

Europe Matters

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Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Issue 4 - November 2006

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth issue of Europe Matters. It's the turn of the European and External Affairs Committee to experiment with the use of video conferencing this month, as we welcome the virtual appearance of two of Wales' Members of the European Parliament to the Committee – Jill Evans and Eluned Morgan. We're looking forward to hearing about what they're working on directly from Brussels, the heart of Europe, and if all goes well, we'll be using this technology more often in future.

On that note, I'm pleased that the European Parliament's response to the White Paper on a European Communication Policy, adopted last week, supports the idea of enhancing debates on Europe in regional assemblies. This is what we're aiming for in the Assembly.

Indeed, last week, the Environment Planning and Countryside Committee had a video link with the Deputy Head of Commissioner Fischer-Boel's cabinet, which resulted in an open and interesting exchange of views on the future direction of the Common Agricultural Policy. Mr. Borchardt welcomed this initiative and committed to updating members again next year as the CAP health check in 2008 draws nearer.

Finally, any organisations interested in EU funding for culture projects should tune in to the Culture Committee's discussion on the 30 November on opportunities for Wales in the EU's new seven-year programmes which will kick-off next year.

If you would like any further information about the European work of the Committees, please get in touch.

Sandy Mewies
Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee

Forthcoming EU business in the Assembly's Committees

European and External Affairs Committee

29 November 2006

- ◆ **Exchange of views with two of Wales' MEPs** – Jill Evans MEP and Eluned Morgan MEP will brief the Committee on their current priorities via video conference from Brussels.
- ◆ **European Commission Representation in the UK** – Reijo Kemppinen, Head of the Office will brief the Committee for the first time along with Andy Klom, Head of the Commission's Representation in Wales, who is a regular guest at the Committee.

Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee

22 November 2006

- ◆ **Minister's report** – items covered include: note on the Minister's meeting with Graham Meadows, Director-General of DG Regional Policy, European Commission; review of UK assisted areas.
- ◆ **WEFO Quarterly Report** – WEFO will provide an update on the progress of the current structural funds programmes.

Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee

30 November 2006

- ◆ **EU Cultural funds** – The Committee will discuss the European Cultural Funds available for the period 2007-2013. The discussions will follow a presentation from an official of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

13 December 2006

- ◆ **Biodiversity** – Following on from earlier sessions on the EU Commission's Communication '*Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond*', the Committee will scrutinise the Minister on the Welsh Assembly Government's plans to halt the loss of biodiversity.

Look Back: EU related topics discussed or noted in the Assembly's Committees

[Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee](#)

[15 November 2006](#)

◆ **Minister's Report** – included an update on the situation with regard to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages which the UK government signed in March 2000.

[Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee](#)

[18 October 2006](#)

◆ **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** – The Committee received a paper to note on the EQF and its relationship with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

[Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee](#)

[18 October 2006](#)

◆ **Minister's Report** – items covered included: EU Structural Fund Progress at 31 August 2006; Contract of Confidence Commission and Wales; update on the convergence fund consultation.

[9 November 2006](#)

◆ **Review of EDT Committee's Report on Energy Policy in Wales** – the Committee received evidence on developments in Welsh energy policy since the Committee's 2003 review of energy policy.

[Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee](#)

[15 November 2006](#)

◆ **Discussion with Commissioner Fischer Boel's Cabinet** – The Committee held a video conference with Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel's Deputy Head of Cabinet, Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, discussing the CAP simplification, the 2008 CAP 'Health Check', and other EU-related agricultural issues.

Related items

◆ **All-Wales Fisheries Strategy** – the Committee scrutinised the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy.

◆ **Agri-environment research** – the Committee discussed the Welsh Assembly Government response to the Committee's report on the evidence taken on agri-environment research.

[26 October 2006](#)

- ◆ **Minister's report** – The Committee discussed the proposed budget for Tir Mynydd in light of European financing rules; the Committee discussed progress in Brussels on a proposal to allow the continuation of voluntary modulation in the Member States.
- ◆ **Scrutiny of the Draft Assembly Budget 2007-2010** – the Committee discussed the proposed budget for Tir Mynydd and the other agri-environmental schemes for post 2007.
- ◆ **CAP Simplification** – The Committee discussed the recent conference on the simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy held by the European Commission in Brussels on 3-4 October 2006, and the Commission's simplification working paper.

[European and External Affairs Committee](#)

[25 October 2006](#)

- ◆ **Minister's report** – items covered included: the Wales European Forum; structural funds; review of UK assisted areas map; competitiveness funding for Wales; enlargement.
- ◆ **Functions of the Committee in the Third Assembly** – Members agreed their input to the Standing Orders Committee to aid them with the drafting of the Standing Order on the European and External Affairs Committee.
- ◆ **EU Presidency** – Members received an update from His Excellency Jaakko Laajava, Ambassador of Finland to the UK on the progress of Finland's Presidency of the EU.
- ◆ **European Citizenship Education Policy Review** – the Committee took further evidence from Oxfam Cymru on their work in this area.

[Health and Social Services Committee](#)

[26 October 2006](#)

- ◆ **Minister's report** – included items on: GM contamination of American long grain rice; the "hospital at night" initiative in Wales which has been developed to ensure care for patients given the changes in permitted working hours for doctors in training under the EU directive.

[15 November 2006](#)

- ◆ **Recall of Certain US Tissue Products** – paper to note (relates to the EU tissues and cells directive.)

*Please note transcripts may take 5-10 days to appear after the meeting has

taken place

Links

[National Assembly for Wales homepage](#)
[NAfW Committee pages](#)
[Current Policy reviews - summary of work on-going](#)
[Assembly Calendar](#)
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We welcome communication in either English or Welsh.

Ymddiheurwn bod y cylchlythyr ar gael yn Saesneg yn unig. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

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