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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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**Responsible MEPs**



Jill Evans

Member

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