

Agenda – Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: Wednesday, 28 June
2017

Meeting time: 10.00

For further information contact:

Steve George

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCWLC@assembly.wales

Informal pre-meeting

(9:45 – 10:00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 General Scrutiny Session with Lord Tony Hall, Director of BBC

(10:00 – 11:30)

(Pages 1 – 15)

Lord Tony Hall, Director-General, BBC

Ken McQuarrie, Director Nations and Regions, BBC

Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, BBC Cymru Wales

This session will be streamed live on Facebook as well as Senedd.tv.

3 Paper(s) to note

Letter from European Language Equality Network (ELEN) to Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

(Pages 16 – 18)

Reply from the First Minister to the letter from the Chair: Appointment of BBC Board Member for Wales

(Page 19)



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Wales

- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:**
- 5 General Scrutiny Session with Lord Tony Hall, Director of BBC:
Consideration of Evidence
(11:30 – 12:00)**

Agenda Item 2

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Agenda Item 3.1



Thursday June 15th, 2017.

Dear Mr Alun Davies, Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language,

Re. Inter-Governmental Working Group on the Brexit Effect on the Celtic languages.

On behalf of the European Language Equality Network, which works to represent the 55 million speakers of European regional or minority languages and with member organisations in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Cornwall, I am writing to you to express our concerns about the potentially disastrous effect of Brexit on the Celtic languages.

On May 30th the Cross Party Group for Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament discussed the issue. At the meeting we called for a special inter-governmental working group to be set up immediately to deal with, and to provide solutions for, the negative effect of Brexit on Celtic language speaking communities. It would comprise the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Irish Government, the Executive in the north of Ireland, Cornwall Council, ELEN and language NGOs.

The EU, the UK, and the autonomous governments have been strong supporters of regional or minority languages, linguistic diversity and our shared cultural heritage. It is vital that these institutions continue to act to support the Celtic languages, most of which are defined as endangered and need support for their revitalisation, and to ensure that this sector is represented during the forthcoming Brexit negotiations.

Brexit will have a profoundly negative effect for all of the Celtic languages spoken in the UK. These language communities in Wales, Scotland, the north of Ireland, and Cornwall, are faced not only with losing direct funding via programmes such as Erasmus Plus and Horizon 2020, but, more importantly, indirect funding from structural funds such as the Social Fund, Regional Development Fund, Interreg, Growth, LEADER and EAFRD, all of which have created sustainable employment for Celtic language speakers in sectors such as agriculture, fishing, construction, engineering, tourism, and higher and further education.

The UK Government has said that existing funding will be guaranteed only for another 2.5 years until 2020. In addition, with a hard Brexit, or no deal at all, there will be the huge loss of access to the European markets with the potential of trade tariffs and border controls which will affect all economic sectors. In the Brexit negotiations it will be vital for our governments to make the case for the economic well-being of our language communities and to ensure that we continue to receive the support that we need to ensure the long-term sustainability of our languages and cultures.

Welsh will be particularly badly affected as so much of rural and urban Wales receives EU funding (and noting that the majority Welsh-speaking areas voted to Remain). For example, under WTO rules lamb exports will be taxed by an extra 40%, meaning that Welsh hill farmers' livelihoods will be severely affected. Most of these farmers live their lives through the medium of Welsh and they underpin the fabric of rural Welsh-speaking society.

Similarly, the areas of Scotland with high levels of Gaelic speakers will be affected. Many are crofters and fishermen who will be affected by the trade barriers; others work in construction and many more in tourism which are also supported through European funding.

In the north of Ireland cross-border funding programmes such as PEACE IV, Leader and Interreg will all be discontinued, all of which are used to support Irish language projects. In terms of continuing support for the language, our governments must help the Irish language community to ensure that language planning and development continues on an all-Ireland basis, help ensure that any potential new border rules have no impact on Irish language funding, planning and development, and uphold the Good Friday Agreement which underpins the peace process.

Over the last few years Irish language groups have increased their participation in European funded projects, many of those groups will now be disqualified from applying because they are located in the north. It will also affect groups in the south who would be making joint applications with groups in the north, and who will be delivering projects through the medium of Irish. Many of these projects will no longer be viable.

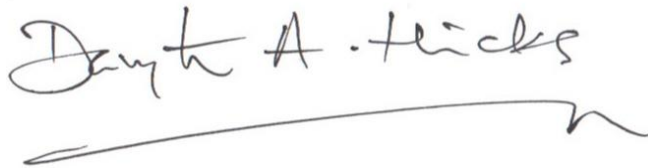
It is a situation that we find unacceptable, and coming at a time where we are doing crucial work to revitalize Irish, Welsh, Gaelic and Cornish.

To conclude, we call upon the Welsh Government to support our initiative to swiftly set up an intergovernmental working group to address the impact of Brexit on the Celtic languages. This could be done as a stand-alone working group that meets on an *ad hoc* basis in order to formulate a joint response and action from governments and NGOs as the Brexit negotiations get under way. Or, it could be set up under the auspices of the Indigenous and Minority Language Group of the British-Irish Council.

Furthermore, given that Welsh will be the language most adversely affected by Brexit we suggest that the Welsh Government consider leading on this initiative.

Should you wish to discuss these issues further please feel free to contact me at the address below.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Davyth A. Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Davyth Hicks
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ELEN represents 44 lesser-used languages with 150 member organisations in 22 European states and has consultative status with the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the UN and UNESCO.

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language & Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales

20th June 2017

Dear Bethan,

I am writing in response to your letter of 24 May 2017 regarding the appointment of a new BBC Board Member for Wales. In your letter you have asked for the consent of Welsh Ministers to be withheld until after a pre-appointment hearing with your Committee.

Policy responsibility for Broadcasting is not devolved. Although the consent of the Welsh Ministers is required before the Board Member for Wales can be appointed, the recruitment and appointment process is not determined by the Welsh Government, although we are of course consulted and are represented on the recruitment panel. Ultimately however, this process is determined and managed by the UK Government. It is therefore not within my powers to introduce a pre-appointment hearing. It is clear that the process would also need to be consistent for all nation member appointments. I know that the Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language plans to discuss this matter with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and his counterparts in the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, in relation to future appointments of BBC Board Members representing the nations. It is a matter for you as to whether you wish to have a similar discussion with the Chairs of the relevant Parliamentary or Assembly Committees in the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland, who would need to agree they should be similarly be involved in the future appointments for their respective nations.

The recruitment process to appoint a Welsh Board Member is currently live and interviews are expected to take place in late June. I would expect the person subsequently appointed to make themselves available to the Committee for scrutiny at an appropriate time, as early as possible following their appointment.

Yours sincerely



CARWYN JONES

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