

Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity

The Welsh Government and the Province of Noord-Holland are concerned that Brexit could lead to further divisions across Europe if it is not managed effectively.

They draw particular attention to the historical reminders of Europe's violent past, with 2018 marking the hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War, a period of unprecedented destruction and devastation in Europe.

They reiterate that the end of hostilities in 1918 did not mark the beginning of peace, but was the prelude to an even more violent tragedy of conflict in Europe and the world.

They underline the importance of structured European cooperation after World War II in building a long period of prosperity and peace in large parts of Europe.

They regret however that many citizens feel alienated as a result of the imbalanced impacts that have come from globalisation.

They affirm, as regions in the UK and the EU27, now that the UK has decided to leave the European Union, in the spirit of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions' Cardiff Declaration:

- Their desire for strong solidarity and friendship between the nations and regions of Europe, those in the UK, the EU27 and beyond, knowing that the best way to defend national, regional and local interests is to continue to work together;
- Their interest in encouraging and facilitating exchange, cooperation and learning between nations and regions, in particular through contact and collaboration between:
 - Individuals, families, and in particular young people;
 - Schools, universities, research institutions;
 - Cultural and sporting bodies;
 - Health, social care, and third sector organisations;
 - Businesses and business organisations;
 - Politicians, political institutions and government bodies.

The signatory regions also commit to:

- developing a new shared European identity beyond Brexit, grounded in their cities and regions, and based on mutual trust and respect;
- promoting openness between cultures and tackling racism and xenophobia;
- building economic co-operation – sharing expertise in key sectors and growing trading relationships;
- developing ways of working and solutions which promote wellbeing of citizens and which address mutual challenges, such as protection of the environment;
- working together, through EU programmes where possible and through other bilateral/multilateral mechanisms, including through the CPMR, to turn these aspirations into reality; and
- to support the call in the Committee of the Regions' resolution of March 2017 for an institutional mechanism to promote regular consultation and interaction between the nations and regions of Europe, the EU27 and the UK.

They call on EU and UK Regions to sign this Declaration of Friendship and Solidarity and on the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions to adopt this Declaration.

Haarlem, 13 April 2018

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Prof. Mark Drakeford
Cabinet Secretary for
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