

Delyth Jewell AS
Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon a Chysylltiadau
Rhyngwladol
Senedd Cymru
Caerdydd
CF99 1SN

23 November 2023

Dear Chair,

Response to Committee Report — Wales-Ireland Relations

Thank you for the copy of your recent report. The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) is an important element of the Senedd's inter-parliamentary work, recognised and appreciated by Members of all parties. As Llywydd and Chair of the Commission, I support this work so that the participating Members and subsequently, the Senedd as a whole, benefits from this political structure.

I note recommendation number 15, relating to the work of the Senedd and requesting a view from the Commission on the potential increase in the number of BIPA committees, considerations on increasing the number of Senedd representatives and filling the vacant seat.

Whilst I wish to support BIPA activity as much as possible, matters relating to the BIPA structures, including any increase in the size of the Senedd delegation, are ultimately matters for the Senedd. Similarly, nominations to the BIPA delegation are made by the political groups and, per BIPA rules, reflect the political makeup of the Senedd. I am aware that Commission officials have drawn the specific recommendation - as well as the wider issues raised in the report - to the attention of the Senedd's nominated BIPA delegates, who may wish to respond to the Committee.



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The Commission's direct involvement in BIPA is to provide support for Senedd representation at BIPA plenary meetings and BIPA sub-committee attendance. This currently includes funding the cost of Member travel and providing research and administrative support for Members participating in BIPA activities. As such, BIPA is a key element in the delivery of the Senedd Commission's International Framework, which provides accountability, clarity and direction to the international parliamentary activity resourced by the Senedd Commission. It serves as the foundation for organising priorities for support provided. One of the principles of the framework states:

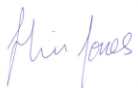
"... our international activities will:

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;"

As this report highlights, BIPA is one forum for bilateral engagements between Wales and Ireland, but indeed there are other methods that the Senedd and its political structures can implement to promote bi-lateral relations, and the Commission's International Framework facilitates that work.

Any increase in BIPA activities may give rise to resource implications. Recognising the importance of BIPA, the Commission would consider any implications as part of its business and budget planning, in consultation with relevant Members, in light of the commitments in the International Framework.

Kind regards,



Rt. Hon. Elin Jones MS

Llywydd and Chair of the Senedd Commission

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

