

International Framework Review Report 2026

March 2026



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Llywydd foreword	3
Purpose of the Report.....	4
Summary of approach.....	5
Reporting.....	7
Outcomes and conclusions.....	8
Examples Section.....	9
Share and acquire best practice internationally.....	9
Member-led activity – promoting Senedd innovation.....	10
Hosting International Engagement at the Senedd	13
Work on UK-EU networks.....	14
Senedd Committee work.....	15

Introduction

Llywydd foreword

*“Being a respected international actor is an important part of being a national legislature, contributing to and benefiting from knowledge exchanges, finding allies, and enhancing the influence that the Senedd can have through scrutiny and representation”. **EEAL Report on External Scrutiny (2021)***

As we near the end of this Sixth Senedd, I would like to reflect on our International Engagement during what has been a busy and productive time.

We have continued to show that we are a young but innovative and outward looking parliament, confident of our place and importance in the world, with a good story to tell.

We have empowered our Members through numerous opportunities; be that through our hosting of a flagship conference, driving the establishment of a new LGBT+ network, to participating in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Conferences in Asia, to learn of best practices internationally whilst always showcasing the very best of our own Senedd.

I am particularly pleased of the way in which our the Senedd Business focused approach has driven our proactive outward engagement during this term. This has resulted in focussed visit programmes which the Deputy Presiding Officer and I have led – accompanied by Senedd Committee Chairs and Members - to the parliaments of Iceland, Baden-Württemberg and the Dáil (Ireland).

I would, at this time, like to put on record my thanks to those Members who have given their time to participate so enthusiastically in our international networks, the Chairs and Members of our Senedd Committees, as well as the Commission officials who have supported our international work.

I am of the firm view that the Senedd’s International profile and reputation has been enhanced during this parliamentary term and that there now exists a strong foundation to elevate this further during what will undoubtedly be an exciting Seventh Senedd - a Senedd that will look and feel very different to any other over the past quarter of a century - and one which will invite renewed interest from across the world in Wales and our democracy.

Purpose of the Report

This report reflects on how the framework agreed by the Commission has helped shape the international activity within the Commission's ambit.

The framework set out to provide accountability, clarity and direction to the international parliamentary activity supported by Senedd Commission resources. It has enabled the Commission to demonstrate how we are working towards the achievement of identified outcomes.

The framework is a tool which enables international activity to align with the Commission's strategic goals, including that of providing outstanding parliamentary support with a focus on supporting Members, responding to constitutional change, including strengthening inter-institutional networks and learning and enhancing the Senedd's reputation.

An integrated team model was established across service areas to improve our internal communications and knowledge exchange, and to enable a strategic approach to coordinate and align the international work with the agreed principles and objectives.

Summary of approach

The framework has been based on the principles that international activities will:

- 1.** Be focused on parliamentary business, enabling the Senedd to deliver its core function of representing the interests of Wales and its people by enhancing the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience; and
- 2.** Recognise the value and importance of building the institutional and international reputation of the Senedd through engagement and collaboration, whether it be Member or committee-led, official level or Parliament to Parliament.

This report provides an overview of the implementation and offers examples and highlights the types of activity which reflect the underpinning principles and objectives of the framework.

They represent a clear implementation of the framework's vision as set out by the Senedd Commission.

Detailed reports are available for each of the activities which are facilitated by the Commission.

Implementation

- 1.** There has been a fundamental shift during the Sixth Senedd to a more integrated approach to the coordination of international activity supported by the Senedd Commission, directorates and commission officials.

Provision of existing support to international networks such as the CPA and BIPA has continued but with refreshed approaches to improve the diversity of members participating and links between the work of these networks and Senedd Committees/Business where appropriate.

Examples of this includes the significant review of the rules of our CPA Branch to guarantee a gender balanced Executive Committee as well mechanisms to ensure wider participation in the opportunities available to Members. Our BIPA branch has taken on a more strategic focus, feeding back into wider Senedd

business; including providing evidence to the work of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee (CCWLSIR) on Wales-Ireland Relations.

2. A focus has been placed on ensuring inward and outward visits and activity maximises opportunities for Senedd Members to gather evidence and information to support Senedd Business, promote the work of the Senedd and undertake learning and development that feeds directly into their day-to-day roles.

Examples of this include cross-service work to support Committee Chair and Presiding and Deputy Presiding Officer engagement with EU Ambassadors and the European Parliament; external delegation visits of the Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer and Committee Chairs to Iceland, Ireland and Stuttgart.

3. Activity under the framework has given Members opportunity to promote the work of the Senedd in key areas of innovation such as parliamentary inclusivity, gender diversity, Artificial Intelligence and youth engagement.

Examples of this include the establishment of the Senedd Women’s Caucus, participation, international knowledge exchange in the use of Artificial Intelligence and participation in establishing of an LGBTQ+ network.

4. As new UK-EU structures have emerged, collaboration under the framework by the Senedd’s Brussels office and the international relations team has enabled Members to maximise the opportunities for Members to raise issues of importance to Wales and Welsh citizens in these on-going discussions.

Examples of this include the hosting in March 2022 of the UK-Committee of Regions Contact Group in Cardiff which brought regional and local elected Members and leaders from across the EU and UK to the Senedd and the successful launch in Brussels of the CCWLSIR Culture Shock Report on the impact of Brexit on the culture sector in Wales.

5. International events and international relations work has featured heavily in the work of Senedd Committees and Plenary during the Sixth Senedd. Work on significant international issues such as Ukraine, Israel-Gaza, new international trade agreements, the rights of EU citizens in Wales and UK-EU Relations.

Enhanced coordination of this work through the framework has ensured a coordinated response to external events.

For example coordinated responses on the invasion of Ukraine with the support for events, business items and committee activity on Ukraine and the using on both inward and outward visits to promote the work of four Senedd Committees on the UK-EU Relations.

This more integrated approach has delivered a number of important outcomes for the Senedd in line with the objectives set out with the framework but nonetheless challenges remain that the Seventh Senedd will need to consider. These include:

- a. Ensuring Senedd Members are continued to be supported by party groups and other Senedd bodies to have sufficient time and capacity to engage in international work;
- b. Ensuring sufficient resource is dedicated to deliver on the ambitions and objectives of any new international framework agreed.

Reporting

Following the adoption of the framework the Senedd website now hosts a page which acts as a **hub for International work**.

The hub is a rich and accessible source of reports and articles. This reflects the commitment in the framework towards coordinated processes for reporting back in meaningful ways on activities undertaken to inform Senedd Business and to raise the profile of our international work with external organisations and stakeholders.

It includes details of Member activities, including reports as well as providing an overview of international activities across the Commission's services.

The reporting structure will be reviewed in light of the Senedd moving to a shorter term of 4 years at the start of the Seventh Senedd.

Outcomes and conclusions

The framework has provided a valuable structure for the coordination of the Commission's international activity, enabling the Senedd to maximise opportunities to share and acquire best practice internationally, raise the Senedd's profile and influence external decisions that affect Wales and its citizens.

The examples set out in this report demonstrate that work under the international framework in the Sixth Senedd has delivered a number of important outcomes and enabled the Senedd to respond effectively to a dynamic and changing international landscape.

The willingness and enthusiasm of Senedd Members to engage in and develop this work is testament to the importance placed on international engagement by them and the value and benefit they derive from it.

The Senedd has developed a reputation as a constructive and important partner. This in turn has opened up new opportunities for Senedd Members to raise issues of importance to Welsh citizens on an international stage.

In the Seventh Senedd it will be important to ensure that the momentum generated by work completed under this international framework is not lost. Adequate capacity to deliver on the ambitions of the new Senedd will be key.

Throughout its history the Senedd has been an outward looking institution eager to learn from the experience of others and promote its work abroad. Work in the Sixth Senedd has solidified this ambition and illustrated the continuing value of international engagement for promoting the interests of the Senedd and the people of Wales.

Examples Section

This section provides detailed case studies of activities undertaken under the framework during the Sixth Senedd that further elaborate on the outcomes described above.

Share and acquire best practice internationally

It is often the case that parliamentary bilateral relations emanate from Llywydd and DPO activity relating to speaker led visits (inward and outward). These visits lead to continued links at both political and official level.

Following the visit of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP – South Africa) Speaker and Delegation to the Senedd in 2022, a programme of support was put in place to mentor the WCPP as they sought to establish a Youth Parliament. The Senedd's Welsh Youth Parliament (WYP) officials provided comprehensive virtual training sessions to the WCPP to share the Senedd's experience, highlighting what worked well and lessons learned.

The Senedd's Members' Business Services has also advised the Parliament of New Zealand on how we support our Members.

Inward visits hosted by the Llywydd during this Senedd term include:

- Speaker Masizole Mnqasela and Delegation from the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) (May 2022)
- Seán Ó Fearghaíl, the Ceann Comhairle (Ireland) (March 2024).
- Delegation from the Assemblée Nationale du Québec, led by Speaker Mme. Nathalie Roy MLA (June 2024)
- President M. H. Sr. Josep Rull, Speaker of the Catalan Parliament and delegation (December 2024)
- Pat Weir, Speaker of the Queensland Parliament (May 2025)
- Senator Sue Lines, President of the Australian Senate (May 2025)
- Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, President of the New South Wales Legislative Council (July 2025)

Member-led activity – promoting Senedd innovation

In addition to the opportunities for Member development opportunities and acquiring of skills and information from international colleagues, the Senedd Members have also established themselves and the Senedd as having an important voice amongst discussions relating to challenges facing parliaments and democracy in general.

BIMR LGBT+ Network

The Senedd hosted the launch of a **BIMR LGBT+ Network**. This was the first CPA Region to formally establish an LGBT parliamentary network. Senedd Members were a driving force behind this initiative to secure a platform for dialogue and collaboration.

Adam Price MS undertook the role of interim Chair and Hannah Blythyn MS, also represented the Senedd at the inaugural forum of the BIMR LGBT+ network.

“Parliamentarians in the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region as well as across the Commonwealth have a unique opportunity: to champion inclusive policies, defend democratic institutions and amplify the voices of those most at risk.” Adam Price MS

Senedd at the 2024 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

The Llywydd, Elin Jones MS represented the Senedd at the 2024 CPC. This was the first time for a Llywydd of the Senedd to attend an annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The Llywydd utilised the platform, having been invited to deliver a keynote speech to talk about the issue of retaining women in politics. The Llywydd referenced issues such as women’s menstrual and menopausal health and the gendered weaponisation of social media. Similarly, delegation representative Rhun ap Iorwerth MS made a speech on Strengthening Democratic Resilience in an Age of Fake News.

Women's Caucus

The establishment of the **Senedd's Women Caucus** during this Senedd term provided an additional international element to the Senedd's work.

With a number of women Members actively engaged in international networks, the Caucus's international reputation continues to grow, with updates on our work appearing in the CPA's journal, *The Parliamentarian*, and international delegations expressing an interest in hearing from our members.

The Caucus has been involved in a number of inward visits to the Senedd this year, as visiting delegations look to learn about the experiences of women parliamentarians in Wales and share good practice around encouraging and retaining women in politics. Members of the Caucus met with visiting delegations from the Canadian Federal Parliament and the *Assemblée Nationale du Quebec* to compare Caucuses' activity, family friendly parliaments, and gender equality measures.

The Senedd's Women's Caucus has also contributed to discussions regarding establishing caucus in other parliaments.

Artificial Intelligence Conference

"The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible AI" conference (Kuala Lumpur) was attended by over 200 parliamentarians and staff from around the world.

Following a competitive applications process by Members via the Senedd's CPA branch executive, Hannah Blythyn MS and Adam Price MS represented the Senedd. The delegates focused on:

- Bringing a distinctly Welsh perspective to debates about skills, human judgement and democratic resilience in the age of AI.
- Connecting global lessons back to the Senedd's own work on AI governance and to the Welsh Government's *AI Cymru* plan. Our delegation made influential contributions by securing an additional recommendation to the communique which committed parliaments to share resources and collaborate with a view to supporting parliamentarians and staff on scrutiny, legislative drafting and policy.

“For a small, digitally minded parliament like the Senedd, this is potentially transformative: it offers a route to high-quality tools we could not realistically build alone, while maintaining public control, ethical standards and bilingual accessibility.”

“Report into the Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible AI conference”

The Members provided a comprehensive report ([link](#)) with recommendations to be pursued via the Commission and also regarding the strengthening of scrutiny of AI across Welsh public services.

This conference followed on from the Artificial Intelligence and Disinformation: **‘Democracy in the age of deepfakes’ conference** in June 2024, attended by Lee Waters MS.

In participating in international opportunities, Members are contributing to a rich source of information and discussions specifically from a parliamentary perspective which benefit the Senedd and will be influential in how the Commission progresses its use of AI.

Hosting International Engagement at the Senedd

It is important that events of national and international significance are attracted to the Senedd estate in order to platform the Senedd and Wales and to showcase Welsh democracy.

BIMR Conference

June 2025 saw the Senedd host a major international conference. The Senedd British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Conference was well attended, by over 40 elected Members from 10 of the Region's Branches, International Observers from the Western Cape and Quebec as well as by the Secretary General, Stephen Twigg.

The Senedd BIMR included plenary and workshop sessions on numerous topics, including:

The Welsh Youth Parliament experience

Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Parliamentarians

The importance of LGBT+ voices in parliament

How modern parliamentarians are engaging in an evolving digital landscape and effective Implementation, Training and Oversight of

Artificial Intelligence in Parliaments

Delegates heard from expert speakers from Wales and across the world and Senedd Members were active participants and had prominent platforms during the conference.

The Conference provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the Senedd's innovation and to exchange knowledge and experience with different parliaments. Importantly, the delegates were able to experience and enjoy what Wales has to offer. ([link to report](#))

Work on UK-EU networks

The Senedd Commission supports Senedd Member engagement in two key UK-EU networks - the Committee of the Regions-UK Contact Group and the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly. The focus of the work is to raise key issues of importance to Wales, build networks to influence on-going discussions and gather evidence to inform the scrutiny of the Welsh and UK governments by the Senedd.

-The Senedd hosted the first UK meeting of the Committee of the Regions-UK Contact Group. The meeting brought local and regional leaders from across the EU and UK to the Senedd and provided an opportunity to showcase the work of the Senedd. The Senedd also co-hosted a meeting of the Contact Group in London in November 2025 with the Committee of the Regions at Europe House.

-Alun Davies MS was invited as part of the Committee of the Regions Contact Group to address the Plenary session of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. This is the first time a UK member of the Contact Group has been invited to do so and provided a platform for sharing issues of importance to the Senedd to hundreds of delegates.

- Senedd Members have attended six meetings of the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA). They have undertaken joint work with other devolved legislatures to enhance the role provided to devolved Members in this body. Senedd Members are now routinely invited to address Plenary sessions of the Assembly on topics such as trade, culture, climate and energy cooperation, youth exchange and AI regulation and digital cooperation.

-The DPO led a delegation to Brussels in March 2025 to highlight the Senedd's work on UK-EU issues including the provision of evidence by the delegation to the European Economic and Social Committee on priorities for the UK-EU relationship identified in Senedd work.

Senedd Committee work

Work on international affairs formed a key part committees work in the Sixth Senedd. The focus on the coordination of international activity and relevant Senedd Business under the framework has created new opportunities for committees to promote their work on the international stage.

- The Senedd has hosted and facilitated regular visits by the EU Ambassador to the UK and Ambassadors from EU Member States to the Senedd. The Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer host meetings between Committee Chairs and Senedd Members in UK-EU networks as part of these visits to provide additional avenues for committee priorities to be shared directly with EU institutions and for the Ambassadors to share information and updates directly with Senedd Members.
- Work on Wales-Ireland relations has been a key example of coordinated - international activity. In September 2024, a delegation of members led by the Deputy Presiding Officer undertook an international visit to Dublin. This provided an opportunity to further strengthen relations between the Senedd and the Oireachtas and identify areas of shared interest and possible future cooperation. The visit stemmed from the Ceann Comhairle's visit to the Senedd during his March 2024, where he and the Llywydd considered further collaboration between the Senedd and the Oireachtas. [Link to report](#)
- Engagement has continued between the Parliaments, indicating its strategic importance. This work has also further emphasised the added value of the Senedd's BIPA representation and associated activities. The Senedd's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language and International Relations Committee will report on future priorities for this relationship before the end of the Senedd.

In 2025, the Deputy Presiding Officer led a cross-Committee delegation from the Senedd to Stuttgart, to visit the Baden Württemberg Landtag (State Parliament). The delegation held meetings with counterpart committees on issues related to work the environment, climate change and energy, economic affairs, tourism and international and European affairs. The delegation discussed the extensive links between Wales and Baden-Württemberg. The delegation met with representatives from one of the largest energy companies in Germany whose current projects include a proposed offshore wind farm located off the north Wales Coastline. In addition, the delegation visited the Mercedes-Benz plant and Stuttgart University to learn how they are using AI and high-performance computing in their projects. [Link to report](#)

The Llywydd led a delegation of the Chairs of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee and the Chair of Health and Social Care Committee to Iceland. The delegation met both the Speaker of the Icelandic Parliament and the President of Iceland. Meetings were held with Members of the Icelandic Parliament including counterpart committees to discuss shared policy challenges in areas such as health, environment and infrastructure. [Link to report.](#)