

# Rename Wales to her original name, Cymru

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 06 Chwefror 2023  
Petitions Committee | 06 February 2023

Reference: SR23/4917/2

Petition Number: P-06-1316

Petition title: Rename Wales to her original name, Cymru.

Text of petition: Wales was the name imposed on Wales. The original name was Cymru.



# 1. Background

Wales remains the internationally recognised name of the nation, rather than Cymru, despite the equal status given to both languages by the Welsh Government.

The Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012 gave both Welsh and English status as the official languages of the then National Assembly. Through the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020, the National Assembly was renamed Senedd Cymru. While both 'Senedd Cymru' and 'Welsh Parliament' have equal status in legislation, the term 'Senedd' is now the common name used in both Welsh and English contexts.

There have been several recent instances of places and organisations in Wales choosing to use their Welsh title exclusively, often citing this as a key part of their identity. Despite this, the Welsh Government currently has no plans to change the official title of the nation, signalling in its response to this petition its intention to carry on using both Cymru and Wales.

## 1.1. Examples of Welsh only names being used

Some organisations and councils have adopted revised Welsh language policies for their names and branding. Cyngor Gwynedd, previously known by its English name Gwynedd Council, adopted a revised Welsh language policy in 2022. The new policy states that "the Council's corporate identity reflects its commitment and the priority given to the Welsh language".

In 2022, Snowdonia National Park Authority voted to use Yr Wyddfa and Eryri, rather than the English terms Snowdon and Snowdonia.

## 1.2. National football team

Cymru, rather than Wales, is used by the Football Association of Wales (FAW) in its internal and external communications and by staff to refer to both the men's and women's national football teams.

It has been reported that the FAW plan to change the name officially in the near future. Noel Mooney, the FAW's chief executive, has said that a name change "is the direction of travel, but there's no firm decisions on it".

### 1.3. International examples

There have been many international examples of nations changing their official title. In 2022, the Turkish Government sent a letter to the UN formally requesting that it be referred to as Türkiye, the Turkish spelling and pronunciation of Turkey. The Republic of Türkiye is now the country's official name, and the country is listed as Türkiye in the UN list of Member States.

In 2016, the Czech government officially changed the country's name to Czechia. The long title remains in some contexts, with the short name being compared to that of France (officially known as the French Republic).

The island nation previously known as Cape Verde changed its name to Cabo Verde in 2013. Cape Verde was an angelized version of the original Portuguese.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government responded to this petition on 13 January 2023.

The Minister for the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, welcomed recent instances of organisations and authorities choosing to use Welsh names as their official title. The Minister said that examples such as Cyngor Gwynedd and Yr Wyddfa being used officially instead of English terms show "there is a strong desire in some contexts to place the Welsh language at the heart of public life, especially in areas where there is a higher proportion of Welsh speakers."

The Minister went on to say that it was the Welsh Government's intention to continue to use both Cymru and Wales to refer to the nation.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

A 2019 petition calling for the then Assembly to be known officially as 'Senedd' (rather than a bilingual title) received 1,033 signatures. The Petitions Committee considered the proposals, but rejected them on the grounds that the issue was being considered in the passage of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill.

During the consultation on the Bill, 53% of respondents considered that a monolingual name consisting of 'Senedd' would positively describe the role and responsibilities of the National Assembly for Wales, while 73% favoured 'Welsh Parliament'.

The Bill initially proposed 'Senedd' as a monolingual official title. However, an amendment from the then First Minister, Carwyn Jones, was passed by 43 to 13 that gave the Senedd its bilingual name it has today.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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