



Northern Ireland Office
Parliament Buildings
Belfast BT4 3SS

Ms Monica McWilliams
NI Women's Coalition
c/o Block B
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3SG

28 November 1997

Dear Monica,

The Maastricht Treaty provided for the establishment of a European Committee of the Regions (COR). The Committee's function is to advise the Commission and the Council of Ministers on issues affecting European Regions. The Treaty requires COR to be consulted on proposed legislation relating to Education, Culture, Health, Trans-European Networks and Cohesion. It may also be consulted by the Commission or Council in any other instance which is considered appropriate, or issue an opinion on its own authority where regional interests are involved.

The first four year term of the current Committee is due to expire on 25 January 1998 and I am therefore writing to seek your advice on whom I should recommend to the Foreign Secretary for appointment as a member for the next four year period of Office.

It is expected that two seats and two 'alternates' will be allocated to Northern Ireland, as at present. Nominees must in accordance with the terms of the European Communities (Amendment) Act 1993, be elected members of local authorities. At present there is no bar on them being members of the European Parliament. However the Amsterdam Treaty, agreed in June this year, introduces a requirement that MEP's cannot be member of the COR. The Treaty will be ratified in 1998. The 'alternates' will usually be expected to deputise for members and we therefore assume that members will wish to have alternates of the same or similar political outlook.



The Committee meets in Brussels and has its own administrative structures. Members receive travelling expenses and a daily allowance to attend meetings in Brussels. However the UK delegation of the Committee of Regions also meets approximately three times a year in the UK. Expenses for this are not met from the COR budget and it is up to members to seek assistance from their Local Authorities.

The previous arrangements resulted in the appointment of UUP and SDLP members with DUP and Alliance Party alternates. I would like to ensure that the next round of nominations also secures representation for as wide a range of political opinion in Northern Ireland as possible. I would welcome your nominations for members and alternates as soon as possible, and in any case not later than Monday 8 December. The following information is required on each nominee:

Full Name
Position (E.g. Councillor)
Date of Birth
Postal Address
Telephone Number
Fax Number

I am writing in similar terms to Ian Paisley, John Hume, Gerry Adams, Lord Alderdice, Robert McCartney, David Trimble, Hugh Smyth and Gary McMichael.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marjorie Mowlam".

MARJORIE MOWLAM