

Second Festival of Europe to be held in Edinburgh

Scotland's second Festival of Europe is being held at the French Institute, Edinburgh, on 10 and 11 May and organisers say they have booked top-flight speakers".

Backed by the European Movement in Scotland and a wide range of other organisations, a major theme of the two-day event is "The Future of European Democracy".

The organisers say the Festival comes at a time when far right parties are on the rise across Europe and, as Donald Trump's administration changes the global order that has been in place since the end of the Second World War.

Mark Lazarowicz, one of the conference organisers and a former Edinburgh MP, said: "The world is more unstable today than at any time in the past 80 years. There are powerful political forces at work here, in Europe, the USA and globally that want to tear down the institutions and ideas that have brought freedom, dignity, security and stability to millions.

"We have assembled an outstanding cast of speakers who will explain where we are now and look at how we can keep democracy healthy in Europe."

Among the issues to be discussed are proposals to revitalise the European project of political and economic integration, how the EU should respond to hard right politics, how political parties and civil society can strengthen liberal

democracy and what the prospects for closer ties between Scotland, the UK and the EU.

The recent report on the future of European competitiveness is being seen as a vital blueprint for Europe, a matter made far more urgent by America's new protectionist trade policy. A conference session will look at how the report recommendations can be implemented the implications for economies across Europe, including Scotland and the UK.

MSP Clare Adamson and Alistair Mackie, Chief Executive of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, will look at progress on the Face the Music campaign. Brexit has meant that artists, performers and technical specialists who support performers have lost income and bookings across Europe.

To book tickets for The Future of European Democracy Conference and all the other events taking place as part of the Festival of Europe [click here](#).

Speakers include:

Tanja Bueltmann, Professor of International History at the University of Strathclyde. She specialises in the history of migration and diaspora. She is also a citizens' rights campaigner and founder of the EU Citizens' Champion campaign.

Mark Leonard is co-founder and director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, currently the Henry A Kissinger Chair in foreign policy and international relations at the US Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Sophie Pornschlegel is Deputy Director of Europe Jacques Delors, a Brussels-based think tank. She is also a Policy Fellow with Das Progressive Zentrum in Berlin.

Alyn Smith was an SNP Member of the European Parliament for Scotland from 2004-2019 and SNP MP for Stirling from 2019 to 2024. He was the party's Westminster lead on Europe until last

year.

Sir Graham Robert Watson was a Liberal Democrat Member of the European Parliament between 1994 and 2014. He is a previous leader of the Liberal Group in the European Parliament,

Sandro Gozi MEP sits for France in the European Parliament. He is Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly. He is a former Minister for European Affairs in the Italian government.

Catherine Barnard has been Professor of European Union and Employment Law at the University of Cambridge since 2008. She has also been Deputy Director of the UK in a Changing Europe think-tank.

Cecilia Jastrzemska is President, Young European Movement (YEM). She has worked as a senior policy advisor in UK government departments. She has also held leadership roles in the Young European Socialists. She speaks and writes on feminism, climate change and AI, and European citizens' rights.

Stephen Gethins has been an SNP MP from 2015-2019 and from 2024. He was SNP Spokesperson for International Affairs and Europe at Westminster. He is Professor of Practice in International Relations at the University of St. Andrews. He has worked in the NGO sector specialising in peace-building, arms control and democracy in the Caucasus and the Balkans.

Alistair Mackie, Chief Executive of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Originally from Ayrshire, Alistair Mackie was appointed Chief Executive of the RSN0 in 2019. A classical musician before entering management, he was principal trumpet with the London Sinfonietta and a professor at The Royal College of Music.

Clare Adamson MSP is Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee.

She will talk about the committee's work and the cross-party parliamentary support for the Face the Music campaign.



The French Institute