Simultaneous interpretation to support the House’s international engagement

As you may be aware, the International Relations Committee is continually asked to meet foreign parliamentary delegations, invitations which we are pleased to accept in order to strengthen the House’s international links and exchange views with our counterparts. Some of these delegations come to us directly, and some via bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

For example, in recent weeks we have meet with delegations from the parliaments of Finland and Uruguay, and as of now we have forthcoming meeting with parliamentarians from Austria and Pakistan. We expect a further steady stream of requests.

Many of these visiting delegations are able to conduct meetings in English, but many others cannot. Sequential translation wastes much time and often meaning suffers. In the context of the Liaison Committee’s review of investigative and scrutiny committees, I and members of this committee I chair would suggest that it would be of significant value for the House to invest in standing facilities to allow for simultaneous interpretation for meetings hosted by the House and/or in response to the frequent requests described above. We note that many other parliaments have such an established facility, the provision of which would greatly benefit this House in its international engagement.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Howell of Guildford
Chairman of the International Relations Committee

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