

**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 18th issue of Europe Matters, our regular update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

On 1 March, the European and External Affairs Committee was in Brussels to celebrate St David's Day. During our visit we held a formal meeting of the Committee, hosted at the Committee of the Regions, with evidence from Chair of the European Parliament's Regional Development Committee, Professor Danuta Hübner, and all four Welsh MEPs. This was the first time the Committee has met formally with all four Welsh MEPs and was a great opportunity to discuss European matters of importance to Wales.

The Committee also held a number of useful informal meetings with officials to discuss the Europe 2020 Strategy, the future of cohesion policy and the EU Budget Review. Those we met included a Member of President Barroso's Cabinet, European Commissioner Hahn's Deputy Head of Cabinet, representatives from the Spanish Presidency and representatives of the Saxony-Anhalt region, and Graham Meadows, the former European Commission Director-General of DG Regional Policy.

Building on this visit the Committee will take further evidence on the future of cohesion policy during May and is aiming to adopt a second interim report by the end of June, timed to ensure maximum impact on related internal EU negotiations taking place during 2010.

This issue of Europe Matters also details Europe-related activities of other Assembly Committees, including evidence being taken by the Rural Development Sub-Committee into the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. This is a very important issue in Wales given that our rural communities receive around £200 million per annum from the EU through this policy and the future of CAP will feature prominently in discussions in Brussels on the post 2013 EU Budget period.

The Enterprise and Learning Committee has also been taking evidence from European Commission officials for its inquiry into the implementation of the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales.

Finally, the Assembly received a number of distinguished guests during this period, including a delegation of women politicians from the Armenian National Assembly, who met with Members of the Equality of Opportunity Committee, and Christine Chapman AM, the Chair of the Assembly's Women and Democracy Group to discuss the Welsh experience of promoting gender equality in the Assembly.

**Rhodri Morgan AM**

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







Members of the **European and External Affairs Committee** hold a formal meeting with Welsh MEPs at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Pictured from left to right: **Rhodri Morgan AM (Chair)**, **Jeff Cuthbert AM**, **Mike German AM** and **Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM**.



**Christine Chapman AM** (fifth from left) meets with a delegation of women politicians from the Armenian National Assembly in Cardiff Bay.

## EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees

### European and External Affairs Committee

- **Future of EU Cohesion Policy:** the Committee took evidence from Professor Danuta Hübner, Chair of the European Parliament's Regional Development Committee, and the four Welsh MEPs during its meeting held in Brussels on St David's Day. Further evidence sessions are planned in April and May, including an update on the Committee of the Regions report on the future of this policy, and representatives from the All Wales Programme Monitoring Committee.
- **Committee of the Regions:** the Committee received an update from Dr Gerhard Stahl, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions on its new mandate for 2010-2015, including the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on the status of this body.
- **Europe 2020 Strategy:** the Committee held a scrutiny session on 16 March with the Deputy First Minister on the Europe 2020 Strategy draft proposal published by the European Commission in March, and to cover the Assembly Government response to the Commission's consultation.
- **European Commission activities in Wales:** The Committee received an update on European Commission activities from the Head of the Commission's office in Wales, Andy Klom.
- **European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010:** On 16 March the Committee received further evidence for its inquiry from the Bevan Foundation. The Bevan Foundation has been awarded funding for activities in Wales, including a conference, in support of the European Year's objectives.

### Enterprise and Learning Committee

- **Implementation of the Structural Funds in Wales 2007-2013:** the Committee held a number of evidence sessions for this inquiry during this period. On 26 February DG Regional Policy and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; on 4 March an external meeting was held in the Soar Centre, Penygraig, including contributions from Valleys Regional Park project, Building the Future Together project and Bridges into Work project; on 11 March the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport, and the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action; and on 18 March Professor Dylan Jones Evans, University of Wales, and South West Regional Development Agency.
- **Generating Jobs in the Green Economy:** this inquiry remains open and further evidence sessions are envisaged during the summer term.

### Sustainability Committee

- **Flooding in Wales:** the Committee published its report from this inquiry at the end of February.

## **Rural Development Sub-Committee**

- **Future of the Uplands:** the Sub-Committee published its report from this inquiry on 4 April.
- **Future of Common Agricultural Policy:** the Sub-Committee will hold its first session on this new inquiry on 28 April, with evidence from the Minister for Rural Affairs Elin Jones.
- **Wine, beer and cider production:** the Sub-Committee held two evidence sessions in March with a number of brewers, wine and cider producers in Wales. The Committee also visited Otley's Brewery in Cilfynydd on 11 March, and Glyndwr Vineyard at Llanbleddian near Cowbridge on 25 March as part of the evidence gathering. A final session will take place with the Minister for Rural Affairs on 28 April.
- **Inquiry into Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene:** the report from this inquiry is in the process of being drafted and is due to be discussed by the Sub-Committee shortly.

## **Communities and Culture Committee**

- **Inquiry into Making the Most of Sporting Events:** the Committee took evidence from the Welsh Rugby Union and Glamorgan Cricket Club on 11 March, as part of this inquiry which is examining the activities of the Welsh Government, its delivery bodies and other national organisations in relation to major sporting events, in particular the Ryder Cup and Olympic Games in London 2012.

## External activities of Members on Assembly business

- **Committee of the Regions:** Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM attended the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels from 14-15 April.
- **Committee of the Regions:** Christine Chapman AM was a keynote speaker at a hearing held in the European Parliament on 3 March, to debate the Europe 2020 Strategy. Christine participated in this event in her capacity as Committee of the Regions rapporteur on this dossier.

## International and other VIPs visiting the Senedd

- On **24-25 February** a delegation of women Members of Parliament from the Armenian National Assembly, led by the Deputy Speaker Ms Arevik Petrosyan MP, visited the Senedd to learn from the Welsh experience of promoting gender equality here at the Assembly. They met with Members of the Equality of Opportunity Committee, and Christine Chapman AM, Chair of the Assembly's Women and Democracy Group.
- On **25 February** the newly appointed Ambassador to Lithuania, His Excellency Mr Oskaras Jusys visited the Assembly and met the Deputy Presiding Officer.
- On **9 March** to mark Commonwealth Day the National Assembly for Wales hosted a debate with young people from Fitzalan High School, Cardiff, on this year's Commonwealth theme of "Science, Technology and Society".
- On **9 March** the British Ambassador to South Africa, Dr Nicola Brewer visited the Assembly for cross-party talks with Assembly Members.
- On **25 March** Mr Adam McCarthy, Australian Deputy High Commissioner visited the Assembly and had meetings with Presiding Officer and with Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly Wales Branch Executive.



### **Links**

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

### **For further information—**

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