

UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly: Sixth meeting summary report

February 2026

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 sixth meeting of the PPA took place in London on 17-18 November. 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 sixth meeting and the report has 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 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 proceedings are available to view on the UK Parliament's YouTube channel, 17 March Plenary session, 18 March Plenary session.

Senedd Member contributions

Senedd Members were asked to contribute to Plenary agenda items on two topics and to participate fully at breakout groups. The invitation to participate in two plenary items rather than one, as has previously been the case, is welcome progress.

Plenary

Delyth Jewell MS contributed to the Plenary agenda item on creative and cultural exchange. She said:

Four of our committees published a joint report on how the TCA operates in Wales, we heard once again about Brexit's adverse effects on touring artists and how UK participation in Creative Europe remains elusive.

Our artists are crying out for help, we must show them that we are listening. Touring artists have been handed one of Brexit's most intractable problems, it need not be so. Young artists in particular risk missing out on opportunities that cannot be measured as they never were.

We must ensure that we do not create a generation of lost chances, missed moments, broken dreams. We owe them nothing less than to ensure that does not happen. Culture connects us. Culture enriches us. Above all as the great Welshman Raymond Williams said 'culture is ordinary'. Let us do all we can to keep it as the treasure of the many and not the luxury of a few.

Hannah Blythyn MS spoke in the item on AI and digital cooperation, drawing particular attention to the need to consider workers' rights in UK-EU conversations. She said:

AI is the topic of our time, the automation of our age, bringing with it both opportunities and the need to balance challenges. In Wales, we want to get a better understanding of what AI means for the workforce and my Senedd committee's work on AI has recently reported on the potential impacts on both individual businesses and workers.

We have called for greater analysis on which groups are most likely to be impacted by job displacement in order to best place governments to mitigate against adverse effects.

We do need to move beyond the hype and focus on hope, working together with workers to put them front and centre of this. We have heard repeatedly that we don't want to be left behind but to make sure we leave no one behind, workers' rights should be at the heart of our discussions on AI in this Assembly and a collective approach and commitment to ethical AI is not just essential to our economies but to our democracies as well.



Hannah Blythyn MS and Delyth Jewell MS during the Plenary session
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Breakout group: Trade, supply chains and workers' rights

The need for a regular UK-EU social dialogue summit was a key recommendation from the breakout group. The group agreed a summit could help to ensure the protection of workers' rights features more 'systematically' in the UK-EU economic relationship.

Hannah Blythyn MS attended the breakout group which discussed the need for further action to reduce non-tariff barriers to trade between the UK and EU. This was an important issue highlighted in the cross-committee Senedd report on the implementation review of the TCA.

The discussion considered how the proper protection of workers' and social rights, in addition to tackling the cost of living, are key tools in tackling the rise of the far-right. The group discussed the shared challenge of ensuring sustainability in their supply chains and said that cooperation on this issue is critical.

Breakout group: Review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the 2026 UK-EU Summit

Delyth Jewell MS highlighted the key findings from the Senedd cross-committee [report on the implementation review of the TCA](#).

The [group agreed the TCA review](#) and the regular UK-EU summits should ensure the agreements governing the UK-EU relationship keep pace with the changing geo-political climate.

The group agreed the full potential of the TCA has not yet been maximised and the review should:

- map underused or unimplemented provisions, and set out a clear roadmap to exploit the potential of the TCA to the full including:*
- regulatory cooperation and dialogue,*
- financial services cooperation,*
- mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and*
- customs cooperation.*

On the Common Understanding agreement, the group agreed work on an SPS agreement, ETS-linkage, electricity trading, and UK participation in Erasmus+ should be accelerated.

Issues that should be a focus of the next UK-EU summit include support for touring artists and broader cultural and creative cooperation. The UK and EU should also develop a more long-term strategic approach to identifying areas for deepening cooperation, and where appropriate, alignment.



Delyth Jewell MS contributes to the TCA review breakout group

2. Key issues for Wales

The TCA 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.

State of play

The Common Understanding agreement and the progress resulting from the May UK-EU summit were welcomed in the Assembly's discussions, but the need to 'proceed swiftly' to implement commitments was emphasised. Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, UK Minister for EU relations, welcomed and agreed with calls for the 'need for speed' and urgency to implement agreements reached in May in his remarks to the PPA. He said this was critical to ensure citizens feel the benefits in their everyday lives.

The EU's Ambassador to the UK, Pedro Serrano, noted that what has been agreed shows a high level of ambition for closer cooperation and said the EU

hopes to have concluded agreements on a number of areas ahead of the next UK-EU summit in 2026. He also set out the European Commission's view that work is needed to fully implement the Windsor Framework and citizens' rights provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement are needed.

The recommendation adopted by the Assembly sets out the need for work and progress by the UK and EU.

The co-chairs of the Assembly called for greater parliamentary engagement in the 2026 UK-EU summit to enhance transparency and the democratic accountability of its outcomes.

Specific areas of cooperation

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

- The EU's proposals for **steel tariffs** were discussed in the Plenary and breakout groups. Concern about the impacts on the UK were expressed by UK members. The EU's Ambassador to the UK said the EU's proposals foresees a similar regime to the current one for GB-Northern Ireland steel movements and that specific country and product quotas would be discussed with the UK. The recommendation adopted by the Assembly called for this to be done at the 'earliest opportunity' and for collaboration to take place between the UK and EU at fora like the Global Forum on Steel Excess capacity and the OECD Steel Committee.
- On **creative and cultural exchange**, delegates once again expressed strong support for further and more comprehensive measures to support touring artists. Delegates spoke of the need to ensure the opportunities available to young people are not less than those afforded to previous generations. Addressing the Assembly, Richard Szostak, Director of Western European Partner at the European Commission, said the issue of touring artists is more challenging than may appear on the surface but the European Commission notes the strength of feeling on this issue which it will report to Member States. He said the European Commission is 'open to hearing ideas' for how issues could be resolved. He highlighted the increased investment by the EU in its Creative Europe programme and noted the opportunities for third party countries to participate in it. Rejoining Creative Europe is a key priority for the culture sector in Wales, as set out in the Senedd

committees' TCA review report. The UK Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts, Ian Murray MP, ~~told the Assembly~~ that the existing UK-EU agreements and the commitments reached in Common Understanding should be viewed as a 'floor' and not a 'ceiling' to future cooperation between the UK and the EU. He urged the Assembly to continue its collective work on this issue, setting out his view that Assembly discussions will be a key part of the political context for further agreements at the next UK-EU summit.

- On **climate and energy**, the view that UK-EU cooperation is essential to lowering energy costs and ensuring energy security was reiterated. There was support for the principle of linking the UK and EU emissions trading schemes but concern was expressed about the potential impact of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on trade. They called for temporary exemptions to be provided while negotiations on linkage continue, particularly for Northern Ireland. The Assembly said agreeing interim measures could avoid unwanted costs and impacts for industries and households in the UK and EU.

3. Recommendations

~~As we have noted previously,~~ devolved legislatures have much to contribute to the PPA. The number of devolved issues discussed in this most recent meeting alone highlights the necessity of ensuring that we are fully engaged in the work of the Assembly. This will be more important than ever as negotiations for closer alignment on fully devolved areas such as SPS and emissions trading continue and conclude.

We welcome the opportunity to have contributed to more than one item in Plenary and the opportunity afforded to us by the UK Co-chair to input ideas for agenda items in advance. These are important developments in the role of the devolved legislatures and we hope they are now adopted as routine practices. We reiterate two of our recommendations in our last report and will continue to explore opportunities to further this work with colleagues in the PPA.

Recommendation 1: We welcome improvements in the engagement and role of the devolved legislatures in the work of the PPA. These important developments should be adopted as routine practice.

Recommendation 2: We continue to press for devolved representatives to participate fully in the PPA interparliamentary meetings where devolved matters are engaged.

Recommendation 3: The Co-chairs of the PPA should explore hosting a UK meeting of the PPA in a devolved nation.

This report will be shared with relevant Senedd committees and the Welsh Government as with previous reports.



Delegates of the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly
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