

National Assembly for Wales
Europe Matters

Produced by the National Assembly for Wales
EU office

Issue 15_September/October



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 15th issue of Europe Matters, our regular update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

As we return from the summer recess there is a sense of anticipation regarding Europe. The European Parliament is back in full swing, with new political groups formed, and membership of the Committees determined. With President Barroso's re-nomination as Commission President confirmed by the European Parliament on 16 September, all eyes will be on Ireland as we find out on 2 October whether or not the "guarantees" secured since the "no" vote in the first referendum will be sufficient to convince the Irish people to vote "yes" to the Treaty of Lisbon at the second time of asking. This should be followed by the various nominations for the new European Commissioners during November.

In October President Barroso is expected to launch a consultation on the future of the Lisbon Strategy, and I am pleased that the European and External Affairs Committee is looking at this issue, with Deputy First Minister Ieuan Wyn Jones presenting the Welsh Government's views on this key dossier for Europe and for Wales. We are also delighted to receive an update from Christine Chapman on her "own-initiative" opinion on the future of the Lisbon Strategy, which passed its first hurdle when it was adopted by the Economic and Social Affairs Commission in the Committee of the Regions on 14 September in Wrocław, Poland.

We also continue with our inquiry on the future of Cohesion Policy, which is very much linked to the discussions on the future of the Lisbon Strategy. This includes evidence from Welsh stakeholders, such as the Higher Education sector and Welsh Council for Voluntary Action, European networks including the European Anti Poverty Network, and the European Commission itself, namely DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. We are on target to adopt an interim report for this inquiry before the end of the year.

On 13 October the Committee will also consider a scoping paper for a short inquiry looking at the Welsh involvement in the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, which has particular significance in the current economic climate, with rising unemployment and the pressures that this brings.

I am also pleased that we are receiving updates on the activities from other bodies in Wales, as is seen through the session on "Encouraging Active Global Citizenship" with participation of CILT CYMRU, ECTARC and Wrexham Library.

Looking at the Assembly's other Committees there are a number of inquiries that look particularly interesting from a European context.

Enterprise and Learning are proposing an inquiry on the Green Economy, which is expected to feature strongly as one of the priorities of the successor to the current Lisbon Strategy.

Rural Affairs Sub-Committee will carry out an inquiry into Uplands Farming in Wales, of which the status of "Less Favoured Areas" will be an important element. They are also looking at the dairy industry in Wales, a discussion that follows demonstrations in Brussels, and strikes in some parts of Europe, over the question of fair prices for milk.

We are also expecting the publication of a number of reports, following inquiries that took place earlier this year, including Flooding in Wales, Carbon Reduction and the Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales.

Finally, I am delighted that we will debate in full plenary the report on Patients' Rights to Cross-Border Health Care, which was adopted by the European and External Affairs Committee in July following the inquiry we held earlier this year. We will be coming back to this topic in 2010 as the discussions advance in Brussels.

Sandy Mewies

Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee



EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees

Plenary

- **Inquiry into Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare:** the European and External Committee's Report and the Welsh Government response will be debated at the Plenary meeting on 7 October.
- **Inquiry into the Production and Promotion of Welsh Food:** the Rural Development Sub-Committee's Report will be debated in plenary on 30 September.

European and External Affairs Committee

- **Inquiry into Future of EU Cohesion Policy:** the Committee will take evidence from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Higher Education Wales, the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action, and the European Anti Poverty Network in October as part of this ongoing inquiry.
- **Future of the Lisbon Strategy:** at the Committee's meeting on 29 September the Deputy First Minister will present the Welsh Government's views on the future of the Strategy. Christine Chapman, the Assembly's representative on the Committee of the Regions, will give an update at the same meeting on progress of her draft opinion on the future of the Strategy.
- **2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion:** the Committee will consider a scoping paper to carry out a short inquiry into this topic on 13 October.

Enterprise and Learning Committee

- **Generating Jobs in the Green Economy:** the Committee plans to carry out an inquiry in this area, as a follow up to its inquiry into the Welsh Government's response to the international economic downturn, and to contribute to the debate on the implementation of the Green Jobs Strategy for Wales.
- **Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales:** as a follow up to the interim report published in January this year, the Committee will launch its final report and recommendations on 7 October at the University of Wales Newport.

Sustainability Committee

- **Flooding and Carbon Reduction:** the Committee will publish the reports from its inquiries into Flooding in Wales and Carbon Reduction in Wales in November.
- **Access to inland waterways:** the Committee is carrying out an inquiry into access to inland waterways.

Rural Development Sub-Committee

- **Future of the Uplands in Wales:** the sub-Committee is carrying out an inquiry into this issue, which includes Less Favoured Areas in Wales, during the autumn term.
- **Dairy Industry in Wales:** the Sub-Committee is holding a session on the dairy industry in Wales at its meeting on 1 October, in the context of the current crisis affecting milk producers across Europe.

External activities of Members on Assembly business

- **Committee of the Regions:** Christine Chapman presented her draft opinion on the Future of the Lisbon Strategy at the Economic and Social Affairs Commission's meeting in Wrocław, Poland on 14 September. The report was adopted with six amendments, and will go to CoR plenary on 2-3 December. Christine will be keynote speaker at a seminar on the Future of the Lisbon Strategy taking place in Brussels on 6 October as part of the Open Days Week of the Regions, organised by the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's DG Regional Policy.
- **British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly:** the 39th Plenary Conference will take place in Swansea on the 18-20 October, with Assembly Members Alun Cairns, Michael German, Dai Lloyd and Joyce Watson expected to attend.
- **CALRE:** the Deputy Presiding Officer, Rosemary Butler will attend the plenary session of CALRE, which takes place in Innsbruck in Austria from the 18-20 October.

International and other VIPs visiting the Senedd

- On 23 July the Senedd hosted a **Wales for Africa** event in the presence of the Foreign Secretary Right Honourable David Miliband MP and First Minister Rhodri Morgan.
- On 10 September a **UK Treasury Study Tour** visited the Assembly from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Bosnia.
- On 30 September the **Rt. Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons**, will visit the National Assembly for Wales, and will meet the Assembly's Commissioners, a cross-party group of Assembly Members, as part of a comprehensive programme of meetings.

Links

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

For further information—

Contact:

Gregg Jones, Head of Office (Gregg.Jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk)
National Assembly for Wales EU Office
Wales House
6th Floor
Rond Point Schuman 11
1040 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: 0032 2 226 66 92

Or

National Assembly for Wales International Relations Team
External Communications
Ty Hywel (3rd floor)
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA
Tel: 0044 (0)29 2089 8642/8897
assembly.bookings@wales.gsi.gov.uk

We welcome communication in either English or Welsh.

This email has been sent to you as we think it may be of interest to you. If you do not wish to receive future editions of this newsletter, or if you have not received this directly and would like to add your name to the mailing list, please email Gregg Jones.