

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Europe Matters

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The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

## Introduction

I am delighted to welcome you to the thirteenth issue of Europe Matters, our monthly update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

On 6 May we marked the tenth anniversary of the National Assembly for Wales, the date when the first elections to the Assembly took place, and it was fitting that we held a debate in Plenary where I, my colleagues from the European and External Affairs Committee, and other Members in the Senedd, discussed the contribution of the European Union to the first ten years of devolution in Wales within the context of Europe Day. I was delighted at the enthusiasm with which Europe was and continues to be debated in Wales, and the recognition of the positive contribution the EU has made during this period, notably of course through the Structural Funds programmes.

To mark Europe Day, the Assembly also hosted a reception organised by the European Commission's representation in Wales, and my fellow Committee Members Jeff Cuthbert, Mike German and Rhodri Glyn Thomas, participated in a seminar organised by the Scottish Parliament, where they were joined by fellow politicians from a number of EU regions including Baden Württemberg, Catalunya, and Flanders.

On 4-7 June the European Parliament elections take place and we look forward to working in the future with the four elected MEPs for Wales.

In the European and External Affairs Committee we held the second evidence session for our inquiry into the future of EU Cohesion Policy, and I was delighted to welcome Graham Meadows, former Director General of DG Regio, to Cardiff. We had a very interesting session with him looking at how the future shape of the policy may impact on Wales, and how the debate is unfolding in Brussels. I was also very pleased to welcome Councillor Andrew Mitchell, Economic Portfolio holder in Cornwall Council, the UK's only other Convergence Region for 2007-2013, to hear how Cornwall is engaging with this debate.

On 30 June we will take evidence from First Minister Rhodri Morgan, and we also have sessions planned in June with representatives from Business Europe, Saxony-Anhalt, and Welsh stakeholders including the Welsh Local Government Association.

On 28 April we concluded the evidence gathering for our inquiry into the draft Directive on Patients' Rights to Cross-Border Healthcare, with Carol Lamyman-Jones, Director of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales, and we expect to publish an interim report in July. The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the negotiations on the draft Directive.

On 20 May the plenary session of the Assembly included a debate on the Welsh government's response to the report from the Committee's inquiry into subsidiarity.

Regarding the Assembly's other Committees, the Rural Development Sub-Committee will take evidence from the Minister for Rural Affairs, Elin Jones, on 17 June at the final session of their Inquiry into the Production and Promotion of Welsh Food. The Sustainability Committee took evidence in Gloucestershire as part of its inquiry into flooding, and met with representatives from local communities affected by the severe flooding that hit the county in 2007. The Enterprise and Learning Committee adopted the report from its inquiry into the Welsh government's response to the economic and financial crisis, whilst the Audit Committee discussed a recent report by the Auditor General in Wales looking at compliance with the Working Time Directive for junior doctors in NHS Wales.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we note the passing of Kathryn Jenkins, Clerk to the Enterprise and Learning Committee, and who last year clerked the European and External Affairs Committee. She will be greatly missed by all Assembly Members and her colleagues, and we send our deepest condolences to Kath's family and friends.

**Sandy Mewies**

**Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee**



## **Forthcoming EU business in the Assembly's Committees—**

### **European and External Affairs Committee**

- Inquiry into Future of EU Cohesion Policy: on 30 June the First Minister Rhodri Morgan will give evidence to this inquiry, and evidence sessions with Business Europe, the Saxony-Anhalt Representation to the EU and the Welsh Local Government Association are also planned for June.
- Inquiry into Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare: the Committee will consider its draft interim report in June.

### **Sustainability Committee**

- Carbon Reduction: the Committee will launch its final report on carbon reduction in Wales in June.
- Inquiry into flooding in Wales: the Committee plans to take further evidence for this inquiry in June.

### **Rural Development Sub-Committee**

- Inquiry into the Production and Promotion of Welsh Food: the sub-Committee will take evidence from Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs on 17 June for the final session for this inquiry. They will also take evidence from Professors Terry Marsden and Kevin Morgan from Cardiff University.
- Inquiry into the Electronic Identification of Sheep (EID): the sub-Committee is due to discuss the draft report on 3 June, and subject to agreement being reached, the report will go to Sustainability Committee in June for approval.

## **Look Back: EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees—**

### **European and External Affairs Committee**

- Inquiry into Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare: on 28 April Carol Lamyman-Jones, Director of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales, gave evidence to this inquiry.
- Inquiry into Future of EU Cohesion Policy: on 12 May Graham Meadows, former Director General of DG Regional Policy and Councillor Andrew Mitchell from Cornwall Council gave evidence to this inquiry.
- Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe: on 28 April Christine Chapman and Councillor Bob Bright, gave an update on their work as representatives from Wales on the Committee of the Regions, whilst Councillor Ronnie Hughes updated the Committee on his work in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in the Council of Europe.
- Subsidiarity Report: on 20 May the full plenary of the Assembly debated the Welsh government's response to the Committee's report from its inquiry into subsidiarity.



## **Audit Committee**

- Working Time Directive: the Committee received a briefing from the Auditor General for Wales on his recent report, Compliance with the European Working Time Directive for junior doctors across NHS Wales, in which he reported that the NHS in Wales is unlikely to comply fully with the 48 hour a week working time limit for junior doctors when it comes into force on 1 August this year. While the Committee was concerned about these findings they concluded that there was no need for them to investigate this further and decided not to undertake an inquiry. The Chair will now write to the Government asking for its response to the Auditor General's report.

## **Enterprise and Learning Committee**

- Inquiry on the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the international economic downturn: the Committee's report from this inquiry was published on 14 May.

## **Sustainability Committee**

- Inquiry into Flooding in Wales: the Committee launched its inquiry on 29 April and visited Gloucester on 11 May to take evidence on good practice for the flooding inquiry.
- Inquiry into Carbon Reduction from Energy Generation: the Committee launched its report from this inquiry on 14 May.

## **External activities of Members on Assembly business—**

- Committee of the Regions: Christine Chapman participated as an expert speaker during a Roundtable Discussion on the future of the Lisbon Strategy on 29 April, organised as part of the background debate to inform her opinion on the future of the Strategy. She was joined by a panel of experts, including Professor Iain Begg from the London School of Economics and representatives from the European Commission and a variety of EU networks.
- On 8 May Assembly Members Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Mike German and Jeff Cuthbert from the European and External Affairs Committee participated in a Europe Day seminar organised by the Scottish Parliament. They were joined by fellow politicians from a number of European regions.
- On 15-17 June a cross-party group of Assembly Members will participate in the British Isles and Mediterranean Regions 40th Annual Conference in Guernsey.

## **International visitors to the Senedd—**

- On 28 April the Wales Branch of the British-Australia Society was officially launched by the Llywydd in the presence of His Excellency John Dauth, the Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, at an event was sponsored by Lorraine Barrett, Assembly Member.
- To mark Europe Day the National Assembly for Wales hosted a reception and an exhibition stand in the Senedd, including speeches by the Deputy Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler and Andy Klom, the Head of the European Commission's Office in Wales, which organised the event.
- His Excellency Yury Viktorovich Fedotov, the Russian Ambassador to the UK, undertook a tour of the Senedd in May as part of a visit to Wales co-ordinated by the Welsh government. An international delegation of Senior Military officers from the Royal College of Defence Studies met with William Graham, Assembly Commissioner at the Senedd during their visit to Wales in May.
- On 10 June a reception for Chevening Scholars based in Wales will be hosted at the Senedd on behalf of the British Council, with a welcoming speech by the Deputy Presiding Officer.

### **Links**

- [National Assembly for Wales homepage](#)
- [Assembly Business Notice](#)
- [Committee pages](#)
- [Members' Research Service pages](#)

### **For further information—**

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