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Approaches to inter-parliamentary and international engagement in other legislatures

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This information is provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in support of their duties, and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as professional legal advice, or as a substitute for it.

1 Introduction

This briefing paper has been prepared for the Assembly and Executive Review Committee. It sets out the arrangements for international and inter-parliamentary engagement in the Scottish Parliament, Senedd, House of Commons and the Oireachtas.

The research was asked for information on:

- the range of international/inter-parliamentary bodies covered by the arrangements in place;
- how Members are nominated and selected to participate in the bodies;
- the level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies, including how corporate messages/positions are identified and conveyed as applicable;
- arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified etc.; and
- any arrangements for sharing and applying the learning from Members' participation in international and inter-parliamentary bodies.

The research relied on publicly available information along with that provided directly by officials in the various legislatures. Where possible, information is presented in tables for ease of reference.

1.1 Structure of the paper

Section 1 provides an introduction to the research briefing; **section 2** sets out the role of the main international and inter-parliamentary organisations relevant to this paper; **sections 3, 4, 5 and 6** look in detail at the approaches adopted by the legislatures in the UK and Ireland.

2 Overview of the main international and inter-parliamentary organisations

There are a number of international and inter-parliamentary groups of which the legislatures in the UK and Ireland are members. This section provides an

overview of the main bodies. A number are relevant only to sovereign parliaments, while others are applicable to the devolved legislatures.

2.1 International assemblies

2.1.1 Inter-parliamentary Union (British group)

The website of the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) states that:

(BGIPU) is the official national group representing UK parliamentarians in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). BGIPU's membership comprises all sitting members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords across all political parties and the crossbenches of the Palace of Westminster.

BGIPU's work is supported by a dedicated Secretariat under the direction and guidance of the Chair, Officers and Executive Committee. BGIPU is funded jointly by the House of Commons and the House of Lords with the primary aim of advancing the parliamentary dimension of Britain's foreign relations.¹

2.1.2 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The parliamentarians who make up the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe PACE come from the national parliaments of the organisation's 47 member states. They meet four times a year to discuss topical issues and ask European governments to take initiatives and report back.²

Each national delegation has its own secretariat, which serves as a liaison between the parliamentarians on the one hand, and between the parliamentarians and the secretariat of the Assembly on the other hand (e.g. notifying substitution or submitting requests to be placed on the list of speakers).

2.1.3 NATO Parliamentary Assembly

¹ British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union: <https://www.bgipu.org/>

² Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: <https://assembly.coe.int/LifeRay/APCE/pdf/Communication/BrochurePACE-EN.pdf>

The website of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) states:

Since its creation in 1955, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly has provided a unique specialised forum for members of parliament from across the Atlantic Alliance to discuss and influence decisions on Alliance security.

Through its work and activities, the Assembly facilitates parliamentary awareness and understanding of the key issues affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, and supports national parliamentary oversight over defence and security.

In terms of membership:

The NATO PA is made up of 281 delegates from the 32 NATO member countries. Each delegation is based on the country's size and reflects the political composition of the parliament, therefore representing a broad spectrum of political opinion. Delegates are nominated by their parliaments according to their national procedures.

In addition to NATO country delegates, delegates from 11 associate countries, 4 Mediterranean associate countries, as well as 7 parliamentary observer delegations take part in its activities, bringing the total number of delegates to approximately 369.³⁴

2.1.4 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The website of the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) states:

...the primary task of the 323-member Assembly is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue to advance the OSCE's goals of comprehensive security.

³ Commonwealth Parliamentary Association: <https://www.cpahq.org/what-we-do/>

⁴ NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Assembly Membership and Rules of Procedures: <https://www.nato-pa.int/content/functioning>

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area.⁵

The 323 members are drawn from 56 parliaments.

2.1.5 EU – UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

From the website of the UK Parliament:

The UK-EU PPA was established under the terms of the 2021 Trade and Co-operation Agreement and acts as a forum for parliamentarians to exchange views on the implementation and operation of the Agreement. The Agreement established a Partnership Council as a joint UK-EU body which will inform the PPA of its decisions and recommendations.⁶

The EU – UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly consists of two delegations of 35 members each, appointed by the European Parliament and by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, respectively.

Both the European Parliament and the Parliament of the United Kingdom delegations may from time to time contain substitute members standing in for members who cannot be present, in each case in accordance with the rules and/or practices of the respective parliaments.

The term of office of the members is decided in accordance with the rules and/or practices, respectively, of the European Parliament and Parliament of the United Kingdom.⁷

⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Parliamentary Dimension of the OSCE: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/about-osce-pa/parliamentary-dimension-of-the-osce>

⁶ UK Parliament, UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/uk-parliamentary-assemblies/ppa-uk-delegation/>

⁷ Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly: <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/ipro/uk-eu-ppa-rules-of-procedure.pdf>

Although they do not officially participate, representatives from the devolved legislatures have obtained observer status.⁸

The Secretariat of the PPA is provided jointly by the secretariat of the European Parliament and the secretariat of the House of Commons and House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

2.1.6 British-American Parliamentary Group

The British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) aims to “promote closer relations and understanding with Members of both Houses of Congress of the United States of America and other US political and leading figures.”⁹

Any Member of the House of Lords or House of Commons is eligible for membership of the British-American Parliamentary Group and will become a member on setting up a standing order for an Annual Subscription (£10) or on paying a Life Subscription (£60).

Membership Statistics Prior to the 2019 General Election:

- Members of the House of Lords 293
- Members of the House of Commons 313

It acts as an autonomous body within Parliament. It appoints its own staff to carry out its objectives and the Rules of the Group define the limitations on its powers. The management of the BAPG is vested in the Executive Committee. The Chair of the BAPG is the Prime Minister. The two Vice-Chairs of the Executive Committee are normally of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet rank.

In Washington D.C.:

...the BAPG is authorized by law, with the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House appointing and authorizing Members of the Senate and House to meet with Parliamentarians for annual conferences and

⁸ Hansard Society briefing on the EU-UK PPA:
<https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/publications/briefings/parliamentary-partnership-assembly-ppa-uk-eu>

⁹ Website of the British-American Inter-parliamentary Group

other activities. Funding is obtained each year through appropriations to pay for its expenses.¹⁰

2.2 Inter-parliamentary groups where devolved legislatures may participate

2.2.1 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) aims to:

...nurture an open and wide-ranging understanding of parliamentary democracy that takes account of the national context and is in line with the Association's non-partisan, non-prescriptive and non-intrusive approach, as well as the priorities set by jurisdictions and parliaments themselves.

Through its programmes, the CPA seeks to capture the diverse experiences of parliamentary democracy from across the Commonwealth. Through the sharing of ideas and practices the CPA is able to expand its comparative knowledge on parliamentary strengthening recognising the diverse challenges that many Commonwealth jurisdictions face.

All members of qualifying legislatures are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. CPA UK is part of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) and also serves as its Secretariat. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are also part of CPA BIMR.

The CPA UK Executive Committee is made up of 20 parliamentarians from both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. By virtue of its position in the UK Parliament, CPA UK has two Co-Presidents in the form of the presiding officers of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

2.2.2 British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

¹⁰ As above

The mission of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly is to “promote co-operation between political representatives in Britain and Ireland for the benefit of the people we represent.”¹¹

It consists of:

- 25 Members from each sovereign Parliament,
- five each from the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, and Northern Ireland Assembly one each from the High Court of Tynwald and States of Guernsey and Jersey.

There are also:

- 20 Associate Members from the two sovereign parliaments,
- four each from the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly,
- one each from the High Court of Tynwald and each of the States of Guernsey and Jersey.¹²

Members and Associates are nominated by their parties to serve on the Assembly.

The Secretariat is drawn from the UK Parliament and the Houses of the Oireachtas and administers and looks after the smooth running of the Assembly.

2.2.3 Inter-parliamentary Forum

The aim of the IPF is to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the legislatures of the devolved legislatures and the UK Parliament.

At its launch on 25 February 2022 the Forum agreed to focus on the following areas of work:

¹¹ British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly: <http://www.britishirish.org/about-the-assembly/>

¹² BIPA Membership: <http://www.britishirish.org/members-2/>

- The operation of international agreements including the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the Withdrawal Agreement and the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol;
- The UK internal market including the UK Internal Market Act and Common Frameworks;
- The impact of the new constitutional arrangements on the legislative process including the use of secondary powers and the legislative consent process.¹³

The relevant Chairs, Convenors and members of the relevant committees attend meetings.

2.2.4 Committee of the Regions – UK Contact Group

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) – UK Contact Group document Political Objectives and Working Methods states:

In order to ensure continuing political cooperation with representatives of UK local government and devolved parliaments and assemblies following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, on 12 February 2020 the (CoR) Bureau approved the creation of a CoR-UK Contact Group.¹⁴

The Group comprises:

- A number of EU Member States including Belgium, Ireland, France, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain and Portugal;
- UK devolved legislatures and some governments;
- The government and parliament of Gibraltar;
- London Assembly and the Mayor of London; and
- Local government organisations from Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

¹³ UK Parliament, Launch of the Inter-parliamentary Forum, February 2022: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2022/february-2022/launch-of-the-inter-parliamentary-forum/>

¹⁴ Committee of the Regions UK Contact Group, Political Objectives and Working Methods

2.2.5 Council of Europe - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE)

The website of CLRAE states:

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 46 member states and assessing the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. As the voice of Europe's municipalities and regions, it works to foster consultation and political dialogue between national governments and local and regional authorities, through cooperation with the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

The Congress is made up of two chambers: the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It has 306 representatives and 306 substitutes, all appointed for five years, representing over 130,000 local and regional authorities in the Council of Europe's 46 member states. The Congress's work is organised with three committees: a Monitoring Committee, a Governance Committee and a Social Inclusion Committee.¹⁵

3 Scottish Parliament

3.1 International Strategy

The International Strategy for Session 6¹⁶ was agreed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and implemented by the International Relations Office (IRO). The IRO support the Presiding Officer and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) when they represent the Scottish Parliament abroad.

The Strategy does not apply to the international work undertaken by individual committees, by MSPs in response to approaches made directly to them, or by Cross-Party Groups with a country theme.

¹⁵ Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/overview>

¹⁶ Scottish Parliament, International Strategy for Session 6:
<https://www.parliament.scot/about/international-relations/international-strategy#topOfNav>

The Strategy's overarching aims are to:

- promote the Scottish Parliament, its practices and processes as an open, accessible and participative legislature amongst other parliaments and international organisations;
- develop the Parliament's reputation, skills, knowledge and abilities, through this work and its relations with other legislatures and organisations, to represent the people of Scotland in holding the Scottish Government and public bodies to account;
- provide opportunities for the continuous professional development of MSPs and officials through meetings and discussions with elected Members and officials in other legislatures and organisations;
- showcase and develop the policy, procedural and corporate knowledge of MSPs and officials through international collaboration and engagement;
- set a direction and purpose to the Parliament's international work and the outcomes it is aiming for and identify the parameters around what can and cannot, be supported; and
- identify, plan and programme activities with key organisations and other parliaments, countries/regions and illustrate why these are strategically important to the Parliament and to Scotland.

The focus of the Strategy is underpinned by three core elements – policy, procedural and corporate. These are set out in Figure 1.

Policy

This reflects those policies that matter most to the Parliament, which will largely be reflected in the work of individual committees including inquiries and Bills scrutiny. Through exposure to learning from international best practice and the experience and thinking in other countries on such issues, the international work can develop MSPs understanding and awareness of policy proposals. The Parliament can, through its core international work, learn from other parliaments, countries, organisations about the actions and approaches they take.

Procedural

Discussions with other parliaments can identify how they operate and why, their own rules of procedures, the approaches and principles behind how they work and why. This can then increase awareness and generate ideas on new and better ways for this Parliament to fulfil its central purpose.

Corporate

Discussions with counterparts in other parliaments can identify the frameworks, decision making processes, approaches which they take to ensure the efficient running of that organisation.

Figure 1: Core elements of the Scottish Parliament's International Strategy

Outward visits led by the Presiding Officer and supported by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SCPB) must be justified through a business case. The business case will be set out by the IRO to the SCPB.

It will identify on which of the three core elements the visit will be based and reflect the outcome principles. This in turn will inform the size and make up of the delegation (with consideration to party and gender balance). It will indicate who the delegation will meet and why and provide an indicative cost for the visit.

It will outline why the engagements proposed are appropriate for an 'in person' visit as opposed to through virtual format. Finally, it will address the travel options considered, weighing up key considerations such as the environmental impact, journey distances/times, and how long Members would be absent (in person) from core parliamentary business.¹⁷

There are four key outcomes sought by the Parliament:

- **parliamentary focused:** ensure that Presiding Officer and SPCB international activities complement and support the development of the Parliament as an institution through the professional development of

¹⁷ Information taken from the International Strategy

MSPs and staff, and the conduct and management of parliamentary business (policy, procedural and corporate);

- **partnership**: identify where the Parliament can capitalise from working with other organisations, share resources and jointly-deliver similar activities;
- **reputational value**: recognise that certain types of activity pro-actively support the Parliament's institutional and international reputation and which, if not undertaken, could adversely affect that; and
- **supporting Scotland**: through the Parliament's participation, support activities which could bring wider economic benefit and added value to Scotland.

The IRO provides the SPCB with twice-yearly reports outlining the activities undertaken. These reports are published on the Parliament's website. In addition, reports will be produced by the IRO for SPCB supported outward visits. To ensure consistency, the report will cover location, any sponsor (e.g. CPA), date and purpose of visit and theme, outline of programme and discussions held and the outcomes and action/learning points.

Table 1: Information on membership, support and feedback on engagement with other organisations – Scottish Parliament

	Membership	Level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies	Arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified
British Irish Parliamentary Assembly	The Parliamentary Bureau agrees the political make-up of the Scottish Parliament's delegation of five Members at the start of every Session. Since its initial involvement in 2001, the Scottish Parliament delegation has been led by one of the Deputy	A staff member from the International Relations Office (IRO) provides secretariat and logistical support to Scottish Parliament BIPA members at plenary sessions and committee meetings. In practice, this means providing 'in-person' support for the full delegation at the bi-annual plenary sessions as well as for the Deputy Presiding Officer at regular meetings of	Members will feed back their experience of BIPA at a Members Business Debate, usually held once per session. In addition, BIPA committee reports are circulated to the clerks of the relevant subject committee in the Scottish Parliament and/or other parliamentary officials, as appropriate, by the IRO.

	Presiding Officers with the remaining four members consisting of one member from each of the four largest political parties. Once the political make-up of the delegation has been decided, the Parties themselves (via Business Managers/Whips) nominate their Members.	the Steering Committee. For consistency across the Session (and multiple Sessions of Parliament), one member of staff from the IRO is assigned to provide this support. This ensures the delegation are assisted by an official with an appropriate level of expertise in BIPA practices and procedures as well as an ‘institutional memory’ of decisions taken at previous plenaries. No ‘in-person’ support is provided to members attending meetings of the BIPA subject committees. However background briefings are provided. All members will receive logistical support for participation in plenary and subject committees i.e. travel and hotel bookings etc.	
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Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	All current MSPS are members of the Branch. The Officeholders of the Branch shall be the President and the members of the Branch Executive Committee. The President shall be the Presiding Officer of the Parliament. The management of the affairs of the Branch are vested in its Branch Executive Committee (BEC) which shall consist of no fewer than three and no more than five MSPs elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)	As part of their job description, one of the International Relations Officers is the CPA Scotland Branch Secretary. They provide all support needed for the Members taking part in CPA activities. This includes advising the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) on all CPA aspects, including opportunities, budget, memberships, rules and procedures. It includes providing briefings and logistical support such as travel arrangements as well as in person support during meetings and outward visits. The Branch Secretary is also the liaison between the Scottish Parliament, CPA HQ and other CPA Branches. Section 11 of the Branch rules provides information on the selection process. Opportunities approved by the BEC are advertised by email to all	• All Members are invited to attend the AGM which is held each September, during this meeting the current BEC provide an update on recent CPA work and upcoming opportunities. The Branch Secretary also provides an annual report, which is circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting. • Following outward visits to conferences etc. a report is written by the Branch Secretary and Members feed into this. The report will include various action points for the Members and Branch Secretary to take forward, such as sharing information with relevant committees, and six months following the visit the Branch Secretary meets with the
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	and who shall hold office until the next AGM.	Members/Parliamentary Staff and a notice is also included in a weekly email sent to all Members from the IRO. Opportunities aimed at Members Staff and Parliamentary Staff are also advertised in the Corporate Bulletin (the internal weekly notice board).	Members again to check on the progress of the action points. • Also currently trialling holding a drop in session after an outward visit where Members, Members staff and Parliamentary staff interested in the visit can hear about the discussions and workshops that took place. • It has also been suggested that there should be a CPA Members Business Debate on an annual basis.
Nordic Council	The relationship with the Nordic Council is managed by the International Relations Officer responsible for the Nordic Region. Members are invited to take part in visits	The International Relations Officer provides Members with background information and relevant briefings depending on the areas of interest of the Members. During the Nordic Council Session they also arrange bilateral meetings with Nordic Council	Following outward visits to conferences etc. a report is written by the International Relations Officer and Members feed into this. The report will include various action points for the Members to take forward,

	by the Nordic Council to the Scottish Parliament based on the visit objectives, eg if they are visiting a particular committee or wish to meet with the Presiding Officer. The Scottish Parliament has attended the Nordic Council Session for three years. The first two years the delegations were led by the Presiding Officer and one of the Deputy Presiding Officers and they chose the delegations. This year there was no delegation leader so the opportunity to join the delegation was advertised out to all Members by	Committee members and travel with the Members to provide in person support during the visit.	such as sharing information with relevant committees, and six months following the visit the International Relations Officer meets with the Members again to check on the progress of the action points.
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	email. Members applied for the opportunity, detailing what they would bring to the conference and aim to take back and share with their colleagues.		
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Although not included in the information provided by the Scottish Parliament, the Parliament is entitled to nominate one full member and one alternate member to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

4 Senedd

4.1 International Framework

The purpose of the Senedd's International Framework for the Sixth Senedd is to:

...provide accountability, clarity and direction to the international parliamentary activity resourced by the Senedd Commission, and supports the corporate delivery plan and annual performance reporting. It will serve as the foundation for organising priorities and initiatives and enable the Commission to demonstrate how the organisation is working towards the achievement of identified outcomes.¹⁸

The principles of the International Framework are to:

1. Be focused on Parliamentary business, enabling the Senedd to deliver its core function of representing the interests of Wales and its people by enhancing the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience; and
2. Recognise the value and importance of building the institutional and international reputation of the Senedd through engagement and collaboration, whether it be Member or Committee-led, official level or Parliament to Parliament.¹⁹

The framework does not conflict with any international work which individual committees undertake as part of their policy work or legislative scrutiny.

The principles are underpinned by three objectives which should:

1. Share & Acquire - best parliamentary practice internationally;
2. Raise the Senedd's Profile - on the international stage; and

¹⁸ International Framework for the sixth Senedd: <https://senedd.wales/media/q13g044f/international-framework-sixth-senedd.pdf>

¹⁹ As above

3. Influence – understand and influence external decision-making.²⁰

The framework sets out how the Senedd intends to meet these objectives and a summary is provided below:

- We will identify, plan and programme activities with key organisations, networks and other parliaments, countries/regions, illustrate why these are strategically important to the Senedd and tell our many stories of impact.
- We will ensure added value for money by facilitating the cross-over and feedback mechanisms between international activity undertaken under this framework and Senedd Business, including the work of Committees and individual members.
- We will develop a longer-term planned approach to bi-lateral engagement and relations. This will include identifying opportunities to host high profile activities on the Senedd estate; examining collaboration opportunities with Welsh Government in countries and regions where the Welsh Government are building relationships with the respective governments and where the Senedd may wish to develop links with the legislatures.
- We will promote the Senedd, its practices and processes as an accessible, innovative and pioneering legislature amongst other parliaments and international organisations.
- We will provide opportunities for the continuous professional development of Members of the Senedd (MS) and Commission staff, developing their policy, procedural and corporate knowledge.
- We will provide opportunities for Members to understand and influence external decision-making that affects the work of the Senedd, (including international obligations the Senedd has a responsibility to implement) and raise issues on an international stage that have a material impact on everyday lives of the people of Wales.²¹

²⁰ International Strategy for the sixth Senedd

²¹ As above

The framework also sets out expectations in terms of promoting, reporting and outcomes. This includes publishing information on external engagement in various formats such as visit reports, guest blogs and articles.

The Senedd Commission will publish each outward visit report, setting out any action/learning points. The Senedd website will host a page which will act as hub for relevant International work. It will include details of Member activities, including reports as well as providing an overview of international activities across the Commission's services.

The framework sets out a number of delivery mechanisms, one of which is international visits. It states:

Under this framework, proposals will be presented for strategically focused outward visits during the Sixth Senedd and inward visit programmes with a clear parliamentary focus and where there is also an opportunity for the Senedd to benefit from the engagement.

Outwards visits - it is important that our visits are clear in terms of their purpose and benefit, and they should be evaluated both as part of the development of any proposals and for success following each visit. This would include:

- Visits as part of our membership of international networks;
- Proactive visits to countries and parliaments of particular interest to the Senedd, with a view to learning of best policy and practice elsewhere as well as taking advantage of the opportunity to raise awareness of Wales, the Senedd and our work as a democracy; and
- Capacity building in developing countries.²²

²² International Strategy for the sixth Senedd

Table 2: Information on membership, support and feedback on engagement with other organisations - Senedd

	Membership	Level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies	Arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified
CPA	CPA Branch Rules (which are reviewed at the end of each parliamentary term) dictate this. The current rules state that each official party group can nominate two Members to sit on the Branch Executive Committee, at least one of whom must be a woman Member. The Branch Chair is elected at the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of each Parliamentary	The Branch Secretary is the CEO/Clerk who Chair's the first AGM in a new term until a Chair is elected. The Acting Branch Secretary (Senior International Relations and Protocol Manager – SEO/MB1 within the Speaker's Private Office) manages the day to day activities of the Branch. As part of these responsibilities the Acting Branch Secretary will:	Official reports are produced (and are a conditional requirement) following Members' participation in CPA Conferences. These reports are shared with relevant Committees and Senedd Commission teams who will have an interest in the topics discussed and lessons learned. Members are often invited to appear at subsequent Branch Executive Meetings where they are given the opportunity to give supplementary

	term and holds the Chair for the duration of the term.	• Arrange and provide secretariat support for Branch Executive Meeting and AGMs (and draft the Annual Report) • Provide Briefings and advise the Branch Chair as well as the Branch Secretary and other Members, as required. • Accompany Senedd Branch delegations to both the Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary conferences (CPCs) as well as the BIM Regional Conferences.	oral reports and answer questions from Executive Committee Members.
BIPA	Each party group nominates one Member to sit on BIPA. The Senedd's BIPA delegation is currently led by the Deputy Presiding Officer.	The Senedd's BIPA delegation is supported by the above International Relations Manager (HEO/MB2). This official coordinates travel arrangements and briefing material through the Research Service for BIPA Plenaries and	BIPA Committee Reports, upon their agreement at Plenaries, are sent by the BIPA Committee Clerks to relevant Committees in each legislature. Committee reports and Plenary transcripts are also published on the

		Committee meetings, and accompanies members to the Plenaries (but not Committee meetings). This official also leads on the Deputy Presiding Officer's International work programme and activities, beyond these parliamentary networks.	Senedd's International Relations webpages. No formalised arrangements for members themselves to report back following Plenary or Committee meetings, though there is an active discussion through BIPA's Steering Committee about best practice and ways to encourage this.
CLRAE	The Senedd is responsible for nominating one full member and one substitute member to the Congress of the Council of Europe. These nominees are ratified and officially put forward by the UK Government as the Member State party. Rules for nomination are set by the Council and UK Government, they must be gender balanced and representative of the	The UK delegation is provided with official secretariat support by the LGA. They are paid to do this by the UK Government and Council. The Senedd provides background briefing to any member attending on request, facilitates engagement with the UK secretariat and provides general advice and support.	Currently no mechanisms to feed back.

	‘political balance’ of the institution and more broadly across the UK. Based on these rules the relevant parties put forward candidates, the governing party has the full member seat and the relevant opposition party the substitute seat.	Members are required to pay costs up front and claim them back from congress. If needed Members Business Support (pay and remuneration body) can, in accordance with usual expenses rules, provide salary advances etc to help cover costs in the interim. Members represent their parties so corporate lines are not appropriate.	
UK-EU PPA	The Senedd is invited to send two observer members by the UK delegation. It was decided that the Senedd should select Members from relevant Committees working on the issues related to the work of the Assembly. This decision was made by the Senedd’s Chair’s Forum. Current membership is either the Chair or	Support is provided by the Senedd’s Brussels office and its EU Affairs Adviser. Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs are met from the Brussels office budget and all travel and accommodation are arranged for members. Members receive briefing backs and advice from the Brussels office and Senedd Research. Speaking notes	Representatives produce a report on proceedings after each meeting with support from the Senedd’s EU Affairs Adviser. This is sent to their respective committees and any other committees to whom it may be of interest and published on the relevant committee webpages. It is also sent to the Welsh Government for information.

	in their absence a member of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee. This is currently subject to review by the Chair's Forum.	are also provided on request. Briefing is based on the work/position of the Committee they represent.	The Senedd will be trialling the same approach to CoR-UK Contact Group.
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5 House of Commons

The *House of Commons Administration Inter-parliamentary engagement strategy*²³ sets out how the House of Commons engages with other legislatures. Its mission for this work is:

To ensure the House of Commons administration is an active and valued participant in the international, inter-parliamentary community.²⁴

Through this work it aims to:

- exchange, share and build knowledge between parliaments on issues of mutual concern
- share and capitalise upon the value of parliament-to-parliament learning
- develop and sustain good working relationships across and between parliaments
- enhance the capability and knowledge of our staff to support Members through delivering excellent services.

One of the guiding principles of the strategy is:

Strive for meaningful impact: Pursuing work which delivers meaningful impact both for the House Administration and other parliaments internationally. Considering the likely benefit to both the UK Parliament and others when determining whether, when and how to engage, including an approach which is mindful of value for money and sustainability.

²³ House of Commons Administration Inter-parliamentary engagement strategy:
<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/assets/teams/ipro/inter-parliamentary-engagement-strategy/inter-parliamentary-engagement-strategy-final.pdf>

²⁴ As above

Table 3: Information on membership, support and feedback on engagement with other organisations – House of Commons

	Membership	The level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies, including how corporate messages/positions are identified and conveyed as applicable	Any arrangements for sharing and applying the learning from Members' participation in international and inter-parliamentary bodies/ Arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, NATO Parliamentary	The current version of the Guide for Members of the Delegations was created prior to the establishment of the EU-UK PPA. Members are formally appointed to the	<i>This section applies to all groups.</i> The level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies, including how	Arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified

Assembly, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and EU – UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly	EU-UK PPA delegation by a Written Statement by the Prime Minister. PACE: 18 and 18 substitutes/alternate members NATO PA: 18 OSCE PA: 13 and 13 substitute/alternate members Delegation members are formally appointed in a Written Statement by the Prime Minister (PACE and OSCE PA), or by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (NATO PA).	corporate messages/positions are identified and conveyed as applicable The House of Commons Inter-parliamentary Relations Office provides support to Members in undertaking activities in connection with the parliamentary assemblies. This includes assisting Members with travel and logistics support (including flight and hotel bookings and administering subsistence) and providing administrative support for meetings (for example, ensuring Members receive relevant papers from the secretariats of the parliamentary assemblies and registering Members for assembly activities). There are two delegation secretaries (one for PACE/ EU PPA, another for NATO/ OSCE	Many of the Members who are delegates on inter-parliamentary assemblies are also members on the UK Parliament's Select Committees; they will regularly draw colleagues' attention to work done through the inter-parliamentary assemblies (committee reports, international visits etc.) informally and will sponsor and contribute to debates in both Chambers, and in Westminster Hall, about the outputs of the inter-parliamentary bodies. In addition, they will sometimes engage formally with Government Ministers, such as writing letters and arranging private briefings. The text of PACE Resolutions and of UK-EU PPA Recommendations agreed in
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	Membership reflects the political party balance in the House of Commons at the time of the most recent General Election and each House decides on the distribution of its places. It is for each party to determine their own method of nominating members of the delegations. The balance of Members and Peers nominated should broadly reflect the split of funding between the two Houses, presently 70:30 Commons:Lords.	PA) who are the first point of contact for delegation queries and provide procedural support to the delegations as required. Support to Members is provided in line with the rules set out in the Guide for Members of the Delegations, which also details how the UK Parliament interprets its responsibilities as a member of the assemblies. Each inter-parliamentary group has a secretariat responsible for providing advice and administrative support to its members. The secretariats operate independently of the Inter-parliamentary Relations Office.	Plenary Session are circulated to the relevant select committees. Members of the inter-parliamentary groups use a variety of report back methods following visits. This may include feedback meetings for other Members, articles published on the relevant inter-parliamentary group's website, and letters to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Opportunities to feedback While there are no formal arrangements, the IPRO Parliamentary Assemblies team supports all four assemblies that the UK participates in, meaning the opportunity for staff to share knowledge and apply any learning takes place organically across the
British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary	All Members of the House of Commons are members of the BGIPU. Members elect an Executive Committee		

Union (BGIPU)	(including a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Treasurer), which reflects the numerical strength of the parties in the House of Commons. Members of the Executive Committee can be drawn from the House of Commons or House of Lords. Details are set out in Rules 3 and 8-12 of the BGIPU's Rules.		team. The international secretariats support the delegation secretaries and arrange regular meetings, when colleagues can discuss how they work with members and manage the operational side of delegation work. Most recently, this network has enabled colleagues to feed into an ongoing revision of the UK's administrative 'Guide for Members of the Delegations'. Some Members belong to multiple assemblies, meaning they can informally share lessons in best practice with their colleagues. Furthermore, some are IPRO staff are members of the International Affairs and National Security Hub, a policy network for staff working on these policy issues,
CPA UK	CPA UK: Has similar governance arrangements. Members elect an Executive Committee with a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Treasurer. There are 20 members of the Executive Committee.		

BIPA	25 members and 20 associate members. Members and Associates are nominated by their parties to serve on the Assembly.		providing a further forum for knowledge sharing.
BAPG	Any Member of the House of Lords or House of Commons is eligible for membership of the Group. An annual subscription fee is payable.		

6 Oireachtas

The Oireachtas works with other parliamentary assemblies within Europe and beyond. The Oireachtas also participates in European and international parliamentary assemblies. Ireland is a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe.

Table 4: Information on membership, support and feedback on engagement with other organisations – Oireachtas

	Membership	The level, type and source of support provided to the Members nominated to participate in the bodies, including how corporate messages/positions are identified and conveyed as applicable	Any arrangements for sharing and applying the learning from Members' participation in international and inter-parliamentary bodies/ Arrangements for Members who have participated in the bodies to report back to their legislatures on applicable outcomes, lessons learned, best practice identified
OSCE PA	<i>The Members are nominated by the Party Whips based on their Party</i>	Travel arrangements, briefing and somebody from Inter-parliamentary	No formal arrangements in place however during Ireland's Presidency

	<i>Strengths for all organisations.</i> 6 Members and up to 6 Alternate Members. Note up to 6 members can attend a meeting.	Office accompanies the delegation on their trips. In some cases the organisers would contact the Oireachtas for additional information on the participants.	of the COE a debate was held in the Upper House.
PACE	8 Members 4 Full and 4 Alternate full participation by all Members.		
IPU	No permanent delegation in place the Whips nominate up to 5 Members per Assembly.		

The Oireachtas also participates in the following bodies:

North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association: This provides a forum for regular formal discussions between Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas on issues of mutual interest. Membership of the assembly is drawn in equal numbers from the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly: As with the UK Parliament, the Oireachtas nominates 25 Members and an additional 20 Associate Members.