



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 17th issue of Europe Matters, our monthly update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

On 26 January I became the new Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee (EEAC). I would like to pay tribute to Sandy Mewies AM, who chaired the Committee for the last five years. As someone who in a previous guise appeared frequently before the Committee, I had many opportunities to swim in the Committee's waters. It was among my best experiences as First Minister, and I wish Sandy every success in her new role as Chair of the Assembly's Communities and Culture Committee.

Sandy left a strong legacy in terms of the strategic issues that EEAC is following. I expect the focus to remain on the key policy debates on the agenda in Brussels during 2010.

On 3 February the Assembly debated the EEAC report on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and the Welsh Government's response in plenary session. Cohesion Policy will feature prominently in the work of EEAC during 2010, within the context of the wider discussions taking place in Brussels on the future of the Lisbon Strategy (likely to be renamed the "EU2020 Strategy") and the EU Budget Review.

On 1 March the Committee plans to visit Brussels to discuss these issues with senior officials from the European Commission President Barroso's Cabinet, DG Regional Policy and DG Employment and Social Affairs, the four Welsh MEPs, and Professor Danuta Hübner MEP, in her new role as chair of the Regional Development Committee in the European Parliament.

Spain holds the 6-month rotating Presidency of the EU and we were delighted to meet His Excellency Mr Carles Casajuana on 9 February, who gave an overview of the Spanish priorities.

2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Committee has taken evidence on the significance of the European Year for Wales, and considered the key issues arising from that inquiry in February.

The Committee of the Regions' (CoR) new five-year mandate began in January 2010, and the Assembly's two representatives are Christine Chapman AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM. Christine is expecting to continue on the Economic and Social Affairs (ECOS) Commission in the CoR, whilst Rhodri Glyn, who in January became Chair of the Assembly's Rural Development Sub-Committee, will sit on the newly established Natural Resources (NATUR) Commission, which includes agriculture and rural development within its remit. Councillors Bob Bright and Chris Holley are the WLGA's two representatives on CoR, and I look forward to the regular updates all four Welsh representatives will provide to EEAC.

As far as the Assembly's other Committees are concerned, the Enterprise and Learning Committee will shortly start a new inquiry looking at the implementation of the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales. The Committee is also planning further evidence sessions for its inquiry into generating jobs in the green economy.

Rhodri Morgan AM

Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee



EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees

European and External Affairs Committee

- **Spanish Presidency of the EU:** on 9 February His Excellency Mr Carles Casajuana, the Spanish Ambassador to the UK, presented the priorities for the Spanish Presidency of the EU.
- **2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion:** the Committee took evidence from the European Anti Poverty Network on 26 January as part of this inquiry. Evidence gathering is now completed and a paper on the key issues arising was considered on 9 February.
- **Committee of the Regions (CoR):** the Committee received an update from Welsh representatives on the CoR, Christine Chapman AM, Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM, and Councillor Chris Holley.
- **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA):** on 12 January the Committee received an update on CPA activities from the Chair of the CPA Wales Branch, Janet Ryder AM.

Enterprise and Learning Committee

- **Implementation of the Structural Funds in Wales 2007-2013:** at its meeting on 21 January the Committee agreed the terms of reference for this inquiry, which is expected to start in March.
- **Generating Jobs in the Green Economy:** the Committee took evidence from the Wales Environmental Link and from Alex Bird Consultancy in January.

Sustainability Committee

- **Flooding and Carbon Reduction:** the Committee will publish the report from its inquiries into Flooding in Wales in the coming weeks and Carbon Reduction in Wales is expected to be published in March.
- **Access to inland waterways:** the Committee took evidence from three Welsh Government Ministers on 21 January, namely Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, Alun Ffred Jones AM, Minister for Heritage and Elin Jones AM, Minister for Rural Affairs. On 28 January the Committee took evidence from Welsh Salmon and Trout Association, the Countryside Alliance and the Wye and Usk Foundation. The evidence sessions have been completed and the Committee is now reviewing the findings from the inquiry.

Rural Development Sub-Committee

- **Future of the Uplands in Wales:** the Committee held a further evidence session on 10 December 2009 for this inquiry into the future of the uplands in Wales, and the inquiry remains open.
- **Wine, beer and cider production:** the Sub-Committee launched a **call for evidence** in December with a closing date of 12 February for this inquiry into the Welsh wine, beer and cider industry during 2010.
- **Inquiry into Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene:** the Sub-Committee's **call for evidence** for this an inquiry into animal welfare and meat hygiene at abattoirs and slaughterhouses in Wales, closed on 8 January, with evidence sessions taking place on 14 and 25 January.

Communities and Culture Committee

- **Inquiry into Making the Most of Sporting Events:** this inquiry will examine the activities of the Welsh Government, its delivery bodies and other national organisations in relation to major sporting events, including in particular the Ryder Cup and Olympic Games in London 2012. The **call for evidence** closed on 15 January.

External activities of Members on Assembly business

- **British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA):** Mike German AM, visited visit Stockholm on 13-14 December 2009 as part of a delegation from the European Affairs Committee, who are carrying out an inquiry into regional economic spaces and macro regions across Europe. On 18 January Mike German AM attended the BIPA European Affairs Committee in London, which discussed the initial recommendations from this inquiry, as well as Common European Defence and Foreign Policy and the Recession and EU Migrant Workers.
- **British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA):** On 18 January Dai Lloyd AM attended a BIPA Committee meeting in Dublin to discuss a short inquiry into returning the unemployed into work.
- **Committee of the Regions:** Christine Chapman AM, was keynote speaker at the Fifth Territorial Dialogue, organised by the Spanish Presidency of the EU and the Committee of the Regions, which took place in Palma da Mallorca on 18 January. She presented the key messages from her report on the future of the Lisbon Strategy, which was adopted by the Committee of the Regions in December 2009. Christine Chapman AM will be keynote speaker at a conference organised by the European Association of Local Authorities in Barcelona on 22 February. Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM attended the plenary session and Natural Resource (NAT) Commission meetings in Brussels on 10-11 February, and will attend the second NAT Commission meeting on 23 February.
- **Congress of Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE):** Deputy Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler, attended the Standing Committee meeting of CALRE at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on 25 January.
- **OECD Seminar:** Rhodri Morgan AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM will attend a high-level Parliamentary seminar “Sustaining a Global Recovery” organised by the OECD in Paris on 18 February.

International and other VIPs visiting the Senedd

- **On 14 January** Mr Ram Chandra Paudel the Chief of the Parliamentary Party in the Nepali Congress and Mr Nabindra Raj Joshi, Spokesperson for Parliamentary the Party in the Nepali Congress, visited the Assembly to discuss matters on the British Federal and Parliamentary systems, as well as meeting with Mohammad Asghar AM.
- **On 24 February** a delegation from the Armenian Parliament will visit the Assembly and meet to discuss gender equality with Deputy Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler AM, members of the Equal Opportunities Committee, and Christine Chapman AM, who is the spokesperson for an all-party working group on gender equality.
- **On 24 February** a delegation from Bosnian will meet the Chair and Members of the Finance committee.

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