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Plaid MEP Challenges Commission President

Press release by Plaid MEP Jill Evans

Plaid MEP **Jill Evans** has called on the European Commission President to recognise the reality of constitutional change in Wales and across Europe.

Ms Evans who is President of the European Free Alliance Group (EFA) in the European Parliament (to which Plaid Cymru belongs) spoke in the debate on the possible re-election of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso for a second five year term. She challenged him to bring forward proposals to involve countries and regions with legislative powers in European decision making which were missing from his guidelines for work over the next five years.

Speaking in the Parliament in Strasbourg, Jill Evans said:

"You talk in your guidelines about the need to create a "feeling of connection between the EU and its citizens." But this can never be achieved unless the EU recognises the real nations and peoples and subsidiarity operates at all levels, not just between the EU and the member state government.

"If the European Union is to effectively support us through the economic crisis, lead the way - as it must - in fighting climate change, protect public services and defend human rights and contribute to international peace and disarmament, then it needs the input of all of us. That includes Wales, Scotland, Catalunya, Corsica, Flanders and many others.

"Across Europe at this moment there are discussions, consultations and referenda taking place. I'm not talking about the Lisbon Treaty but about proposals for constitutional change and greater autonomy in these countries and others. I regret that you have not acknowledged or recognised these important developments in your guidelines and have not brought forward proposals for greater involvement of countries and regions which have legislative powers in EU decision making, which we in EFA see as crucial. I would ask you again to agree to do that."

Following the parliamentary session she added:

"I will not be voting for President Barroso to lead the Commission for another five years. The debate on future powers for the Assembly is much more important to people in Wales than the detail of the Lisbon Treaty yet he ignores the first and focuses completely on the second. Constitutional change in Wales and Europe should go hand in hand."

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