

Correspondence from Dr Anthony Soares, Centre for Cross Border Studies

Dear Mr Rees AM,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee to respectfully request an opportunity to appear before members of the Committee in order to inform them of the content and objectives of the New Common Charter for Cooperation Within and Between these Islands, and to seek the Committee's support.

The New Common Charter (attached) represents a grass-roots vision for cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, and between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and is the result of a process of intensive dialogue initiated in early 2015 involving community groups from all jurisdictions on these islands.

This work has been taken forward by the Centre for Cross Border Studies as part of its "Towards a New Common Chapter" project, and has involved Welsh organisations in its latter stages.

Those stages involve a process of engagement with political representatives and policy-makers across these islands, and begins today with an appearance before the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, which comes before Monday's appearance before the 58th Plenary Session of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly.

We would welcome, therefore, the opportunity to discuss with the Committee how the New Common Charter could become an important vehicle in repairing and sustaining North-South (Northern Ireland-Ireland) and East-West (island of Ireland-Great Britain) relations in whatever context we will be facing as a result of the UK's negotiations on its withdrawal from the European Union.

However, we would also hope to raise awareness of the vital need for political representatives to ensure appropriate structures and policies are in place to support ongoing cooperation between community organisations within and between these islands.

I would be grateful if you would kindly consider this request and inform me of the Committee's decision.

Kind regards,

Anthony

Dr Anthony Soares
Acting Director
Centre for Cross Border Studies