

The Earl of Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee
House of Lords

22 February 2021

Dear Lord Kinnoull,

The UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

The Senedd and its committees developed strong relationships with the European Union's institutions over the years of the UK's membership of the EU.

This was to ensure that the interests of Wales in devolved areas of policy were understood at an EU-level. This engagement also informed our scrutiny of the implementation of EU policies devolved to Wales.

Of course, there were many more benefits accrued from these relationships too, derived around this core engagement activity.

Whilst we engaged in a broad way, across the EU's institutions, national and regional representations, and other Brussels-based stakeholders, the main focus of our approach was the European Parliament.

Whilst the nature of our relationship with the EU changed fundamentally following the UK's decision to leave the EU, we continued to engage with the EU throughout the exit process. This included meetings with the three principal institutional leads in the European Council, European Commission, and the European Parliament.

We considered the question of our future relationship with the EU on a number of occasions since 2016 and held informal discussions with senior MEPs about the prospect of a more formal relationship with the European Parliament.

The possibility or otherwise of a more formal relationship rested on the final terms of the future relationship between the UK and the EU.



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Having now considered the provision in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement for a Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (“the PPA”), we believe that there remains a possibility for Members of the Senedd to form part of the UK’s delegation. We recognise that this depends on the UK Parliament’s decision on how it wishes to formulate its delegation and the agreement it reaches with the European Parliament on how to structure the work of the PPA.

We seek this representation as part of the UK’s delegation because we believe the purposes for which the PPA has been established cannot be adequately fulfilled without representation from the devolved legislatures.

Significant areas of devolved policy are covered by the TCA. It is the devolved legislatures that are responsible for representing their nations’ interests in these areas of policy, and, through scrutiny, to assess that the TCA is properly implemented in their nations (insofar as it relates to policies for which they are responsible).

As you continue to develop the UK Parliament’s approach to the PPA, alongside your colleagues in the House of Commons, we ask that you consider our request for Members of the Senedd to be represented on the PPA as part of the UK Parliament’s delegation.

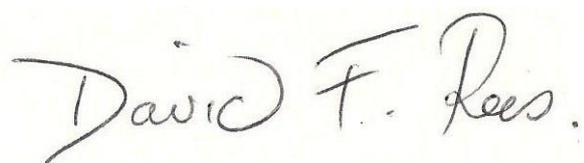
We note that the Scottish Parliament’s Culture, Tourism, European and External Affairs Committee has made a similar call for representation.

Should it be helpful, I would be very happy to meet with you to discuss this further. The Clerk to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee is also ready to engage with your clerks on this matter should that be of any assistance.

I am writing in similar terms to Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, as Chair of the Liaison Committee in the House of Commons. I have also copied this letter to Joan McAlpine MSP, Convener of the Culture, Tourism, European and External Affairs Committee in the Scottish Parliament, and Colin McGrath MLA, Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office in the Northern Ireland Assembly.



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "David F. Rees." with a period at the end. The letters are cursive and fluid.

David Rees MS

Chair of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

