

Eluned Morgan AM

Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language

Welsh Government

2 April 2019

Dear Eluned,

**The impact of Brexit on the arts, creative industries, heritage and the Welsh language.**

Thank you for agreeing to answer questions which arose during the Assembly Plenary session on 13 March 2019 following my statement on the impact of Brexit on the arts, creative industries, heritage and the Welsh language.

I know you share my concerns that leaving the European Union will have a hugely detrimental effect on our creative industries, rural economy and ability to promote Wales globally.

My statement addressed the issues raised in the [report](#) of the inquiry into this issue carried out by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee published in November 2018.

I am grateful for the detailed [response](#) to the Committee's recommendations you provided in January 2019. Some of the issues which were raised in the Plenary session have been addressed in your response, such as the need to have continued membership of Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. However, there are some other points which would be useful to clarify.

**Welsh language**

Our inquiry report details the concerns we have about the risk to the Welsh language if the rural economy suffers, particularly from a change in the level of funding support via the Common Agricultural Policy framework.

These concerns were raised by David Melding AM and Suzy Davies AM after my statement. David commented on the risk to Welsh speaking rural economies from agricultural tariffs and the need mitigate the costs in the short term, while Suzy noted that the Welsh language was not given due

regard in the Government's policy proposals for agricultural support in 'Brexit and our land'.

During our inquiry, we heard from Meirion Prys Jones, the former Chief Executive of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity and also the Welsh Language Board, who called for the maintenance of the Welsh Language to be named as one of the Government's principles in this policy area.

In response to our recommendation on assessing the risks to Welsh-speaking communities from Brexit, you said:

we are committed through the changes proposed in the recent consultation 'Brexit: Our Land' to keeping farmers on the land, and to working with them to create a better, more prosperous future for their sector.

The Committee have since discussed the need to highlight the risk to the Welsh language as a result of the threat to our agricultural sector from Brexit. We are recommending the Welsh Government identifies the maintenance of the Welsh language as a key principle underpinning its support for delivering the public goods scheme.

Will the maintenance of the Welsh language be named as one of the 'key principles to guide future support' as set out in Chapter 4 of ['Brexit and Our Land'](#)?

### **Welsh language impact assessments**

In your response to our report, you say:

We have already committed to undertaking a Welsh Language Impact Assessment on our final proposals following consideration of consultation responses [to 'Brexit and Our Land']. We will do likewise for other policy changes that will be required as a consequence of Brexit.

However, Suzy Davies AM questioned whether Welsh language impact assessments were an integral part of the Welsh Government's process of preparing for Brexit, in particular, for a 'no deal' Brexit scenario. She is concerned that this issue has not been answered directly in evidence provided to other Assembly Committees.

Please can you provide evidence that the Welsh Government has carried out a Welsh language impact assessment on your Brexit policies and 'no deal' scenario preparations?

Finally, I note from your response to our report that you have been in correspondence with the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to the potential impact of Brexit on the Welsh language.

Please can you provide the Committee with a summary of your discussions with the Welsh Language Commissioner and any agreed actions?

### **Modern languages**

During the debate following my statement Delyth Jewell AM and Rhianon Passmore AM commented on the importance of studying modern languages and their concerns at the declining numbers of pupils who are opting to do so. This was also raised in our inquiry. It was suggested that schools in Wales will struggle to recruit modern language teachers as a result of Brexit. Also, in the event that the UK is not a part of the Erasmus+ scheme it will mean students are deprived of a valuable cultural learning experience in Europe.

I know that on the same day I made my statement, the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, was asked about the BBC poll which found that 'Wales has seen a bigger decline in pupils learning foreign languages than in any other part of the United Kingdom'. She responded that over £2.5 million has been invested on the Global Futures plan, to enable learners to understand the importance of languages and, under Wales's new curriculum, learners will experience languages from an earlier age.

The Committee noted your response to our report recommendation on this issue:

The approach within the new curriculum aims to address this decline however it is also important that we assess the impact that Brexit may have on the current situation in relation to language learning in schools and universities in Wales.

Please can you provide an update on the work being done to assess the impact of Brexit on the current situation in relation to language learning in schools and universities in Wales?

I made a commitment to Suzy Davies AM to follow up on her query about the Welsh Conservatives' campaign for a 'trilingual Wales' which was launched when she was opposition spokesperson on education. She said 'That general principle was noted by the Minister for Education at the time, and it became part of Government policy, so I would like to receive some assurance from the Minister, perhaps, that that remains the case, in terms of Government policy'.

Please can you confirm that the Wales as a trilingual nation policy continues to be endorsed by the Welsh Government?

Please can you respond to the questions highlighted in this letter by **26 April** so that we can inform our stakeholders?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bethan Sayed." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bethan Sayed

**Chair of the Committee**



Our ref MA-P/EM/1545/19

Bethan Sayed AM  
Chair, Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

29 April 2019

Dear Bethan,

### **The impact of Brexit on the arts, creative industries, heritage and the Welsh language**

Thank you for your letter of 2 April further to the statement you made in Plenary on 19 March on the Committee's report on the impact of Brexit on the arts, creative industries, heritage and Welsh language.

You have raised a number of questions with regard to the Welsh language and modern languages, which I answer in turn. Where relevant, the responses represent the views of the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs and the Minister for Education and Skills for the relevant matters which fall in their respective portfolios.

### **Welsh Language**

**Question 1:** *Will the maintenance of the Welsh language be named as one of the 'key principles to guide future support' as set out in Chapter 4 of 'Brexit and Our Land'?*

**Response:** The Minister for EERA will be making a formal statement on the outcome of the Brexit and our land consultation in May, which will contain further detail on future support proposals.

**Question 2:** *Please can you provide evidence that the Welsh Government has carried out a Welsh language impact assessment on your Brexit policies and 'no deal' scenario preparations?*

**Response:** In relation to *Brexit: Our Land*, the Minister for EERA has clarified it is too soon to carry out impact assessments at this point until policy proposals have been developed

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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.

further. We have committed to undertake a full range of impact assessments in due course, including for the Welsh language.

We will do likewise for other policy changes that will be required as a consequence of Brexit.

As I have previously noted, our approach in terms of assessing the risk of the impact of Brexit on Welsh speaking communities and on the Welsh language more generally will be to do so on a continuous basis as part of our *Cymraeg 2050* strategy programme monitoring.

The Welsh language exists within the context of communities of speakers. *Cymraeg 2050* is clear that the continued vitality of Welsh in communities where there are high percentages of Welsh speakers is inextricably linked to the sustainability of those communities as economically viable places in which Welsh speakers can remain, or return, if they so wish. As such, assessing the potential impact of Brexit on the demography of the Welsh language and on the use of Welsh in those communities can only meaningfully be undertaken as part of wider modelling of the resilience of those communities to Brexit. To this end we have been working with stakeholders through the ERA Roundtable Forum to look at the potential geographic vulnerability of communities across Wales to a variety of Brexit scenarios.

**Question 3:** *Please can you provide the Committee with a summary of your discussions with the Welsh Language Commissioner and any agreed actions?*

I agreed with the previous Welsh Language Commissioner that Brexit should be a standing item in our quarterly meetings. I will wish to continue those discussions with Aled Roberts. The Commissioner's Office has shared with us evidence it has presented to various Assembly Committees and policy consultations.

## **Modern Languages**

**Question 4:** *Please can you provide an update on the work being done to assess the impact of Brexit on the current situation in relation to language learning in schools and Universities in Wales.*

**Response:** Global Futures is Welsh Government's plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales. The approach is led by a steering group which includes a diverse range of stakeholders including Universities, The British Council, regional consortia and language institutes. Members of the group have been involved in research into the effects of Brexit on language learning both in Wales and across the UK as a whole. These include a paper by the British Council on '*Languages for the Future*' (2017) and a paper by Claire Gorrara Professor of French Studies at Cardiff University, '*Speaking from Wales: Building a Modern Languages Community in an era of Brexit*' (2017). The British Council runs an annual Language Trends Survey which assesses attitudes and approaches to learning languages in Wales and which includes questions on the impact of Brexit. The analysis from these surveys and studies is shared with all members of the group and forms an evidence base for decisions made in taking forward the Global Futures plan. These have included developing the student mentoring programme to include a greater focus on intercultural skills and proposals to extend the teaching of international languages in primary schools as part of the new curriculum.

## *Erasmus+*

Wales has benefitted significantly from Erasmus and the Welsh Government wants to continue to be a full member of the programme, or whatever scheme replaces it. The UK Government has failed to give assurances that we will be able to continue to participate in

Erasmus+. That is why we will continue to make the case for our universities, colleges and schools to be a full part of the programme and make sure our European links continue, despite Brexit.

The EU has published its proposed regulations covering the next Erasmus scheme from January 2021 to 2027. This provides a framework for third country participation. The UK Government has sought the view of the Devolved Administrations on these proposals. The Withdrawal Agreement – if agreed – provides for the UK to continue to participate in Erasmus to the end of the current scheme in December 2020. In the event of a “no deal” scenario, the UK Government underwrite guarantee would apply. It is the UK Government’s responsibility to deliver this guarantee and its extension. It is unclear as to the stage negotiations have reached with the Commission on this matter.

The UK Government holds regular discussions with the Devolved Administrations to update on progress with plans for the guarantee. The Welsh Government has been working even more with our universities to strengthen international links for the benefits of researchers, institutions, economic regions and the nation as a whole. We have funded the British Council to develop, deliver and evaluation a mobility programme focussing on providing a wider range of opportunities, for example to Vietnam for those young people from deprived areas where take up has generally been lower. We are keen to learn from best practice around the world and crucially to share our areas of expertise with those who can learn from us. These exchanges can be mutually beneficial to both participating countries.

### *Teacher Recruitment*

We anticipate limited impact in terms of teacher supply from Brexit. Currently the EWC are able to register teachers from the European Union who wish to practice in Wales (providing their qualifications and QTS is comparable to Wales’ requirements) and we have put in place measures to enable this to continue in the event of a No Deal Brexit with ‘The Teachers’ Qualifications (Amendment) (Wales) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019” that we have laid. These provide for the arrangements to continue and further, in the event of a No-Deal exit, enable Welsh Ministers to consider (in the same way as we consider applications from EU nations) the qualifications of teachers from other nations. In the event of a deal we have the transition period where things are pretty much status quo, and assuming no changes are required following the transition period these amendments to regulations can be brought into force (in a lift and shift arrangement).

Guidance has been prepared for schools on Brexit issues and includes the paragraphs below:

- Currently EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss qualified teachers have the right to have their professional status and qualifications considered for the award of Qualified Teacher Status in Wales. EU EEA EFTA and Swiss professionals whose qualifications have been recognised before the exit date, or who have applied for a recognition decision before that time, will retain this right in a no deal exit. There will be no retrospective change for people who have already had their EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss professional status and qualifications recognised and been awarded Qualified Teacher Status in Wales.
- In a No Deal scenario, the current system of reciprocal recognition of professional qualifications between the EU, EEA EFTA and Switzerland and the UK will not apply after the exit date. This does not affect those who have already had their qualifications recognised in the UK or have applied for a recognition decision before the exit date.

- After we leave the EU, we will ensure that professionals with EU EEA EFTA or Swiss qualifications, including teachers, will still have a means to seek recognition of their professional qualifications through a new system. Further information will be published shortly on GOV.UK.
- The arrangements above are without prejudice to the rights and privileges accorded, by virtue of the Common Travel Area, to Irish and UK citizens when in each other's state.

**Question 5:** *Please can you confirm that the Wales as a trilingual nation policy continues to be endorsed by the Welsh Government.*

**Response:** The 'Bilingual plus 1' strategy was announced in 2015 as part of the Global Futures 5-year plan to help reverse the UK-wide decline in the take up of modern foreign languages (MFL) in Wales.

Concerns have been raised however that some schools are interpreting 'Bilingual plus 1' literally, based on the erroneous assumption that 'plus one' indicates the offer of a single modern language only, to the exclusion of a second or more modern languages in schools in Wales. We have clarified with all stakeholders that, it is neither the intention nor the stated aim of the 'Bilingual plus 1' strategy for schools to limit the choice of modern languages offered to a single language. Such limitation would run contrary to the ethos of *Global Futures*, which seeks to support and broaden, rather than narrow, language learning and language diversity in the curriculum.

Languages are an essential element in realising the four purposes of the new *Curriculum for Wales*. The new curriculum will bring together Welsh, English and International Languages in the Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) Area of Learning and Experience (AOLE). The term International Languages will be used to encompass modern languages, community languages, classical languages and British Sign Language (BSL). Learners will develop from showing an awareness of the languages and cultures around them at school and in the community to showing an understanding of multicultural societies and plurilingualism both here in Wales and across the world. Progression in an International Language will be shown from Progression Step 3 (by the end of primary school). The draft curriculum proposes that all learners will have opportunities to learn at least one international language alongside Welsh and English and this will replace the 'bilingual plus one' strategy. Skills and knowledge in listening and reading, speaking and writing and in literature developed in one language support their development in another language, no matter which language came first.

Yours sincerely,



**Eluned Morgan AC/AM**

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol  
Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language