

European & External Affairs Committee

Date: 11 November 2004
Time: 09:00 – 12.10 am
Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title: Minister's Report

Purpose

1. To provide an update on a range of issues arising since the last meeting of the Committee.

Recommendation

2. Members to note the content of the report.

Background

3. The Committee last met on 14 October. This paper provides an update.

First Minister's International Activities

19 October. Meeting with the Nigerian Ambassador. Meeting was at the request of the High Commissioner. I met briefly with Dr Christopher Kolande, Nigerian High Commissioner to the UK. I discussed with the High Commissioner the visit of the Nigerian President in 2000, Nigerian students in Wales and oil production in Nigeria.

20 October. Meeting with HE Mariano Fernandez, Chilean Ambassador. Met with the Chilean Ambassador who had come to Wales to speak to Welsh companies about investing in Chile. Discussed the economic ambitions of Chile, the relationship between Chile and Argentina, the Welsh community in Patagonia and Chile's use of liquid gas - including the proposed developments in Milford Haven for LPG.

25 – 26 October. Visit to Emilia-Romagna, Bologna. The visit was to forge links between the region and Wales.

27– 28 October. Attended the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of s-HERTOGENBOSCH,

Netherlands by the 53rd Welsh Division. I attended the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of 's-Hertogenbosch on the 27th and 28th of October. The visit was carried out jointly with His Excellency Colin Budd KCMG, HM Ambassador to the Netherlands and Brigadier Iain Cholerton, Commander, HQ 160 (Wales) Brigade, successor, in a sense to the 53rd Division. The visit included:

- Commemoration at the Welsh Memorial and wreath laying at the Dutch Resistance Monument
- Cathedral service and parade for and with liberators
- Commemoration and visit to Uden Commonwealth War Cemetery

2 November. Meet Dr Hughes Prospective British Ambassador to Argentina. Dr Hughes visited Wales as part of his pre- posting briefing tour. I was not able to meet Dr Hughes but Alun Pugh did on my behalf.

3 November. Meeting the Icelandic Ambassador. I held a one to one meeting with the Ambassador and hosted a small lunch in honour of his visit. This was Ambassador Gunnlaugsson's first visit to Wales so was very much a courtesy call.

Other Issues

Joint Ministerial Committee (Europe) (JMC(E)) – 20 October.

I was not able to attend JMC(E) due to prior commitments on that day. Des Clifford attended on my behalf. Discussions focused on the Working Time Directive, Better Regulation and the UK Presidency.

Wales Euro Preparations Committee – 25 October

This was the fourth meeting of the Secretary of State for Wales' Euro Preparations Committee. I was not able to attend, however, Sue Essex represented the Welsh Assembly Government. HM Treasury (HMT) officials updated the Committee on the UK position of Euro preparations, specifically, the Autumn Report on Euro preparations, completion of the planning phase, the Integrated Communications Plan, the Managed Transition Plan and the Consumer Protection Framework. Philip Hamell from the Department of Finance of Ireland, gave a presentation on the Irish perspective of a Euro changeover. Philip Bird updated the Committee on Welsh Assembly Government Euro preparations.

Euro Ministers Meeting – 1 November

Brian Gibbons attended on my behalf. HMT provided an update on the completion of the planning phase, the draft Consumer Protection Framework, Local Authorities Pathfinder Project, Managed Transition Plan, Integrated Communications Plan and forthcoming Autumn Report on Euro preparations. When published, the Autumn report will be circulated to members.

EEAC FIRST MINISTER'S REPORT – ANNEX A

Date	Assembly Minister/ Official/ Division	Event	Objectives	Outcomes
17 October 2004	Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside	Sial 2004	<p>Assist Hybu Cig Cymru promote Welsh lamb in a key market</p> <p>To meet with Welsh businesses and witness first hand their efforts at securing business in a global market</p> <p>Deliver keynote speech about the successes of Welsh food and to highlight their benefits</p> <p>Help raise the profile of Wales in the world market place</p>	<p>Met. Minister held discussions with key French meat buyers/ importers at the Sial Show</p> <p>Minister undertook an extensive tour of the International and Dairy arenas – met with all Welsh exhibitors</p> <p>Met via the WDA/ HCC jointly hosted dinner involving over 100 personnel representing industry stakeholders</p> <p>Achieved through undertaking visit. Minister also met with Bretagne food & drink reps.</p>

19 October 2004	First Minister	Meeting with the Nigerian Ambassador	Meeting was at the request of the High Commissioner	Met
20 October 2004	First Minister	Meeting with the Chilean Ambassador	To discuss economic development.	Met
21-27 October 2004	Alun Pugh Minister for Culture, Sport & Welsh Language Officials accompanying Minister:- Catherine Cody PS/Alun Pugh, Hywel Owen, CWLSD and Siwan Gwyndaf, CyMAL	Visit to Patagonia, Argentina	Raise profile of the Welsh language project in Patagonia which is funded by the WAG. Also the visit provides opportunities to start dialogue and scope options for CyMALs ideas for co-operation with Patagonia.	An opportunity to raise the profile of the WAG's policies in relation to the Welsh Language Board. The intention for CyMAL would be to develop appropriate sustainable activities under CyMALs Action plan 2004-07.
23 –30 October 2004	Andrew Davies Minister for Economic Development and Transport	Trade Mission to the USA	To attend the British American Business Council's Fall Conference in Philadelphia, to add support to a WTI Trade Mission being organised to coincide with the Conference and to undertake a series of investment visits on the West Coast.	Met

25 – 26 October 2004	First Minister	Visit Emilia-Romagna, Bologna	Facilitate links between the region and Wales	Met
26 October 2004	Jane Hutt Minister for Health & Social Services	Eurochild conference, Brussels	To make a speech at the Eurochild conference and meet UKrep	Met
27– 28 October 2004	First Minister	Attend the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of s-HERTOGENBOSCH	Anniversary of the Liberation celebrations	Met
2 November 2004	Alun Pugh Minister for Culture, Sport & Welsh Language	Dr John Hughes Prospective British Ambassador to Argentina	Working Lunch from 12 to 1pm. Dr Hughes is undertaking a briefing tour prior to taking up post as British Ambassador to Argentina.	Met
3 November 2004	First Minister	Meeting the Ambassador to Iceland	Initial courtesy visit.	Met
5 November 2004	Jane Davidson Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning	Visit to Catalunya	Initiate a programme of bilateral work between Wales and Catalunya following the 2001 Co-operation agreement between the two regions. To demonstrate the importance Wales places on its	Met

			relationship with Catalunya	
7 – 8 November 2004	Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside	Steering Committee Meeting, Bilbao	To Chair the Steering Committee meeting of nrg4SD which will agree on all preparatory work for the 1 st General Assembly in Sumatra in February.	Pursue our commitment under the Wales: A Global Citizen (point 2) in the SD Action Plan.