

Mrs Maria Miller, Chair
Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
ELGC(5)-01-18 Papur 14 / Paper 14

12 December 2017

Dear Mrs Miller

Inquiry into human rights in Wales

Thank you for your letter dated 12 October. I am writing with an update of our [inquiry into human rights in Wales](#). Since beginning the inquiry, the Committee has narrowed the scope to focus on the impact of Brexit on human rights.

At its meeting on 19 October, the Committee discussed the Brexit negotiations and heard from Rebecca Hilsenrath, the Chief Executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Committee agreed a set of core principles that we consider should be adhered to during the Brexit process in relation to human rights and equality.

We will monitor progress against these principles and will be looking for opportunities to work with our counterpart parliamentary committees across the UK on these issues.

Our core principles are that:

- there should be no regression in human rights and equality protections as a result of Brexit;



- Wales should establish a formal mechanism to track future developments in human rights and equality in the EU to ensure that Welsh citizens benefit from the same level of protection as EU citizens; and
- Wales should continue to be a global leader in human rights, and commit to bringing forward legislation to fill any gaps in rights and protection if the UK Government does not do so (where possible).

We are of the view that the Charter of Fundamental Rights must be preserved in some form after withdrawal from the EU. We welcome the statement made by the First Minister on 24 October supporting the efforts to ensure that the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill continues to respect the Charter after Brexit. We also welcome the UK Government's commitment to publish the analysis of how Charter rights will be protected after the UK leaves the EU.

We welcome your report on 'Ensuring strong equalities legislation after the EU exit', in particular your call for the Equality Act 2010 to be amended to give the rights enshrined in the Act similar protection to those in the Human Rights Act. We also support the other recommendations in this report in relation to:

- Ensuring that the loss of the framework provided by the EU does not lead to a reduction or weakening of equalities protections;
- Clarity on the status of future EU case law once the UK has left the EU;
- Ensuring that funding is available so that UK research and civil society can maintain international links; and
- Assessment of the levels of EU funding and work should then be done to identify and develop alternative sources of funding, both state and non-state sources.

We share your disappointment with the UK Government's response to the report. While we welcome the UK Government's commitment to bring forward an amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill that will ensure Ministers have to




demonstrate that legislation relating to Brexit is compatible with the Equality Act 2010, However, we believe that this should be widened, in line with the recommendations you made, to cover all legislation, and not just that which is directly related to withdrawal from the European Union.

As a Committee we are keen that our concerns are heard at a UK level, and would welcome any opportunities for joint working with our counterpart committees, including the Women and Equalities Committee. I understand that our clerks are working to find a date that is convenient for all.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course, and would be grateful for a response by **Friday 26 January 2018**.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths AM
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

