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New EU President must address 'Europe's missing link'

Press release by Plaid MEP Jill Evans

Wales MEP and President of the EFA Parliamentary Group **Jill Evans** (Plaid Cymru) has called on the newly appointed President of the European Council to recognise the role nations like Wales, Scotland, Catalonia, Corsica and Flanders have to play in the European Union.

The MEP was speaking in a debate at the European Parliament in Strasbourg to plan for the forthcoming European Summit on 10th December.

The Plaid Cymru MEP said that many people across Europe feel more distant than ever from the European Union and blamed the 'missing link' that exists between the EU and the people's of Europe. Ms Evans highlighted the important role of the devolved governments in delivering policies that matter to people's everyday lives and criticised the European Commission and Council for refusing to recognise this.

In her speech to the European Parliament, the Plaid Cymru MEP said:

"The EU summit will take place less than two weeks after the Treaty of Lisbon comes into force. We have, as the minister said, been through a long and difficult process to reach this point. But many of us feel that we have missed a critical opportunity. There is still the missing link - a vital democratic element in the relationship between the EU and the people of Europe - that is the sub-state or regional level of government.

"Many constituents tell me that Europe is as distant as it ever was and we have to address this urgently. Not all of us had a referendum and the opportunity to give our views on the future development of Europe - yet there are things happening across the EU that have a direct impact on our work in facing the challenges before us and all the policy issues already mentioned - employment, social rights, economic regulation, fighting terrorism and peace and justice.

"So we must look beyond the member state level to the peoples of Europe. On Sunday December 13th over 150 municipalities in Catalonia are holding referenda on independence from Spain. How is Europe responding to this? Will this be on the council agenda? I very much doubt it - but it should be. Europe is changing. I hope that the new president will recognise and respond to this."

The members of the European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament will be writing to the newly appointed president Herman Van Rompuy to request a meeting to discuss these issues.

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