

**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 19th issue of Europe Matters, our regular update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

On 7 July the European and External Affairs Committee publishes its second report on the future of EU Cohesion Policy, which contributes to the broader debate about the new Europe 2020 Strategy and the future EU Budget. This is a joint launch with the Enterprise and Learning Committee as it publishes its report into implementation of the 2007-2013 Structural Funds Programmes in Wales.

With Europe 2020 under consideration by the European institutions, and a White Paper on the future EU Budget and the Fifth Cohesion Report both expected this autumn, it is an appropriate moment for the Committee to report again. We also publish in the context of a challenging and volatile fiscal and financial situation, and following the appointment of a new UK Coalition Government in May.

Evidence taken in this second phase of inquiry strongly echoes the key priorities of our first report: to continue with an EU-wide Cohesion Policy for all regions of the European Union, both in the old and new Member States, with continued access to Convergence and Competitiveness-type funding subject to need, and transitional support for those regions moving out of 'Convergence' status.

'Renationalisation' of Cohesion Policy, by 'repatriating' EU funding to relatively richer Member States including the UK, has been mooted from time to time by key players including most recently by the Commission Presidency. This idea is flatly rejected as not being in the best interests of Wales, the UK or the wider European Union.

Driving economic recovery and cohesive growth across the Union - in line with the strategic priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy – requires an integrated EU-wide approach that recognises the importance of multi-level governance. Continued support through Cohesion Policy will unlock Wales's potential to fully implement the Europe 2020 goals of 'smart, sustainable, inclusive growth': by boosting research and development, innovation and the 'green' economy, and supporting the development of the training and skills necessary to make this vision a reality.

There is intense interest among Welsh stakeholders in this debate, both in Wales and Brussels, and I commend in particular the support of all four Welsh MEPs for continued access for Wales to funding from the EU Cohesion Policy post 2013. Given the need to influence this important debate at EU level, we have made recommendations to the Welsh and UK Governments as well as to the European institutions and representatives of European bodies.

On 27 May the Committee reported on its inquiry into the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Inclusion. The Welsh Government's response is expected on 8 July, and we look forward to a plenary debate on this important topic in the early autumn.

On 8 June we held a session on international activities, with an update from the Deputy Presiding Officer, Rosemary Butler AM, on the Assembly's involvement in the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly. We also took evidence on Wales's significant contribution to international development activities, in particular through the Wales for Africa Programme, and on 16 June an event in conjunction with Dolen Cymru

was held in the Senedd to mark the 25th anniversary of the link between Wales and Lesotho.

On 22 June we received updates from Welsh MEPs Jill Evans and Derek Vaughan. Commitments in the European Parliament prevented Kay Swinburne and John Bufton from participating on this occasion, but we are keen to take regular updates on all the MEPs work in Brussels and Strasbourg, and look forward to hearing from them again in the autumn.

In this issue, Europe Matters sets out the Europe-related activities of all other Assembly Committees, including the Rural Development Sub-Committee's work on CAP reform. As a Member of Legislation Committee Number 2 I was pleased to receive evidence from the Catalan Government as part of scrutiny of the proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure.

Finally, as this is the last Europe Matters before the summer break I wanted to mention the Mock European Council, being organised by the Welsh Government, which we will host in the National Assembly for Wales in September. I am delighted to Chair this event, which brings together 27 schools from across Wales and one international school – on this occasion a school from another of Wales' long standing international partners, Brittany in France.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer!

**Rhodri Morgan AM**  
**Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee**



## EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees

### European and External Affairs Committee

- **Europe 2020 Strategy, the future EU Budget and the Future of EU Cohesion Policy:** the Committee completed a second phase of evidence gathering on 18 May – including sessions with the Welsh higher education sector, the All-Wales Programme Monitoring Committee and the European Investment Bank. A second report on the future of EU Cohesion Policy will be published on 7 July. The inquiry will remain open into the autumn pending proposals on the future EU Budget post 2013.
- **European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010:** the Committee published its report on 27 May and the Welsh Government's response is due on 8 July. A plenary debate is provisionally scheduled for 22 September.
- **Developments in the European Council, Parliament and Commission:** on 22 June the Committee considered recent developments, including the impact of the economic and financial crisis on strategic policy issues, with updates from Welsh MEPs Jill Evans and Derek Vaughan, and from the Head of the European Commission's office in Wales.
- **International activities of the Assembly:** on 8 June the Committee received an update from the Deputy Presiding Officer, Rosemary Butler AM, on the activities of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly and CALRE.
- **International Relations and Wales for Africa:** on 8 June the Committee took evidence on international development activity, in particular the implementation of the Wales for Africa Programme, from the Welsh Government, Oxfam Cymru and SMIDOS (Small and Medium sized International Development Organisations).

### Enterprise and Learning Committee

- **Implementation of the Structural Funds in Wales 2007-2013:** the report from this inquiry will be published on 7 July jointly with the European and External Affairs Committee's report on Cohesion Policy (see above).
- **Generating Jobs in the Green Economy:** the draft report for this inquiry was discussed on 24 June.
- **Young people not in education, training or employment:** this inquiry includes reference to the use of structural funds to support young people in training and employment, and the Committee took evidence from the Leighton Andrews AM, Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning on 24 June.

### Sustainability Committee

- **Access to inland waterways in Wales:** the Committee published its report on 16 June.



## **Rural Development Sub-Committee**

- **Future of Common Agricultural Policy:** the Sub-Committee discussed the draft report from this inquiry at its meeting on 6 July with the intention of launching the report at the Royal Welsh Show on 20 July, the same day that the Commission presents the results of their “public debate” on the future of CAP. The Committee held further evidence sessions on 19 May and 16 June, including with DG Agriculture and Rural Development, and a broad range of Welsh stakeholders. The Sub-Committee will visit Brussels on 15-16 September to discuss the findings of their report ahead of the publication of the European Commission’s Communication on the future reform of CAP in November.
- **Inquiry into Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene:** the report from this inquiry was published on 28 May.

## **Communities and Culture Committee**

- **Inquiry into Making the Most of Sporting Events:** the report from this inquiry was published on 4 June.
- **Financial Inclusion and the impact of Financial Education:** this inquiry is ongoing with the report expected to be adopted during the autumn.

## **Legislation Committee No.2**

- **Proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure:** the Committee took evidence from Mr Bernat Joan i Marí, Secretary for Language Policy, at the Government of Catalonia on 17 June, as part of the scrutiny of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure.

## External activities of Members on Assembly business

- On 20 May Christine Chapman AM was a speaker in Brussels on behalf of the Committee of the Regions at the **Regions for Economic Change Conference** organised by the European Commission.
- On 21 May the Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee, the Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM, chaired a seminar at the Assembly's Pierhead in Cardiff on **'Reconnecting the European Parliament and its people'**. The event was organised by the European Commission Office in Wales and the Foreign Policy Centre. The panel included the four Welsh MEPs and Dr Adam Marshall from the British Chambers of Commerce.
- Christine Chapman AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM both attended **Committee of the Regions Plenary Session** in Brussels on 9-10 June.
- On 8 July the Deputy Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler will attend the **Standing Committee of CALRE**, which takes place in San Sebastian, the Basque Country, Spain. The Assembly will also be represented at a **seminar on the Subsidiarity Protocol** organised by the Parlament de Catalunya on 7 July in Barcelona.
- On 6-9 July the **Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod** takes place, which will be attended by a number of AMs, and the National Assembly for Wales will have a stand at this event.

## International and other VIPs visiting the Senedd

- On 18 May the National Assembly for Wales welcomed **Destiny Africa Children's Choir** from the Kampala Children's Centre in Uganda to perform in the Pierhead building as part of their UK tour.
- On 20 May the National Assembly for Wales welcomed a **delegation from Kenya** participating on the Active Citizens Programme, organised by the British Council (Wales). During their visit they met with Members of the Communities & Culture committee.
- On 14 June the National Assembly for Wales welcomed a **delegation from Hong Kong** as part of a wider programme to the UK to study the UK electoral system.
- On 16 June the National Assembly for Wales hosted an event in the Senedd in conjunction with **Dolen Cymru** to mark the 25th anniversary of the link between Lesotho and Wales.
- On 18 June the National Assembly for Wales welcomed a delegation of civil servants and local government officials from **Croatia** visiting Wales as part of a visit programme arranged through the Wales Audit Office.
- On 22 June the National Assembly for Wales welcomed a **delegation from the Crimean Parliament** as part of a wider programme to the UK to study the Legislative Process and our relationship with Westminster.
- On 28 June the National Assembly for Wales welcomed a **delegation from India, China and Russia** as part of a visit to Wales arranged through International Business Wales.

### **Links**

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

### **For further information—**

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