

**Y Pwyllgor Materion Cyfansoddiadol a Deddfwriaethol
Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee**

First Vice-President
Frans Timmermans
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



27 February 2015

Dear First Vice-President Timmermans

**Effectively engaging sub-Member State parliaments/legislatures in
discussions on EU governance**

I am writing to you as Chair of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee at the National Assembly for Wales in the context of the debate on improving EU governance launched under the Italian Presidency of the EU and President Juncker's focus on democratic change in his political guidelines for the new Commission.

We place a high level of importance in the National Assembly for Wales on positive engagement in the EU policy and legislative process. We undertook an inquiry into Wales' role in EU decision-making during 2013-2014 and I attach a copy of our report for your information. It drew mainly positive conclusions about the way in which Wales engages with the EU decision-making process, its relationship with the European Commission and European Parliament, whilst also recognising some of the challenges we face at the sub-Member State level sitting outside the main formal structures of the EU Institutions.

As you will be aware sub-Member State parliaments and legislatures (in varying degrees) have key responsibilities in transposing EU legislation, in monitoring and scrutinising the compliance by their governments with EU obligations in those areas where it has competence. In Wales, the Assembly plays an important role in engaging the people of Wales in EU policy and law-making. This includes drawing attention to and explaining the relevance of EU policy/legislative developments, as well as acting as forum where Welsh

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Ffôn / Tel: 029 2089 8008
E-bost / Email: Gareth.williams@wales.gov.uk

stakeholders can debate and share their views/concerns, which we feed into the EU policy cycle through the Welsh MEPs and other MEPs in a 'legislature to legislature' dialogue, as well as communicating directly with the European Commission, Committee of the Regions and other Brussels-based bodies. We also have responsibility for overseeing the transposition of relevant EU legislation in Wales, and scrutinising compliance by the Welsh Government in implementing EU legislation, which includes most EU environmental legislation, agriculture (including CAP), animal welfare, education, health, culture, as well as overseeing the management and implementation of EU Structural and Investment Funds in Wales.

Therefore, a debate on how the EU can most effectively engage with citizens to address concerns over democratic deficit is something we welcome. These discussions are also timely given the internal discussions within the UK and Wales about the future of devolution, which has taken on an increased momentum following the recent Scottish Referendum.

The engagement of the EU's parliaments and legislatures, at all levels of governance, including sub-Member State parliaments like the National Assembly for Wales is an essential element of this debate. We would very much welcome the opportunity to explore ways in which we can participate in any initiatives that the European Commission takes forward on delivering democratic change, be this through working groups, meetings of parliamentarians, hearings, conferences or other fora.

I am also writing to the Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs and the Chair of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee Professor Danuta Hübner to draw their attention to these issues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Melding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David Melding AM
Chair