

Wales' future relationship with Europe and the world

February 2019



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the National Assembly website: www.assembly.wales/SeneddEAAL

Copies of this document can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Tel: **0300 200 6565**

Email: **SeneddEAAL@assembly.wales**

Twitter: **@SeneddEAAL**

© **National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2019**

The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the National Assembly for Wales Commission and the title of the document specified.

Wales' future relationship with Europe and the world

February 2019



About the Committee

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016. its remit was agreed on 15 September 2016 and can be found at: www.assembly.wales/SeneddEAAAL

Committee Chair:



David Rees AM

Welsh Labour
Aberavon

Current Committee membership:



Michelle Brown AM

UKIP Wales
North Wales



Alun Davies AM

Welsh Labour
Blaenau Gwent



Huw Irranca-Davies AM

Welsh Labour
Ogmore



Delyth Jewell AM

Plaid Cymru
South Wales East



David Melding AM

Welsh Conservatives
South Wales Central



Mark Reckless AM

Welsh Conservative Group
South Wales East



Joyce Watson AM

Welsh Labour
Mid and West Wales

The following Members were also members of the Committee during this inquiry:



Suzy Davies AM

Welsh Conservative Party
South Wales West



Vikki Howells AM

Welsh Labour
Cynon Valley



Jane Hutt AM

Welsh Labour
Vale of Glamorgan



Mark Isherwood AM

Welsh Conservative Party
North Wales



Steffan Lewis AM

Plaid Cymru
South Wales East



Jenny Rathbone AM

Welsh Labour
Cardiff Central



Jack Sargeant AM

Welsh Labour
Alyn and Deeside

Contents

Chair's foreword	5
Recommendations	7
1. Introduction.....	12
1. 1. Background.....	12
1. 2. Wales in the World inquiry.....	12
1. 3. Evidence gathering.....	13
1. 4. The Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration.....	13
2. A new international relations strategy for Wales.....	18
2. 1. A strategic approach	18
2. 2. Our view	21
3. Wales' role in Europe after Brexit	26
3. 1. Relationship with the European Parliament.....	27
3. 2. Our view	28
3. 3. Committee of the Regions (CoR)	28
3. 4. Our view	30
3. 5. Informal networks	30
3. 6. Our view.....	31
3. 7. Welsh Government presence in Brussels	32
3. 8. Our view	33
3. 9. EU programmes	33
3. 10. Our view.....	35
3. 11. The Conference of Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE).....	35
3. 12. Our view	36
3. 13. Bilateral relationships and memoranda of understanding	36
3. 14. Our view	38
4. Wales and the Welsh overseas.....	42
4. 1. The Welsh diaspora.....	42

4. 2. Our view	46
4. 3. Wales' overseas offices	46
4. 4. Our view	47
4. 5. "Global Britain" and the relationship with London.....	47
4. 6. Our view	49
4. 7. Soft Power	50
4. 8. Our view	52

Chair's foreword

A new strategy for how Wales engages with the world needs to be bold and set out the scale of the Welsh Government's ambition. This, in essence, is what we are calling for in this report. Whilst there has been much to celebrate in terms of the relationships that Wales has built over previous decades, the approach all too often has been patchy and incoherent.

This report highlights that the Welsh Government's new Minister for International Relations has an important task ahead to drive forward a new international agenda based on maximising Wales' profile on the international stage. This work must now begin in earnest and progress at speed.

The need for a new strategy, is made all the more urgent by the United Kingdom's imminent departure from the European Union. As a result of Brexit, Wales will lose membership of, and access to, a range of institutions, organisations and networks that we are currently allowed access to by right. Our first report on Wales' future relationship with Europe set out, in clear terms, what our Committee would like to see from the UK-EU future relationship.

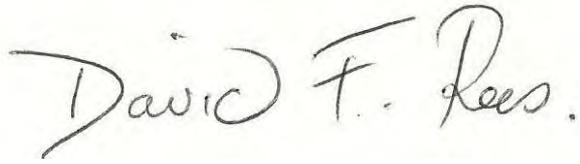
This second report has evolved into a broader piece of work which looks at the range of Wales' international engagement work. It contains recommendations on the way ahead in a number of areas and also highlights examples of best practice that Wales can learn from.

It also looked at the role of the Welsh diaspora. The disappointing truth is that Wales has been far less successful than other, comparable nations at engaging our citizens overseas. We want to see this change.

The role of some of Wales' distinct assets – our language, culture, and values – was also highlighted. These need to be used better to carve out a niche for projecting ourselves across the world.

The evidence in this report, builds on what we heard during our part one inquiry. Our sincerest thanks must go to all those who helped us by contributing to our work and in particular to the representatives of Norway, the Basque Country,

Québec and Switzerland for the warm welcome they gave us during our visit to their embassies and offices in London.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "David F. Rees." in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

David Rees AM

Chair, External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the new international engagement strategy for Wales sets out the scale of the Welsh Government's ambition in terms of international engagement after Brexit and that, in response to this report, the Welsh Government sets out the anticipated timescales for publication of this work..... Page 21

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Welsh Government establishes a formal mechanism – for example through the creation of a Cabinet sub-committee – to ensure effective coordination between the remit of the Minister for International Relations and the remits of other Ministers that may have an international dimension to their work..... Page 22

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the new international strategy has an accompanying suite of key performance indicators. These should be made available publicly so that progress can be measured against the objectives of the new strategy on an annual basis. Page 22

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government outlines in its response to this report, details of the work it is undertaking to support civil society through the transition to a post-Brexit future. This response should include an assessment of any additional funding required by priority sectors to achieve this.Page 31

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government explores with the EU the possibility of Wales' continued participation in European programmes that are undertaken in devolved areas. This work should be progressed urgently, with an update provided to the Assembly by autumn 2019..... Page 35

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government reviews the bilateral relationships it currently has in order to assess which of these relationships can be strengthened and deepened in the future, in line with Wales' strategic priorities..... Page 39

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government draws up an action plan for engaging with the Welsh diaspora. This action plan should include details of which countries will be prioritised and how the Government will seek to achieve this.Page 46

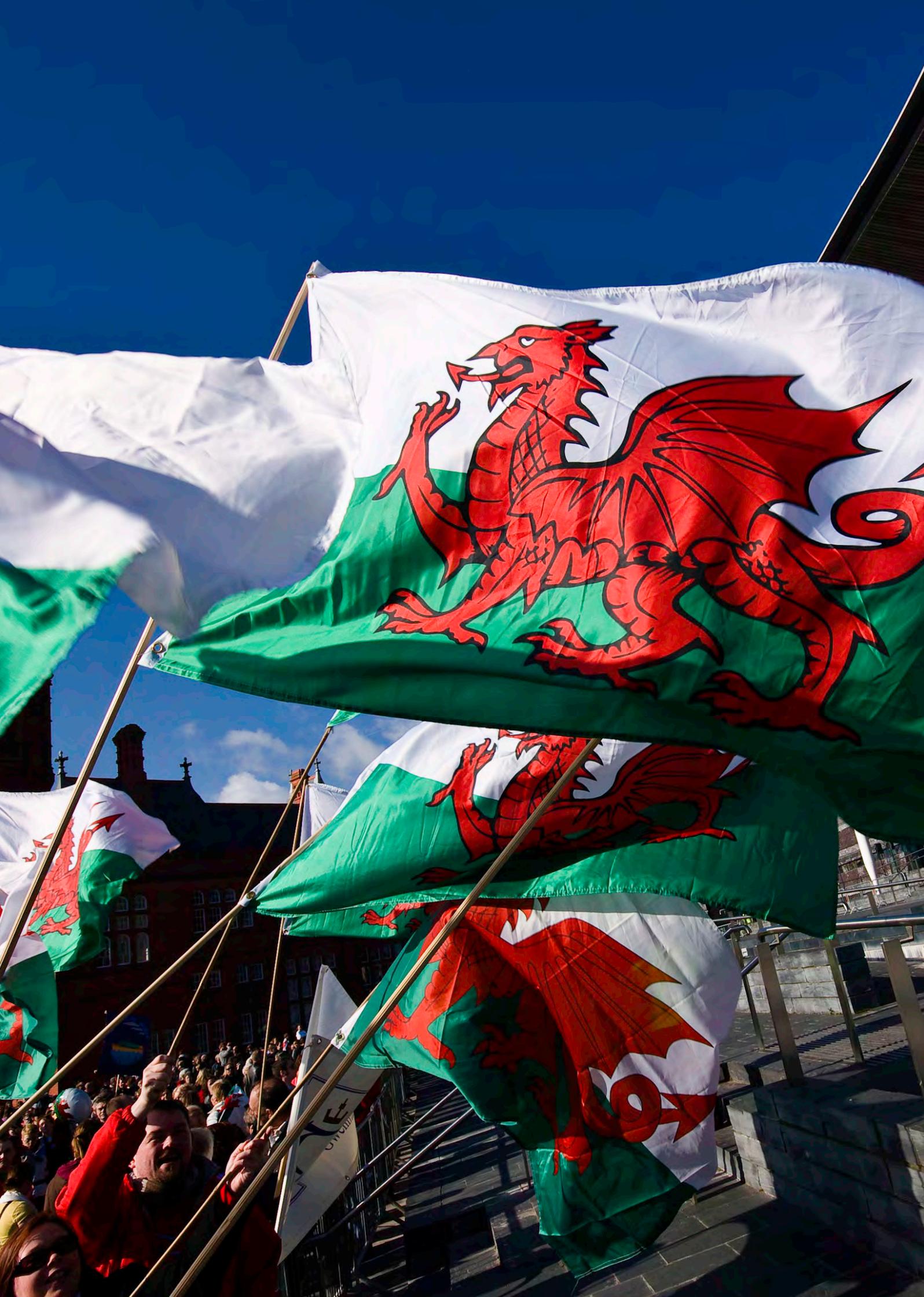
Recommendation 8. We recommend that the Welsh Government commissions an independent baseline analysis, for example by the Wales Audit Office, of the operation of the Government's overseas offices. Subsequently, these baselines should be used to measure progress made by the offices, in line with the forthcoming international strategy. Page 47

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government, sets out in its response to this report:

- the steps that it is taking to strengthen its presence and influence in London;
- an assessment of the sufficiency of resources in place to improve awareness and access to Whitehall departments to maximise its influence..... Page 49

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government urges the UK Government to publish the review of inter-governmental mechanisms commissioned by the Joint Ministerial Committee (Plenary) in March 2018, as soon as possible..... Page 50

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the new international engagement strategy identifies areas of soft power where Wales can demonstrate international leadership..... Page 52





Chapter 1:

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1. In March 2018 we published our part one report on Wales' future relationship with Europe, which focused on the key elements that should form part of a future relationship between Wales and the European Union. At the time of publication we made a commitment to explore some of the themes raised in our part one report in more detail. This report has subsequently evolved into a larger piece of work about Wales' place in the world, and how Wales could position itself on the international stage after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

2. In particular the focus of our work, as outlined in the terms of reference for the inquiry, was to:

- assess the Welsh Government's approach to external affairs and identify best practice examples from elsewhere in the world;
- examine how the Welsh Government should prioritise its future external relations with key European and/or international institutions, regions and networks, including the support it provides to trade associations and civil society;
- explore how third countries and sub-state nations and regions engage with the EU and EU institutions, and the grounds for cooperation, in order to identify potential models that could be adopted by Wales after Brexit; and
- explore the National Assembly for Wales' own relationships with European networks and institutions and make recommendations on how these can be taken forward after Brexit.

1.2. Wales in the World inquiry

3. In summer 2017, the Committee appointed two rapporteurs – Steffan Lewis AM and Jane Hutt AM – to undertake some evidence-gathering work on the Welsh Government's approach to external affairs. As part of this work they held discussions with academics and a rapporteur summary of their discussions was published in September 2018.

4. At our meeting on 24 September 2018, we agreed to take forward the findings of the rapporteur report by incorporating it into our work on Wales' future

relationship with Europe, and widening its scope to include relations with the rest of the world.

1.3. Evidence gathering

5. To inform our work, we took evidence from academics, European networks and civil society on the following dates:

- 9 July 2018;
- 16 July 2018;
- 1 October 2018.

6. In October, the Chair led a rapporteur delegation to London to speak to representatives of Norway, the Basque Country; Québec, and Switzerland. A summary of these discussions was published on 18 February 2019.

7. We also held an evidence session with Baroness Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language on 21 January 2019.

8. Further details of all evidence gathering activities is provided as an annex to this report.

1.4. The Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration

9. In November 2018, the UK and the EU agreed in principle the text of the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration (commonly referred to as “the Withdrawal Agreement”).

10. The Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration were subsequently rejected by a vote of the National Assembly for Wales on 4 December 2018, and by the UK Parliament on 15 January 2019.

11. We set out our own views on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration in a report published on 29 November 2018.¹

12. At the time of writing, considerable uncertainty remains regarding the eventual status of the Withdrawal Agreement will be, and it is understood that discussions between the UK and the EU are currently ongoing. At the same time, it is likely that at least some of the key aspects of it will form the basis for the UK’s

¹ National Assembly for Wales, External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee “[The Withdrawal Agreement and its implications for Wales](#)” - 29 November 2018

exit and where it is reasonable to do so, this report refers to relevant parts of the Withdrawal Agreement that offer an insight into the UK and EU's preferred end state for the future relationship.



...the special
...ity of
...to come
... but we still
... a little bit worry
... every thing is gonna be
... more patient. We had
... I was just about to give
... customer came!! She's a nice
... she loved our product. She bought 5
... us, she wanted to kiss her, haha ☺

Chapter 2:

A new international relations strategy for Wales

The United Kingdom's imminent departure from the European Union should provide Wales with new and urgent impetus to re-assess its role in the world and its overarching strategy for international relations and engagement. This chapter looks at how and why Wales needs a new strategy for engagement across the world.



2. A new international relations strategy for Wales

The United Kingdom's imminent departure from the European Union should provide Wales with new and urgent impetus to re-assess its role in the world and its overarching strategy for international relations and engagement. This chapter looks at how and why Wales needs a new strategy for engagement across the world.

2.1. A strategic approach

13. The Welsh Government's current international strategy – Wales and the World – was published in 2015, prior to the UK referendum decision to leave the European Union.

14. A number of witnesses to the inquiry suggested that Wales needed a new strategy, not only to take account of Brexit, but of changing priorities for Wales. Auriol Miller of the Institute for Welsh Affairs told us a new strategy needed to be clear in terms of its objectives and that needed “clear channels” for the public, private and third sectors as well as academic and civil society to engage with the strategy.²

15. Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the Learned Society of Wales also emphasised the need for a clearer strategy for Welsh international engagement. Sir Emyr said:

“What you need is to work out a strategy of, ‘What are we trying to achieve, with whom, by whom, what are the assets that we have, how are we going to—all of us—? And it's not just Government; it's your responsibility and this committee, it's business, it's the university sector—you name it. In Wales, we all need to be with a louder voice trying to exert influence on behalf of Welsh interests. In my view, that's not happening, hasn't been happening with anything like a loud enough voice, but it needs to do so, but on the basis of clear objectives worked out.”³

² Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 36](#) – 1 October 2018

³ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 28](#) – 1 October 2018

16. Sir Emyr went on to crystallise the situation in relation to the need for a strategy:

“We need a strategy, and, crucially, what do we want? What are our assets? How can we influence? Where is soft power? And how do we prioritise? That’s the challenge for the nation.”⁴

17. Dr Christopher Huggins of Suffolk University emphasised the need for a strategic approach. Dr Huggins stated that:

“The main message is don’t find somewhere else and go, ‘Oh, that looks nice, what they’re doing; we’ll tag onto it’; it’s establish what you want to get out of this bilateral or multilateral contact first, and then develop your partnerships and your network activity around what you want to get out of it. So, there’s always a temptation when you engage in this stuff to think, ‘Well, Wales should be at the international level; it should be at the European level, and we’ll just attach ourselves onto this network and this network and this network, because that way we’ll be visible.’ But if it’s going to get real benefits, then it’s got to meet what your underlying strategy is. So, you’ve got to have that strategic objective there first before you can go out and identify who you should be working with.”⁵

18. Dr Huggins went on to explain that the local authorities and subnational governments that are effective in pursuing international engagement have a clear idea about what they want.⁶ Dr Huggins said:

“Just responding to a call of, ‘Do you want to link up to us?’ isn’t going to [go] very well if you have nothing in common with the partner region—you don’t share policy objectives and so on. So, you want to base your activities on what, fundamentally, you want to get out of it, otherwise you’re tied to a partnership or you’re investing resource in a partnership that isn’t going to deliver what you want out of it.”⁷

19. During our visit to London, to speak to representatives of Norway, the Basque Country, Québec, and Switzerland, a key message from the discussions was the need for a strategic approach to international relations and engagement. All of the representatives highlighted the strategic framework within which they

⁴ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 19](#) – 1 October 2018

⁵ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 18](#) – 16 July 2018

⁶ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 38](#) – 16 July 2018

⁷ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 40](#) – 16 July 2018

approach their international work, which are tailored to their own constitutional circumstances.⁸

20. Dr Elin Royles of Aberystwyth University suggested that the Welsh Government's 2015 international strategy lacked meaningful outputs and failed to provide strategic direction for its various work strands.⁹

21. In her paper, the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language (the Minister) stated that the Government will be working with partners over the coming months to develop a new international strategy.¹⁰

22. During oral evidence, the Minister told us that it was her intention to develop a new "international vision for Wales". The Minister said:

"This is a new post; it's an opportunity for us to provide a new view on how we look at the relationship, not just from my department, but across the whole Government, and in partnership with other organisations across Wales. I do think that that's important.

What I didn't want to do at the beginning was to set out what that ambition looks like, because I'm very keen that everybody helps to develop what that should look like. Of course I have my own ideas regarding how I'd like to see that developing. I am very keen to ensure that we work across the various departments with partnerships across Wales. I'm very keen to raise the profile of Wales globally, and, of course, one of the main things I want to do is to ensure that our attitude and our approach to the international relationship looks at how we can increase the prosperity of our country."¹¹

23. The Minister set out her personal priorities to the Committee, but also highlighted that she did not wish to "lock down" discussions around the Government's strategic approach. She stated that her vision would include a value-based foundation of Wales based on the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and on being a Fair Work Nation.¹²

⁸ [Rapporteur report](#)

⁹ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

¹⁰ [Written evidence, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language](#)

¹¹ [Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 8 and 9](#) – 21 January 2019

¹² [Record of Proceedings, paragraph 12](#) – 21 January 2019

24. The Minister also recognised the need to work across government departments and ministerial portfolios. The Minister said:

“I think we do need clarity in terms of who is responsible for what. We'll all have to be working hand in glove with one another on anything relating to international relations, but Wylfa is quite a good example, because energy is in the portfolio of Lesley Griffiths, economic development and the north Wales economy is in the hands of Ken Skates, and I'm responsible for international relations. We need to be clear about who is leading on that. Now, Ken Skates is leading on that, but we need to make sure that Ken is therefore instructing me to make those international relationships with, for example, the Japanese ambassador if he deems that to be necessary. So, it's making sure that we are clear about who is leading on those kinds of projects. So, that's an example where I think we—. That's a very good example where we need to be working cross departmentally but having a lead Minister.”¹³

2. 2. Our view

If a new international strategy is to succeed, the Welsh Government will need to successfully engage Welsh business, universities and civil society in both the design and implementation of the new strategy. We heard some initial ideas from the Minister about her priorities, which gave us an indication of her approach to the role. However, there is a considerable amount of work still to be done to develop the overarching vision needed to meet the challenges and opportunities posed by Brexit in order to maximise Welsh standing and influence across the world.

We welcome the appointment of a cabinet-level Minister with specific responsibility for international relations within the Welsh Government. We believe that this is an area which the Welsh Government will need to pay greater attention to over the coming years. In terms of the Minister's role, it is clear to us that many aspects of international relations cut across other ministerial portfolios, particularly the economy, environment, and education portfolios. We are clear that this will require a high degree of coordination across government.

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the new international engagement strategy for Wales sets out the scale of the Welsh Government's ambition in terms of international engagement after Brexit and that, in response to this

¹³ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 33](#) – 21 January 2019

report, the Welsh Government sets out the anticipated timescales for publication of this work.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Welsh Government establishes a formal mechanism – for example through the creation of a Cabinet sub-committee – to ensure effective coordination between the remit of the Minister for International Relations and the remits of other Ministers that may have an international dimension to their work.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the new international strategy has an accompanying suite of key performance indicators. These should be made available publicly so that progress can be measured against the objectives of the new strategy on an annual basis.





Chapter 3:

Wales' role in Europe after Brexit

This chapter outlines some of the considerations that will need to be made in terms of Wales' future relations with Europe, and European Union institutions and networks after Brexit.

3. Wales' role in Europe after Brexit

This chapter outlines some of the considerations that will need to be made in terms of Wales' future relations with Europe, and European Union institutions and networks after Brexit.

25. A key theme from our part one inquiry was the need to ensure that Wales and the Welsh Government find new ways of sustaining Wales' relationship with European institutions and networks after Brexit.

26. A number of witnesses noted that Wales' access and influence in Europe will decline as a result of Brexit.¹⁴

27. Sir Albert Bore, head of the UK delegation to the Committee of the Regions explained that EU institutions may be reluctant to have direct, formal relationship with a sub-state actor such as Wales after Brexit. Sir Albert said:

“[...]the Council of Ministers and therefore the Commission, are always reluctant to have an EU/sub-regional member-state-type arrangement. It's objected to, in some respects, with some of the Spanish regions, for example, and the fear amongst the former Spanish Government that that would simply encourage the separatist agenda. So, there has been a marked reluctance within the EU to set things up that are bilateral, if you like, between the EU and a region of a Member state. The opposite way around, you will find examples of where, for example, Quebec or some of the American states have got their own EU office, and therefore you've got it the other way around, but of course the EU can't prevent that—not from the point of view of EU looking outwards of the EU. I think there's that reluctance to engage with a specific region of a state, because of its potential impact—if it was with the UK or a region of the UK—because of its potential impact upon the EU, in terms of a region of a member state within the EU. So, I think there are issues there. There's no-one saying it couldn't happen, but I think, from what has happened in the past, I personally believe there might be a reluctance to move in that direction.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Record of Proceedings, [paragraphs 20, 25](#) – 16 July 2018

¹⁵ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 26](#) – 9 July 2018

28. Dr Christopher Huggins outlined difficulties relating to Wales' continued involvement in more formalised European structures. Dr Huggins said:

“The problem with the flexibility angle on that is these are organisations that operate under the EU treaties, and so their role and membership is very clearly defined in those. And if you want to change how those organisations operate, or under what rules they operate, you've normally got to change the EU treaties, which is very difficult to do.”¹⁶

29. Dr Huggins went on to suggest that engaging with less formalised networks (such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions) might be an easier route for influence after Brexit. Dr Huggins also emphasised the importance of common interests and objectives:

“You know, if you want to pursue common interests, if you want to operate on the European level, then having partners in Europe who share common interests, share common policy objectives, if you like, helps to build a critical mass of trying to get your voice out there.”¹⁷

3. 1. Relationship with the European Parliament

30. Since our inception we have held routine dialogue with counterparts in Brussels, in particular the European Parliament, as the Brexit process unfolds. These have included informal discussions with senior MEPs with regards to establishing mechanisms for the continuation of relations between the Assembly and the European Parliament after Brexit.

31. In the past engagement with the European Parliament has been a central tenet of the Assembly's approach to engaging with European affairs, particularly following the Lisbon Treaty.¹⁸

32. Sir Albert Bore highlighted the fact that after 29 March 2019 the UK will no longer have a “seat at the table” including at the European Parliament. However, he added that “processes within the EU-27 will continue and will, undoubtedly, in some cases, have an impact upon the UK, even if the UK is, in due course, to leave after a transition period”.¹⁹

¹⁶ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 88](#) – 16 July 2018

¹⁷ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 12](#) – 16 July 2018

¹⁸ Examples include: Environment and Sustainability Committee, [“Approach to European Affairs.”](#)

¹⁹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 65](#) – 9 July 2018

33. The Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU does not contain provisions for formal interparliamentary engagement (during the transition period) beyond a limited continuation of the supply of information from the European Commission to the UK Parliament.²⁰

34. The Political Declaration setting out the future framework for the future relationship between the UK and the EU should include a “dialogue between Parties” including “at a parliamentary level”.²¹ Furthermore, the Declaration notes that “the overarching institutional framework could take the form of an Association Agreement”.

3. 2. Our view

We recognise the important and beneficial role interparliamentary relations between the Assembly and the European Parliament have played in the past. We agree that it is vitally important that the Assembly retains a means of engaging with the European Parliament after Brexit. We note that the Political Declaration leaves open opportunities for closer interparliamentary ties after Brexit. We would expect a formal role for the devolved legislatures – either as a part of the UK delegation, or as part of a configuration within an overarching EU-UK structure – in any future interparliamentary arrangements. We will keep this situation under review and continue to make the case for Wales' interests as the process unfolds.

3. 3. Committee of the Regions (CoR)

35. In our part one report we acknowledged the important and beneficial role that Wales' membership of the Committee of the Regions has played in the past.²²

36. Dr Christopher Huggins described the way in which the CoR is just one route for Wales to exert influence in Europe. He told us:

“The Committee of the Regions as a consultative body is always going to have that soft power role. It doesn't have formal decision-making powers. One of the criticisms that it often gets is it is just a consultative body. The other institutions don't have to listen to what it says. All of

²⁰ European Commission, “[Draft Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union](#)” – 14 November 2018

²¹ European Commission, “[Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom](#)” – 22 November 2018

²² External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, “[Wales's future relationship with Europe: part one](#)” – March 2017

these areas, I guess, are about how you maximise the various routes where you want to try and influence what's going on, and rather than putting your eggs in one basket, like the Committee of the Regions, you might pursue a range of different networks as well, related to whatever you want to get out of this activity.”²³

37. The UK's membership of all European Union institutions, including the CoR, will cease on 29 March 2019.

38. In his evidence, Sir Albert Bore told us that the UK Delegation to the Committee of the Regions had proposed a two-stage approach to the development of a future relationship between the UK and the CoR. In the short term the proposal is for the creation of a joint commission between the UK and the CoR to cover the period of transition between “Brexit Day” and the establishment of more permanent arrangements.²⁴

39. In the longer term, Sir Albert told us that proposals were being looked at for the creation of a macro-economic region to cover north-west Europe. Sir Albert said:

“We were then looking at a period beyond any transition period where we had a more lasting arrangement, which picked up on where the European Commission have been moving things, and that is in terms of macro-economic regions. There are a number of macro-economic regions already established and, therefore, there is an opportunity with EU funding sitting in behind macro-economic regions to look at economic issues across the regions perhaps of a number of member states. We wondered whether or not, post Brexit, that we might look at a north-west Europe macro-economic region, which then engaged the UK, not just with the north-west of Europe, but also potentially with the likes of Norway and Iceland. That would be phase 2, but phase 2 would require the agreement of member states. We would have to go down that route. It's going to take rather longer to set up a macro-economic region if that is to be, if you like, the nature of phase 2.”²⁵

²³ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 90](#) – 16 July 2018

²⁴ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 33](#) – 9 July 2018

²⁵ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 6](#) – 9 July 2018

40. In January 2019, Mick Antoniw AM and Bethan Sayed AM, in their roles as the Assembly's representatives at the CoR, published a report outlining options for Wales' future relationship with the CoR.²⁶ They recommended that:

- the National Assembly for Wales recognise the importance of maintaining an ongoing relationship with EU institutions and networks, including the CoR, post Brexit;
- the Welsh Government should seek direct meetings with the CoR and other relevant EU bodies to discuss how this might be achieved; and
- the Welsh Government should raise the issue of ongoing associate representation on the CoR with the UK Government.

3. 4. Our view

We have previously noted the “important and beneficial role” that Wales' membership of the CoR has played.

We welcome the proposal for a joint commission between the UK and the CoR after Brexit and hope that Wales will play a role in this.

We note that the Assembly will have an opportunity to give its collective view on the recommendations made by Mick Antoniw AM and Bethan Sayed AM at a Plenary meeting in March 2019.

3. 5. Informal networks

41. During our first phase of work, we heard about the importance of both formal and informal networks and the valuable role they play in terms of policy learning and collaboration.²⁷

42. Professor Michael Keating, University of Aberdeen, suggested that businesses and civil society organisations would play an important role in maintaining access to European networks after Brexit.²⁸

²⁶ Mick Antoniw AM and Bethan Sayed AM, “[Wales Future Relationship with the Committee of the Regions](#)”, – January 2019

²⁷ External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, “[Wales' future relationship with Europe](#)” – March 2018

²⁸ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

43. The Vanguard Initiative and the Atlantic Arc Commission were highlighted by witnesses as potentially important after Brexit.²⁹

44. Dr Rachel Minto told us about the importance of looking beyond solely the international relationships made by government and the Assembly. Dr Minto said:

“It’s a huge concern to those within civil society, and for those working at a devolved level there’s a particular significance to those European networks. There’s a concern about the nature of their relationship with those European networks post Brexit, and I think this is something that’s really important that we emphasise—it’s not only the Government and the Assembly, but it’s really important for non-state actors as well.”³⁰

45. Auriol Miller suggested that using informal networks were an important route for Wales to get its voice heard in Europe but added that civil society needed to prioritise its own networks.³¹

46. During our visit to London, Norway highlighted the need to build networks as a critical means of influencing the EU policy-making process as a non-member state.³²

3. 6. Our view

In both the first and second parts of our work in this area we heard of the important role that European networks play in the exchange of ideas and policy collaboration. We believe that this has been of valuable benefit to Wales, however, we heard concerns that civil society may need help transitioning from current to the future relationship arrangements as a consequence of Brexit.

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government outlines in its response to this report, details of the work it is undertaking to support civil society through the transition to a post-Brexit future. This response should include an assessment of any additional funding required by priority sectors to achieve this.

²⁹ [Rapporteur report](#); Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 51](#) – 1 October 2018

³⁰ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 55](#) – 16 July 2018

³¹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraphs 109 – 110](#) – 1 October 2018

³² [Rapporteur report](#)

3. 7. Welsh Government presence in Brussels

47. In her evidence, Professor Jo Hunt noted that outside the EU, the competitive international environment is not as finely tuned, or as accommodating, to the needs and concerns of sub-states. As a consequence, Wales will have to work harder to have influence in Brussels and elsewhere.³³

48. Dr Christopher Huggins highlighted the importance of maintaining a presence in Brussels. He told us:

“Brussels is like the hub, if you like, of many of these links and activities, so you get a lot of bang for your buck if you go to Brussels, because there’s a high concentration of people there that you can link up with and network with. So, you need the resource to do that, but you also need investment in people with skills. So, if you want to do EU engagement, you need people who know how the EU functions, not only in terms of its formal legislative procedures, but also in terms of how to play the Brussels game of informally influencing policies, for example, and people who are sensitive to what’s going on around them. So, people with language skills help, for example, because it allows you to build those one-to-one relationships that are often quite crucial to building these wider partnerships.”³⁴

49. All those we met in London – representatives of Norway, the Basque Country, Québec, and Switzerland retain a permanent presence in Brussels.³⁵

50. Des Clifford, Director General, Office of the First Minister and Brexit in the Welsh Government highlighted the need for a continued presence in Brussels after Brexit. Mr Clifford said:

“There is another very important aspect to all of this: if we’re outside of the European Union, which could happen quite quickly, we will lose access to all of that institutional information that is now ours as of right. We will literally have to go knocking on the doors of our friends in Brussels to tell us what’s happening inside the European Union. So, those informal sources of information, which have always been useful to us—that informal opportunity to network—actually, the premium on that will become very much greater as a result of being outside

³³ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

³⁴ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 68](#) – 16 July 2018

³⁵ [Rapporteur report](#)

because we will have to find new ways of working and new ways of accessing the information and new ways of trying to bring influence to bear.”³⁶

51. The Minister also stated that now was the time to “reinforce” relationships in Brussels and described any moves to pull out as a result of Brexit as a “big mistake”.³⁷

3. 8. Our view

We agree that the Welsh Government should retain its presence in Brussels and that the Government should ensure that its presence there is resourced to ensure maximum benefit is gained for Wales.

3. 9. EU programmes

52. In our part one report we identified a number of European programmes and agencies that Wales should seek continuing involvement in after Brexit. They included the European Medicines Agency, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 (and any successor programmes). A number of witnesses suggested that Wales would need to think and act creatively if such involvement is to be secured after Brexit.³⁸

53. Auriol Miller told us that members of the Institute for Welsh Affairs prioritised relationships within the fields of further and higher education, Erasmus+, Creative Europe and research collaboration in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.³⁹

54. Basque Trade and Investments told us that they had benefitted greatly, in terms of competitiveness, from EU research and development networks. In terms of the networks that the Basque Country considered Wales should prioritise after Brexit, they suggested the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.⁴⁰

55. In common with the previous section on involvement in EU institutions, it was noted that Wales' involvement has historically been predicated on the UK's involvement and/or membership (of these organisations). Sir Emyr Jones Parry, however, suggested that all options should be explored:

³⁶ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 55](#) – 21 January 2019

³⁷ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 97](#) – 21 January 2019

³⁸ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#); Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 63](#) – 1 October 2018;

³⁹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 67](#) – 1 October 2018

⁴⁰ [Rapporteur report](#)

“Let me throw out one suggestion, which is, in the end, depending on what Britain ends up with as a future relationship with the EU, it doesn't exclude, in my view, having a Wales relationship with bits of the EU. I'll elaborate that with an example. I don't know how research and development is going to work because it's much more complicated than, at first sight, it appears. If those links are to continue, great, but they may not. I don't see why Wales couldn't have its own participation in Horizon Europe, post 2020. You'll say Wales is not a nation state in an international sense. No, but legally it's my view that if the British Government didn't object and if the European Commission were prepared to recommend, you could have a Wales agreement with parts of the EU. I think that's well worth looking at to see if somehow we can insinuate ourselves into processes that are taking place.”⁴¹

56. Sir Emyr went on to state that it was unlikely that the EU would offer terms that are as advantageous to Wales as are currently the case. He said:

“The proposal is that anybody who's not a member of the EU should not be allowed to get out more than they put in, and that's a big disincentive, and no share in decision making either for the strategy or for individual projects—and you're now getting down to a point where it's becoming very unattractive. So, I'm not arguing necessarily for it, what I'm saying is that it may be worth exploring possibilities.”⁴²

57. During her evidence, the Minister identified Erasmus+ and collaboration in terms of science research as potential areas for continued involvement after Brexit. The Minister said:

“I think we've been clear that we would like to see those relationships continue. So, Erasmus+ is a particular area that we'd like to focus on. If you think about the science programme, in Britain we do really, really, well from this, and part of the problem about coming out of the EU would be that, actually, whereas we get quite a bonanza in relation to what we put in at the moment, we'd probably be in a relationship that looks much more like Israel, for example, where you can only get out what you put in, and you don't have the opportunity to shape the programme in the first place. So, there are undoubtedly lots of disadvantages of not being part of the EU in relation to some of those

⁴¹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 52](#) – 1 October 2018

⁴² Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 58](#) – 1 October 2018

programmes, and yet I think there are enough advantages for us to continue with supporting those kinds of things.”⁴³

58. The Political Declaration, in setting out the future framework for the future relationship between the UK and the EU, states that both parties will seek to establish “terms and conditions for the United Kingdom’s participation in Union programmes” in areas which include “science and innovation, youth, culture and education”.⁴⁴ The Declaration adds that any such arrangements “should include a fair and appropriate financial contribution”.⁴⁵

3. 10. Our view

Historically, Wales has enjoyed the benefits of European programmes through the UK’s status as a Member State. This should not preclude Wales looking for new partnerships in a creative way in the future. We recognise the Welsh Government’s position that it will continue to advocate participation in particular EU programmes through the UK. However, in the event that the UK Government does not secure this then the Welsh Government should explore securing participation in its own right, in areas that are clearly devolved and where it is considered that there are clear benefits for Wales.

Should specific proposals be forthcoming it would be for the Welsh Government and prospective participating organisations to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of any proposals for Welsh participation in collaborative European programmes after Brexit.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government explores with the EU the possibility of Wales’ continued participation in European programmes that are undertaken in devolved areas. This work should be progressed urgently, with an update provided to the Assembly by autumn 2019.

3. 11. The Conference of Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

59. CALRE is the principal network with which the National Assembly for Wales enjoys a relationship. In January 2019, the Llywydd, Elin Jones AM, noted that

⁴³ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 57](#) – 21 January 2019

⁴⁴ European Commission, [“Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom.”](#) – 22 November 2018

⁴⁵ Ibid.

CALRE members are “in principle content, and indeed enthusiastic, to facilitate our continued participation in its work post-Brexit”.⁴⁶

60. In her letter, the Llywydd provided an excerpt from the CALRE presidency which stated that:

“The members of CALRE welcome the stay of the United Kingdom regions after the Brexit as members of full right and through an exception to the rule that the members of CALRE should be from Member-States of the European Union, although they understand that the matter should be approached only after the exit of the United Kingdom and taking into account the content of its agreement, in the way that only then will be possible to have a clear and extensive view of the future relation, in general, of the United Kingdom with the EU and, particularly, in the scope of the regional and territorial cooperation.”⁴⁷

61. Looking more broadly at the Assembly’s international engagement activities, the Llywydd stated that:

“I do not expect our engagement with the other international networks in which we participate, namely the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA), to be directly affected by Brexit; though they may take on an increased significance for our Members, in light of any restrictions which impede our participation in engagement dependent on EU membership.”⁴⁸

3. 12. Our view

We welcome the fact that the Assembly may be able to continue to be a member of CALRE after Brexit and we support the Llywydd’s efforts in that regard.

We also note the importance placed on the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement in the proposed Withdrawal Agreement. As such we would also encourage continued, and if possible, strengthened engagement with those institutions, including the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly.

3. 13. Bilateral relationships and memoranda of understanding

⁴⁶ Correspondence from the Llywydd to the Chair regarding Wales’ future relationship with the EU - 8 January 2019

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

62. During the inquiry we heard of a number of bilateral relationships that Wales enjoys including those with Brittany, Flanders, the Basque Country, Galicia, and Noord Holland. The Welsh Government has signed Memoranda of Understanding with Brittany, the Basque Country and Galicia. It has also signed a Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity with Noord Holland.⁴⁹

63. The Basque Country and Wales have a Memorandum of Understanding based on areas of common interest, which include taxation, culture, language, economy and trade, vocational training and Erasmus+. During our meeting with Basque Trade and Investment, it was noted that Wales and the Basque Country have a common interest in the protection and promotion of minority languages. Furthermore, it was argued that, in light of Brexit, the legal status of these relationships may change but that the fact of, and nature of, these relationships will not.⁵⁰

64. The Basque Government's update of the 2020 internationalisation framework strategy sets out clearly its rationale for prioritising particular bilateral relationships. It states that both the UK and Wales are priority areas for attention between 2018 and 2020. It states that the UK is in the top five countries for attention, while Wales is in the top five regions. The Basque Government's strategy states that:

“The EU as a supra-state body and Europe as a whole are the main priority area. On a specific, bilateral level the UK, Germany and France are long-term partners of the Basque Country, and have close links to it in fields as wide-ranging as public institutions, the economy (they are its main trading partners), science, culture and tourism...

Also in a specific context within Europe, the current and potential future members of the Basque Network of Strategic Partnerships are priority objectives, for their geographical proximity and for the historic, multi-sectoral links maintained with them as in the case of Aquitaine, or because they are comparable territories in terms of their strong identities, as in the case of Flanders, Wales, Scotland, Bavaria and Québec.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Written evidence, [Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language](#)

⁵⁰ [Rapporteur report](#)

⁵¹ [Basque Government, Update of the 2020 internationalisation framework strategy](#)

65. The previous Québec Government published its international policy in 2017 – Québec: On the world stage: Involved, engaged, thriving.⁵² This notes that France is Québec's principal international partner in the area of multisectoral cooperation. The government states that it is Québec's natural ally, particularly in multilateral forums, but also in the ongoing effort to develop an internationally vibrant economic Francophonie.

66. The Québec Government's approach to international relations states that it will continue to lean on its historical first-tier circle of partners in North America, Western Europe and the international Francophonie.

67. Québec also noted a number of ways in which it collaborates with Wales in areas such as aerospace and life sciences. Examples include the collaboration agreement signed between Aéro Montreal and Aerospace Wales in 2018. It was suggested there is scope for further collaboration between Wales and Québec in areas such as science, innovation and culture in the future.⁵³

68. Dr Christopher Huggins told us that since the 1990s there has been a shift towards more multilateral networking. He went on to tell us that:

“Whether there should be more of an emphasis on bilateral networking again is more of a political decision as to whether building those relationships with individual regions is more important than having the wider EU presence within these networks.”⁵⁴

69. During oral evidence, the Minister told us that she would like to see these bilateral relationships continue in the future but that more work might be needed in terms of the prioritisation of these relationships.⁵⁵

3. 14. Our view

We note that, in addition to the multilateral relationships and networks highlighted above, bilateral relationships will also play a part in Wales' future external engagement work. Furthermore, it is potentially the case that the UK's withdrawal from the EU will mean Wales has fewer opportunities to take part formally in multilateral networks.

⁵² Québec Government, [Québec: On the world stage: Involved, engaged, thriving](#)

⁵³ [Rapporteur report](#)

⁵⁴ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 30](#) – 16 July 2018

⁵⁵ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 53](#) – 21 January 2019

We note that most countries and sub-state actors that operate successfully on the international stage have clearly prioritised bilateral relationships based on common interests. The strategic approaches of the Basque Country and Québec set out the rationale for prioritising such relationships, and could be an example for the Welsh Government to learn from.

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government reviews the bilateral relationships it currently has in order to assess which of these relationships can be strengthened and deepened in the future, in line with Wales' strategic priorities.



BBC Wales present in the sesquicentennial of the Welsh colony in Chubut, Patagonia, Argentina



Chapter 4:

Wales and the Welsh overseas

This final chapter looks at issues such as how to engage the Welsh diaspora, the role of the Welsh Government's overseas offices and the concept of 'Soft Power'.

4. Wales and the Welsh overseas

This final chapter looks at issues such as how to engage the Welsh diaspora, the role of the Welsh Government's overseas offices and the concept of "Soft Power".

4.1. The Welsh diaspora

70. A number of witnesses suggested that more use could be made of the Welsh diaspora – people of Welsh descent and/or Welsh nationals who have moved to live in another country. Although no definitive figures exist of the number of Welsh people living abroad, a 2006 study, which analysed the geography of Welsh surnames, suggested that as many as 11 million people have Welsh ancestry in the United States alone.⁵⁶

71. Professor Jo Hunt, as part of our work on [Wales in the World](#), suggested that the Welsh Government should better utilise the Welsh diaspora.⁵⁷ Both the Republic of Ireland and Scotland were highlighted as examples where Governments are actively seeking to utilise the power of the diaspora and have a government minister responsible for developing international diaspora movements.⁵⁸

72. Walter May, founder of GlobalWelsh, told us about his ambitions for diaspora engagement. Mr May said:

"We know that our most valuable export is not goods or services, it's talent; we haemorrhage talent every year. Most people who leave Wales don't come back. They seek opportunities and their Welsh success is much greater than the success we have within the borders of Wales. So, we are very much focused on the individual. We are indifferent as to where they're located. So, we are reaching out to the 3 million friends of Wales. Many of them still have an emotional attachment to this country and a propensity to want to help. So, it's London, yes; it could be

⁵⁶ Webber, Richard "The Welsh diaspora: Analysis of the geography of Welsh names" 2006 – research commissioned by the National Assembly for Wales

⁵⁷ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

anywhere in the world. So, we want to tap into those people's propensity to want to contribute back to Wales."⁵⁹

73. Walter May cited New Zealand's efforts in terms of diaspora engagement as one of the best in the world. Mr May highlighted the proactive role that the New Zealand Government takes in engaging New Zealanders from overseas including through an annual event hosted by their Prime Minister.⁶⁰

74. Auriol Miller told us that the diaspora can be "crucially important in terms of mobilising resources and attention internationally" adding that "there is an expressed interest in engaging much more, and an interest in knowing the channels for doing that in the most appropriate way".⁶¹

75. Walter May also highlighted the need to measure impact in terms of diaspora engagement. Mr May said:

"The other thing: diaspora engagement—how do you measure the impact? Well, in Scotland, they've got GlobalScot. It's been going for about 15, 20 years. They focus very much on international trade, and they had an impact study done and they measured an increase in GVA, a significant increase in GVA, as a result of GlobalScot. So, this isn't just, 'This is a fun thing to do'. It does have real economic benefits."⁶²

76. During oral evidence, the Minister conceded that the Welsh Government "could do better" in terms of diaspora engagement.⁶³ The Minister said:

"I think there are different organisations playing in this area, and we need to make sure that we co-ordinate the work. We need a discussion as to whether we will be looking to support GlobalWelsh, which is the kind of private sector diaspora model, or whether we want to look at the way they do it in Scotland, which is basically Government-run. So, that's something I'd like to consider in the context of a new strategy: what's the best way to do that? But, again, the key thing for me is to find the movers and shakers who make things happen."⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 39](#) – 1 October 2018

⁶⁰ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 100](#) – 1 October 2018

⁶¹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 137](#) – 1 October 2018

⁶² Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 101](#) – 1 October 2018

⁶³ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 83](#) – 21 January 2018

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Case study – New Zealand



Kea (www.keanewzealand.com) was founded in 2002 as an independent, not-for-profit initiative, and aims to help New Zealanders connect with and leverage knowledge and contacts from New Zealanders located around the world. It is now mainly funded by the New Zealand Government. Kea has a global community of over 500,000 expats and friends of New Zealand. Its offer includes the Kea Connect and World Class New Zealand initiatives, as well as hosting global events.

Kea Connect allows businesses in New Zealand to connect to its global network of industry experts from the New Zealand diaspora to assist them to break into new markets. World Class New Zealand is the global

network Kea uses to achieve this, and it works to increase New Zealand's global standing. There are over 375 World Class New Zealanders who form this network, and they can provide introductions, insights on overseas markets, market entry advice, mentoring, and speakers for events. It also hosts the annual World Class New Zealand awards, which recognise leading New Zealanders whose achievements promote New Zealand internationally, and are hosted by its Prime Minister.

Case study – Scotland



Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Government's economic development agency, funds and supports the main Scottish diaspora initiative, GlobalScot. The GlobalScot initiative was established in 2001 by Scottish Enterprise. It is a worldwide network of business leaders who provide business expertise to assist Scottish entrepreneurs. The advice businesses can access includes advice on preparing for new market entry, finding customers, and identifying potential partners and suppliers. Over 600 GlobalScots deliver this support, and over 1,000 connections are made between companies and GlobalScots each year.

GlobalScot also created the Saltire Foundation, to help develop Scotland's next generation of business leaders. In 2014, this merged with the Entrepreneurial Exchange to form Entrepreneurial Scotland. The Saltire Foundation is now the charitable arm of Entrepreneurial Scotland, which raises funds to develop the next generation of Scottish entrepreneurial leaders. It supports high potential leaders at their early or mid-career stages through its Saltire Scholars programme which matches undergraduates with leading global enterprises, and through running its Saltire Fellowship executive leadership development programme.

4. 2. Our view

We are clear that better engagement with the Welsh diaspora could be the key to unlocking some of Wales' ambitions for international relations after Brexit. There has been some work done on the best approach to develop this, and the Welsh Government will need to come to a decision on whether a private sector-led approach or a government approach will best allow its goals to be achieved.

We also believe that looking at examples of best practice from around the world could help to inform a new action plan for international diaspora engagement and we encourage the Welsh Government to look at these examples, including New Zealand as well as those closer to home such as Scotland and Ireland.

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government draws up an action plan for engaging with the Welsh diaspora. This action plan should include details of which countries will be prioritised and how the Government will seek to achieve this.

4. 3. Wales' overseas offices

77. During our Wales in the World work, the Welsh Government's network of international offices were highlighted as an area of mixed success. Professor Jo Hunt cited the **Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) research from 2017**, which suggests that "the location of overseas offices doesn't seem to have had a noticeable impact on export performance". Professor Hunt suggested that these offices need to be more effectively woven into a trade and investment strategy and questioned the Welsh Government's methodology for identifying the location for its international offices and the objectives the Welsh Government sets them.⁶⁵

78. Dr Elin Royles emphasised the need to ensure that Wales' international offices are appropriately staffed and multi-functional, in order to act as "mini-embassies" for Wales, rather than having a solely economic function.⁶⁶

79. Sir Emyr Jones Parry told us that Wales should also do more to complement the work of the UK Government stating that "Wales ought to work out what it wants but also ought to be persuading the British Government with its offices in these places to help Wales get what it wants, as well as what we ourselves can do".⁶⁷

⁶⁵ **Wales in the World** rapporteur summary.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Record of Proceedings, **paragraph 31** – 1 October 2018

80. In her paper the Minister states that the Welsh Government's overseas offices will "potentially play an important role in our approach to external affairs" and that "2018 saw the biggest expansion of the Welsh Government network to date, with new offices opening in Montreal, Berlin, Doha, Paris and Dusseldorf".⁶⁸

4. 4. Our view

We note the expansion of the Welsh Government's overseas offices and the efforts to ensure that Wales has a foothold in key markets after Brexit.

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the Welsh Government commissions an independent baseline analysis, for example by the Wales Audit Office, of the operation of the Government's overseas offices. Subsequently, these baselines should be used to measure progress made by the offices, in line with the forthcoming international strategy.

4. 5. "Global Britain" and the relationship with London

81. A number of witnesses suggested that any future Welsh activities in international relations would work better if it complemented the foreign policy objectives of the UK Government.

82. Dr Rachel Minto highlighted the need for Wales to be clear about how its international engagement work fitted in to the context of the UK's "Global Britain" work. Dr Minto told us that there was a clear rationale for Wales to prioritise countries and relationships that the UK is also prioritising.⁶⁹

83. Sir Emyr Jones Parry told us that Wales needed to think about how it influences the government in London:

"In terms of our future external representation, for me, the crucial one is with London—it's persuading London that devolution exists, that Wales has interests and getting the British Government to co-operate with the devolved administrations where it should and has to, but also, in what it does externally, that it represents the interests of Wales as much as it does for other parts of the kingdom. That impact of Wales on policy is crucial."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Written evidence, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language

⁶⁹ Record of Proceedings, paragraph 14 – 16 July 2018

⁷⁰ Record of Proceedings, paragraph 19 – 1 October 2018

84. Dr Einion Dafydd and Dr Elin Royles suggested that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had historically been quite accommodating in allowing the Welsh Government to pursue its international objectives.⁷¹ Furthermore, both characterised the current set up as often built on co-operative relationships, with Wales working with or through the UK state to pursue its interests.⁷²

85. In written evidence, Professor Jo Hunt and Dr Rachel Minto, summarised the Welsh approach as being a “Good European” and a “Good Unionist”.⁷³ Dr Elin Royles however, questioned whether this was always the most successful approach, indicating that Welsh interests are rarely high on the UK Government’s agenda.⁷⁴

86. A key message from our rapporteur visit to London was the need for Wales (and the Welsh Government) to gain clarification and certainty from the UK Government on the scope and breadth of its powers to operate in the international sphere after Brexit.⁷⁵

87. In our meeting with the Swiss, it was noted that there is a federal approach to regional government. Foreign relations are a federal power, with the exception that the cantons are able to enter into sub-national treaties with sub-national bodies in areas that fall within the scope of their powers. This is known as “small foreign policy”.⁷⁶ Cantons in Switzerland are also able to participate in foreign policy decisions, and are consulted on decisions that affect their powers or competencies. Furthermore, cantons are consulted on negotiation mandates where powers under their ambit are at stake. The Conference of the Cantonal Governments, the representative body of the 26 Swiss cantons, also meets the Swiss federal government every two months to discuss the state of relations on bilateral affairs between Switzerland and the EU.⁷⁷

88. During oral evidence, the Minister told us that she was keen to see the UK Government do more for Wales, in terms of international engagement.⁷⁸ The Minister said:

⁷¹ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ [Rapporteur report](#)

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 11](#) – 21 January 2019

“If you just look at the relationship with the UK Government. I’m already in the process of arranging meetings with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, just to explore how much further we can push them, for example. So, I would never foresee us as a Welsh nation opening an office, even within the FCO, in Peru for example, but I do want the embassy in Peru to be waving the flag for Wales at least once a year; I want them to do an event once a year. So, I want to know if that’s happening at the moment—if not, what can we do to support that. So, I think there are some clear key performance indicators that we could be asking of the UK Government, and that’s the kind of thing that I’m trying to develop now. If you look at the Department for International Development, we spend 0.7 per cent of our gross domestic product on that. There are lots of contracts that are available for British companies to go and install water purification or build roads in parts of Africa. There’s no reason why we couldn’t be trying to land some of those and to help Welsh companies to land some of those investments as well.”⁷⁹

4. 6. Our view

We acknowledge that there are a number of potential avenues for Wales to exert greater influence, aligned to Welsh priorities, in terms of international engagement. This should include ensuring that relevant UK departments of state take greater account of Welsh priorities in terms of their international work.

We support the Minister’s ambitions in terms of increasing awareness and understanding of Welsh priorities in Whitehall departments that have an external focus.

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government, sets out in its response to this report:

- the steps that it is taking to strengthen its presence and influence in London;
- an assessment of the sufficiency of resources in place to improve awareness and access to Whitehall departments to maximise its influence.

We have previously highlighted the need for more formalised inter-governmental mechanisms within the UK as a means of discussing policy,

⁷⁹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 28](#) – 21 January 2019

agreeing shared positions and resolving any potential conflict. We agree that such a mechanism would be helpful in the area of international engagement. We will be exploring some of these issues in more detail as part of our forthcoming work on international agreements and trade.

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government urges the UK Government to publish the review of inter-governmental mechanisms commissioned by the Joint Ministerial Committee (Plenary) in March 2018, as soon as possible.

4. 7. Soft power

89. Auriol Miller told us that, although a greater awareness and understanding of Welsh interests in London was important, Wales should caution against “sitting in London and expecting the world to come to us”. Ms Miller said that:

“the other angle of soft power is around communicating a nation’s ideals, beliefs and values, political heritage and culture. And an opportunity for that, and the common understanding of relationships across borders, is very much through education, tourism, exchange programmes and business partnerships[...].”⁸⁰

90. Auriol Miller highlighted the work of the British Council on soft power, stating that:

“The things that came through in terms of the soft power index that the British Council did in April were our digital expertise, our entrepreneurialism, and sport as a clear priority.

The other thing that came through from conversations with our members was around our focus on sustainability as a country, and our engagements in networks around sustainability. So, what is it that we are doing that is world leading and how can we make the most of that, and use that as a way to pull in expertise and attention, and in all sort of different areas? So, I think those are the angles for us.”⁸¹

⁸⁰ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 35](#) – 1 October 2018

⁸¹ Record of Proceedings, [paragraphs 69 – 70](#) – 1 October 2018

91. Sir Emyr Jones Parry agreed that Wales would need to be “creative” in maximising the benefits of soft power, adding that sport was one potential area for Wales to capitalise upon.⁸²

92. Professor Michael Keating and Dr Einion Dafydd highlighted the importance of Wales defining or developing its “unique selling point” or “niche” and argued that developing a speciality in a field boosts international recognition in a crowded market.⁸³ It was argued that developing a speciality in a field boosts international recognition and that developing Welsh national expertise, would lead to other countries proactively seeking to engage with Wales. The Scottish Government’s promotion of its offshore energy expertise, Finland’s promotion of smart cities and the Netherlands’ expertise in advanced agriculture were highlighted as examples of good practice.⁸⁴

93. In a similar vein, Sir Emyr Jones Parry highlighted the profile of the Welsh economy, alongside Wales’ culture and language as areas where Wales is distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom.⁸⁵

94. The Well-being of Future Generations Act was also highlighted as a potential exemplar.⁸⁶

95. During oral evidence the Minister told us that she would seek ways to maximise Wales’ soft power in future. The Minister said:

“I think that soft power is essential. I think you can go a very long way with it. I think individuals matter when it comes to soft power. I think that one of the things I’d like to do is to engage with the British Council, with the BBC World Service, with those British organisations again where we can try and exert more influence and try and get them to tell our story a bit more for us.”⁸⁷

⁸² Record of Proceedings, [paragraphs 62 – 65](#) – 1 October 2018

⁸³ [Wales in the World rapporteur summary](#)

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 93 to 95](#) – 1 October 2018

⁸⁶ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 106](#) – 1 October 2018

⁸⁷ Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 80](#) – 21 January 2019

4. 8. Our view

We believe that more could be done to maximise the potential of Wales' soft power, particularly in terms of Wales' distinct assets – such as the Welsh language and culture.

We agree that the Minister for International Relations should seek the support of institutions such as the British Council and the BBC, alongside Welsh institutions, to further these aims.

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the new international engagement strategy identifies areas of soft power where Wales can demonstrate international leadership.

We will keep this situation under review, including details of how the Minister engages institutions with an external-focus in promoting Wales to the world, when the new international engagement strategy is published.