



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT

BY THE

WELSH GOVERNMENT

Title: EU's Sixth Cohesion Forum in Brussels on 8-9 Sept 2014

Date: 9 September 2014

By: Jane Hutt, Minister for Finance

Yesterday I addressed the EU's Sixth Cohesion Forum in Brussels on the importance of EU funds to Wales and also the UK and Wales' continued membership of the EU.

Attended by Ministers and leaders across national and regional governments, and institutions in the EU, the Forum discussed the important contribution of EU Cohesion Policy (the main investment policy in the EU) in delivering on the goals of Europe 2020 by creating jobs and reducing regional disparities across the EU.

Wales has been a major beneficiary of Structural Funds since 2000, and over this period, significant progress has been made in delivering structural reform and in meeting the social challenges that accompanies structural economic change. The 2007–2013 round of programmes alone has already helped us create over 9,000 enterprises and 28,000 jobs, and helped nearly 61,000 people into work and over 180,000 to gain qualifications.

The Sixth Cohesion Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion also outlines how future EU investments will be focused on key areas to benefit businesses and citizens across Europe, such as research and innovation, energy efficiency, skills and employment, and social inclusion.

In Wales, negotiations with the European Commission on the new Structural Funds programmes 2014-2020 are progressing well. The new programmes will fully embrace the principles of concentration, integration and simplification. They will also have a strong focus on results, maximising impact and creating a lasting legacy from the investment of the EU funds. I am hopeful that the programmes will be agreed by the Commission by the end of October, following agreement of the UK Partnership Agreement, and I will continue to keep Members informed of developments.

During my two-day visit to Brussels, I met with the French Europe Minister, the Lithuania Finance Minister, a number of Commission Directors General and Welsh MEPs to discuss the progress and opportunities through the EU funds and the importance of future structural investments beyond 2020. The Welsh Government believes that these funds should be made available to the poorest regions in the EU, irrespective of the GDP per capita of the Member States in which they are located.

A full copy of the Sixth Cohesion Report is available via the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion6/index_en.cfm

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.