

# Europe Matters

(Produced by the  
National Assembly for Wales  
EU office)



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

**Issue 9 – November 2007**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the ninth issue of Europe Matters. Every Autumn the European Commission publishes its Legislative and Work programme for the following year - it is essentially the EU equivalent of the Queen's Speech. The 2008 work programme was published on 23 October and presents the Commission's key policy and legislative initiatives which we can expect to see over the next 12 – 18 months.

The European and External Affairs Committee has already flagged up some of these issues as important to Wales. These include the "Health Check" on the Common Agricultural Policy – the consultation document was published this week; the consultation on the EU budget review and the future of cohesion policy post 2013. Climate Change will also remain high on the EU agenda with work on adapting to climate change, a second strategic energy review and a green transport package. In December, we will be considering the Commission's 2008 work programme. To help us with this, we are hoping to have a video link with some of Wales' MEPs, live from the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The Committee continues its work on its inquiry on European Investment Bank financing and opportunities for Wales. Senior officials from the European Investment Bank will be attending the Committee along with the Head of the EIB London office on 27th of November. The Welsh European Funding Office will also give evidence.

We will also be discussing the National Assembly for Wales' European and International Relations. The Assembly is represented in a number of European and International Bodies such as the British Irish Inter Parliamentary Body, the Committee of the Regions and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

If you have any suggestions for the work of the Committee, or about this newsletter, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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

## Forthcoming EU business in the Assembly's Committees

### European and External Affairs Committee

27 November

- **European Investment Bank Inquiry** - Officials from the European Investment Bank will give evidence on the opportunities and processes for accessing EIB finance.
- **European Investment Bank inquiry: Welsh European Funding Office** - officials from WEFO and Finance Wales will give evidence on the potential use of JEREMIE and JESSICA in Wales' structural funds' programmes.
- **National Assembly for Wales European and International Relations Strategy** - the National Assembly's European and International Unit is seeking the input of the Committee on themes and activities to underpin the NAW's European and International relations in the Third Assembly.
- **European Investment Bank inquiry consultation** – the Committee is calling for those with an interest or expertise in this area to submit written evidence by 31 December.

11 December

- **Commission's 2008 Annual Legislative and Work Programme** – the Committee will consider the Commission's work programme and identify items of interest to take forward in the Committee in 2008.

### Items related to the EU agenda

### Enterprise and Learning Committee

21 & 28 November, 5 & 12 December

- **Committee inquiry into the economic contribution of higher education** - the Committee will consider the terms of reference and scope of the inquiry (21 November) and will take evidence from Higher Education Wales; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; business sector representatives.

12 December

- **The Committee will consider a proposal to establish a Structural Funds Sub-committee.**

### Equality of Opportunity Committee

- **Inquiry into issues affecting Migrant Workers** – the Committee is calling for interested parties to submit written evidence by Friday 4 January 2008.

### Sustainability Committee

22 & 29 November, 6 & 13 December

- **Inquiry into carbon reduction in Wales: the transport sector** - the Committee will be taking evidence on the second stage of its inquiry. Ieuan Wyn Jones AM, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport will give evidence on 13 December.

### Rural Development Sub-Committee

29 November

- **Developments with the Foot-and-Mouth outbreak** - Elin Jones AM, Minister for Rural Affairs will give evidence to the Committee.

6 December & 13 December

- **Inquiry into rural poverty and deprivation** – evidence sessions.

### **Look Back: EU related topics in the Assembly's Committees**

#### European and External Affairs Committee – 23 October

- **European Investment Bank Inquiry: Nationwide Building Society and 'Valleys to Coast' Housing** - the Committee heard evidence about the investment of £45 million in a housing and community redevelopment project in Bridgend, which included finance from the EIB.
- **First Minister's Briefing** – the Committee was updated on a range of issues including information on the EU Reform Treaty; and the JEREMIE and JESSICA initiatives. The First Minister agreed to update the Committee in the spring term on the Assembly Government's response to the consultation on the EU Budget Review and the consultation on the future of Cohesion Policy. The Chair suggested that the Committee could be involved in the visit of Commissioner Margot Wallström in January 2008. The First Minister undertook to provide a Briefing Note on the current situation with the REACH Directive.
- **National Assembly's European and International Relations Strategy** – the Committee agreed to give further consideration to this matter at a subsequent meeting.

### [Enterprise and Learning Committee – 17 October](#)

- **Cross-cutting Scrutiny of Ministers: W:AVE, Structural Funds, Departmental Mergers** - The Committee scrutinised Jane Hutt, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and senior officials from the Welsh Assembly Government. Actions included a request for a note from the Heritage Minister confirming the proportion of European structural fund support within the Welsh tourism marketing budget. The Minister for the Economy and Transport will provide the Annual Business Plan of the Department for Economy and Transport, including the projected leverage of European funding, for the next financial year.

### [Sustainability Committee – 15 November 2007](#)

- **Inquiry into carbon reduction: transport section** - the Committee considered a scoping paper on the approach for the next stage of its inquiry into Carbon reduction in Wales which will focus on the contribution of the transport sector.

### [Rural Development Sub-Committee - 18 October](#)

- **Inquiry into rural deprivation and service delivery** - the Committee discussed the scoping paper and terms of reference for the Committee's second scrutiny inquiry.

#### **Links**



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#### **For further information contact**



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