

Europe Matters

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EU office)



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Issue 8 – October 2007

Introduction

Welcome to the eighth issue of Europe Matters. How Europe is communicated and explained to citizens in Wales is something that we've consistently discussed in the European and External Affairs Committee. The European Commission presented its proposals for "[Communicating Europe in Partnership](#)" on 3 October. Discussing the future of the EU is a hot topic at the moment given the debate surrounding the European Reform Treaty.

One area for improvement identified by the Commission is the European dimension of citizenship education in schools – it is keen to support the exchange of best practice across Europe in this area. This was something the previous Committee of the Second Assembly raised in its [response](#) to the Commission's consultation paper in June 2006 (White Paper on Communication).

It is good that the Commission emphasises the need for action at the local and regional level to generate debate and better understanding, for example through the Europe Direct Centres. There are six of these already in Wales working proactively with young people, local communities and specific networks. Also, the European Commission Office in Wales has already stated it will explore the possibility of joint communication initiatives with the new coalition government in Wales.

At the next meeting of the European and External Affairs Committee, the First Minister will make his first appearance before the Committee in the Third Assembly. The Committee will also hear about how European Investment Bank loans have been used in Wales as it starts to take evidence for its inquiry.

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

23 October 2007

- **First Minister** – the First Minister Rhodri Morgan will brief the Committee on the Welsh Assembly Government's recent activities, the Intergovernmental Conference and the future of EU cohesion policy. He will also contribute evidence to the European Investment Bank inquiry.
- **European Investment Bank inquiry** – the Committee will hear evidence from the Nationwide Building Society which acts as an intermediary for the EIB and Valleys to Coast Housing which benefited from an EIB loan to complete the transfer of housing stock from Bridgend CBC in 2003.
- **European and International Relations Strategy for the National Assembly for Wales** – the Committee will receive a paper to note.

Enterprise and Learning Committee

17 October

- **Cross-cutting scrutiny of Ministers** – the Committee has called Ieuan Wyn Jones AM, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport; Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills; and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM, Minister for Heritage for an evidence session on the implementation of the structural funds programmes, as well as WAVE and the Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies mergers process.

Items related to the EU agenda

Sustainability Committee

18 and 25 October

- **Carbon Reduction in Wales** – the Committee will continue to take evidence for from stakeholders its inquiry into carbon reduction. The EU Sustainability Housing in Europe project will give evidence on good practice on 18 October.

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

[European and External Affairs Committee – 25 September](#)

- **European Investment Bank** – the Committee discussed the scope of the inquiry and amendments to the terms of reference. The Committee will be consulting stakeholders and will start taking evidence at the next meeting.
- **European Commission update** – Andy Klom, the European Commission's Representative in Wales briefed the Committee on upcoming Commissioner visits to Wales and the Commission's priorities for the coming months. One of the main issues will be the European Reform Treaty and how to explain it to citizens.
- **Future work programme** – the Committee identified its areas of interest, discussed its approach to dealing with European issues, how best to work with other Committees and to scrutinise the Welsh Assembly Government.

[Equality of Opportunity Committee – 11 October](#)

- [Inquiry into issues affecting migrant workers](#) – the Committee agreed the terms of reference for their inquiry on 11 October following an initial discussion at the 27 September meeting. The inquiry will lead to recommendations on the action needed to ensure equality of opportunity for migrant workers, their families and the people who live within the communities in which they live and work.

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