



Ein cyf/Our ref: PO/FM/0010/25

Delyth Jewell MS
Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport
and International Relations Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

13 January 2026

Dear Delyth,

On 7 and 8 January 2026, I signed memoranda of understanding with the respective governments of Catalonia and the Basque Country. The agreements were signed following meetings with the President of Catalonia, M. H. Salvador Illa, in Barcelona and the Basque Country's Lehendakari, Imanol Pradales, in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

In line with our agreed protocol, I am writing to inform you of the details of those agreements and how they will enhance our relationship with each region.

The relationship between Wales and Catalonia is a long-standing one and, for many years, there have been calls to renew the bilateral agreement that used to be in place. This agreement formalises our commitment to this relationship between the Welsh Government and the Catalan government.

The Wales - Catalonia Memorandum of Understanding will support collaboration across a broad range of shared priorities, including:

- Equality, gender, human rights, and community engagement
- Language and cultural promotion and exchange
- Sustainable and responsible tourism
- Innovation, with a focus on semiconductors, cyber security and artificial intelligence
- Sustainable development, including climate neutrality and renewable energy
- Education, with particular emphasis on promoting exchanges between young people.

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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.

There is a four-year Action Plan to support the agreement. The Action Plan prioritises social progress, including cooperation on languages, cultural exchange and joint engagement in multilateral organisations. It also emphasises innovation, with collaboration on technology, AI, cybersecurity and research - alongside joint work on compound semiconductors.

Looking ahead, it promotes sustainable development, climate neutrality, vocational education exchange and expanded trade cooperation between Catalonia and Wales.

This renewed Memorandum of Understanding provides a solid platform to strengthen cooperation in areas where Wales and Catalonia share clear, long-term ambitions, from social progress and cultural exchange to innovation and future focused policies. The Action Plan sets out concrete work on languages, culture, youth mobility, sustainability and multilateral engagement ensuring our collaboration is practical and people-centred.

Wales and Catalonia both hold real strengths in advanced technologies, including compound semiconductors, mobility technologies, artificial intelligence and cyber security. Through existing international networks and our own bilateral relationship, there is a major opportunity to align our research ecosystems, support joint projects and position our regions as European leaders in emerging technologies.

Both of our governments are committed to climate neutrality, renewable energy development and sustainable economic models. The Action Plan will deepen collaboration on green hydrogen, urban sustainability, natural resource management and skills development for the green transition.

Wales and the Basque Country have connections based on industrial heritage and longstanding links at governmental and institutional level. There are clear economic, learning, health, and cultural opportunities for Wales from joint cooperation.

By choosing Wales as the only new priority region in its Internationalisation Strategy (2018-20) the Basque Country demonstrated an appetite for a closer working relationship with Wales, an alignment of interests and evidence of the growth of our international activity and profile.

The renewed Wales - Basque Country agreement will provide a framework for collaboration across a wide range of sectors, including:

- Sustainable mobility and transport
- Renewable energy and climate change
- Technology and innovation
- The agri-food industry
- Education
- Fiscal strategy and policy, including tax administration and budget management
- Social policy
- Health
- Culture and language

Wales deeply values its longstanding relationship with the Basque Country, which is rooted in shared identity, culture and values. The new Memorandum of Understanding provides an important opportunity to consolidate this partnership and expand cooperation across a variety of areas.

As always, these formal agreements are just part of the story. Beyond formal ties, the partnership between Newport County AFC and Athletic Club Bilbao reflects a shared history of solidarity dating back to 1937, when 56 Basque children fleeing the Spanish Civil War were welcomed into Newport. This season, Newport's away kit takes on Bilbao's red and white colours as a tribute to those Basque Children of '37, with their names and symbolic Welsh Basque details woven into the design. The collaboration showcases how sport can honour shared heritage while strengthening community identity and cultural connection between Wales and the Basque Country.

I would like to thank Committee for your continued support and interest in our international relationships. Whilst we have a number of agreements now in place all are focussed on collaboration and delivery.

We have worked with the respective governments of Catalonia and the Basque Country to develop agreements with content and in a format that are agreeable for all. As we have previously set out you 'a templated approach' to these agreements is not always the most appropriate. I am pleased that we were able to develop these agreements in a way that is respectful of both governments' priorities and ways of working.

As set out in a previous letter to the Committee on 7 December 2022, we do not publish the full details of the agreements and, at the Committee's request, set up a webpage which summarises each agreement instead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eluned Morgan', written in a cursive style.

Eluned Morgan