

# Europe Matters

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Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

Issue 5 – January 2007

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## Introduction

Happy New Year to you and welcome to the fifth issue of Europe Matters.

As the Welsh Assembly Government is consulting on the draft regional competitiveness and employment programmes for East Wales, at its next meeting, the European and External Affairs Committee will be discussing their plans on how to spend the estimated £200 million investment package. We will also be hearing from the RSPB about their experiences in making use of EU funds for environmental projects and opportunities in the 2007-2013 round of programmes.

Last week, the EIN and EPC Committee launched a joint consultation on the Green Paper on a future EU Maritime Policy. The two Committees will formally consider it in a joint session of their Committees on 8 March. The development of a new EU policy could open up some significant opportunities to Wales, as I and my fellow members from the European and External Affairs Committee discussed with Commissioner for Maritime Policy, Joe Borg during our visit to Brussels last February. I would encourage you to respond to the Committees' consultation.

Over the coming weeks, each Committee will be looking at the European Commission's work programme for 2007 and the Welsh Assembly Government's analysis of it. The Committees will identify items of potential significance to Wales for further scrutiny which may be taken forward in the Third Assembly from May 2007.

If you would like any further information about the European work of the Committees, please 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

24 January 2007

- ◆ **EU Competitiveness and Convergence programmes** – to consider the WAG's consultation on the regional competitiveness and employment programme for East Wales and to receive an update on the convergence programme for West Wales and the Valleys.
- ◆ **EU Funding for environmental projects** – the RSPB will brief the Committee on their views on EU funding opportunities, including the structural funds.

### Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee

- ◆ **Green Paper on an EU Maritime policy** – a joint consultation by EIN and EPC Committees was launched on 8 January to help the Committees' consideration of the Green Paper in March.

17 January 2007

- ◆ **EU Competitiveness and Convergence programmes** – to consider the WAG's consultation on the regional competitiveness and employment programme for East Wales.
- ◆ **EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – to consider and identify items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

### Local Government and Public Services Committee

18 January 2007

- ◆ **EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – to consider and identify items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

### Social Justice and Regeneration

31 January 2007

- ◆ **EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – to consider and identify items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

## [Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee](#)

25 January 2007

- ◆ **EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – to consider and identify items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

### **Related items**

- ◆ **Climate Change Bill** – The Committee will have a session on the Climate Change Bill, which was listed in the Queen's Speech. The Committee will discuss what it would like to see included in the Bill.
- ◆ **Waste Management** – the Committee will hear evidence from the Environment Agency on Waste Management.

## [Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee](#)

17 January 2007

- ◆ **East Wales Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes Consultation** – The Committee will consider a WAG consultation on the Programme, which was launched on 1 December 2006 (deadline for responses is 26 January 2007). The EIN Committee is leading on this, but the ELLS Committee will look particularly at economic inactivity, which falls under its remit.

1 February 2007

- ◆ **Paper to note on EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – The Committee will receive a paper to note identifying items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

## [Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee](#)

7 February 2007

- ◆ **EU legislative and policy priorities for 2007** – to consider and identify items of significance to the Committee's remit from the European Commission's work programme for 2007.

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

## [European and External Affairs Committee](#)

[29 November 2006](#)

- ◆ **Exchange of views with Jill Evans MEP and Eluned Morgan MEP** – the Committee had a lively and useful discussion with both MEPs on the future of Europe and energy policy respectively via video conference from Brussels. The First Minister agreed to provide a note on progress regarding the use of the Welsh language in European Union institutions.
- ◆ **European Commission Representation in the UK** – Reijo Kemppinen, Head of the Office updated the Committee and agreed to provide the Committee with suggestions for how to better communicate details of EU funded projects in Wales.

### Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

30 November 2006

- ◆ **Minister's Report** – the Committee discussed the status of draft EU legislation on voluntary modulation and the effects that this could have on rural development spending in Wales.

13 December 2006

- ◆ **Biodiversity** – Following on from earlier sessions on the EU Commission's Communication '*Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond*', the Committee scrutinised the Minister on the Welsh Assembly Government's plans to halt the loss of biodiversity.

### Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee

30 November 2006

- ◆ **EU Cultural funds** – The Committee discussed the European Cultural Funds available for the period 2007-2013 following a presentation from an official of the Welsh Assembly Government who agreed to provide a further note on the Media 2007 programme.

13 December 2006

- ◆ **Minister's Report** – Following previous discussions on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Minister's Report highlighted scrutiny work by the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the UK's second periodical report from August 2005 and their 'on-the-spot visit' to the UK in December 2005.

### Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee

22 November 2006

- ◆ **Policy Review of Special Educational Needs** – As part of the Committee's evidence gathering session on special educational needs

the Committee heard evidence about the 'Promoting Independence' Initiative of the Trinity Fields Special School, which started off as a European Social Fund Initiative.

### [Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee](#)

[7 December 2006](#)

- ◆ **Minister's report** – items covered included the updates on progress on the development of the EU structural funds programmes, including the Ireland/Wales 2007-2013 Territorial Co-operation Programme; and project Gallileo – the Cardiff bid.

[22 November 2006](#)

- ◆ **WEFO Quarterly Report** –The Minister agreed to provide a note on what information could be provided to the Committee in relation to fraudulent claims.

### [Social Justice and Regeneration](#)

[6 December 2006](#)

- ◆ **Update on the Committee's EU priorities** – the Committee received an update on the priorities they selected for 2006 from the European Commission's Programme.

### **Links**

[National Assembly for Wales homepage](#)

[NAfW Committee pages](#)

[Current Policy reviews - summary of work on-going](#)

[Assembly Calendar](#)

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We welcome communication in either English or Welsh.

*Ymddiheurwn bod y cylchlythyr ar gael yn Saesneg yn unig. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu Saesneg.*

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