



Delyth Jewell MS
Chair
Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport
and International Relations Committee
Senedd Cymru

7 December 2022

Dear Chair,

I am writing in response to your letter of 4 November which requested further information following my attendance at the Committee's annual scrutiny session of International Relations on 23 June.

FIFA World Cup in Qatar

On 15 November, the Minister for Economy gave an oral statement reiterating the Welsh Government's key objectives for the FIFA men's world cup in Qatar:

- to promote Wales;
- to project our values;
- to ensure the safety of Welsh citizens; and,
- to secure a positive legacy from our participation.

These are shared objectives, working in partnership with the FAW and many others, to create a Team Cymru approach to deliver joint activity.

The World Cup is a global event so, in addition to the in-market activity in Qatar, I am pleased that there is a range of activity being hosted, or co-hosted, by our offices overseas as well as a global marketing campaign. Events overseas include business and diaspora events, match screenings and sports diplomacy, Welsh language events and cultural celebrations.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

To ensure that we secure a positive and lasting legacy, we will evaluate all our activities in supporting the World Cup to learn lessons from these interventions for future sports diplomacy opportunities.

Overseas engagement

As stated during the scrutiny meeting, I will arrange for my officials notify the Committee of the visits which have taken place to show our engagement with other countries and regions. My officials will notify the Committee directly, providing retrospective summary each month from December of all diplomatic visits and ministerial visits overseas.

International strategy and action plan reporting

Monthly reports are issued to the three Ministers with portfolio responsibility for the International Strategy and its action plans. These are internal reports which also inform the internal Welsh Government reporting mechanism – the Business Information Reporting Tool (BIRT). BIRT tracks progress against the Programme for Government deliverables, which includes activity in the International Strategy.

Support for Exporters

With regards to Welsh Government support for exporters, I can confirm that there are multiple sources of assistance for Welsh companies to support their export ambitions, depending on the type of support they need. Since November 2019, Business Wales has supported 4,385 businesses, with 485 specifically receiving advice on their growth plans including exports and trade. Of the 485 businesses, 167 have gone on to be supported with bespoke specialised one-to-one advice. 61 of these companies are in the foundational economy sectors.

In addition, a comprehensive range of bespoke export support, as outlined in the Export Action Plan for Wales, is provided by the Welsh Government's Export and Food and Drink teams. Since April 2019, these teams have provided over 1,500 export support interventions to businesses in Wales. The type of export support intervention provided varies depending on business needs, but typically could include:

- assistance to develop an export strategy;
- support for specialist export skills training;
- research and identifying new export markets;
- identifying potential new customers in target markets; and
- support to visit overseas markets (including participation in overseas trade missions, exhibitions and events).

Furthermore, Export Clusters (covering 6 key sectors) have been established and currently include over 250 Welsh businesses focussed on their export development; whilst the online Export Hub, on the Business Wales platform, has around 300 registered users and provides access to a comprehensive source of information on international trade. There is also an ongoing series of webinars provided for Welsh businesses to understand export processes and market opportunities, culminating in the annual export conference – Explore Export Wales – to further promote awareness and the benefits of exporting.

Information is not available on the number of referrals made by Business Wales to the Welsh Government teams. Business Wales measures the effectiveness of its support by measuring the increase to the value of exports in each business supported. In the last three years, the increase in exports as a result of Business Wales support is £302.6m. The Welsh Government's Export and Food and Drink teams use specific metrics to evaluate their support programmes, as set out in the Export Action Plan. Success is measured only where financial support or a funded programme has been provided through, for example, a trade mission or supporting a visit to market. Based on this, since April 2019, in excess of £132m of new export deals have been secured by Welsh companies as a direct result of support via Welsh Government funded export programmes.

Memoranda of Understanding

A list of Country and Regional level MOUs was published in [Annex A to the International Strategy](#) in January 2020. Since its publication, I have signed two further agreements – the [Joint statement with Ireland](#) signed in March 2021, and an [MOU with Oita Prefecture](#) signed in March 2022.

My officials would be happy to update the Committee when new MOUs are agreed, and I will provide an updated list when I submit the annual report.

Bi-lateral agreements of this nature are not normally published, this is in line with UK Government protocol. However, my officials can set out the parameters of any new agreement, what policy areas will be covered etc. when they update on any new agreements.

Indigenous languages

On 19 May, I met with the Director for Language Observation and Standardisation and the Chief of Staff from Sprakradet – the Norwegian Language Council in Oslo.

The Language Council gave a presentation which reflected its organisational structure, its work to promote Nynorsk - the standard version of Norwegian - and included a history of the attempt to standardise Norwegian across the country in the 1950s. Council staff reported that one of the current significant challenges is the prevention of language domain loss in universities and digital contexts where English can often be used. The Council publishes a report on the state of the language every four years.

The Norwegian Language Act 2022 is the first of its kind aiming to protect and promote the languages of Norway. It recognises Norwegian and Sami as official languages and that languages have equality. It aims to promote language use in all domains, strengthen the Sami language while recognising minority languages like Kven and sign language. It also sets out that the minority local language in a region/municipality should appear first and serves to protect place names and covers Norwegian, Sami, Kven and Forest Finn.

There was a great deal of synergy between efforts in Norway and Wales in terms of language planning and place-name protection. Following the meeting, officials shared contacts from the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division and Education Directorate in order that information could be shared.

The news story the Language Council produced to mark the meeting is here: [Berre engelsk i Storbritannia? Niks! \(sprakradet.no\)](#) More information about the Council can be found on its website: [The Language Council of Norway \(sprakradet.no\)](#)

Mark Drakeford

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