

National Assembly for Wales
Petitions Committee

**P-03-262 Academi Heddwch Cymru /
Wales Peace Institute**

October 2013



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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The Petitions Committee was established on 15 June 2011. Its role is to consider all admissible petitions that are submitted by the public. Petitions must be about issues that the National Assembly has powers to take action on. The petitions process enables the public to highlight issues and directly influence the work of the National Assembly. Its specific functions are set out in Standing Order 23.

Current Committee membership



William Powell (Chair)
Welsh Liberal Democrats
Mid and West Wales



Russell George
Welsh Conservatives
Montgomeryshire



Bethan Jenkins
Plaid Cymru
South Wales West



Joyce Watson
Welsh Labour
Mid and West Wales

The following Assembly Members were members of the Petitions Committee during this work.



Christine Chapman
Welsh Labour
Cynon Valley



Andrew RT Davies
Welsh Conservatives
South Wales Central



Mike German
Welsh Liberal Democrats
South Wales East



Veronica German
Welsh Liberal Democrats
South Wales East



Val Lloyd
Welsh Labour
Swansea East

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Chair's foreword

The Petitions Committee continues to consider a wide range of petitions, across the Assembly's devolved powers. This petition calling for the establishment of an Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute was submitted to our predecessor Committee in 2009. They took a range of oral evidence on the petition, and we built on this evidence with further consideration of the petition.

We are supportive of the principle of establishing an Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute, but we have not come to any views on the detail of how such an Institute would be constituted. It is our view that such a body could help contribute to the development of peace in its broadest sense within Wales, and would contribute to both the work of the Assembly and the Government. The evidence we have heard has convinced us that there would be value in exploring further the role, function and scope of such an institution. We acknowledge the current economic climate, and appreciate that funds may not be available for the Welsh Government to undertake this work, but that they could assist in the facilitation of the exploratory work.

We would like to thank the petitioners, and all those who have given their time to help aid our consideration of this petition.

The Committee's Recommendation

The Committee's recommendation to the Welsh Government is listed below, in the order that they appear in this Report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions:

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Welsh Government facilitates further discussions between the interested parties within both the academic community and civic society to enable further scoping work to be undertaken on a Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute. (Page 19)

1. Background

1. In September 2009, our predecessor Committee, received a petition signed by 1525 people, submitted by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Cynefin y Werin, Cymdeithas y Cymod and CND Cymru.

2. The petition called for

“We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to investigate the potential and practicality of Wales having a Peace Institute concerned with Peace and Human Rights, comparable with those supported by state governments in Flanders, Catalonia and elsewhere in Europe.”¹

3. Our predecessor Committee took oral evidence from the petitioners, the Flemish Peace Institute and the International Catalan Institute for Peace. Additionally, the Committee considered written evidence from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

4. Building on this, we conducted a public written consultation, with 56 people and organisations responding. This was the largest response to a Petitions Committee consultation.

5. In this report, we set out the evidence that both we and our predecessor Committee considered, and outline what next steps we feel should be taken.

¹ National Assembly for Wales, [P-03-262](#), Wales Peace Institute, 28 October 2009 [accessed 2 August 2013]

2. The Petitioners' ambitions

6. The petitioners provided a set of outline proposals for a Peace Institute. Detailed proposals were not provided, because the petitioners wanted a broader debate about what the potential role and function of an Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute.² The petitioners emphasised that an institute would need to look at peace in the broadest sense. Jill Evans MEP told us

“Most people would assume that a peace institute would be concerned with issues of war and peace in the traditional sense. However, we are looking at something much more than that: a body that would promote peace in all aspects of our society.”³

7. This view was supported by the peace institutes we took oral evidence from, and also in the written evidence that we considered.

8. Those key principles underpinning any Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute identified by the petitioners were:

- A relationship with the National Assembly to provide independent evaluation of the potential effects of its actions and decisions in respect to upholding peace and human rights;
- Examination of the impact on Wales of UK defence and foreign policy decisions – for example, the training of foreign military who might be involved in human rights abuse;
- A reference point and resource for people and organisations providing information about peace, disarmament conflict resolution, and human rights issues with channels to allow enquiry into the arms trade, human rights, nuclear disarmament, upholding the NPT etc;
- Direct relationship with NGOs, UN agencies, other Peace Institutes and networks with similar organisations that contribute to international knowledge of and activity for and the promotion of peace;

² National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [24-29] 23 February 2010

³ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [9] 23 February 2010

- Academic freedom will be essential to the independent functioning of the Institute as a non-partisan authority on peace issues;
- Educational provision in respect to peace studies, conflict resolution through non-violence, awareness of human rights; building international relations through cultural contact, cooperative deals etc;
- Consultation status in respect to the national curriculum of Wales;
- Freedom to seek independent financing through commissioned research and to utilise funds and resources in the area of peace-building.⁴

9. The petitioners stated that there were a number of examples within Wales which could provide a blueprint for a Peace Institute, such as Cynnal Cymru, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales and the Child Poverty Expert Group.⁵ However, they were reluctant to provide more detail on what they saw as the role, function and activities of a Peace Institute. Their priority was to seek support in principle for the establishment of a peace institute.

10. Throughout the process the petitioners have been clear that they are not seeking funding at this stage, or even a commitment to proceed with the establishment of a peace institute, but that they wanted further investigation into the practicalities of how such an institute could be established.

11. As the petitioners have not provided detailed proposals it has made it difficult for both us and our predecessor Committee to come to a view on the petition. This was an issue that some of the consultee respondents also highlighted, with Marc Pollentine stating

“...the current proposal raises more questions than answers, and lacks sufficient detail in terms of how the Institute would be constituted and mandated....The detail is absolutely vital to the principle not least because very few principles command

⁴ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [PET\(3\)-15-09: Paper 01A Academi Hedwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute](#), 10 November 2009 [accessed 2 August 2013]

⁵ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [11] 23 February 2010

common understanding of their practical meaning and application.”⁶

12. We agree, and while understanding that the motivation behind the petition was to generate support for the concept, we think that this petition may have been more quickly progressed, if more detail had been forthcoming from the petitioners.

13. While the petitioners focus was not on obtaining funding, they stated that a peace institute would be cost-effective, because it would be performing a unique function, and would add value to the Assembly’s decision making ability. ⁷

14. We know from informal conversations with the petitioners that there were some different views within the group on funding, with some feeling that funding should not be accepted from anybody that the peace institute may seek to scrutinise. Others were more relaxed about this issue.

15. There was initially some confusion when we first corresponded with the Welsh Government about this petition. Their response focused on the academic element of this work, highlighting the possibility of collaboration between universities within Wales to take forward some of this work. However, the petitioners were clear that what they have in mind was broader than pure academic study.

“With regard to research bodies, there is quite a lot of academic study, but it is very much buried in my view....It really is something in which the converted are talking to the converted, and the academics are talking to the academics. We want to see this being spread to the whole of society.”⁸

16. The petitioners also feel that such an institute would have a co-ordinating function, to help bring together all the work that is being undertaken across Wales, and internationally.⁹

17. As would be expected with a basic principle that has broad support, we heard a range of views of what the Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute would do and how it could best

⁶ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee [Consultation response PET\(4\) WPI 16 – Marc Pollentin](#) [accessed 2 August 2013]

⁷ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [12], 23 February 2010

⁸ Ibid [24]

⁹ Ibid [25]

function. It is clear that further work is needed to consider better what sort of role and function such an Institute could have within Wales.

3. Peace Institutes across Europe

18. To help understand how a peace institute could function, our predecessor Committee took oral and / or written evidence from three European peace institutes; the Flemish Peace Institute; the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP) and the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF). We are aware that there are a range of peace institutes across Europe and the rest of the world, but the consideration focused on these three institutes.

19. While these institutions are different in size, scope, range, function and age, they all highlighted some similar issues which should be taken into consideration when establishing a Peace Institute.

Flemish Peace Institute

20. The Flemish Peace Institute was established in 2004 following the devolution of competence for the licensing of the foreign arms trade. The Flemish Parliament indicated that such an institute was needed to advise on these new powers, and as the institute was developed the remit was broadened, to include ‘international relations, peace and society, polemology, social defence’.¹⁰

21. The Institute is fully financed by the Parliament, but can seek external funding. It remains fully independent of the Parliament, despite its advisory role to, and funding from, the Parliament. It has four main ‘tasks’; documentary, research, advisory and information. They have both a Board of Directors and a Scientific Council.¹¹

International Catalan Institute for Peace

22. The ICIP was established by an Act of the Catalan Parliament in 2007. This was the result of campaigning by the peace movement and civil society more broadly.

23. It has three main areas of work; research, establishing training and fostering the culture of peace, and interventions in terrain conflicts to facilitate peace. It is fully funded by the Catalan Government, but expects in the future to obtain funding from other bodies. Although funded by the Government, it has a close relationship with the Catalan Parliament, and on an annual basis has to

¹⁰ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [124], 23 February 2010

¹¹ Ibid [124-129]

present details of their work, and their finances. They have a Governing Body, of 12 people, three of whom come from Government, with the other nine elected by Parliament.¹²

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

24. The Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) was established in 1970 by the Government of the State of Hesse. Initially it focused on basic research, and there was not a direct link to policy, however this has changed over time. Most of the Institute's funding comes from the State of Hesse and the Federal Government.¹³

25. The Institute 'walks on two legs'¹⁴ undertaking both research and practical work. This includes developing options for policies, and acting as a major consultant to the Federal Government on a number of issues. On issues such as arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation they are 'the leading advisor in Germany'.¹⁵

¹² National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee RoP [17-38] 27 April 2010

¹³ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [PET\(3\)-05-10: Paper 1, Annex A: Evidence Session: Catalan Peace Institute](#), 27 April 2010

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

4. Key Lessons from other Peace Institutes

26. While each of the institutes are at a different stage in their development, it was interesting to note a number of key themes. These should be taken seriously in any further consideration of the establishment of a peace institute.

Political independence

27. All three of the peace institutes we took evidence from stressed the importance of independence. While each of the institutes receive funding from the relevant regional government, all are independent from their funders.

28. It was interesting to hear the Flemish Peace Institute say that prior to the establishment of the Institute, there was a ‘big discussion’ about whether it should be part of the Government or at arm’s length of the Parliament, and that they felt the decision to make it a ‘partner in Parliament’ was the right one.¹⁶

29. The issues of political neutrality were of particular importance to the PRIF. They stressed this, especially in a field that moves in a ‘politically contested field’¹⁷ stating that

“The initial closeness of PRIF to a social democratic government made us suspicious with the Conservatives as a leftist project, and we had to struggle with that suspicion well in to the latter half of the eighties.”¹⁸

30. They told us that this was overcome through a ‘double strategy’¹⁹ of actively making contact with leading conservative politicians and by showing ‘academic excellence’. These two routes, led to ‘an all partisan acceptance of our place in the German debate both in academic research on security and peace, and second in the policy discourse on these issues.’²⁰

¹⁶ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee RoP [149] 23 February 2010

¹⁷ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [PET\(3\)-05-10: Paper 1, Annex A: Evidence Session: Catalan Peace Institute](#), 27 April 2010

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, Correspondence from the Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt

²⁰ Ibid

31. It is clear that if a peace institute is established, it must be done so on a basis of utter independence from those who would establish it and that funding sources should not impact on its independence.

Funding

32. Funding is a vital element to consider in the establishment of such an institute. Each of the institutes stressed the importance of structural funding. The Director of the Flemish Peace Institute told us

“On the landscape of non-governmental organisations, I see shifts from structural funding to project funding, and it always nibbles away at the quality of what they do, because they have to invest much more time in getting the money and pleasing the donors....Whether the money comes from the Executive or wherever, structural long-term funding is important, apart from the small projects that meet some needs.”²¹

33. The PRIF stated that to protect an institute against broader political and economic picture, consideration could be given to a part of the budget being dependent on an endowment. This would help ensure independence and provide protection against economic downturns, but they acknowledged that this required substantial up-front economic investment, and may not be popular with the funding body. They also acknowledged that this is why the PRIF was not funded in this way.²²

34. All three institutes receive the bulk or all (in the case of the ICIP) from their main funder. All do, or are planning to, obtain funding from other sources.

35. It is difficult to assess, without having a greater understanding of the role and function of a peace institute, how much a peace institute would cost, and where funding could be obtained for such a body. It is clear from the correspondence received from the Welsh Government that it wouldn't be something that they would be able to fund in the current climate.²³

²¹ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [161] 23 February 2010

²² National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [PET\(3\)-05-10: Paper 1, Annex A: Evidence Session: Catalan Peace Institute](#), 27 April 2010

²³ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [PET\(3\)-11-10: Paper 1: New Petitions and Updates to Previous Petitions](#), 28 September 2010

Merit of regional parliaments establishing peace institutes

36. It is interesting to note that all three of these institutes were established by regional parliamentary bodies, which are not responsible for the armed forces, and military spending. This provides a template for Wales, where powers over the military and defence remains the responsibility of Westminster. We heard from the ICIP that

“The institute is saying that there is a way for the Catalan Government to make itself visible in international relations.”²⁴

37. Additionally the PRIF said that it was both possible and made sense for regional governments and parliaments to set up a peace institute, telling us that

“Even if the work of the institute is mainly directed towards the national capital, the involvement of the state government gives the institute some robustness against a central authority enraged by criticism uttered by researchers.”²⁵

38. The ICIP stressed that this type of work should not be ‘monopolised’ by the state and that ‘non-state actors, although public actors’ have to be involved in this work.²⁶

²⁴ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee RoP [63] 27 April 2010

²⁵ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, Correspondence from the Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt

²⁶ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, RoP [34] 27 April 2010

5. Stakeholders views

39. We held a public written consultation asking for views on whether a peace institute should be established, and if so, how such an Institute could be constituted and what its functions could be. Most of the consultation responses we received came from individuals, peace and religious groups, who were in the main broadly supportive of the proposal. Although few gave us detail on what they would like to see such an institute to do.

40. The Welsh Refugee Council felt that a peace institute would be 'desirable'.²⁷ They said it could help provide an 'independent and authoritative source of information about refugees and asylum seekers in Wales'.²⁸ They stressed the importance of independence, and that while the UK Government are signatories to various international treaties that are outside of the Assembly's powers, that some of the international obligations touch on issues of social justice and equality for everyone living in Wales. They wanted any terms of reference to include some similar clauses to those of the Flemish Peace Institute.²⁹

41. Higher Education Wales was one of the only respondents who told us that they did not feel that such an Institute should be established at this time. They said that they understood that the petitioners were keen in the research elements and academic freedom of such an institution and that 'both of these themes are already embedded and held in high regard within universities in Wales'.³⁰

²⁷ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [Consultation Response PET \(4\) WPI 41 Response from the Welsh Refugee Council](#) [accessed 9 September 2013]

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ National Assembly for Wales, Petitions Committee, [Consultation Response PET\(4\) WPI 42 Response from Higher Education Wales](#) [accessed 9 September 2013]

6. The Committee's views

42. While the Committee has taken a range of evidence on this issue, we do not feel that we are in a position to provide a blue print of what a Welsh Peace Institute should look like. However, having considered the evidence we are supportive of the principle of the establishment of a peace institute being established in Wales.

43. This is because we feel that such a body could add value to both the Assembly's work, and the wider civic society. We are supportive of the petitioners' suggestion that bodies such as Cynnal Cymru could provide a template as to how such an institute could look like, and how it could help inform policy development. We agree with the petitioners that peace should be considered in the broadest terms, and that while the Assembly does not have direct powers in relation to the military and defence, peace should be considered in the widest sense.

44. Having seen how it can work in those places (especially with the ICIP) where there is no devolved responsibility for military and defence, we feel that there is a strong argument for Wales being at the forefront, and having some form of peace institute which could consider issues relating to peace in more detail.

45. We are also persuaded by the petitioners' arguments that while there is a lot of work currently being undertaken within Wales on peace, there is a need for this work to be brought together, for it to be disseminated out to the widest audience, and for a broader engagement with civic society.

46. We believe that there is a need for further exploratory work to be undertaken on this issue. We understand that this is something which the petitioners' felt that the Committee should be doing, but this is outside of our expertise, and we simply don't have the capacity to do such work. However, we agree with the petitioners that this should be undertaken. We acknowledge the current economic climate and the financial constraints across the public sector. We appreciate that there may not be funds available for detailed scoping work to be undertaken by the Welsh Government. We are therefore recommending to the Welsh Government that they facilitate further discussions with the interested parties, particularly between the academic community and the civic society, to help drive forward development of proposals for a Welsh Peace Institute.

We recommend that the Welsh Government facilitates further discussions between the interested parties within both the academic community and civic society to enable further scoping work to be undertaken on an Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute.

Meetings

The petition was considered at the following meetings during both the current and Third Assembly. Transcripts and the correspondence considered at the meeting can be viewed in full at:

Third Assembly www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-262.htm

Fourth Assembly www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=0918

Witnesses

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-262.htm

23 February 2010

Dr John Cox CND Cymru

Jill Evans MEP

Stephen Thomas Director, Welsh Centre for International Affairs

Tomas Baum Director, Flemish Peace Institute

Nellie Maes President, Flemish Peace Institute

27 April 2010

Pablo Aguiar International Catalan Institute for Peace

Tica Font Director, International Catalan Institute for
Peace

List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee consultation. All consultation responses can be viewed in full at

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=0918>

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Reference</i>
George Millar	PET(4) WPI 01
Nia Rhosier	PET(4) WPI 02
Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales	PET(4) WPI 03
Angharad Roberts	PET(4) WPI 04
Ifanwy Williams	PET(4) WPI 05
Rhys ab Elis	PET(4) WPI 06
Cardiff and District United Nations Association	PET(4) WPI 07
Uniting for Peace	PET(4) WPI 08
Dr Peter Sutch	PET(4) WPI 09
The Baptist Union of Wales	PET(4) WPI 10
Edwin C Lewis	PET(4) WPI 11
Guto Prys ap Gwynfor	PET(4) WPI 12
Methodist Peace Fellowship	PET(4) WPI 13
Ieuan Davies	PET(4) WPI 14
Mr H.O Phillips	PET(4) WPI 15
Marc Pollentine	PET(4) WPI 16
Philip Kingston	PET(4) WPI 17
Elizabeth Morley	PET(4) WPI 18
Hedd Ladd-Lewis	PET(4) WPI 19
Lynne and Trefor Williams	PET(4) WPI 20
Maria Pizzoni	PET(4) WPI 21
Caerleon Quaker Meeting	PET(4) WPI 22
Stella Westmacott	PET(4) WPI 23

Peace Mala	PET(4) WPI 24
Mari Hobbs	PET(4) WPI 25
Palestine Community Link	PET(4) WPI 26
Tudur Dylan Jones	PET(4) WPI 27
Jennifer Harwood	PET(4) WPI 28
Mererid Hopwood	PET(4) WPI 29
Reverend Dr Owen E Evans	PET(4) WPI 30
Heather Jordan	PET(4) WPI 31
CND Cymru	PET(4) WPI 32
Dr Lillian Parry-Jones	PET(4) WPI 33
M. Islwyn Lake	PET(4) WPI 34
Dorothy Wilson	PET(4) WPI 35
Wales Green Party	PET(4) WPI 36
Brian Jones	PET(4) WPI 37
Meeting of Friends (Quakers) in Wales	PET(4) WPI 38
Tony Young	PET(4) WPI 39
Canolfan Morlan	PET(4) WPI 40
Wales Refugee Council	PET(4) WPI 41
Higher Education Wales	PET(4) WPI 42
Norbert X Mbu-Mputu	PET(4) WPI 43
Awel Jones	PET(4) WPI 44
Minnie Street Independent Chapel Cardiff	PET(4) WPI 45
Jill Evans MEP	PET(4) WPI 46
Church and Society Division, Presbyterian Church of Wales	PET(4) WPI 47
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University UK	PET(4) WPI 48
Elin Tudur	PET(4) WPI 49
Nicholas Jewitt	PET(4) WPI 50
Lynette Hughes	PET(4) WPI 51
Welsh Centre for International Affairs	PET(4) WPI 52
Brecknock Peace and Justice Group	PET(4) WPI 53

Phillip Steele	PET(4) WPI 54
Conwy County Peace Group	PET(4) WPI 55
Julie Gritten	PET(4) WPI 56
Elenid Jones	PET(4) WPI 57
Stephen Thomas	PET(4) WPI 58