

UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly: Fifth meeting summary report

May 2025

The Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA) is a formal body established under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). It plays an important role in overseeing the implementation of the TCA and all subsequent UK-EU agreements.

The fifth meeting of the PPA took place in Brussels on 17-18 March. This report provides a summary of the issues discussed of importance to Wales.

Delyth Jewell MS, Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and Hannah Blythyn MS, a member of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee participated in the fifth meeting and the report has therefore been agreed by them in that capacity.



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1. Roles and responsibilities

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) provides for the establishment of a UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA) as part of its governance structure, referred to as the ‘institutional framework’. This framework will oversee the TCA and all subsequent UK-EU agreements.

The TCA provides that the PPA should include members of the European Parliament and UK Parliament. The PPA has an important role to play in providing oversight of the implementation of the agreement.

It is the only body that can jointly hold the TCA Partnership Council to account. The Partnership Council is the body with overall responsibility for the TCA. It is made up of European Commission representatives and UK Government Ministers.

The PPA:

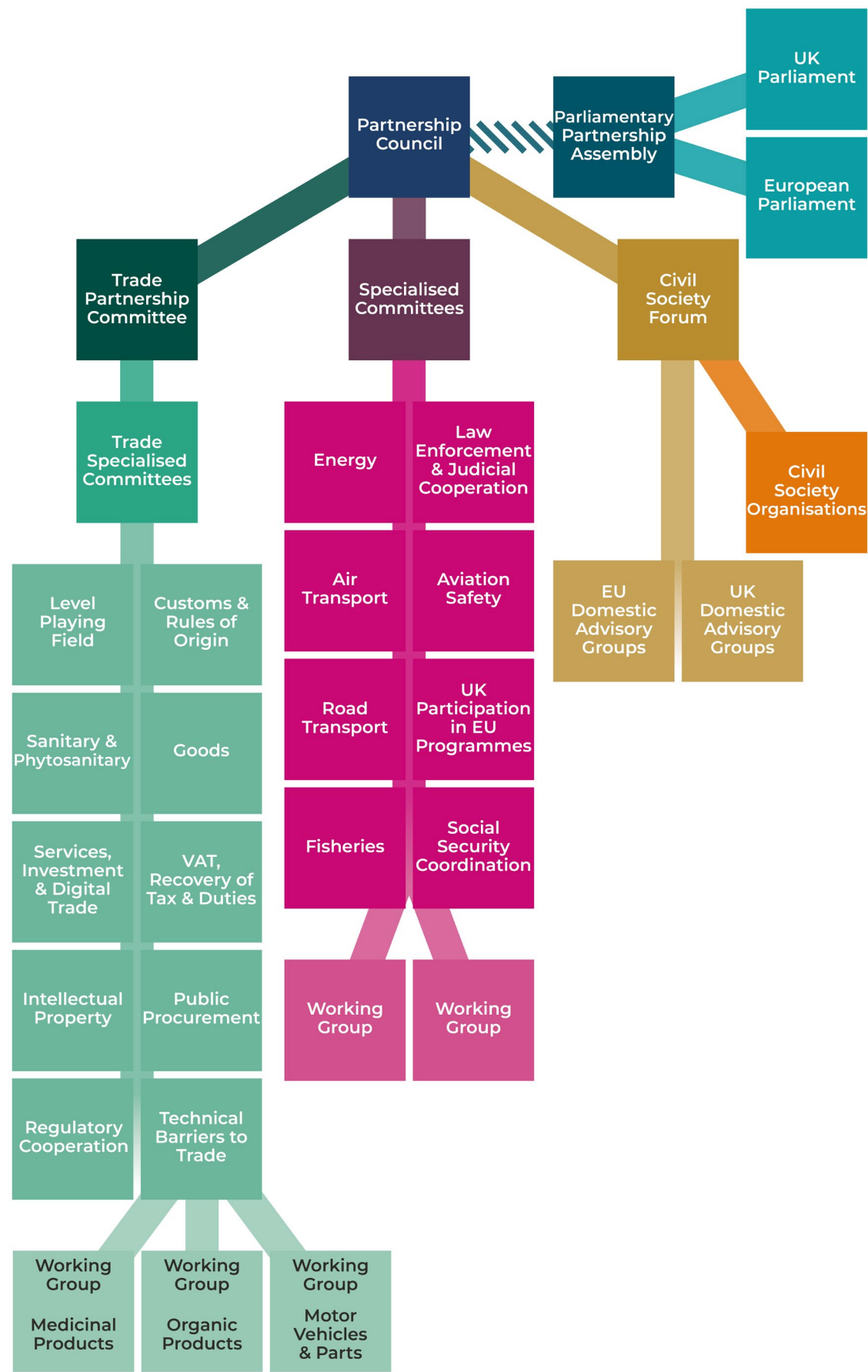
- can request information on the TCA and future UK-EU agreements from the Partnership Council, which must provide the information;
- must be informed of decisions and recommendations of the Partnership Council; and
- may make recommendations to the Partnership Council.

The PPA has also adopted its own rules of procedure since its establishment which set out how it will operate in practice.

The PPA is chaired jointly by a representative of the UK Parliament and of the European Parliament. The current co-Chairs are Marsha de Cordova MP and Sandro Gozi MEP. A full list of UK and European parliament delegations can be found on their respective websites.

The infographic below shows where the PPA sits within the TCA’s overarching institutional framework.

Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Institutional Framework



The role of the Senedd

The TCA does not provide a formal role for the UK's devolved legislatures, the EU's regions and cities, nor for civil society in the work of the PPA.

However, given that large parts of the TCA fall within areas of devolved competence or have an impact on them, the rules of procedure adopted allow for the devolved legislatures to be invited to attend meetings as observers. Representatives with observer status do not have ordinary speaking rights during Plenary sessions and have no voting rights.

The Senedd was invited to send two Senedd Members to the PPA. The Senedd's Chairs' Forum has decided that, given their respective remits, the Senedd should be represented by the Chair or a Member of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and the Chair or a Member of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee.

The proceedings are available to view on the [European Parliament website](#).

Senedd Member contributions

Senedd Members were asked to contribute to one Plenary agenda item of their choice and to participate fully at breakout groups.

Plenary

Delyth Jewells MS contributed to the Plenary agenda item on youth opportunities. She said:

At the Senedd, we hear time again how youth opportunities open doors to the world.

In November, my Committee which leads on culture and international relations, was here in Brussels to publish our report on the effects of Brexit on the culture sector, highlighting particularly for the first time the generational effects on young and emerging artists in Wales.

Our sectors are telling us how keenly they feel the loss of Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. They are calling on the UK to rejoin these schemes.

Baroness Bull was right when she spoke of “an opportunity hit for young people”. I’d add my voice entirely to her comments made earlier.

I’m sure we have all heard similarly heartbreaking stories – where young people are forced not to pursue new ventures, not to make life-changing connections, because those doors are now closed to them.

We support fully this Assembly’s predecessor’s recommendation recognising the situation is particularly challenging for young people. I hope we can take that further.

We must show them we can find solutions for their futures. If we cannot, we risk further alienating an entire generation. Because so much of what is being lost is not captured in graphs or statistics. Chances not taken, connections never made, lives unchanged for the better.

We owe it to young people today and to future generations not to become casualties of our carelessness. We owe it to them to offer hope.

Baroness Deborah Bull, who gave evidence to the Committee’s inquiry, said:

One additional mechanism for cultural exchange that’s often overlooked is Creative Europe, the EU’s flagship programme. The UK and its cultural organisations were highly valued partners and it had a major impact on projects in the UK’s nations and regions.

So, I echo the Welsh Senedd’s excellent Culture Shock report, as well as colleagues in Creative Scotland, who are calling for consideration of the UK’s reassociation to Creative Europe as these youth opportunities discussions move forward.



Hannah Blythyn MS and Delyth Jewell MS during the Plenary session

Breakout group: Data protection and AI

Hannah Blythyn MS participated in the breakout group on data protection and AI.

Delegates acknowledged the UK and EU's different approaches to AI regulation, and debated the threats and opportunities this brings. There was agreement that the current global situation, particularly developments in the US and China, could require the UK and the EU to cooperate and concerns were shared that multiple legal frameworks may offer opportunities for bad actors.

Hannah highlighted the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee's recent AI inquiry and emphasised that workers' voice and social dialogue are central to AI's impact on democracy and the workplace.

Delegates called for joint investment in research and development, and for urgent action.

Breakout group: Climate and energy cooperation

Delyth Jewell MS participated in the breakout group on climate and energy cooperation.

There was widespread acknowledgement that climate change harms the economy. Delegates supported the need for greater climate diplomacy in addition to existing commitments on energy security, decarbonization and

supply, including decoupling from Russian oil and gas. Supply chain due diligence was also highlighted as an important issue, as were the implications arising from the US' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

Delyth emphasised the important role played by different communities in responding to adverse weather events, such as flooding and coal tip slides, and the need to support their transition to renewables.

Potential areas for deeper UK-EU cooperation were put forward for emissions trading systems (ETS), carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAMs) and reducing the energy transition skills gap.



Delyth Jewell MS participating at the breakout group on climate and energy cooperation

2. Key issues for Wales and the Senedd

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement sets the terms for the UK-EU relationship after the Withdrawal Agreement withdrew the UK from the EU. Many of its provisions either fall within devolved competence or affect areas within devolved competence, from fisheries to healthcare cooperation.

More information about what these are, how these affect Wales and the role of the PPA is available in Senedd Research guides on the agreement.

State of play

The European Commission's Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Maroš Šefčovič, and the UK Government's Minister for EU Relations, Nick Thomas-Symonds, provided an update on the state of play from the Partnership Council. They each took the opportunity to set out their respective priorities for UK-EU relations.

Commissioner Šefčovič outlined several key issues for the EU, including citizens' rights, and three broad priority areas for "enhancing strategic cooperation with the UK". These were security and resilience, "people to people contacts", including youth mobility, and the "protection of the planet and its resources".

UK Minister for EU Relations, Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, highlighted the UK Government's three priorities of security, safety and prosperity. He said the UK Government was ready to negotiate a security and defence partnership and also an SPS agreement. He reiterated the UK Government's red lines not to return to the EU's Single Market, customs union or to freedom of movement.



Hannah Blythyn MS and Delyth Jewell MS with co-Chairs Marsha de Cordova MP and Sandro Gozi MEP

Specific areas of cooperation

Over two days, the PPA debated specific areas of UK-EU cooperation of importance to Wales and the Senedd:

- Delegates emphasised the important role played by the UK and EU in **foreign policy, security and defence**, including through NATO, and in promoting peace and stability. They reaffirmed their support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression and for a lasting peace.
- On **trade, customs and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS)**, delegates welcomed the TCA's provisions on cooperation, level playing field,

procurement, zero-tariff zero-quotas, regulatory cooperation on subsidies and sustainable development. Delegates agreed that the parties' work closely together, including that TCA committee meetings provide useful forums to resolve issues, check shared understanding and to pre-empt issues arising. Successes were outlined alongside recognition that there is room for improvements. UK delegates noted areas for improvements include an SPS agreement, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and for touring artists and there were calls for the UK to reexamine its red lines. The importance of Welsh exports, including lamb exports, was raised by Monmouthshire MP, Catherine Fookes.

- Delegates expressed widespread support for increasing **youth opportunities** and received an update from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on its work. There were calls from both delegations for the UK to rejoin Erasmus, for a reciprocal strong youth mobility partnership and for a cultural exemption and reciprocal visa waiver for creative industries. Delegates from both parties' regretted the conflagration of mobility with freedom of movement. Delegates noted the need for arrangements to be broader in scope than university schemes and to include people from low-income and disadvantages backgrounds. In this regard, the EESC noted there are important lessons to be learned on inclusivity from the Welsh Government's international exchange programme, Taith.

3. Recommendations

Devolved legislatures have much to contribute to the PPA and our positive contributions to the breakout groups represent a valuable opportunity to raise issues and good practice from Wales.

To further develop the relationship between the Senedd and the PPA, we recommend:

Recommendation 1: The Chair and Vice-Chair of the UK delegation should explore hosting a meeting of the PPA in a devolved nation.

Recommendation 2: We welcome the opportunity to contribute to breakout groups and to address the Plenary for one agenda item of our choice. However, we continue to press for devolved representatives to participate fully where devolved matters are engaged.

Recommendation 3: We reiterate Recommendation 3 from a previous report, that Senedd representatives and relevant Senedd committees work together to develop informal relationships with UK and EU delegation members outside of the formal PPA meetings on areas of common interest.

Recommendation 4: As with previous reports, this report will be shared with relevant Senedd committees and the Welsh Government.



Delegates of the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly