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 20th issue of Europe Matters, our regular update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales on European issues.

Wales has been in the spotlight in the past few weeks after 10 years of planning came to fruition in the hosting of the 38th Ryder Cup. The tournament is the only sporting event where Europe is represented as a single team, in this biennial competition with the USA. It was with immense pride that Wales and the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport welcomed this unique and world class tournament to Wales.

The Ryder Cup attracted a number of high profile dignitaries and the Committee Chair and Members were particularly pleased to welcome European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to the Senedd on his way to the to the Opening Ceremony in Newport. During his first visit to Wales, the President saw first-hand the benefits that EU Structural Funds have brought to Wales, and will have taken away a clear message of the importance of maintaining an EU-wide Cohesion Policy in the future, in order to deliver the overarching aims of Europe 2020 in countries like Wales.

The EU Budget Review and the Fifth Cohesion Report, as well as a number of flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 Strategy, are due for publication this autumn. We will follow these developments closely in the European and External Affairs Committee. On 21 September UK Ambassador to the EU Sir Kim Darroch gave the Committee his views on how these issues will unfold over the coming months and during 2011-2012. We also received an update from Welsh MEPs Jill Evans and Derek Vaughan at the same meeting.

In October the Committee launches an inquiry into participation by Welsh organisations in EU Funding Programmes that support lifelong learning, research and innovation. An open call for written evidence was published on 4 October, and on 5 October we received the first set of evidence from the British Council, the National Agency that administers a number of EU programmes supporting mobility in education and lifelong learning for young people in the UK. We also heard from the European Commission’s Director General for Education and Culture about their new Youth on the Move initiative.

I am also pleased to report that Members of the Assembly’s Rural Development Sub-Committee visited Brussels in September to present their messages to the key players in the debate over the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. The European Parliament will have a strong role to play in shaping the future of this policy, which under the Lisbon Treaty will now be agreed through the co-decision procedure.

On 16 September I joined lawyers and academics from various EU Member States to speak at the Wales Governance Centre’s annual conference – ‘A question of subsidiarity’, at the Assembly’s Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay. The Treaty of Lisbon was the subject of discussion at another seminar held in the Pierhead on 30 September, this time organised by the European Parliament’s UK Office. The event was attended by all four Welsh MEPs.

On 20 September I delivered the keynote address at a WLGA Open Days Conference on ‘The Future of EU Competitiveness Funding’ held in Llandrindod Wells,
Powys. The event was a welcome opportunity to afford specific attention to the continuation of Regional Competitiveness and Employment funding post-2013 and its vital role in achieving the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Conference findings echoed our Committee report on this issue published on 7 July, which provided a unified view across all political parties in Wales of the importance of ensuring the continuation of Competitiveness funding.

Finally, it was also my great pleasure to Chair the Mock European Council held in Siambr Hywel, the Assembly’s youth debating chamber, and I would like to thank all of the young people and schools that participated in a memorable day.

Rhodri Morgan AM
Chair of the European and External Affairs Committee
EU related topics in the Assembly’s Committees

European and External Affairs Committee

– **EU Budget and the future of EU Cohesion Policy**: the Committee took evidence from Sir Kim Darroch, the UK Ambassador to the EU in the context of the forthcoming debate on the future of the EU Budget.

– **Belgian EU Presidency**: Belgian Ambassador to the EU, His Excellency Johan Verbeke gave the Committee an update on progress with the priorities of the Belgian Presidency at the 5 October meeting.

– **Europe 2020 Strategy**: The Committee held an evidence session with Director General of DG Education and Culture Mr Jan Truszczyński on the new Youth on the Move flagship initiative published by the Commission in September.

– **Welsh MEPs**: on 21 September the Committee received updates from Welsh MEPs on their work in the European Parliament. Derek Vaughan and Jill Evans participated, whilst Dr Kay Swinburne and John Bufton were unable to attend due to commitments in the European Parliament.

– **Other EU funding programmes**: the Committee agreed to carry out an inquiry focusing on EU funding programmes (excluding structural funds and rural development) supporting lifelong learning, innovation and research. The first evidence sessions were held on 5 October with the British Council and DG Education and Culture, and further evidence sessions are planned in October and November. A call for written evidence has been launched with a closing date for submissions of 12 November.

– **Committee of the Regions**: on 21 September Christine Chapman AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM gave an update on their work on the Committee of the Regions, together with representatives from the WLGA.

Enterprise and Learning Committee

– **Generating Jobs in the Green Economy**: the report from this inquiry was published in July and scheduled to be debated in plenary on 13 October.

– **Young people not in education, training or employment**: the draft report for this inquiry was discussed on 24 June.

– **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Skills**: a short inquiry will begin during the autumn with evidence likely to be taken on best practice within the EU.

Sustainability Committee

– **Biodiversity**: the Committee plans to carry out an inquiry looking at biodiversity targets within Wales, taking into account the consultation launched by the European Commission as part of a review of EU level targets.
Rural Development Sub-Committee

– **Future of Common Agricultural Policy:** the Sub-Committee visited Brussels on 15-16 September to promote the report from its inquiry into the future of CAP and to discuss next steps with key figures. They met with the Chair of the Agriculture Committee in the European Parliament, Paolo de Castro MEP, Welsh MEPs, the Cabinet of Agriculture Commissioner Cioloș and officials from EU regions and Member States. The Committee also met with DG Health and Consumer Affairs to discuss proposals on new rules for authorising cultivation of GMOs.

External activities of Members on Assembly business

– On 20 September **Rhodri Morgan AM** was keynote speaker at the WLGA Open Days Conference on 'The Future of EU Competitiveness Funding' held in Llandrindod Wells, Powys. **David Melding AM** chaired a panel discussion during the day, and **Jeff Cuthbert AM** spoke in his capacity as Chair of the All Wales Programme Monitoring Committee.

– **Janet Ryder AM** represented the National Assembly for Wales as a delegate in the 56th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from 10-19 September. She also gave a keynote speech at the Commonwealth Women’s Parliamentary Conference, where she discussed strategies for enhancing women’s participation in parliament, highlighting the Assembly’s strong credentials in this area. Following the conference Janet Ryder visited the Ugandan Parliament, where she had a meeting with the Deputy Speaker Rebecca A Kadaga MP as part of her programme.

– On 5 October **Christine Chapman AM** chaired a seminar on regional innovation during the Open Days week of the Regions in Brussels. During this visit she also attended the Committee of the Regions (CoR) Plenary (from 4-6 October), and spoke at the political bureau meeting of the CoR in her capacity as one of the two political co-ordinators of the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform.

– On 5 October the **Deputy Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler AM** attended the Standing Committee and annual plenary meeting of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), hosted by the CALRE Presidency in Trento, Italy.

– From 17-23 October **Alan Davies AM and Veronica German AM** will represent the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s (CPA) Wales Branch at the forthcoming CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, which will take place in Ottawa.

– On 29 October **Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM** is due to attend a meeting of the Committee of the Regions cross-party working group on the future of the EU Budget.
International and other VIPs visiting the Senedd

– On 17 September Tommaso Leonardi, a lawyer from the Trento Region in Italy, the current Presidency of CALRE, the European network of regional parliaments and legislatures, was a speaker at a conference on subsidiarity organised by the Wales Governance Centre in the Pierhead.

– On 30 September Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg MP, visited the Senedd, and was given a tour by the Presiding Officer Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas PC AM, and met Welsh Liberal Democrats leader, Kirsty Williams AM and Welsh Conservatives leader, Nick Bourne AM.

– On 30 September the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso was welcomed to the Senedd by the Presiding Officer, where he attended a seminar hosted by the Assembly and organised by the Welsh European Funding Office and the European Commission’s Wales Office, on Welsh participation in EU Structural Funds. Dignitaries attending this event included the four Welsh MEPs.

– On 30 September the four Welsh MEPs and the Presiding Officer spoke at a Pierhead seminar event organised by the European Parliament UK Office on the implications of the Lisbon Treaty for Wales.

– On 5 October His Excellency Mr Johan Verbeke, the Belgian Ambassador to the UK, attended the European and External Affairs Committee meeting, and during his visit was given a tour of the Senedd as part of a wider programme organised by the Welsh Government.

– On 6 October the Queen of Lesotho visited the Senedd and was welcomed by the Presiding Officer, who hosted a lunch in honour of Her Majesty’s visit joined by representatives from each of the main political parties, namely John Griffiths AM, Janet Ryder AM, David Melding AM and Kirsty Williams AM. Her Majesty also attended the Plenary session during the afternoon, before her meeting with the First Minister.

The Presiding Officer, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas PC AM with the Queen of Lesotho.
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