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Language diversity side-lined in new EU Commission

Press Release from the EFA Group in the European Parliament

The new European Commission is at risk of ignoring the importance of language diversity in Europe, according to Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales MEP **Jill Evans**, a member of the European Free Alliance (EFA) Group of MEPs.

The Welsh MEP has criticised the decision not to appoint a dedicated EU Commissioner for Multilingualism with express responsibility for languages, with the word 'multilingualism' dropped from the Commissioner's title.



Pictured: EFA MEPs

Jill Evans raised the issue as confirmation hearings for members of the new European Commission take place in Brussels.

EFA MEPs were instrumental in winning co-official EU language status for Catalan, Basque, Welsh and Gaelic. This means that languages which have official status within part of an EU member state can enjoy co-official status at EU level, with the EU providing certain services in those languages.

The EFA Group of MEPs forms a common parliamentary group with the European Greens. EFA MEPs represent stateless nations, regions and minorities including linguistic minorities.

Jill Evans said:

"Now more than ever, Europe needs to connect with its citizens and the best way of doing that is in their own languages."

"We have gone from a position of having a dedicated Commissioner for Multilingualism, to having it sidelined."

"This is completely unacceptable and I urge Mr Juncker – himself the speaker of a minority language – to think again."

Jill Evans explained:

"The European Commission increasingly seems to see multilingualism as being about learning only official state languages for the purpose of employee mobility and nothing else."

"That's important but it ignores the very rich linguistic tapestry of the European Union."

"There are many more languages spoken in Europe than just the 24 official languages of the EU."

"There is no more effective way for the EU to communicate with its citizens than in their own language. I call upon Mr Juncker to appoint a dedicated European Commissioner for Multilingualism, and bring forward an effective strategy for languages."

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Jill Evans

Member

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