



HOUSE OF LORDS

House of Lords Commission

1st Report of Session 2021–22

**EU-UK
Parliamentary
Partnership
Assembly**

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House of Lords Commission

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EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

FIRST REPORT OF SESSION 2021–22

Purpose of this report

1. At its meeting on 16 November 2021, the Commission considered the issue of the House of Lords' participation in a UK delegation to a new EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA). The agreement of the House, together with parallel agreements from the House of Commons and the European Parliament, will be necessary for the PPA to be confirmed. This report sets out the background to the development of the PPA in order to inform the House in taking the decision over the House's participation.
2. **We make this report for information.**

Background to the PPA

3. Article 11 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) states:

“Parliamentary cooperation

 - (1) The European Parliament and the Parliament of the United Kingdom may establish a Parliamentary Partnership Assembly consisting of Members of the European Parliament and of Members of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, as a forum to exchange views on the partnership.
 - (2) Upon its establishment, the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly:
 - (a) may request relevant information regarding the implementation of this Agreement and any supplementing agreement from the Partnership Council, which shall then supply that Assembly with the requested information;
 - (b) shall be informed of the decisions and recommendations of the Partnership Council; and
 - (c) may make recommendations to the Partnership Council.”
4. Since January 2021, informal discussions have been held between Member and official-level stakeholders in both Houses about the possible shape of this new Assembly. Discussions have also been held informally with the European Parliament. Following these informal discussions, the European Parliament confirmed its intention on 5 October 2021 to appoint a delegation of 35 members to the PPA. This matches the envisaged size of a UK delegation, respecting the party balances in both Houses, with 21 MPs and 14 Lords members (members of the party in Government will have a majority on the delegation, including six of the Lords members).
5. Based on the informal discussions between institutions so far, the full PPA is likely to meet twice yearly, once in London and once in Brussels or Strasbourg. It is anticipated that observers from the devolved legislatures

will also be invited to attend, subject to the agreement of the European Parliament. The PPA will be led by a Bureau, consisting of a Co-Chair and two Vice-Chairs from both delegations. The Bureau is likely to meet between plenary meetings.

6. Article 11 of the TCA gives the PPA the power to request relevant information from, and to make recommendations to, the Partnership Council. It is possible that the main value to the House of Lords will be from the less formal aspects of the PPA. Its existence will provide a structure for the exchange of views between MEPs and members of the two Houses on the many issues arising in the implementation and operation of the TCA. Lords members of the delegation will be able to bring to those exchanges their insights from the scrutiny work of the House and its committees, and to bring insights from PPA exchanges back to complement that core scrutiny work. Each meeting of the PPA is expected to result in a summary report which will be available to all members.

Next steps

7. At its meeting on 16 November, the Commission noted progress in establishing the PPA and supported the proposal that the House be asked to endorse its participation in the PPA as part of the UK delegation. Subject to the House taking that decision, the Commission noted that funding would be necessary, with provision of an additional £38,000 per year proposed to be included in the House's financial plans.
8. The next step is for motions to be brought forward in both Houses to seek their agreement to the participation of the UK delegation. Should both Houses provide their agreement, the members of the UK delegation are expected to be confirmed formally through a Written Ministerial Statement in the same way as for the UK delegations to other treaty-based parliamentary assemblies, such as OSCE, NATO and the Council of Europe.
9. Once the delegation is established, the Bureau will meet to discuss and provisionally agree Rules of Procedure which will be put to the Assembly for adoption as the first item of business at its first meeting. The timing of the first meeting is not yet fixed and will be a matter for the Bureau to decide, but on the assumption that the Commons, Lords and European Parliament agree the establishment of both delegations in plenary this autumn it is anticipated that the first meeting of the PPA could be held in early 2022.