



The UK–EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly

A briefing

3 November 2022



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What is the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly?

The UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA) is the new inter-parliamentary body between the UK Parliament and the European Parliament (EP) that has been established under the [UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) (TCA), the treaty governing the two parties' post-Brexit relationship that was signed in December 2020.¹

The PPA is the inter-parliamentary element in the joint UK-EU institutional architecture established by and for the TCA; it gives the two Parliaments jointly a role in that architecture. Each of the two member Parliaments has a standing Delegation to the PPA. The two Delegations jointly constitute the Assembly.

Such inter-parliamentary bodies are an established feature of the EU's close treaty-based relationships with non-EU countries that go beyond purely trade. Inter-parliamentary bodies are also found in a wide range of bilateral and multinational organisations and arrangements worldwide. In the UK, arrangements for the Delegation to the PPA are explicitly being modelled on those for three older Delegations, to the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#) (PACE), the [NATO Parliamentary Assembly](#), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) (OSCE).

Following a lengthy process in and between the UK and European Parliaments to establish the make-up and basic operational arrangements of the PPA (including, in the UK, between Parliament's two Houses), the Assembly held its first meeting in Brussels in May 2022. Its second meeting is in London on 7-8 November 2022.

Timeline: Establishing the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA)

30 December 2020:	UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed
1 January 2021:	TCA provisionally applied
1 May 2021:	TCA entered into force
9 June 2021:	UK-EU Partnership Council first meeting
5 October 2021:	EP agrees to establish Delegation to PPA
18 October 2021:	Members of EP Delegation to PPA announced
6 & 8 December 2021:	House of Commons and House of Lords agree to establish UK Delegation to PPA
9 December 2021:	EP Delegation to PPA first meeting
26 January 2022:	Members of UK Delegation to PPA appointed
12-13 May 2022:	PPA first meeting, Brussels
7-8 November 2022:	PPA second meeting, London

¹ Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 149/10, 30 April 2021

After initial contacts involving the Speakers of the two Houses and the President of the European Parliament, the negotiations were led for the UK by Sir Oliver Heald MP and Lord Kinnoull (Chair of the House of Lords European Affairs Committee). They took on the task by arrangement with the Government and were then appointed, respectively, as Chair and one of the Vice-Chairs of the UK Delegation to the PPA, also becoming Chair and one of the Vice-Chairs of the PPA.

How big is the PPA?

The PPA has 70 Members, 35 from the UK Parliament and 35 from the EP.

The size of the PPA is not specified in the TCA and had to be negotiated between the two Parliaments.

With 35 Members, the [UK Delegation to the PPA](#) is the largest UK inter-parliamentary Delegation:

- The UK Delegations to the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#) (PACE) and the [NATO Parliamentary Assembly](#) have 18 members each.
- The UK Delegation to the [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly has 13 members.
- The UK Delegation to the [British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly](#) (BIPA), an inter-parliamentary body which operates under different arrangements to the PPA and the three multinational assemblies, has 25 members.

On the EU side, the [EP Delegation to the PPA](#) is the EP's [largest bilateral Delegation apart from those for China \(37 members\) and the United States \(63 members\)](#).²

The PPA's two member Parliaments have each also appointed substitute members of their Delegations, who can take part in the PPA's work as full members in the place of any such members who cannot participate at any point. The UK's Delegation has 12 substitute members and the EP's 35.

Involvement of the UK's devolved legislatures

The TCA specifies that the PPA consists of Members of the EP and of the UK Parliament ([Article 11.1](#)). Members of the UK's devolved legislatures therefore cannot be Members.

However, when the discussions on establishing the PPA got underway between the UK and European Parliaments in 2021, after the TCA had been concluded, the [devolved legislatures expressed concern about being excluded from the body and a](#)

² European Parliament decision of 17 July 2019 on numerical strength of interparliamentary delegations, P9_TA(2019)0003

[wish to be involved in some way](#).³ The matter was raised in particular via a [joint letter in August 2021 from the Chairs of the Committees engaged on the issue in the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland legislatures](#) to Sir Oliver Heald MP and Lord Kinnoull, the two Westminster parliamentarians leading the discussions with the EP on the establishment of the PPA.⁴

After further discussions with the EP, shortly before the PPA's first meeting in Brussels in May 2022 Sir Oliver was able to [extend invitations to the three devolved legislatures](#) to send two observers each to the gathering.⁵ The [Scottish Parliament](#) (in the shape of the Convener and Deputy Convener of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee)⁶ and [Welsh Senedd](#) (in the shape of one Member each from the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee and the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee) took up the offer⁷, but the Northern Ireland Assembly did not (the PPA meeting came only days after the May 2022 NIA election).⁸

At the PPA's first meeting, the Assembly established a formal basis for an ongoing observer role for Members of the UK's devolved legislatures, via provisions in its [Rules of Procedure](#) for the Co-Chairs to be able to invite "elected representatives from other national and regional Parliaments and assemblies" to attend PPA meetings as observers (Rule 8), and for PPA papers to be "shared with all those attending its meetings" (Rule 5).⁹

The role of the devolved legislatures with respect to the PPA and the UK PPA Delegation forms one strand in a larger and quite intricate ongoing conversation, involving multiple bodies, about how the devolved legislatures can best engage with each other, with the UK Parliament, with the UK and devolved Governments and with EU institutions to achieve effective engagement on and scrutiny of post-Brexit issues.

³ Letters from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, *Welsh Senedd*, to Sir Oliver Heald MP and Lord Kinnoull: UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly, 16 July 2021

⁴ Joint letter to Lord Kinnoull from the Convener/Chairs of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, Scottish Parliament, the Committee for the Executive Office, Northern Ireland, and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, *Welsh Senedd*, 25 August 2021

⁵ Scottish Parliament, Letter from Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald QC MP to the Presiding Officer on UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly meeting, 8 April 2022

⁶ Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, Scottish Parliament, 'Note of the First Meeting of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA)'

⁷ Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, *Welsh Senedd*, Annual Report 2021/22, October 2022, p. 32

⁸ Northern Ireland Assembly, *Brexit & Beyond Newsletter*, Issue 76, 18 May 2022

⁹ Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly, as agreed by the Assembly at its first meeting on 12 May 2022 and approved by the Bureau of the European Parliament at its meeting on 6 June 2022

What are the role and powers of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly?

Role and initial activities

The TCA defines the PPA simply as “a forum to exchange views on the [UK-EU] partnership” ([Article 11.1](#)).

Beyond this definition, and the listing of the PPA’s three formal powers (discussed in the following section), the TCA says nothing more about the PPA’s role or activities.

The PPA did not go significantly further when it agreed its own [Rules of Procedure](#): these define the role of the Assembly as being to “meet and exchange views on issues arising within the framework of the TCA, including supplementing agreements, and any other matters of mutual interest” (Rule 1).

There is thus considerable scope for the PPA to determine its own agenda, activities and ways of working. In this context, the Assembly’s practices are to some extent likely to become established only over time and through a degree of experimentation and learning. For example, at its second meeting in London in November 2022, the Assembly is holding some ‘breakout’ sessions, under the Chatham House Rule, to allow more detailed discussion than was possible in the public plenary-only format that was used at the first meeting. Given that the PPA meets only twice a year, the development of established practices could be quite slow. However, given that the PPA meets only twice a year, and only over two days each time, there are limits to what can be carried out within the format; and the PPA’s initial operation does not appear to be significantly different from that of other inter-parliamentary bodies involving the EP.

In the [House of Commons’ debate in December 2021](#) on establishing the UK Delegation to the PPA,¹⁰ MPs in effect pointed to two (diametrically opposed) possible roles for the PPA that they did *not* want to see it play – namely, as just a [low-value ‘talking shop’](#), on the one hand;¹¹ and, on the other, as a body which [disrupts or usurps Parliament’s existing mechanisms for conducting scrutiny of EU-related matters](#) and holding the UK Government to account.¹²

At the same time, MPs with widely differing views on the EU and UK-EU relations almost all expressed a cautious welcome for the PPA, as a potentially useful body. (The motion establishing the UK Delegation was [agreed in both Houses](#) without a division.)¹³ For their part, the then-Committees of the two Houses which had examined the TCA and the post-Brexit UK-EU relationship both firmly saw the PPA

¹⁰ House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 138

¹¹ Robert Goodwill MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 149

¹² Peter Bone MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 151

¹³ House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 155; House of Lords, *Hansard*, 8 December 2021, vol. 816, col. 1904

as potentially being able to make a valuable contribution. The House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU stressed the need for [scrutiny of the implementation of the TCA](#)¹⁴ and the [existence of issues which required ongoing discussion](#),¹⁵ while the House of Lords European Union Committee said that the PPA's initial role "[should be to help rebuild relationships between the UK and the EU and strengthen channels of communication between the two Parliaments](#)."¹⁶

The PPA does not meet sufficiently frequently – or bring sufficient additional capacity in terms of Member and staff time – to conduct detailed ongoing scrutiny of policy or legislation, activity which would in any case duplicate work conducted by each of its two Member Parliaments.

At the PPA's first meeting, the possibility was raised of establishing some working format that would allow more detailed work to take place between meetings of the full Assembly. The Rules of Procedure, which were only agreed on that occasion, do not include any provision to this effect.

What did the PPA do at its first meeting?

In the end, at the [PPA's first meeting](#), after consideration of the Rules of Procedure and the information the Assembly should request from the Partnership Council (discussed in the following section), the Assembly first held a 'state-of-play' session with the Council, represented by European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, Partnership Council Co-Chair for the EU, and Michael Ellis MP, then-Minister for the Cabinet Office, representing the UK Co-Chair.¹⁷ (The Foreign Secretary, the UK Co-Chair of the Partnership Council, did not attend, which drew criticism but was possibly owing to a scheduling clash with a G7 meeting.) These sessions with the Partnership Council are likely to be a fixture at PPA meetings.

The first day of the [PPA's first meeting](#) then concluded with a discussion of UK-EU cooperation on the war in Ukraine, with the participation of James Heappey MP, the UK's then-Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, and Stefano Sannino, Secretary General of the EU's External Action Service (EEAS). Members then had dinner together, before holding three sessions on the second day of the PPA meeting, on the 'Impact of Withdrawal Agreement issues upon the work of the Partnership Council and the importance of building the new multi-dimensional EU-UK relationship', energy cooperation, and the future work of the PPA.¹⁸

¹⁴ House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union, *The UK-EU future relationship: the Trade and Cooperation Agreement*, Fourth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 1094, 30 December 2020, para. 32

¹⁵ House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union, *The shape of future parliamentary scrutiny of UK-EU relations*, Fifth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 977, 21 January 2021, paras. 68–75

¹⁶ House of Lords European Union Committee, *Beyond Brexit: the institutional framework*, 21st Report of Session 2019–21, HL Paper 246, 22 March 2021, paras. 76–80

¹⁷ Agenda, 1st Parliamentary Partnership Assembly, European Parliament, Brussels, 12–13 May 2022

¹⁸ For an initial assessment of the PPA's first meeting, see Fowler. B, *The Parliamentary Partnership Assembly's first meeting: what did we learn?*, UK in a Changing Europe, 25 May 2022

The PPA's first meeting was public – that is, livestreamed – and the [Rules of Procedure](#) now state that it is a “presumption” that this will remain the practice (Rule 5).

During the planning phase for the PPA, it was expected that each meeting of the Assembly would result in a summary report. As of late October 2022, no such report of the first meeting had been published. The two PPA Co-Chairs released a [joint statement](#) following the gathering.¹⁹ (As of late October 2022, the fullest published account of the first meeting is a [note produced by the observers from the Scottish Parliament](#).)²⁰ The minutes of the first meeting are expected to be approved at the second.

Formal powers

The TCA gives the PPA three formal powers ([Article 11.2](#)). The PPA:

- “(a) may request relevant information regarding the implementation of this Agreement and any supplementing agreement from the Partnership Council, which shall then supply that Assembly with the requested information;*
- (b) shall be informed of the decisions and recommendations of the Partnership Council; and*
- (c) may make recommendations to the Partnership Council.”*

Evidently, the PPA has no decision-making powers – with respect to the Partnership Council, the UK Government, the European Commission or other EU Institutions or the Member States, or the operation of the TCA.

Rather, in terms of its formal powers, the PPA is primarily an interlocutor for, and potential influencer of, the Partnership Council, and a scrutineer of its work and the operation of the TCA more widely.

What is the Partnership Council?

The Partnership Council is made up of the UK Government and the European Commission and is the decision-making body at the apex of the governance structures established by and for the TCA. It is co-chaired by a UK Minister (since December 2021, the Foreign Secretary) and a European Commissioner (since its inception, Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič). Under the TCA, the Partnership Council must meet at least once a year. As of late October 2022, it has met once, in June 2021.

¹⁹ First meeting of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly, 12-13 May 2022, Brussels: Statement by the Co-Chairs, 13 May 2022

²⁰ Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, Scottish Parliament, ‘Note of the First Meeting of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA)’

As of October 2022, it is not yet possible to offer any significant assessment of the way in which the PPA's powers are being used nor their effectiveness, given that the Partnership Council has met only once, and at a time before the PPA was established.

Powers to command information

On paper, the first two of the PPA's powers, to receive information, are stronger than the third: the Partnership Council "shall" supply the PPA with information it requests about the implementation of the TCA and any supplementing agreement, and the PPA "shall" be informed about Partnership Council decisions and recommendations.

One difficulty in assessing the operation of these provisions is that the information that is provided to the PPA may not necessarily be public – it may take the form of private briefings, or documents supplied but not for publication.

The test of the PPA's information powers will be the extent to which they expand the information that would be available to the UK and European Parliaments in any case.

Decisions and recommendations of the Partnership Council are official public documents, and the Partnership Council's Rules of Procedure (which are [Annex 1 to the TCA](#)) specify that the body's provisional agendas and minutes shall also be published (Rule 10). This provision extends to the Committees of the Partnership Council, as well as the Council itself (Rule 13). (As an aid, the organogram of the TCA institutions produced by the House of Commons Library is appended to this briefing as an Annex.) Both the [UK Government](#) and the [European Commission](#) are maintaining webpages on which these documents are published.

Against this background, Appendix I summarises the various provisions and apparent or planned arrangements governing the provision of information on the Partnership Council and its bodies to the PPA, the UK Parliament and the European Parliament. In assessing these provisions, it is important to note that the flow of information to the UK Parliament goes primarily to the EU scrutiny committees in the two Houses (the European Scrutiny Committee – ESC – in the Commons and the European Affairs Committee – EAC – in the Lords). In the EP, the key body receiving information from the Commission on UK-related matters is the [UK Contact Group](#). This is the latest incarnation of a body which has existed throughout the Brexit process as the prime vehicle for private communication and briefing between the Commission and Parliament on the issue. (Overlap between the memberships of these bodies and the PPA Delegations is discussed in the following section.)

Power to make recommendations

The PPA's third power under the TCA, to make recommendations, appears weaker than its powers to command information: the Partnership Council is under no obligation to implement any such recommendations, or even respond.

However, the PPA's recommendation power is potentially the one that could make the most difference to the operation of the TCA's institutional arrangements.

If the PPA were to make practical, constructive recommendations for the better working of the UK-EU relationship under the TCA, it could help to allay concerns or criticisms that the PPA is just a 'talking shop' and show that such inter-parliamentary bodies can add value. The fact that any recommendation would have the backing of a majority of both the UK and EP Delegations would confer political credibility, and demonstrate that 'landing zones' for agreement between the two sides can be found. (The PPA's decision-making rules are discussed in the following section.) And, if the work of the two member Parliaments could be seen to be feeding into joint recommendations that then influence the Partnership Council, it could help to incentivise their scrutiny and foster their sense of responsibility for the UK-EU relationship. The potential role of PPA recommendations could be especially important in the context of the review of the TCA which must, under its [Article 776](#), take place by May 2026.

In the House of Commons' debate in December 2021 on establishing the UK Delegation to the PPA, Sir Oliver Heald, the leader of the UK Delegation and PPA Co-Chair, [sounded cautious about the possibility of the Assembly adopting formal policy positions](#).²¹ It could be politically sensitive in the UK for a joint UK-EU body to make recommendations to a UK Minister, even in their capacity as Co-Chair of the Partnership Council. In this context, it is notable that, in its [Rules of Procedure](#), the PPA states that it may "address recommendations to the Partnership Council, to the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the Government of the United Kingdom" (Rule 6) – a provision which goes beyond the TCA (which refers only to PPA making recommendations to the Partnership Council). UK Select Committee Chairs can also sometimes find it problematic to sign up to formal positions adopted by international inter-parliamentary bodies if they do not want to be seen to be committing their Committees.

The possible making of recommendations is likely to be one of the main focuses of attention at the PPA's second meeting in London in November 2022. The question of making recommendations did not arise at the first meeting, since the Rules of Procedure which govern the process were only adopted on that occasion. If the PPA chooses not to try, or is unable, to agree recommendations at the November meeting, it may make it more likely that not making recommendations becomes the Assembly's normal practice.

Decision-making

Essentially, the PPA takes decisions by double majority – that is, by a majority of each of the UK and EP Delegations.

This applies to both the PPA as a whole and the PPA Bureau (the PPA's leadership body, which is discussed below).

²¹ Sir Oliver Heald MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 144

Bureau decisions require a simple majority (that is, two) of the Bureau Members from each Delegation, whether or not the Bureau Members are present (under Rule 3 of the PPA's [Rules of Procedure](#)).

The process by which the PPA takes decisions applies to the adoption of recommendations and to all other matters put to a vote, except for the amendment of the PPA's Rules of Procedure (under Rule 6).

How would the PPA adopt a recommendation?

Under Rule 6 of the PPA Rules of Procedure, the process is:

- The Bureau puts forward proposals for recommendations (circulated to Members at least 14 days in advance).
- Amendments may be tabled by Members or political groups in either Delegation, until a deadline set by the Co-Chairs.
- After that deadline, the Co-Chairs may jointly propose compromise amendments.
- At the PPA meeting, votes on recommendations may take place if there is a quorum of one-third of the Members of each Delegation.
- Recommendations are adopted if they are supported by a simple majority of those Members of each Delegation who are in attendance.

For amendment of the Rules of Procedure, the quorum is raised to one-half of the Members of each Delegation, and the required majority is raised to two-thirds of those Members of each Delegation who are in attendance (Rule 14).

The Withdrawal Agreement: in scope or not?

The PPA's formal remit does not cover the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement – and the Withdrawal Agreement has no inter-parliamentary element of its own.

Under the TCA ([Article 11.2](#)), the PPA's power to receive information it requests from the Partnership Council extends to information on the implementation of the TCA plus “any supplementing agreement”. This is in line with the overall approach taken by the TCA, whereby any and all supplementing agreements would be governed under the TCA's institutional structures, rather than have their own.

However, the Withdrawal Agreement is not a supplementing agreement to the TCA, having been signed before it in January 2020. As of October 2022, there is only one supplementing agreement to the TCA, namely the [Agreement concerning Security Procedures for Exchanging and Protecting Classified Information](#).²² This was signed alongside the TCA in December 2020.

²² Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 149/2540, 30 April 2021

Nevertheless, the Withdrawal Agreement and the TCA are intimately linked, above all because of the former's Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, which has been the overriding issue in formal UK-EU relations since Summer 2021. On the basis of its role as a forum for considering the UK-EU relationship in general, the PPA spent a significant portion of its first meeting in May 2022 discussing the Protocol, both in the opening session with Liz Truss and Maroš Šefčovič, and during the session entitled 'Impact of Withdrawal Agreement issues'.

In its own meetings, the EP Delegation to the PPA also devotes [significant attention to the Protocol](#),²³ as it does too to [EU citizens' rights in the UK](#)²⁴ – an issue to which the EP has consistently paid close attention throughout the Brexit process, and another which is governed by the Withdrawal Agreement, not the TCA.

In its [April 2021 resolution on the outcome of the UK-EU TCA negotiations](#) (paragraph 8),²⁵ the EP suggested that the scope of the PPA should include implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, as well as the TCA. If the PPA were to acquire formal powers with respect to the Withdrawal Agreement that were equivalent to its powers pertaining to the TCA, this would presumably require amendment of either or both of the two treaties. As of October 2022, the possibility of such a reform has not been raised in the PPA's public business. However, it might be on the agenda if the governance structures of the two UK-EU agreements ever came to be formally merged, or otherwise as part of the review of the TCA that must take place by May 2026 (under [Article 776](#)). If the PPA's formal remit were extended to include the Withdrawal Agreement, among parliamentarians in the UK this would have implications in particular for Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The role of the Delegations to the PPA in their home Parliaments

The two Delegations to the PPA have very different roles from each other in their home Parliaments, in terms of:

- i. their formal integration into other parliamentary business; and
- ii. their visibility to the public.

This is not specific to the PPA Delegations but applies to international inter-parliamentary Delegations in general in the two Parliaments.

UK Parliament

Inasmuch as there has been debate at Westminster about arrangements for the international inter-parliamentary Delegations, it has turned on the extent to which they should be treated as similar to Select Committees.

²³ See, for example, the agenda of the meeting of the Delegation of 8 September 2022.

²⁴ See, for example, the agenda of the meeting of the Delegation of 3 February 2022.

²⁵ European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2021 on the outcome of EU-UK negotiations, P9_TA(2021)0141

As things stand, international Delegations – including the Delegation to the PPA – have no formal role in parliamentary business at Westminster. They are not mentioned in the Standing Orders of either House. (They receive a brief mention in the [Companion to the Standing Orders of the House of Lords](#).)²⁶

In terms of reporting and access to the House, during the House of Commons' debate in December 2021 on establishing the Delegation to the PPA the then-Leader of the House, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, said that the Chair of the UK PPA Delegation would "[be able to report to this House in the way that Select Committee Chairmen do by asking the Backbench Business Committee for time on a Thursday to make a report or, indeed, to ask for a debate](#)".²⁷ However, this may have elided the ability of *all* backbenchers to ask the Backbench Business Committee for time for a debate, on the one hand, with, on the other, the ability of Select Committees, exclusively, to be granted time by the Backbench Business Committee or Liaison Committee to make a statement and take questions on a report or new inquiry (under [Standing Order No. 22D](#)).²⁸ As things stand, if the work of the international Delegations is formally debated in the Commons at all, it indeed tends to take place as backbench business.

With respect to the public visibility of Parliament's inter-parliamentary Delegations, in ongoing (as opposed to one-off) terms this is almost nil. If a Delegation meets, this is not listed on the parliamentary business papers; such meetings are not public and generate no public record; and MPs' and Peers' memberships in international Delegations are not listed on their individual pages on the parliamentary website. In contrast to the websites of some other Parliaments, on the UK Parliament site (as of late October 2022) there is no link that is visible from the homepage to a section on international work or inter-parliamentary relations.

European Parliament

In the European Parliament, international inter-parliamentary Delegations are official bodies of the Parliament, which are governed by the [Rules of Procedure](#) and which operate in a similar way to the Parliament's Committees in some respects.

Delegations have no formal role in the legislative process, and do not prepare reports and resolutions for debate and adoption by the Parliament. However, they are formally integrated into the information-gathering and scrutiny work carried out by EP Committees. Under the Rules of Procedure, Delegation Chairs are required to report regularly to the Foreign Affairs Committee. EP Committees are required to allow Delegation Chairs to address them when they have an agenda item touching on the Delegation's area of responsibility; and the same applies in reverse to Delegations, with respect to Chairs of Committees ([Rule 223.6 and 223.7](#)).²⁹

²⁶ House of Lords, *Companion to the Standing Orders and Guide to the Proceedings of the House of Lords*, 2022, para. 11.106

²⁷ Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 153

²⁸ House of Commons, *Standing Orders – Public Business*, HC 804, 2 December 2021, Standing Order No. 22D

²⁹ Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, 9th parliamentary term - July 2022, Rule 223

Meetings of EP Delegations are normally held in public (although they may choose to meet in private), and draft agendas and minutes are published. The Delegation to the PPA has met in private when discussing procedural matters and preparation for and feedback from PPA meetings, but otherwise it has been meeting in public roughly once a month during sitting periods, holding exchanges of views with a range of official, expert and civil society stakeholders.

Who are the Members of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly?

UK Delegation

The [list of the Members of the UK Delegation to the PPA](#) is:³⁰

UK Delegation to the PPA: Original Members (appointed 26 January 2022)

MPs (21)

Sir Oliver Heald MP (Chair and Co-Chair of the PPA); Hilary Benn (Vice-Chair of the Delegation and the PPA); Stuart Anderson; Simon Baynes; Andrew Bowie; Sir Jeffrey Donaldson; Sir Robert Goodwill; Sir Mark Hendrick; Rupa Huq; Darren Jones; Andrea Leadsom; Sir Tony Lloyd; David Morris; David Mundell; Neil Parish; Chris Skidmore; Karin Smyth; Kelly Tolhurst; Valerie Vaz; Phillipa Whitford; Mike Wood

Peers (14)

Lord Kinnoull (Vice-Chair of the Delegation and the PPA); Lord Bach; Baroness Crawley; Lord Gilbert of Panteg; Lord Godson; Lord Hannan of Kingsclere; Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town; Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate; Lord Liddle; Baroness Ludford; Baroness Mobarik; Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne; Lord Ricketts; Lord Teverson

Since the Delegation was appointed, Neil Parish resigned as an MP. As of late October 2022, no replacement Member had been appointed.

³⁰ Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister, 'Appointments to the UK Delegation to the United Kingdom-European Union Parliamentary Partnership Assembly', House of Commons, *Hansard*, 26 January 2022, vol. 707, col. 26WS

In terms of gender and party affiliation, the original UK Delegation breaks down as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Breakdown of the UK Delegation to the PPA by party and gender

	Party						Gender		Totals
	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	SNP	DUP	Crossbench	Men	Women	
MPs	12	7	-	1	1	N/A	15	6	21
Peers	6	4	2	N/A	-	2	9	5	14
Totals	18	11	2	1	1	2	24	11	35

Of the 21 original MPs on the Delegation:

- Six had been MPs continuously since before 2010, five since the 2010 General Election, five since 2015, three since 2017 and two since 2019. (The figure for 2017 includes the Labour MP Sir Tony Lloyd, who was first elected in 1983 but who was then out of the House for five years from 2012.)
- Five sit for seats outside England. These are the DUP and SNP MPs on the Delegation, plus two Conservatives with Scottish seats and one Conservative with a constituency in Wales.
- As far as can be ascertained, 16 backed ‘Remain’ in the 2016 Brexit referendum, and five ‘Leave’.³¹

In political terms, the UK Delegation to the PPA is relatively heavyweight, including in terms of previous experience in and with the EU. For example, the original 35-strong line-up included:

- 12 Members with experience in government, including three former Secretaries of State (Hilary Benn, Andrea Leadsom and David Mundell);
- a party leader, in the shape of Jeffrey Donaldson of the DUP;
- 4 Select Committee Chairs, of directly-relevant Committees, namely Darren Jones MP (Business, Energy and Energy and Industrial Strategy), Lord Kinnoull (European Affairs), Neil Parish MP (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and Baroness Hayter (International Agreements) – although Mr Parish resigned from Parliament subsequent to his appointment to the Delegation, initially reducing the number of Select Committee Chairs in the line-up to three, before Robert Goodwill, who was on the Delegation already, was [elected as the new EFRA Committee Chair](#), taking the tally back up to four;
- several Members with significant previous experience on relevant Select Committees – most notably, Hilary Benn MP, Chair of the House of Commons ‘Brexit’ Committee for all of its existence (2016–2021);

³¹ Sources: reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/854015; www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35616946; www.placenorthwest.co.uk/news/tony-lloyd-some-planning-is-boring-some-is-exciting; www.stuartanderson.org.uk/news/stuart-pledges-standup4brexit; www.simonbaynes.co.uk/campaigns/get-brexit-done; www.andrewbowie.org.uk/brexit-faqs; twitter.com/darrenpjones/status/1165372175341277185

- 10 former MEPs (three MPs and seven Peers), falling to nine following the resignation of Neil Parish MP; and
- in the person of Sir Peter Ricketts, the UK’s former Permanent Representative to NATO, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Permanent Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, National Security Adviser, and Ambassador to France.

As of late October 2022, several Members of the Delegation are also serving as Members of relevant Select Committees – including, in the Commons, one Member of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and three Members of the International Trade Committee.

However, a striking feature of the UK Delegation is that it includes no Member of the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee (ESC). This is despite the fact that the ESC has [emerged](#) – by both [default](#) and [appetite](#) – as the House of Commons’ principal scrutiny committee for UK-EU relations,³² and despite the fact that, during the Commons’ debate on establishing the Delegation, the ESC Chair, Sir Bill Cash MP, made an [explicit bid](#) for the Committee to be represented on it.³³ The PPA Delegation also does not include any member of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. By contrast, from the House of Lords, the UK Delegation includes two Members of the European Affairs Committee (including the Chair, who is one of the Vice-Chairs of the Delegation), two Members of that Committee’s Sub-Committee on the Northern Ireland Protocol, and a Member of the International Relations and Defence Committee.

Members of UK international inter-parliamentary Delegations are appointed as individual Members, not in any *ex officio* or representative capacity (beyond their party affiliation). If they leave or join a Select Committee, the line-up of Select Committee members on a Delegation therefore changes.

EP Delegation

The breakdown of the [EP Delegation to the PPA](#) by gender and political group is as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Breakdown of the EP Delegation to the PPA by political group and gender

Political group								Gender	
European People’s Party (Christian Democrats)	Socialists & Democrats	Renew Europe	Greens/ European Free Alliance	Identity & Democracy	European Conservatives & Reformists	Left	Non-attached	Men	Women
9	8	5	4	3	3	2	1	23	12

³² See Fowler, B., *Post-Brexit select committee changes highlight Lords-Commons differences*, 5 February 2021; *Back to the future? House of Commons scrutiny of EU affairs after Lord Frost’s exit*, 21 January 2022; and *When is a ‘cross-party Committee’ no longer cross-party? The case of the European Scrutiny Committee*, 21 July 2022, all Hansard Society

³³ Sir Bill Cash MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 140

By EU Member State, the EP Delegation breaks down as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Breakdown of the EP Delegation to the PPA by Member State

France (incl. Chair)	5
Germany	4
Netherlands	4
Spain	4
Ireland (incl. Vice-Chair)	3
Italy	3
Belgium	2
Poland	2
Austria	1
Bulgaria (Vice-Chair)	1
Czech Republic	1
Finland	1
Hungary	1
Malta	1
Portugal	1
Romania	1

Compared to their shares of MEPs overall, France and especially Ireland and the Netherlands are numerically over-represented, for example; Germany is somewhat under-represented.

In political terms, the EP Delegation to the PPA is relatively heavyweight, like its UK counterpart. It includes at least three Members who have been in national Government (including the Chair, Nathalie Loiseau MEP), plus, in the shape of David McAllister MEP, a former Prime Minister of a German *Land*.

Compared especially to the House of Commons component of the UK Delegation, the EP Delegation is densely networked into the EP's work on the UK and relevant wider issues. Committee memberships arguably count for less in the EP context than in the Commons, because EP Committees are so much larger. and such a greater share of Members have Committee places; but, at leadership level, the PPA Delegation includes, for example, two of the three Co-Chairs of the UK Contact Group, who are also the Chairs of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence (Mr McAllister and Ms Loiseau, respectively). Six further permanent Members of the UK Contact Group are also included.

Leadership structure

Each of the two Delegations to the PPA has a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, who together make up a six-strong Bureau for the Assembly. The Chairs of the two Delegations are Co-Chairs of the Bureau, who take turns to preside over the PPA.

In the UK Delegation, the Chair and one of the Vice-Chairs are from the House of Commons, and the other Vice-Chair is from the Lords.

On this basis, the Bureau of the PPA comprises:

- Co-Chairs: Sir Oliver Heald MP and Nathalie Loiseau MEP; and
- Vice-Chairs: Hilary Benn MP, Lord Kinnoull, Seán Kelly MEP and Tsvetelina Penkova MEP.

The PPA Bureau is powerful: under the Assembly's [Rules of Procedure](#), any recommendations that the PPA might make are put to it by the Bureau (Rule 6) – a provision that drew mild criticism from a Member at the PPA's first meeting. The Bureau may also convene extraordinary meetings of the PPA, on its own initiative or potentially after considering a request from one-third of the Members of each Delegation (Rule 5).

The PPA's Rules of Procedure specify that both Co-Chairs must consent to Bureau decisions (Rule 3).

The Rules also enable the Assembly Co-Chairs to take certain actions alone – namely, to:

- request information from the Partnership Council, exercising the PPA's Article 11.2 power under the TCA (Rule 7);
- draw up the draft agenda of PPA meetings, after consulting the other members of the Bureau in their Delegation (Rule 5);
- propose compromise amendments to proposed PPA recommendations, if – and after the deadline for – multiple amendments are tabled from Members;
- invite guests to PPA plenaries, and invite “elected representatives from other national and regional Parliaments and assemblies” to attend PPA meetings as observers (Rule 8);
- agree that a PPA meeting be held remotely (Rule 5); and
- potentially “rule on all questions relating to the interpretation and implementation of the Rules of Procedure” (Rule 13).

Appointment process

The TCA does not specify how the Members of the PPA are appointed: this is a matter for each of the two sides.

When it came to appointing their PPA Members, both the UK side and the EP stuck to their established processes for appointing standing international inter-parliamentary Delegations. For both Parliaments, the essence of this process is the same: the names of individual Members come forward from their respective political parties, but the overall party breakdown of a Delegation should mirror that of the Parliament as a whole. However, in the UK, Delegation Members are ultimately appointed by the Government. And, in the EP, the appointment process

is set out in the Parliament's [Rules of Procedure](#),³⁴ whereas, in the UK, the process rests on precedent and is not covered by the Standing Orders of either House.

Appointment processes for Members of international inter-parliamentary Delegations, including to the PPA, in the UK and European Parliaments

UK Parliament

Once both Houses have decided (by Resolution) to establish a Delegation to an international body and (if necessary) determined its size, names of potential Members are put forward by the political parties, through the 'Usual Channels' (that is, the Whips) to the Government. The Members of the Delegation are formally appointed by the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary, by Written Ministerial Statement. This includes the Delegation Chair, who is invariably an MP rather than a Peer, and from the Government side of the House.

European Parliament (under [Rule 223 of its Rules of Procedure](#))

Once the Parliament has decided (by Resolution) to establish an international Delegation and determined its size, Delegation Members are appointed by the Parliament's political groups (or non-attached Members) and notified to the Parliament. Political groups are required to "ensure as far as possible that Member States, political views and gender are fairly represented" among their appointments to a Delegation, and there is an overall limit of one-third on the number of Members of any one Delegation who can have any single nationality.

How is the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly organised in practical terms?

Timing and location of meetings

Timing

The PPA is expected to meet twice a year.

This is not specified in the TCA, but has been the frequency envisaged from early in the subsequent PPA planning and development process, and is now stated as an "in principle" rule in the PPA's [Rules of Procedure](#) (Rule 5).

Compared to the other international inter-parliamentary bodies on which arrangements for the UK PPA Delegation are being modelled, at twice a year the PPA will meet with the same frequency as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and less often than the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which normally meets three times a year, and the

³⁴ Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, 9th parliamentary term - July 2022, Rule 223

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which normally meets four times a year.

Given that the PPA hears reporting from – and may make recommendations to – the UK-EU Partnership Council, it would seem sensible for PPA meetings to be timed to fit in with those of the Partnership Council – for example, for PPA meetings to be held in the run-up to Partnership Council meetings. However, meetings of the Partnership Council (which the TCA specifies should be annual) have not yet settled into a regular pattern: the body has only met once, in June 2021, and (as of late October 2022) no date for a 2022 meeting has been announced. The May 2022 timing of the first PPA meeting seems simply to have been the earliest possible, given the time taken by the preparatory process – the expected timing of the meeting slipped back progressively from initial hopes that it might be [before the Summer break in 2021](#).³⁵ The November 2022 timing of the second meeting is simply roughly six months after the first.

PPA meetings are expected to take place over two days. The first meeting was held over a Thursday and Friday, but after some Members complained at that meeting that this timing clashed with their wish to be in their home countries / constituencies on Fridays, the PPA's second meeting was moved to a Monday-Tuesday slot.

Extraordinary meetings of the PPA may be convened by the Bureau alone, or considered by the Bureau if requested by one-third of the Members of each Delegation (Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure).

Location

PPA meetings are hosted alternately by the two member Parliaments.

The EP offered to host the first meeting, and did so at its Brussels (rather than Strasbourg) seat.

For the second meeting, hosted by the UK Parliament, there was some uncertainty over whether it could take place on the parliamentary estate or would need to be organised off-site, owing to the numbers of people involved: a full complement of PPA Members, observers, guests, officials, interpreters and other staff would come to well over 100 people. Among other disadvantages, organising the meeting off-site would incur additional cost.

In the end, the second PPA meeting is taking place principally in Committee Room 14 in the Palace of Westminster (more typically in the news as the location for meetings of the backbench Conservative 1922 Committee). The discussions over the venue for the PPA's first London meeting highlighted the lack of a modern conference or large meeting room, or 'spare second chamber'-type space, on the current parliamentary estate.

³⁵ Sir Oliver Heald MP, House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 143

Staffing and funding

Each Member Parliament funds, and provides ongoing staff support for, its Delegation to the PPA. Each Parliament then also bears the costs of hosting the PPA meetings for which it is responsible. For these occasions, additional parliamentary staff may be drafted in from other duties as needed.

In the UK, staff support for the PPA Delegation is being provided by the House of Commons Inter-Parliamentary Relations Office (formerly called the Overseas Office). Staff support comprises a Delegation Secretary, who is double-hatted also as the Secretary to the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), plus a more junior staff member who also has other duties. The Commons Office supports the Lords Members of the PPA Delegation as well as MPs, in reflection of which the (smaller) House of Lords Inter-Parliamentary Relations Office makes a transfer of funding to its Commons counterpart.

As agreed explicitly by both Houses when they agreed to establish the Delegation to the PPA,³⁶ these arrangements replicate those already in place for Parliament's Delegations to PACE, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

On policy matters, support for the PPA Delegation is provided in particular by the European Affairs Unit, the cross-committee team of specialists created in 2021 within the House of Commons' Select Committee staff.

How much does the PPA cost?

During the process of establishing the UK Delegation, the authorities in the two Houses estimated that participation in the PPA would involve additional annual costs of [£66,000 for the Commons](#) and [£38,000 for the Lords](#).³⁷ However, these estimates were necessarily made before the PPA was established and involved significant uncertainty over the nature and extent of PPA activities.

³⁶ House of Commons, *Hansard*, 6 December 2021, vol. 705, col. 155; House of Lords, *Hansard*, 8 December 2021, vol. 816, col. 1904

³⁷ House of Commons, UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly motion, Financial Consequences: Memorandum by the Accounting Officer, 6 December 2021; House of Lords Commission, *EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly*, 1st Report of Session 2021-22, HL Paper 114, 25 November 2021, para. 7

Appendices

Appendix I: Provision of information to the PPA and the UK and European Parliaments in connection with the work of the Partnership Council and its bodies

PPA

[Rules of Procedure](#) (Rule 7), building on the TCA ([Article 11.2](#))

Requests put to European Commission, according to oral presentation at the PPA's first meeting of an unpublished paper agreed at that meeting

The PPA “shall be informed of all decisions and recommendations of the Partnership Council and its Committees [...]. [...] the PPA [...] may request relevant information regarding the implementation of the TCA and any supplementing agreement from the Partnership Council, which shall then supply the PPA with the requested information”.

Commission requested to provide agendas, minutes, decisions and announcements of the Partnership Council and its Committees; and regular updated tentative calendar of planned meetings, and list of decisions and recommendations in preparation.

UK Parliament

Agreement on revised EU scrutiny arrangements, reached by exchange of correspondence between the Government and the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee (ESC) and House of Lords European Affairs Committee (EAC) (as published in the ESC's [First Special Report of Session 2022–23](#), HC 721, 18 October 2022)

Government is to:

- make Written Ministerial Statements before and after Partnership Council meetings;
- deposit Explanatory Memorandums on European Council Decisions that establish the EU position for the Partnership Council and EU Council Decisions that establish the EU position for meetings of Specialised Committees, both before the relevant meetings where possible;
- provide official-level briefings to Committee staff before and after Partnership Council meetings;
- share provisional agendas of TCA Specialised Committee meetings in advance;
- provide periodic written summaries of activity in the TCA Committees.

European Parliament

[Commission statement on the role of the European Parliament in the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), 27 April 2021

The Commission “will ensure that the European Parliament is immediately and fully informed of the activities of the Partnership Council, the Trade Partnership Committee, the Trade Specialised Committees and the other Specialised Committees established by the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, subject to the necessary arrangements in order to preserve confidentiality. [...] The information concerns the briefing and debriefing before and after meetings of the joint bodies as well as sharing all documents pertaining to meetings of these joint bodies at the same time the Commission shares them with the Council. This includes draft agendas, proposals for Council decisions establishing the Union positions in these bodies, draft decisions of such bodies, as well as minutes of their meetings. The co-chair of the Partnership Council representing the Union will also inform the European Parliament on a regular basis. [...]”

Appendix II: The PPA provision in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement negotiations

With respect to treaty provisions about inter-parliamentary cooperation, both the UK and the EU came to the negotiation of their post-Brexit treaty with relevant pre-existing principles and practices. These defined the issues to be determined:

- The UK is averse, on constitutional grounds, to signing up to treaty provisions which *commit* Parliament to participating in an inter-parliamentary body. Governments of all political stripes have taken the view that participation in such bodies should be a matter only for Parliament. For the UK, therefore, the issue was whether any such provision would be mandating or only permissive (if there were any such provision at all).
- For the EU, the issue is whether a treaty provides for a standing inter-parliamentary body, or only for vaguer inter-parliamentary ‘dialogue’ or other forms of exchange. The former type of provision is standard practice in EU treaties that establish particularly close relationships with non-EU countries that include fields beyond trade: such provisions are found in the EU’s partnership, cooperation and association agreements with countries in Latin America, the former Soviet Union, the Western Balkans and North Africa, for example. The vaguer ‘dialogue’-type provision is found in the EU’s Strategic Partnership Agreements with Japan ([Article 1.3](#))³⁸ and Canada ([Article 27](#)),³⁹ for instance. For the EU, therefore, the question of the form of any treaty provision on inter-parliamentary cooperation was linked to the question of where the UK was to fit in the scheme of EU external relations.

Against this background, the Political Declaration which was supposed (under [Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union](#))⁴⁰ to set out the basis for the future UK-EU relationship included support only for “a dialogue” between the two Parliaments, “where they see fit”. This applied to the versions of the Political Declaration agreed with both [then-Prime Minister Theresa May in November 2018](#)⁴¹ and [then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson in October 2019](#).⁴²

The EU included this language in its [February 2020 negotiating mandate](#) for the UK-EU talks.⁴³

³⁸ Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Japan, of the other part, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 216/4, 24 August 2018

³⁹ Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Canada, of the other part, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 329/45, 33 December 2016

⁴⁰ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, *Official Journal of the European Union* C 202/1, 7 June 2016

⁴¹ Council of the European Union, *Political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom*, XT 21095/18, 22 November 2018

⁴² HM Government, *Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom*, 19 October 2019

⁴³ Council of the European Union, Annex to Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for a new partnership agreement 5870/20 ADD 1 REV 3, 25 February 2020

For its part, the [UK's initial statement of its TCA negotiating objectives](#) the same month included no inter-parliamentary element at all.⁴⁴

However, in its [resolution on the EU's proposed negotiating mandate earlier in February](#), the European Parliament (EP) had said that it “insists [...] that the Agreement should provide for the establishment of a joint parliamentary body between the EU and the UK”.⁴⁵ A proposed treaty provision to this effect, *establishing* a standing body, then appeared in the [European Commission's first draft treaty text](#) the following month, along with some detail about how the body would work.⁴⁶ It was also in this proposed text that the name ‘Parliamentary Partnership Assembly’ seems to have appeared for the first time. The EP proceeded to welcome the Commission's proposal in a [further resolution on the future UK-EU relationship in June 2020](#).⁴⁷

The [UK's first proposed draft treaty text](#), in May 2020, maintained the silence on inter-parliamentary cooperation provisions.⁴⁸

However, over Summer 2020, the then-Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU in the House of Commons (the ‘Brexit Committee’, under Hilary Benn MP) and the then-European Union Committee in the House of Lords (under Lord Kinnoull) took up with the Government (but communicating partly via the Speakers) the case for including some kind of provision creating a formal basis for future inter-parliamentary relations. The [two Committee Chairs proposed](#) that “provision [be] made for some form of Assembly but without prescribing its role or other arrangements at the moment”.⁴⁹ In August 2020, Michael Gove MP (who was at the time leading for the Government on the negotiations with the EU, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) then [confirmed that the UK would “seek to include provision that would allow for inter-parliamentary dialogue”](#).⁵⁰

In the end, the final TCA provision ([Article 11](#)) appears to be a compromise between the initial UK and EU positions:

- it provides for a standing inter-parliamentary body (rather than just ‘dialogue’), but on a permissive not mandatory basis; and
- it includes less detail about the body's operation than the European Commission's March 2020 text (and less detail than some other EU international agreements which provide for such bodies, although EU agreements vary in this respect).

⁴⁴ HM Government, The Future Relationship with the EU: The UK's Approach to Negotiations, CP 211, February 2020

⁴⁵ European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2020 on the proposed mandate for negotiations for a new partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, P9_TA(2020)0033

⁴⁶ European Commission, Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom, Draft text of the Agreement on the New Partnership with the United Kingdom, 18 March 2020

⁴⁷ European Parliament recommendation of 18 June 2020 on the negotiations for a new partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, P9_TA(2020)0152

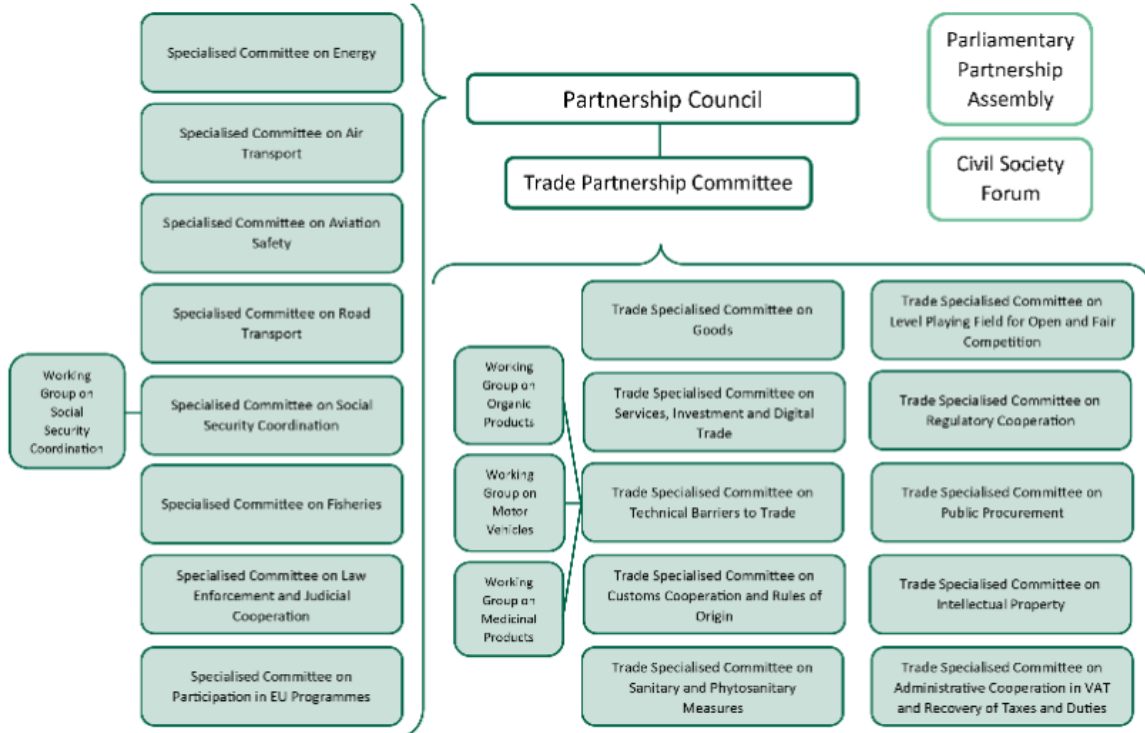
⁴⁸ UK Government, Draft Working Text for a Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union, May 2020

⁴⁹ Letter from Hilary Benn MP, Chair of the House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union, and Lord Kinnoull, Chair of the House of Lords European Union Committee, to the Speaker and Lord Speaker, 21 July 2020

⁵⁰ Correspondence from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the Speaker, 14 August 2020

The title 'Assembly' is retained – a unique provision among [standing bilateral inter-parliamentary bodies involving the EP](#), which are more normally styled as 'committees', with the 'Assembly' title reserved for multinational bodies.

Annex: The Trade and Cooperation Agreement institutions (organogram)



Source: Reproduced from House of Commons Library, [The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: governance and dispute settlement](#), Research Briefing Number 09139, 3 August 2021

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