



Plaid Cymru | Party of Wales

Plaid Cymru Alternative Demands for Article 50 Letter

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This week the UK Prime Minister will notify, under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the EU.

Since the vote in Wales to leave the European Union, Plaid Cymru has prioritised the Welsh national interest. This has primarily meant defending and advancing our economic interests. The Welsh national interest does not correspond with the UK Government's objectives, which means that Wales must have its own distinct voice in any negotiations.

A coherent and comprehensive description of the Welsh national interest in these negotiations has been produced by Plaid Cymru in collaboration with the Welsh Government, in the form of the White Paper *Securing Wales' Future*. Our priorities below build on that distinct Welsh position. They are not exhaustive, and that White Paper should be consulted for a detailed policy picture.

Any Article 50 notification process must take these priorities into account and reflect the wider views of the devolved administrations in the UK. The specific requirements of northern Ireland must also be recognised as a matter of absolute importance. Plaid Cymru has always made it clear that a 'made-in-Westminster' Article 50 process will be unacceptable and unsuccessful.

Before outlining Plaid Cymru's substantive negotiating priorities, our party would also thank the European Council and European Union negotiating partners for their longstanding commitment to peace, democracy and human rights. Plaid Cymru is proud to have been a part of transforming Europe from a continent of war, to one of peace. The process of withdrawing from the EU must be carried out in a climate of mutual respect and acknowledgement of those achievements.

These alternative demands are not the end of the journey in terms of Plaid Cymru's vision for Wales and Europe. They are the next steps in what will be an ongoing mission to uphold the Welsh national interest. Over the coming years the Welsh Government and National Assembly must remain at the forefront of these negotiations, not only being consulted, but being fully involved in all discussions.

1. European Union Single Market and Customs Union

Plaid Cymru's intention is to promote and defend the Welsh national interest at every opportunity. Although the referendum mandate is to withdraw from the political union, Plaid Cymru does not wish to leave the economic union. As promised by the 2015 Conservative Manifesto, Wales and the UK should still be able to benefit from continued participation in the European Single Market.

Plaid Cymru wants to see an agreement whereby Wales can retain its membership of the European Economic Area and/ or the European Free Trade Association as well as the European Customs Union, and which avoids tariff and non-tariff barriers at all costs.

2. Rights for EU citizens living in Wales

We welcome the contribution of European workers and migrants to Welsh society and our economy, and challenge the negativity which has been allowed to dominate political discourse. Plaid Cymru's position is that the citizenship rights of all EU nationals in Wales must be guaranteed. This would be the most plausible way of securing reciprocal rights for Welsh citizens who live in other EU member states.

The Common Travel Area within the British Isles and Ireland should be enabled to continue to function beyond any negotiated agreement.

3. Guarantee of funding arrangements

Wales must and will not lose out financially when EU funding ends. Wales could and should continue to benefit from a range of European programmes which are of benefit to our citizens. Significant investment in Wales is stimulated by a number of smaller EU programmes and we strongly believe Wales should continue to benefit from access to them from outside the EU.

These include: Horizon 2020, ERASMUS+, Creative Europe and the Wales-Ireland Programme. We also want Wales to remain a partner in the European Investment Bank, noting that this can be secured outside the EU if necessary.

Agricultural support payments beyond any negotiations must be guaranteed by the UK Government. The full amount of existing funding should continue, with policy control freely allocated to the Welsh Government and National Assembly. The UK Government's negotiations with the EU institutions must recognise and uphold the vital economic, environmental and cultural role of Welsh farming.

4. Devolution of powers to Wales and the future of the UK

Exiting the EU must not result in devolved powers being clawed back to the UK Government. Plaid Cymru will work to ensure that powers already devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, but operate within an EU regulatory framework, will continue to be devolved in Wales. In areas which are currently reserved to the UK Government but which directly impact on devolved policy areas, we will be pressing for further devolution.

Devolution matters have to be resolved internally within the UK on the basis of equality and respect between the nations and governments. The UK Government must create a climate

of trust by being transparent about its intentions. Plaid Cymru reiterates that no electoral mandate has ever been given by people in Wales to reduce the powers or responsibilities of our National Assembly.

The UK Government should approach the Article 50 notification in a way which secures a special status within the EU for northern Ireland. This should be defined in the most appropriate way which would secure the peace process, equality and democracy in that territory.

With regards to Scotland, the UK Government's negotiation must fully respect the intentions of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament to hold any referendum within a timetable of their choosing. The UK Government should not stipulate when Scotland can or cannot make a decision on its future. Doing so would harm the interests of Wales and worsen relations between the administrations.

5. Final Negotiated Agreements

Any final negotiated agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU institutions should reflect the outcome of parallel negotiations within this state. Any final agreement should also require the approval of the UK's devolved administrations and parliaments, such as they are constituted at the point of withdrawal. A procedure should be developed to ensure that the agreement cannot be finalised until it has the support of each UK nation or country.

The possibility of ratifying a final agreement through a referendum should be kept open.

Exiting the European Union without a negotiated agreement would not be acceptable to Plaid Cymru. Our party has no interest in further isolation or separation from the single market which could arise from reverting to World Trade Organisation rules.