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Press release | 16.09.2009

Wales must approve UK Commissioner

Press release by Plaid Cymru MEP for Wales Jill Evans

Plaid Cymru MEP for Wales **Jill Evans** has demanded that the UK candidate for European Commissioner is approved by the National Assembly.

Together with SNP colleague Alyn Smith, she has called for the person nominated to appear before the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly and be approved by all three before being confirmed as the UK nominee. They have written to London Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and the heads of each of the European Committees of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Irish Assembly, and Houses of Commons and Lords European Scrutiny Committees.

The call comes as the European Parliament votes in Strasbourg on the re-appointment of Commission President Barroso. In the next few months the Parliament will hold confirmation hearings of all 27 proposed new EU Commissioners - the process whereby each one appears before the relevant subject committees of the Parliament to be questioned as to their suitability for the post. The Parliament will then vote on the Commission as a whole.

At present the UK's European Commissioner is chosen by the UK government at the discretion of the Prime Minister in London. The MEPs have proposed that given the UK Commissioner is there on behalf of the entire UK it is essential that the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly agree to the appointment.

Jill Evans said

"Wales is at a disadvantage in not having direct representation in Europe and it is the UK government that votes for Wales when the ministers of the 27 member states decide on new laws.

"It's Gordon Brown that will appoint a Commissioner to serve for five years representing the UK. Only the Commission has the right to propose new laws in Europe, although they can't make the final decision on those laws. But they still have a powerful position. Why should the decision on who represents us be left to Gordon Brown? We need to get the voice of Wales heard in the Commission.

"In the European Parliament we have confirmation hearings for Commissioners. In the same way the Assembly should have the right to question the nominee on issues that matter to us in Wales."

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NOTE TO EDITORS

A copy of the letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown is available on request.

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Jill Evans

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