



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Thursday 3 November 2022

Session 6



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Thursday 3 November 2022

CONTENTS

Col.

UKRAINIAN CULTURE (LINKS AND SUPPORT) 1

**CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
24th Meeting 2022, Session 6**

CONVENER

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)

*Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab)

*Maurice Golden (North East Scotland) (Con)

*Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)

*Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Daria Bondarenko (Ukrainian Freedom Ballet)

Anna Bubnova (British Council)

David Codling (British Council)

Tetyana Filevska (Ukrainian Institute)

George Findlater (Historic Environment Scotland)

Professor Jeffrey Sharkey (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

James Johnston

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Thursday 3 November 2022

[The Deputy Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Ukrainian Culture (Links and Support)

The Deputy Convener (Donald Cameron): Good morning, and welcome to the 24th meeting in 2022 of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee. I have received apologies from the convener, who, unfortunately, cannot join us. I know that Clare Adamson would have wanted very much to be here, as she sponsored the cultural leadership dialogue event on Ukraine in the Parliament in August. I know that many people in the room also attended that event.

Consideration of links with and support for Ukrainian culture is our only agenda item today, which is quite unusual for the committee. I am delighted to say that we are joined by a number of witnesses who will take part in a round-table discussion. I welcome Tetyana Filevska, the creative director of the Ukrainian Institute; David Codling, the director of the UK/Ukraine season of culture 2022 at the British Council; Anna Bubnova, the head of arts at the British Council; Daria Bondarenko, the international project manager for the Ukrainian Freedom Ballet; George Findlater, the head of community and economic development at Historic Environment Scotland; and Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, the principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

I suggest that our discussion be informed by the themes from the cultural leadership dialogue event that I just mentioned and that we structure the discussion in three parts: people, places and partnerships. I will begin with a question at the start of each theme before I bring in witnesses and colleagues. I do not want to constrain the conversation, and our guests should feel free to raise whatever issues they feel are relevant, because we are not technically bound by strict limits. There might be a fair bit of crossover between the themes.

The discussion group on the theme of people at that event in Parliament was focused

“on ways to sustain and develop individual professional cultural careers disrupted by the invasion.”

I want to ask each of our guests about that quotation. How can we best achieve that? How

can we best sustain and develop individual careers that have been disrupted? I will bring in Tetyana Filevska first.

Tetyana Filevska (Ukrainian Institute): Thank you for having us, and thank you for making Ukrainian culture the only agenda item for your committee meeting. We appreciate the attention and commitment of the Scottish Parliament.

On your question, we raised the matter in August and, unfortunately, the situation has not changed for the better since then; the contrary might be true. Perhaps we can divide things up and speak about different categories of people and culture in Ukraine, starting with students, for example, whose education was interrupted and who need to continue their studies. Professions such as music and performing in particular cannot be studied through distance learning. You cannot learn to play the piano over Zoom. Spending days of their semester in a bomb shelter will do no good for students' training. Allowing Ukrainian students to come here to continue their studies in your universities, schools, academies and conservatoires would be a tremendous help in raising a new generation of Ukrainian cultural actors.

For the professionals, it is important to help people to continue their practice, because art is not something that you can stop doing for a long time and then continue without any change in quality. You must always write in order to be a good writer; you need to always direct in order to be a good director. Therefore, it would be good if there was an opportunity to invite Ukrainian actors to work temporarily—for a few months or half a year—at local institutions, or to have internships or an exchange whereby they come to continue their practice and gain new knowledge and teach Ukrainian art in exchange. As we all know, Ukraine was overlooked for a while, and there is a great chance to fill in that gap now.

It is also important to host existing Ukrainian cultural products, such as exhibitions and performances, invite performers to tours and commission new works.

Those are my initial suggestions, and I am sure that my colleagues will have other things to add.

David Codling (British Council): Thank you for the invitation to the meeting.

I will focus on individuals for the moment. One of the matters that we discussed here in August during the culture summit session was the vital importance of maintaining the active links between artists who might still be in Ukraine and those who are outside.

We must also bear in mind that there is quite a lot of movement. A number of artists and arts

technicians—let us not forget the other part of the arts sector: the various people who are part of making arts happen—move around. Therefore, finding ways through twinning at the individual level of shadowing counterparts can be very effective. It is important that they have allies who have a similar role, such as in artist practice or, as I mentioned, technicians, or arts funders—people who are involved in the administrative aspects of supporting fundraising for the arts—so that they can buddy up with their counterparts and spend time with them.

We also need to think of it in a more multilateral way, because those people move around. If it can be done in a way that involves organisations and people in other countries in Europe, as well as here in Scotland, that will benefit the links with Scotland, or elsewhere in the United Kingdom for that matter, in the long term. Once the relationship has been established and the conversations start, stronger links will develop and the professional enrichment of those individuals will be advanced.

George Findlater (Historic Environment Scotland): We feel that there are two areas in which support can be provided. As David Codling mentioned, mentoring and supporting individual colleagues who come across is one. However, the area that I will focus on, which he also spoke about, is the notion of building back better as part of post-war reconstruction and learning from that. If I have understood correctly from colleagues at the most recent workshop, some of the systems might predate the Soviet era, so it is about upgrading systems and planning. My organisation is part of the built environment, so, for us, it is about looking at the massive reconstruction of cities and so on, which requires a very different approach.

Therefore, the focus should be not only on people—which I absolutely agree is essential—but on the systems, which is another area. I think that Scotland has a lot to offer in that regard, with its planning system and its community-based approaches. There is a lot that we can do. As David Codling said, it must be done as part of multilateral work, because the scale is immense.

Daria Bondarenko (Ukrainian Freedom Ballet): Thank you for having us here.

I can talk from experience, because I have lost work in the cultural sphere in Ukraine and we moved here. My husband is also a dancer, so our family directly faced the issue of having no way to work as dancers or artists in Ukraine, and we did not know how to express ourselves in that way in another country.

There is a question around having a platform or site where you could find out where you could go and what you could do there. If we are talking

about dancers, we have been thinking about co-operation with domestic schools, universities and cultural agencies to improve—if we are talking about Scotland—Scottish people’s understanding of modern Ukrainian culture. Understanding the real identity of Ukrainian culture is a big problem in the world.

The Deputy Convener: I completely agree. How can we best do that?

Daria Bondarenko: For me, we have seen that people do not know how to find out how they can be useful. Perhaps there is a question around having more openings and opportunities for people to come to Scotland. For example, a singer would not know where to go, who would be happy to have them here or who would be happy to give them the possibility to express themselves through their knowledge or talent. Perhaps the issue is more about the lack of worldwide information about the possibilities of cultural exchange.

Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): On the back of that point, I know that some of you are involved in trying to match people up and create projects. Can anyone say anything about how that might be helpful in relation to finding roles for people in Scotland or matching people up with events? I know that Tatyana Filevska has an interest in that.

The Deputy Convener: Does anyone want to contribute on how to match people?

David Codling: I have a brief answer, and I am sure that colleagues and others will have other responses. We are building on existing links and exchanges. For example, we have in the room Cryptic from Glasgow, which has close links with a cultural centre in Dnipro. Looking at where there are existing links is one approach, because it is useful to use the material that you already have, especially when it is good material, to find ways of reinforcing those personal and institutional links. I am sure that Professor Sharkey will have more to say about that.

Artist residencies could be another approach to consider. One thing that was mentioned at the culture summit was how useful it would be to have funding to commission new work that would involve exchange, research and residencies across different art forms—that is something that we are very much exploring. Commissioning such new work would mean finding and considering the range of different opportunities that there would be here in Scotland for, initially, a residency for an artist, writer, dancer, painter, film maker or whatever to spend some time here. There have to be conversations, and it is important that the outcomes of those conversations are not prescribed, because the artists need to explore

what they will do together. That would be a very interesting mechanism.

The Deputy Convener: I turn to Anna Bubnova on the specific question of matching and the wider question of sustaining people's careers.

Anna Bubnova (British Council): A lot has already been said, but I will emphasise a few points from my side. One thing that is really important, as David Codling said, is to build on existing ties. Another thing that needs to be done is a sort of mapping of who is in Scotland. We know that there are students in Glasgow, and that there are dancers in Edinburgh, but it is very difficult to understand who is actually here. Hearing those voices would help to identify what kind of help and support they need on the ground.

I also agree with the point that there are a lot of artists back in Ukraine who need support even more than those who are here, because they are in an absolutely different environment. For various reasons, a lot of them cannot practice their art form. One of those reasons is motivation, because when your country is at war, your essential reason for existence is to ensure that there is peace.

09:45

I know, from a lot of conversations with musicians and poets, that they are not writing. It is like they cannot find a reason to write or time to contemplate things. Short-term residencies for people like that would probably really help. I know that there are plenty of opportunities here in the UK, and the British Council could do really good work by trying to spread the word and ensure that people in Ukraine know about those opportunities.

There is a question of visas. We have not touched on that yet, but it is a big issue. Those supporting residencies really have to understand that there is a big visa issue that Ukrainian practitioners would have to go through to get to the UK. It makes life much harder.

Mapping funding is important. I know that the British Council in Scotland has quite extensive experience in building connections between Scotland and the rest of the world. We can use that experience to create new connections between Ukrainian and Scottish arts organisations. However, that will need additional funding from organisations such as Creative Scotland, and the question is whether Creative Scotland is interested in helping the British Council with that.

The Deputy Convener: Daria, did you want to come back in on that?

Daria Bondarenko: Yes. A lot of people who are in Ukraine right now, especially men who are not serving in the military, are sitting there and

literally doing nothing. Those aged 18 to 60 have no permission to leave the country. However, there are several possibilities. For those who do not want to leave, it would be great to find a way to support them in Ukraine. Others want to leave and spread the word everywhere about Ukraine, and the culture of Ukraine, but they cannot. Governments could invite those people to come to their countries and represent Ukraine. That invitation could help somebody to get cultural permission to leave the country for two or three months or half a year. Instead of sitting in a bomb shelter in Ukraine, they could spend their time more usefully around the world, highlighting Ukrainian culture.

The Deputy Convener: Am I right in thinking that that is what happened in the summer with the ballet?

Daria Bondarenko: Yes. The ballet had permission from the cultural ministry to leave the country for one month to represent Ukraine. They needed to get back to Ukraine by 1 September, which they did. We are happy to have such a great possibility to do that. Right now, though, they cannot leave the country to try to find work or even connections here. That is why they need the support of an invitation.

The Deputy Convener: Can I bring in Jeffrey Sharkey to answer the question?

Professor Jeffrey Sharkey (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland): Thank you. I want to build on Tetyana Filevska's opening remarks about people and what we can do to help. The story so far at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is one of a deep desire to help when the war broke out, seizing opportunity and partnership. The Ukrainian National Municipal Opera Kyiv and orchestra had started a tour of European cities before the war broke out. The last city on its tour was Glasgow. I wrote to the company and said, "If you're in town, would you like to come over to the conservatoire?" About half the orchestra and singers turned up in my office, wanting to find out more. I quickly arranged for different heads of programme—whether it was voice, strings, wind or brass—to talk to them about what it is like to study in Scotland. We then guided them in how to apply. One of the most important partnerships in that regard is with the Scottish Government, because without its making the Ukrainians be like home students, we could not have afforded to take them. I am therefore grateful to the Scottish Government.

Nonetheless, the process was still hard. My staff tracked where our Ukrainians were. They went from being on a work visa to having to be on a refugee visa. They were in temporary housing in Edinburgh and then we had to track them as they found another bit of temporary housing, and then

we borrowed housing from Glasgow Caledonian University. I had a staff member tracking them every bit of the way to make sure that we did not lose them. We then hired a Ukrainian graduate of ours who is fluent in English and Ukrainian to help answer their countless queries, such as, “What do I say on this visa?” and, “How do I apply for that housing?” My staff also acted as guarantors for some of the housing. It was a massive effort.

I also want to recognise the Wheatley Group, which builds social housing and has built some housing for Ukrainians. We asked it for help and it gave us some bursary money, which was needed because the Scottish Government covers tuition but not the cost of living. That is what I mean when I say that it took a village of partnerships to make it so that 22 Ukrainians could be in full-time study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. It is a beautiful thing. They are studying mainly in music but we also have two actors.

I am proud to say that we also have students from Russia who are very against the war and very much part of a cultural community that wants to be welcoming, just as we have Palestinians and Israeli students, and Korean and Chinese students. Whatever the case might be, there is something in the conservatoire that is a hopeful model for the rest of the world. We have arts that go beyond language barriers and beyond politics; people come together to perform the work of a Ukrainian composer or Beethoven, Chekhov or Shakespeare. We are proud of that partnership.

I think that Glasgow is twinned with Kharkiv, and I have reached out to work with the Kharkiv conservatoire, which was bombed. It first of all asked me to write a formal letter of support, which I was very happy to do. It has online facilities and it also asked in the first instance that, if we have visiting guest master-classes, we share those with them and beam them to Kharkiv, which we will be happy to do.

I am also interested in whether there are ways that we can be part of that ecosystem of artists coming back—I was talking to Daria Bondarenko that about before the meeting began. For example, if there are dancers, they could perhaps work with or exercise with our dancers.

We are certainly growing our knowledge of Ukrainian composers. I played Boris Lyatoshytsky—a beautiful elegy—in my last trio concert. Those composers are appearing in our concerts more than ever before.

Tetyana Filevska: Professor Sharkey, it is a pleasure to my ears to hear that you are playing Lyatoshytsky. There are many more wonderful Ukrainian composers to open up to.

I will briefly answer the question about networking and matching people. I will also

answer the question about permission to leave the country.

To start with the last point, permission to leave the country can be issued only by the Ukrainian Government. Every ministry can grant that permission, and so people should simply apply through the procedure of the Ministry of Culture, or any other ministry, and we can continue it afterwards. It does not involve any kind of invitation being made. There has to be a reason, but it is simply a matter of internal relations and internal Government permission.

On networking, institutions such as the Ukrainian Institute and the British Council serve as hubs—basically, as databases. We know all the actors in Ukraine and we are there to link them with their counterparts in other countries. We work with several databases, which we suggest to our partners in different countries.

We have a pre-invasion database that has to be adjusted. We are doing that now, and it will be made public. It will be a website with all the data about individuals, institutions and programmes, and people will be able to use that to discover, explore and find all the Ukrainian partners.

We also have an emergency database, which is not public, in which we gather information about who is where, who is on a temporary stay in the UK and who was relocated to Germany and other countries. When we receive requests from our partners abroad we know that there are certain artists in that country—at least for the time being, as people often relocate to different countries. We keep that database up to date so that we can always answer a request, because the Ukrainian Institute has experts in different spheres, such as music, theatre and literature, and in that way each sector knows who is where and we can assist with that—please just send us a note.

Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP): Thank you all for coming. I looked at the Ukrainian Institute website today and read some of the heartbreaking stories on the site. I was struck by a number of the photographs that show Ukrainian people in front of important cultural buildings. There was a photograph of an older lady who had spoken about her memories of being in a church, which has now been damaged. I was struck by the beauty of the buildings and the amazing artwork and the songs and the dances that had all been highlighted. We have many Ukrainian families staying in Scotland, so I am interested in how we can help to ensure that your culture, stories, traditions and music are kept going among the young children who are now here. Daria Bondarenko, do you want to talk about that?

Daria Bondarenko: Are you talking about how we can make the younger generation aware of the culture of Ukraine?

Jenni Minto: Yes, exactly. They are here and they are the cultural ambassadors of 10 or 20 years' time, so how do we ensure that they hold on to that?

Daria Bondarenko: Those who are living with families are already making a big impact by letting people know better what is going on. However, perhaps there is also a reason for them to work with schools and universities to create lessons, master-classes, performances and immersive theatre events to tell people more and to co-operate directly with the younger generation to ensure that they understand what Ukrainian culture is about.

Anna Bubnova: I am in living Falkirk with my children just now, and I want to say that the schools here—I do not know whether it is the case for everyone, but it is true for the school that my kids are in—are really good at including the kids and ensuring that the language is heard by others. They have taught Ukrainian during the school day. It was really well organised.

However, I want to give an example from the UK/Ukraine season of culture. We have a project, which was initiated by the University of Chichester, that invited a Ukrainian writer for the online residency. As a result, there will be curriculum material for schools, including primary schools, to introduce people to the Ukrainian language and culture. That can also be used to work with the Ukrainian communities in various areas. Therefore, something like that could be used for such a purpose, but I guess that, in answer to your question, where there is an interest or a connection and where there is a desire to help, it always works out. The question might be how we create those connections, so we go back to the idea of networking and connecting the right people and the right organisations to each other and ensuring that they have the opportunity to work with each other.

Daria Bondarenko: I am living on a ship right now, and there are a lot of kids on it, too. On the ship, there is a self-organised group called happy moments, which is working with kids. It is very nice because that group has created a small event at Ocean Terminal, and there will also be Ukrainian day in a school that a lot of kids from the ship will go to.

The refugee Ukrainians who are here are taking those kinds of small steps. It is mostly about our own initiative. We just want to give kids an opportunity to do something interesting—to sing, to dance, to express their talents. The group was created with the help of the Scottish Government,

and the crew of the ship were a big help, but it is more about our own initiative. I suggested that there should be a Ukrainian day in a school because Ukrainian kids needed to feel a bit more of a Ukrainian atmosphere.

10:00

Tetyana Filevska: Thank you for the question, Ms Minto. It is crucial to keep the traditions going because, in our history, there are already several generations that completely forgot their past because of Russia's intentional imperial policy to erase Ukraine's identity. The best way to ensure that the next generation stays Ukrainian—keeps its Ukrainian identity and continues the advocacy of Ukrainian culture anywhere—is to ensure that no other cultural heritage is destroyed and that it is safe for people to go back to Ukraine. Therefore, the only answer is to send more weapons to Ukraine so that we can finish the war as soon as possible.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): It has been really good to hear the evidence that we have heard so far. I want to follow up the question that Jenni Minto has just asked, which was about how we support people who have come to Scotland.

The witnesses have said that Ukrainians are already self-organising, which is great to hear, but we need to think about how we make connections with them. I know that there is the work that the British Council is doing and that the conservatoire has had fantastic initiatives, and we have also taken evidence from our national and local cultural organisations, which are facing challenges. What is the win-win in terms of networking and bringing people together? For example, the support that the Ukrainian community in Edinburgh gives people is off the chart, and we need to think about how we make connections there. Glasgow's twinning links have been mentioned, and we have something similar in Edinburgh, too.

When I visited the ship a few weeks ago, I was struck by the number of people who were online or working. As we have learned during Covid, it is still possible to make these connections; we just need somebody to curate them and a bit of money to try to pull people together.

What opportunities can we support in Scotland? How can we support Ukrainian artists who have come here and then support networking with people back in Ukraine? We need to think about how we create connectivity. We have been talking about the wellbeing benefits of arts and culture, and the witnesses have talked about keeping their culture and identity alive. There is potential for networks that take in those ambitions, but the question is how we curate that and support people in making those connections.

I see that Professor Sharkey has some thoughts about how we could do that.

Professor Sharkey: I do not have a quick answer to those questions, but I was just thinking about what Daria Bondarenko said about what happened on the ship. I have already talked about our higher education programmes and the 22 Ukrainians who are in full-time study with us, but I should also point out that we probably have the largest pre-HE programme in the United Kingdom, which we call our juniors department. We have young people from primary school right up to the end of school doing music, dance, drama, production and film. That happens in Glasgow, but we also have centres dotted around the rest of Scotland. I would love to find mechanisms to connect some of the young people who are on the ship or who are living elsewhere into that pre-HE programme, even if we need to raise bursary money to afford it.

As for the comments that Tetyana Filevska and David Codling have made about technical theatre, we teach that at the conservatoire. We teach carpentry for set making, scenic arts and costume making, and we have electricians doing lighting and sound. There is a desperate shortage of those people in Scotland. Covid drove them out of the theatres, because they were closed, and then the people all got jobs with better working hours. They are not coming back. When we add to that the positive fact that the screen industry, which I also deeply support, has taken many of those people, too, it is clear that we have a need.

We therefore have this absolute need. If there are any technical theatre or technical screen people in Ukraine, they could come over and do residencies with our theatres or screen industry or workshops with our students. We could marry the need that Scotland has with some of the skills that Ukraine's people might have.

Those are two areas that I would like to explore.

Sarah Boyack: I would add, as a postscript, that thousands of Ukrainians already live in Scotland, so could we create opportunities for people who are skilled in that sector and have those language skills? Could we make those connections?

Daria Bondarenko: Many Ukrainians who are working use Telegram groups for the most popular stuff in a lot of spheres. For example, painters in different parts of Scotland are in a group together, and they organise to meet each other in order to understand who is here, who is working and so on and to share their experiences of working here. A lot of people are already gathering online in such groups. If there were some direct point where people could go to find out who and what was needed, it would be easy to create opportunities.

I cannot say that I know who is here right now, who works in each sphere, who is still looking for professional work in Scotland or who has decided that it is impossible and has gone to work in, for example, a hotel. A lot of people also think that they cannot find professional cultural work, because it is complicated, because the culture is different or for a lot of other reasons, so they just forget about it, stop their cultural stuff and go and work in a hotel or restaurant.

Maurice Golden (North East Scotland) (Con): I am interested in probing the mapping exercise and what it might look like on a practical level. On the one hand, there are cultural organisations based here in Scotland that might have funding or other opportunities, so how do we match them with the Ukrainians who are here? Could we have something like a skills database? Could they access an app to flag where they were, who they were and what they could do?

Moreover, how do we link all that with artists and others based in Ukraine? It sounds like there is a database there, but how do we link all that up quickly and easily?

The Deputy Convener: Who wants to take that on?

Tetyana Filevska: Could there be something like a career in culture day? You could announce something like that and have a place where people could come together and meet each other. I do not know—it is just a lucky guess.

Anna Bubnova: The Ukrainian clubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh could be a good basis for that, but every municipality in Scotland has people who are responsible for the Ukrainians living in their communities. Some research needs to be done on that idea, and perhaps a Ukrainian club in one of those cities could take that forward. It is a technical question that could be explored.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Sadly, around the world there are continuing wars, oppression and climate breakdown, and refugees are coming here from many different communities and different cultures. Different refugee communities have developed in Scotland in recent years, particularly from Syria and Afghanistan. Has there been any dialogue or shared learning with those communities and the approaches that have been taken to preserve, develop and integrate their culture in Scotland?

I have also been struck by some of the work that the Scottish Refugee Council has done with a number of those communities, and I was also struck by what Professor Sharkey said about the diversity of the conservatoire and people with very different backgrounds, histories and cultures coming together. Does anyone have any reflections on how that work has developed? Have

you been aware of it? Have you linked it into it, learned from it or contributed to it?

David Codling: Speaking from the point of view of the British Council, I have previously worked extensively in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. For example, I have been very much involved for the past few years in our work on cultural connections with Syria. There is a great deal of learning to be done, often working with partners such as the Scottish Refugee Council, which you have mentioned.

It is an important question. What we need to do—and what we are doing, although it is still very much incipient—is to compare notes and experiences and, where possible, bring together artists who are able to share some of their experience. For example, that will be happening this month in Belfast, at the Outburst queer arts festival. Outburst Arts has a particular focus on queer arts, but with regard to refugees, the fact is that queer artists can face particularly complex situations in relation to their own community and the host community. At the festival, we will be bringing together Ukrainian, Palestinian and Lebanese artists, who, among other things, will be looking at the challenges that they face, both in their practice and in the way that they work.

That is a small example. With Ukraine, we have been responding to the disruption caused by the latest phase of the invasion—or Russian aggression, because that is what it is—with the mechanisms for creating the season that I mentioned earlier and so on. How we respond to the experience that we have had with partners from, for example, Syria is very much on the British Council's agenda. Again, Syria is a country from which there are many refugees here in Scotland.

Tetyana Filevska: The experience of people from Ukraine is very different from that of people from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and so on. The difference in the Ukrainian situation is that we are not considered refugees; we are displaced people, and we expect to return home as soon as it is safe. Even officially, in terms of the legislature, we are not refugees, so there is no aim for us to be integrated into society. It is a temporary situation, and we realise that.

Another issue with comparing experiences is that Ukraine is often blamed for Ukrainians being treated much better than other refugees, and we get a kind of guilt about that. We are often ostracised by other refugee communities in host countries. That is happening not just in the UK but all over Europe. Because of recent experiences in Syria and Afghanistan, many people point out the difference.

The Deputy Convener: Thank you for that. I will go to Jeffrey Sharkey next, but in so doing, I would like to move on to the second theme, which is on places.

I wonder, Jeffrey, whether you could make the point that you were about to make. You have also talked about the Royal Conservatoire's links with the Kharkiv conservatory, and I am interested to hear how those links came about and the ways in which the initiative has been developed. We can then have a broader discussion on the theme of places.

10:15

Professor Sharkey: In a sense, my point ties neatly into the issue of places. I will talk about Kharkiv in a second, but, first, I want to say that I am sensitive to what we heard during the cultural summit, when some of the cultural leaders in Ukraine said, "We want to keep our cultural leaders here; we don't want them all to go away. We want them back."

It makes me think about our duty of care to our students. We give them four years of protected, safe study, but how do we help them when they graduate? We all pray that the invasion will be done and that peace will reign in less than four years, but, if that does not happen, we need to consider whether there are work opportunities for them here, how we might place them back in Ukraine and how we have that dialogue.

The idea of twinned cities might help. When I became aware that Glasgow was looking to twin with Kharkiv, I called the rector at the conservatory there and we started a dialogue. We now have an official memorandum of understanding between us, and we just need to work on what that means.

I think that the relationship will be in the online world first, but I can imagine there being something deeper when there is easier exchange. The normal MOUs that we have—we certainly had them when we were part of Erasmus, and we are still fighting to keep that agreement with Europe—involved term swapping of students and staff, shared projects and the upskilling of our teachers. We also have the innovative conservatoire—or ICON—group with the conservatoires of The Hague and Oslo, and I would love to add Kharkiv to it. We can do things that involve placemaking with our partners. I have no quick and easy answer, though, as to where our graduating students should go and how they can go back and stay safe at the same time.

The Deputy Convener: Sarah, do you want to come in on the theme of places?

Sarah Boyack: Picking up on that last point, I, too, wonder what we do after today. Perhaps

something that we need to think about is how we record some of the ideas that have been shared so that we can then share them with our cultural and higher education sectors and the Scottish Government. I am thinking, for example, of Erasmus, where things could be done, and are examples of best practice, including what the British Council is doing, that we could share more widely.

That was just a quick response to the previous comments. I just think that, if we did that, we would not lose the ideas that have come from around the table and it might encourage other people to think about what they could do, which would be a good thing.

On the theme of places, we obviously have twinning, but I am also wondering about the connections that can be made with institutions; after all, it is now a lot easier to make connections online. Some of the most inspiring things that I have seen have involved live broadcasts, but that sort of thing requires a lot of co-ordination. It might sound simple to put on a film, but people need to build and curate that. Are there any opportunities to make connections with our broadcasting companies to help people whether they are in Scotland or Ukraine—or, indeed, on the MS Victoria? Have we got the physical broadcasting capacity to make those connections?

Anna Bubnova: I assume that you are referring to TheatreHD, which is the programme for distributing the best UK theatre pieces all over the world. We were very excited to have it in Ukraine, and it stimulated and encouraged the filming of a lot of theatre work. It was not broadcast, because that would have been very complex, but there were screenings and performances.

Curatorial work is needed to put all of that together, but it is quite easy to do it in cinemas. In Ukraine, we have a couple of organisations that have very good digitised archives of what are called Soviet Ukrainian-era films; they are great pieces of work that have been digitised and then shown in cinemas and at festivals around the UK. Those films can be shown, but a curator needs to come to us or go to the Ukrainian Institute, and we can put them in touch with the organisations that have access to and can share them.

We also have an extremely well developed and emerging generation of young film makers who are travelling around the world right now; they have made very promising pictures that are winning awards all over Europe and the United States, so there are things to show. Tetyana Filevska and I would be happy to put you in touch with organisations that hold those rights and are capable of supporting filming or screenings in communities around Scotland. That said, it is

probably not an artform that can travel around the easiest.

Maurice Golden: Building on Anna Bubnova's point about preserving films, I wonder how much pressure there is on preserving collections in museums and preserving cultural buildings, and what we could do to support that.

Tetyana Filevska: That is a huge problem because, according to the recent report of the Ministry of Culture, more than 500 cultural objects, pieces of architecture, museums or libraries have been destroyed or severely damaged. One of the most recent cases is the Khanenko museum, which is in the centre of Kyiv and has the largest collection of international art. A bomb fell just 20m in front of the museum, so it does not have any windows or doors now; even the blinds in the museum were blown away.

Because of the—I do not want to say “collapse”, but the Ukrainian economy is down 40 per cent—very difficult economic situation, we are at the beginning of a very difficult winter, and museums lack funding to survive through winter, keeping the premises warm and safe and locking the windows. There is already some connection between the Minister of Culture and ministers of culture of other countries, and many individual museums have their own campaigns so that they can sustain themselves and survive the winter. They are not operating and do not get any ticket sales; they have no work, but they need to pay their staff, pay their bills and warm up their buildings in order to survive.

Various museum associations and funds are working to keep institutions running. For example, a fund that supports museums in Kyiv is directed by Ihor Poshyvailo, who was part of our delegation here in August and who shared the experience of the fund and what it is doing. The Memorial Museum of Totalitarian Regimes in Lviv operates a fund that provides assistance to museum workers around Ukraine. Several funds are doing that work, including the International Council of Museums UK, which generously supports some of those initiatives.

There is also the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund, which supports a variety of institutions and people in Ukraine and is very active. A colleague from the British Council in Ukraine is a co-founder and chief executive officer of that fund. There are several reliable, interested and active institutions that are more flexible than state institutions such as the Ministry of Culture or any state agencies and are of great help. We have a list of those institutions that we share with our colleagues, and I would be happy to share it with the committee; it provides a huge range of initiatives.

David Codling: Tetyana mentioned the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund. It is supported by the cultural protection fund, which is a British Council initiative. I will say a couple of things about that.

The cultural protection fund has great potential to have further involvement with Ukraine. Through the fund—this is very important—we have done initial work on what we might call cultural protection first aid, such as making sure that material was available for the padding of sculptures on the facades of buildings in Lviv and Odessa. That is the sort of thing that the fund was involved in right at the beginning. That work is very multilateral, because there are a lot of different players from different countries, and it is important that they do not step on one another's toes. It is complex work, but it is crucial.

Until this year, the cultural protection fund, which was devised five years ago by the British Council with some funding from the UK Government, was focused geographically largely on the middle east, north Africa and south Asia. However, there is now a specific fund related to work in Ukraine, and we want to expand that.

As well as direct protection, there is the area of awareness. We did our online seminar just 10 days ago on the problems and issues that museums face. Raising awareness about all the issues that both intangible and tangible cultural heritage face is crucial. I mention that because the cultural protection fund is equally interested in and involved with intangible and material heritage. I can provide more details about that, but I will not go on now; I just wanted to signal it. Multilateral engagement is also important.

The Deputy Convener: Will you elaborate on multilateral engagement?

David Codling: That applies not only to Ukraine but to other situations and geographies. George Findlater will be familiar with it. Our cultural protection fund colleagues are part of a wider conversation with other organisations in Scotland, the rest of the UK and worldwide. Because there are a lot of different interests and a lot of different funds from Governments and foundations, it is important that conversations take place between them and that there is co-ordination to help to make sure that the work is co-ordinated, that there is no overlap and so on.

Jenni Minto: Before I was elected to the Parliament, I managed a small museum on Islay. Its disaster recovery plan really considered only flooding and wind damage—it certainly did not cover war damage. I am interested in hearing about Historic Environment Scotland's breadth of knowledge in that area and how you can support

building or rebuilding—you said “building back better”—in Ukraine.

I also want to touch on the fact that culture includes our natural environment. I represent Argyll and Bute, which is a very rural area but one that has lots of small towns. Twinning could go further than just involving the big cities. How do we move twinning on to include smaller towns in Ukraine? It has the wonderful beech forests, and we have the Celtic rainforests in Argyll and Bute. Can we make connections in the natural cultural world?

George Findlater: Picking up on David Codling's points about the multilateral approach, I note that members of our staff who are members of the International Council on Monuments and Sites—which is part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization approach—feed information back to Ukrainian colleagues. Through the Institute of Conservation, they also support with advice their colleagues in the conservation industry, mostly on the museum side. In addition, members of our staff are part of the British Army's cultural protection unit. Those are all multilateral frameworks for the protection of the historic environment, the prevention of trafficking et cetera. A lot of that work is going on at the moment.

Maurice Golden's point about mapping and moving on to the frameworks is important. In the past six months, through the British Council and the international summit, it has been great for us to understand what the demands and needs are, but we need to move towards structuring that conversation much more clearly so that we really understand that.

10:30

The World Bank, working with the Ukrainian Government and the EU, did a rapid damage and needs assessment of the situation up to June and it suggested a figure of \$5.2 billion just to restore the cultural sector. The scale of the challenge is immense, and part of that is for us to understand where aid is needed.

Again picking up on David Codling's point, I note that partnership is part of that. We are well placed to be part of that. We hosted a summit back in May with the European Heritage Heads Forum. It is important to share our understanding, because the scale of the problem is immense. We have not seen anything like this since the second world war and we need multilateral partnerships to be able to approach it. We are part of those networks, but we need to move towards formalising the conversation to deepen the understanding between our organisation, the British Council, our

Ukrainian colleagues and our international partners.

The Deputy Convener: I am glad that we moved on to discuss that, because one topic that I wanted to raise was how we approach the repair and rebuilding of what we might call cultural infrastructure in Ukraine. I think that we have covered that. Unless anyone wants to make any other observations on it, we will move on to our third and final theme, which is partnership. That overlaps with quite a lot of what we have already discussed.

Given that relationships and collaborative working need not be restricted to institutions, what do people think about the role of individuals and communities—which might include schools, businesses and the third sector—in what we have been discussing?

Tetyana Filevska: Jenni Minto asked a question about the twinning of smaller communities or areas. My first thought was that I would invite you to Ukraine to see how many beautiful places there are, such as our forests and coastline, but then I realised how dangerous it is at the moment. Perhaps we will postpone that until our victory.

However, there are definitely many wonderful places. Askanie-Nova is just one. It is a natural resort. It is under occupation now and we do not know what state it is in, but it is a beautiful and ancient park full of wildlife. There are zebras running around the steppe. It is a beautiful place and it would be one interesting case that you could look at. There is also the Crimea and the Kherson area. Ukraine also has islands—not only Zmiinyi, but others too. There is a lot to discover.

Because of the way that decentralisation worked in Ukraine in the past few years, local communities have much more power and sovereignty, so there could be initiatives between your communities and Ukrainian communities to arrange twinning and develop that in the way that you want.

David Codling: I reiterate how important residencies can be. It is also important to think about what can be done easily. There is a fantastic network of arts residencies here in Scotland, including in Argyll and Bute. Some are in urban areas, but others are in rural and coastal settings. There is a great opportunity there, and they are anxious and eager to work on making links.

We can start by mapping who is there and who is available. We have to work out when places are available, and then people need funding. We also need to get visas. We have not talked about them yet, although I would prefer not to have to. There is already a network of organisations—some of them are very small and some are much larger—

that we could tap into to start making dynamic and lasting links.

I say again that the key thing is not to try to prescribe outcomes but to let the artists who are involved work those out together.

Jenni Minto: That is a really strong point, because positive relationships are those that start from the people.

David Codling: Yes, and there are loads of places in which one could start that.

Jenni Minto: Two ladies in Lochgilphead have been doing amazing work in filling lorries to send to Ukraine. They are currently trying to fill one with Christmas presents so that the children can have a recognisable Christmas. They have said to me that they would love to twin with such-and-such an area because they have already started that relationship. That is positive.

Daria Bondarenko: Right now, all conscious Ukrainians understand the value of culture, heritage and language. Those on the cultural front are looking for work not only in order to live but as an opportunity to show the Ukrainian culture and heritage—not just to work in and integrate with another community, but to show what Ukrainian culture and heritage look like. That is a noble mission of all Ukrainian cultural representatives.

Professor Sharkey: Those partnerships are going to become more mapped and I am excited about the ways in which we can work together. I mentioned technical theatre and Anna Bubnova mentioned film makers. In that regard, I note that we have huge growth in the screen industry here.

There is also something that Ukraine can give us in Scotland. I mentioned that, last night, here in the Scottish Parliament, the conservatoire celebrated our 175th anniversary. John F Kennedy is quoted on the back of the Kennedy Centre—I used to stare at it—and last night I paraphrased the quote as follows. What are civilisations remembered for when the dust has settled? Are they remembered for their great economies? Are they remembered for their victories in battle? No—they are remembered for the art that they leave behind.

There is something incredibly moving about our Ukrainian friends, in the midst of bombs going off, saying, “We must fight to protect our culture.” We must do that here in Scotland, too. Our culture sector is under extreme challenge. Our budgets are stretched, and that includes our conservatoire. However, it is about having that mindset. We want to appreciate our culture not only when it is in danger of being bombed. We can learn from and help one another through these leaner and hard times.

Sarah Boyack: That is a really good point. When it comes to the people, the partnerships, the links that we have, the better links that could be developed and the work that is being done by the British Council, it is all about how that work is promoted.

Before the meeting, Jenni Minto and I talked about individual sponsorship for sculpture in Scotland. There is something about giving people that opportunity, whether they are corporate sponsors or individuals who make donations to existing cultural organisations in Scotland that are doing that outreach work and supporting artists through the “perfect storm” that is talked about in the committee report that was published on Monday. How do we make such connections?

Looking forward, we have the excellent piece of work from the British Council, which is mapping what is coming in arts and festival organisations. Are there ways to co-ordinate so that individual artists can think, “In six months, I could be at X festival in Scotland”? Obviously, I am thinking of the Edinburgh international festivals and the range of opportunities there.

Is there something that we could do as a committee to help to make those connections? An example might be for us to write to the cabinet secretary, sharing the ideas that have come out today and talking about Erasmus—I am thinking about the points about visas and planning ahead. Are there things that we could do to give the work a degree of energy and include the connectivity that has come from this round-table discussion?

Tetyana Filevska: I thank Professor Sharkey for getting to the essence of the war, which is against the Ukrainian identity—it is not so much about the Ukrainian land or economy. The Russians target that culture. They do not want us to exist as a nation or as a culture. That is why it is crucial to protect it. It is the essence of the conflict.

On co-operation and partnership, I will point out two main things. The first is the importance of mapping Ukraine. Until 24 February, Ukraine was missing from most institutions’ agendas and university courses. The recent example of Timothy Snyder teaching a course on Ukraine at Yale University shows how much the world missed by not learning and knowing about Ukraine. My first call is therefore for people to discover Ukraine by putting Ukraine on their agenda and planning Ukraine into their curriculum, and for libraries to order more books about Ukraine, because plenty of new books are coming out.

In order to learn more, people should invite lecturers to speak, watch movies, arrange stage performances and just discover Ukraine. They should give more space, air and attention to

Ukraine. Because of how much it was overlooked, we need to open it up to audiences.

My second point is about finding partner institutions in Ukraine that you could help to restore and reform. It will not be a rebuilding; the majority of arts institutions in Ukraine needed to be reformed, because they were struggling from a post-Soviet heritage that needed to be rethought. Now, we sometimes joke among ourselves that the real decommunisation is happening because Russians are destroying everything. We need to rebuild from scratch, so we will build better institutions.

A great example is that Scotland already has a partnership with the Kharkiv Conservatory. That is a great start. You already have your partner, so you already see each other’s needs and interests. Each institution can do that; it is just about finding at least one institution in Ukraine with which to develop a lasting partnership.

We are already working on several bigger projects, such as establishing a network of new art schools in Ukraine and a special edition of Manifesta, the nomadic European biennial. That will be open to all institutions, so we will not limit ourselves to EU countries. For example, it would be great to help to open a new film school in Ukraine in a smaller village and not necessarily in a huge city.

Mark Ruskell: It has been an excellent evidence session. I have learned a lot and I think that the points about partnership are very well made.

I had a lingering thought about Eurovision being hosted in Liverpool—sadly; nevertheless, it is in the UK—and whether you see that as an opportunity or entry point, particularly for young people in this country, to get a sense of Ukrainian popular culture. They might subsequently become curious about other aspects of Ukrainian culture, and that could be investigated and followed up.

Daria Bondarenko: For sure—we have already been doing that, because Ukraine’s Freedom Ballet now participates in almost all Eurovision contests. When Ukraine started to do that, dancers visited and performed in each Eurovision contest, I think, with Ukrainian and international acts. The director of Freedom Ballet, Olena Koliadenko, was already in London and had some communication with the Eurovision group, although I cannot say whether that will be successful or what will happen as a result of that communication. Anyway, we understand that Eurovision is a great platform for us. Again, we did it on our own; we just tried to find somebody and get them to acknowledge that we are here and that we can do this. We can—and want to—participate. It is perhaps about finding platforms

through which we can connect and say that we are here in the UK and that we can and do want to work.

David Codling: I had a meeting with the Liverpool team just yesterday. From the point of view of the UK/Ukraine season, we have been involved with discussions. In fact, while the candidate cities were preparing their bids, I briefed them, including Glasgow, and I was very careful to give each candidate city the same briefing. Obviously, since Liverpool was selected, I have had more conversations with that team.

10:45

On the wider resonance of that question across Europe and not just in these two countries, with our Ukrainian Institute partners, we have been looking at precisely what Tetyana Filevska referred to around wider awareness of Ukraine and the opportunity that that provides for a more diverse cultural package. We and Volodymyr Sheiko from the Ukrainian Institute had a meeting with the BBC, and I think that I can say this, because it is not a secret: the BBC, as part of the Eurovision programme, is planning a series of programming—stuff on the telly—during the period before the Eurovision contest happens. It will include things of a different nature, such as documentary film from Ukraine. That is being considered.

With the Liverpool team, we have been looking at things related to the work of the UK/Ukraine season that we could do alongside what they are planning in public spaces in Liverpool, including how, through some kind of installation, we might draw attention to the question of the destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage. There are various ways to do that. That will obviously have a much wider audience because of Eurovision—let us face it.

The Deputy Convener: It will probably have a wider audience than this committee meeting, but only just.

Alasdair Allan: I am sure that there will be stiff competition between the two events.

A few people have rightly mentioned Ukrainian identity and the threats that it has always faced. I wonder about language and literature. What efforts are being made with partnerships to ensure that Ukrainians and others get to hear about the Ukrainian literary tradition, and what opportunities do young Ukrainians and children have to learn to read and write in Ukrainian once they are here, so that they can keep that connection with their culture?

The Deputy Convener: That is a very good point.

David Codling: There is a strong literary strand—when I say literary, I mean spoken word and written published word—to the UK/Ukraine season. A key issue that has emerged is the need to reinforce the traffic of translation from Ukrainian into English, Welsh and Gaelic. We will look at that, because it very much relates to a lot of the British Council's work in literature and publishing. It is a critical issue.

Translation takes a very long time, and it is under-the-radar work. However, from experience with many other languages and cultures, we know that, when we start to increase the flow of contact between translators and writers, getting writers exposed and then translated, which the season is doing at the moment—I will not go into detail about particular events, but they are in the document that was circulated—that strengthens the flow of contact with contemporary Ukrainian literature and gets it into translation and publication. I stress that we will work on translation into Welsh and Gaelic as well as English and perhaps into Irish in the future. That is very much part of the programme for the UK/Ukraine season.

Tetyana Filevska: In the first month after the invasion started, the first lady of Ukraine initiated a project to bring Ukrainian books to Ukrainian kids elsewhere in the world. Several publishing houses donated for free the files of their books, and those books were printed locally with the help of local partners.

One of the countries that printed the largest number of books was the UK, thanks to a local print house. Several thousand books were distributed throughout local Ukrainian communities; my kids have a whole shelf of new Ukrainian books that we received from our borough in London. That was taken care of and, at least from what I know, enough of those books were printed.

Daria Bondarenko: Here in Edinburgh, finding Ukrainian books is a problem. I have been to a lot of libraries, and there are no Ukrainian books. I was thinking about the Olena Zelenska programme and how to bring it here to Scotland and Edinburgh, because my kids currently get books from Kyiv via Royal Mail.

The Deputy Convener: To be clear, when you talk about Ukrainian books, you mean books in the Ukrainian language, for children and for adults.

Daria Bondarenko: Yes, in the Ukrainian language and by Ukrainian writers. Right now, we are looking only for Ukrainian writers, in order to support them and show our children Ukrainian writing.

Anna Bubnova: That is a real issue. For grown-ups, it is not such a big deal, because they can use e-readers, but, for younger kids, pictures are

really important. We need picture books, especially for young learners. In my case, the younger one switches into English very quickly, and it is very hard if you do not have anything to support keeping the Ukrainian language on their radar. We will try to tackle the issue through the Ukrainian Club in Edinburgh.

The Deputy Convener: I promised to go to Sarah Boyack next, and then we will go to David Codling.

Sarah Boyack: I will be brief, because I know that we have to wind up at some point.

To follow on from the Eurovision comment, there is the whole issue of film and broadcast media. Broadcast media are fantastic at telling us what is happening now. However, we had a humanitarian emergency fund meeting last week, and I am wondering whether there is a space for more stories of the people who are helped by the fund or of what is happening next. That is partly about communicating culture. People are still creating drama and documentaries. Is there scope for our broadcast media in Scotland, such as the BBC, Channel 4 and STV, to do more work in that regard to communicate those stories, both in Scotland and more broadly?

The Deputy Convener: A lot of things are being discussed today that we, as a committee, need to take away and think about how to take forward. That is certainly one of them.

David Codling can go next.

David Codling: I actually have with me, in my bag, a book that I brought along for Anna Bubnova's kids. It is a small example of one of the things that we have done recently. Some children's book illustrators were present at one of the literature events that we organised, together with the Ukrainian Institute, at the Cheltenham literature festival just last month. They had produced a bilingual book in Ukrainian and English about reconstruction after the destruction of a community. It does not refer specifically to war, but it shows a community being rebuilt, and the kids are colouring and drawing. That is just one small example of the initiatives that can emerge from some of these partnerships.

The Deputy Convener: We are approaching the end of the session. I want to give each of our witnesses an opportunity to give us a headline, in one sentence, as to how we can support Ukrainian culture. I appreciate that that is a challenge, but it is a useful way of wrapping things up. I will start with Tetyana Filevska and go round the room, so you have been warned.

Tetyana Filevska: For me, it is just about keeping Ukraine high on the committee's agenda

and keeping Ukraine in mind when you plan something—just put it in your plan.

David Codling: It has been said before that this war is essentially about culture. Ukraine is suffering an onslaught on its culture. There is something there, which is of wider significance for us all, about the importance and value of an independent cultural sector. That is important for Ukraine, in the UK and across Europe. At this critical moment that we face, the independence of cultural sectors everywhere is where the strength of our free societies is nurtured.

George Findlater: To pick up on David Codling's big objectives, we need a more structured and focused dialogue in areas in which we can support Ukrainian colleagues.

Professor Sharkey: My headline is that culture matters, and the arts might save the world.

Anna Bubnova: I ask each committee member to go back home and find a Ukrainian film and watch it, or something like that—whatever you like to do. If you like history, Serhii Plokyh has produced a really well-written history of Ukraine that has been translated into English. On the Ukrainian Institute's website, there is a great introduction to Ukrainian culture that is done in a very succinct and visual way, which makes it easier to understand. That would be very helpful in enabling you to understand who we are—it would be a good start.

Daria Bondarenko: I ask you to draw attention to Ukrainian culture with small steps, day by day, and to ensure that people know about Ukraine and its culture. I believe that the cultural front is incredibly important on our path to victory.

The Deputy Convener: I thank you for those responses, and I thank you all—Tetyana Filevska, David Codling, George Findlater, Jeffrey Sharkey, Anna Bubnova and Daria Bondarenko—so much for coming along this morning.

As I said, we, as a committee, must now think about how best we can help. So many points have been raised and discussed this morning, and our clerks will—I hope—helpfully try to collate them all. We must think about what we can do as we go forward. It is important that we keep Ukraine on the agenda, as some of you have said; we will try to do that, and not forget. The on-going situation is horrific, and I ask you to take an assurance from the committee that we will continue to keep Ukraine high on our list of priorities.

For the record, I note that the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine, Neil Gray, gave a statement in the chamber on Tuesday on the status of the supersponsor scheme. It is important

to note what the Scottish Government is doing in that regard.

Meeting closed at 10:58.

The committee will return to its consideration of the wider question of Scotland's humanitarian response to the crisis in Ukraine in due course.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba