

# Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Frank Ross on the EU

✘ Councillor Frank Ross is the SNP councillor for Corstorphine/Murrayfield and as the SNP group leader he is also the Depute Leader of the council. Here he lays out his views on Europe:

“The debate on the UK’s membership on the European Union is a question that will be determined by voters throughout the United Kingdom. While it is natural that this debate will take on a national character, it is only right and proper that the people of Edinburgh consider the impact that the outcome of the referendum may have on our City.

“Edinburgh is a vibrant, successful and multicultural European capital that is famed both for the richness of its history and the warmth of the welcome we offer the 4 million people who visit the city each year.

“People from all over Europe are attracted to live, work and study in Edinburgh because of the distinctive character of our ancient, though cosmopolitan city. We are international in our outlook, global in our reach and welcoming to those of other nations, religions and creeds.

“We are immensely proud that our Old and New Towns are recognised as World Heritage sites, attracting millions of visitors who come to experience and enjoy our unique built and natural environment. UNESCO exists to promote international collaboration and cross-border cooperation, so it is somewhat ironic that a city that so cherishes our UNESCO status should now be asked to consider a future that would see us

disconnected from our European neighbours.

“Edinburgh is Europe’s fourth largest financial centre, with 40,000 professionals employed in the sector. Our success in this important industry relies on the business links we have with our partners in the EU and the ease of doing business on the continent.

“Edinburgh’s economic strength and our international outlook encourages investment from overseas and makes our city an attractive place to do business. EU project funding has brought almost £50m of direct investment to the city, and our strategy of attracting inward investment has resulted in the Edinburgh St James project which will create over 2500 jobs.

“The City Regional Deal will bring an estimated £2bn of investment for vital infrastructure projects. All indications suggest that this deal would be placed in jeopardy if the UK should vote to leave the EU.

“Edinburgh’s ability to attract Europe’s best and brightest expands the skills base that businesses are able to draw upon, which has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on our economic performance, helping us achieve one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country with a claimant rate below 1%.

“EU citizens who have made their home in Edinburgh have enriched our city both economically and culturally. Freedom of movement between EU member states has brought a vibrancy and eclecticism to Edinburgh that befits our status as a modern European Capital City and helps us to punch well above our weight on the world stage.

“Edinburgh is the world’s leading festival city, with 12 major annual festivals bringing talent from more than a third of the world’s countries to our streets and stages, drawing visitors from all over the globe.

“These visitors directly support our thriving hospitality, retail, arts and entertainment sectors which provide 70,000 jobs and are served by a world-class airport which has flourished as a result of our membership of the EU. It serves as an access point for visitors to come to the city as well as the starting point for our citizens to explore the rest of the world, with a tremendous choice of predominantly European destinations to visit.

“When new arrivals from the EU come to work, visit or study in Edinburgh, we hope that they will find a city that is confident in itself, welcoming of others, forward thinking in its approach and proud of its heritage and traditions. But heritage is not just a legacy of the past, it is what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations.

“Let’s make this debate about highlighting what EU membership means to the people of Edinburgh, whether that be those who were born here or the new Scots who have enriched their local communities by living, working and raising their families here.

“It’s about jobs, it’s about investment and it’s about playing our part in a community of nations working together.

“So let’s take the message to Edinburgh – we want to remain.”