



# European and External Affairs Committee

EUR(3)10-10 : Paper 1 : 22 June 2010

## EEAC Work Programme – European Strategic Priorities for 2010

### Overview

This paper has been prepared as an update to the paper on Developing EEAC Strategic Priorities for 2010 that was discussed on 20 April, taking account of developments to the European Commission's Work Programme since 31 March 2010. The purpose is to inform the Committee's forward work programme.

### Action for the Committee:

To consider the paper with a view to **agreeing**:

1. the continuation of an inquiry framed around the key strategic issues identified in Table 1: Europe 2020, EU Budget, tackling the economic crisis, future of Cohesion Policy (**section B below**);
2. selection of one or more issues listed in **Table 2** for more detailed follow up;
3. referral of issues listed in **Table 3** to other Assembly Committees for their consideration.

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## A. Introduction

The European Commission published its annual Work Programme for 2010<sup>1</sup> on 31 March 2010, and it has been discussed with the European Council, European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions.

The Commission has already published a number of legislative and non-legislative proposals included in the 2010 Work Programme, and has also been providing details on its website (as they become available) of initiatives planned for introduction during 2010, including anticipated timeframes.

## B. Key strategic issues for EEAC to follow during 2010

A number of key strategic issues were identified in the Commission Work Programme for the Committee to consider as the basis of its work for the remainder of this Assembly.

During discussion of these issues on 20 April Members requested that the theme 'tackling the economic and financial crisis', focusing on financial supervision and controls in the financial/banking sector across the EU, should be a key strategic priority for the Committee to follow during 2010 and into 2011 because of the potential implications that developments in this area may have in Wales. This has been added to the revised list in **Table 1**.

There is a **high degree of cross-over** between the key strategic issues in Table 1, in particular in terms of the future priorities of the EU, the availability of funding (contingent on how the EU economy recovers from the financial crisis), and the resources that are made available for concerted EU action through the future EU Budget.

The Committee may wish, therefore, to continue an ongoing inquiry on these issues alongside its inquiry into the future of EU Cohesion Policy. This gives the Committee flexibility to respond quickly to any new developments at EU level, whilst retaining the option for detailed inquiry into specific key issues as necessary (e.g. focusing on one or more of the Europe 2020 "flagship initiatives" as they are published).

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2010)135 - available from [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm)

**Table 1: Revised list of key strategic Issues for EEAC during 2010**

Strategic issue	European level	Rationale for EEAC to follow
<b>Tackling the crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plethora of legislative proposals on supervision/controls for the financial and banking sector.</li> <li>▪ Economic governance and the eurozone crisis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential implications of any new rules on business activities in Wales, including the banking sector and availability of finances</li> <li>▪ Potential implications to Wales of any EU measures implemented in the UK, including austerity measures to reduce public spending.</li> <li>▪ Potential knock on effects for debate on the future EU budget</li> </ul>
<b>Future of Cohesion Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adoption of <b>Fifth Cohesion Report</b> in the last quarter of 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key development for ongoing Committee inquiry</li> <li>▪ Key issue for Wales given current level of structural funds</li> <li>▪ Potential to influence Welsh Government position and wider UK negotiating position</li> </ul>
<b>Review of the EU Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of <b>EU Budget Review</b> discussion paper third quarter of 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Directly relevant to inquiry on future of Cohesion Policy and Europe 2020 Strategy</li> <li>▪ Potential implications for all types of EU funding from which Wales benefits</li> </ul>
<b>Europe 2020 Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commission to present proposals on a number of the “flagship initiatives” identified in Europe 2020</li> <li>▪ European Council 18 June to discuss strategy, with national targets scheduled for autumn. European Parliament to delay agreeing Employment Guidelines until autumn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevant to ongoing Committee inquiry</li> <li>▪ To review the potential for Wales to benefit from the proposed “flagship initiatives”</li> <li>▪ To clarify how Welsh Government has influenced UK national targets and how it intends to help to deliver these in Wales</li> </ul>

## C. Other potential priority issues to follow

Table 2 below sets out a number of other specific issues that look of particular interest to Wales, and which the Committee may wish to prioritise during the autumn term and first part of 2011.

**Table 2: Other potential priority proposals for EEAC during 2010**

Specific dossier	Timeframe	Rationale for EEAC to follow
<b>Digital Agenda</b>  <i>Europe 2020 "Flagship Initiative"</i>	May 2010 (proposals published by Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First of the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives - aimed at stimulating growth in digital economy and increasing take up of digital technologies across Europe (including in broadband).</li> </ul>
<b>Revision of Working Time Directive</b>	December 2010 (revised proposals from Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review any implications for Wales of changes to the UK "opt out", e.g. in terms of working hours for key public sector workers</li> </ul>
<b>European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EY2011)</b>	Autumn 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As follow up to EY2010 inquiry - scope to review Welsh participation, and Welsh Government implementation of recommendations of Committee's inquiry (Welsh Government response due by mid July).</li> </ul>
<b>Review of Services of General Interest</b>	June 2010 (consultation launched)  (Proposals expected early 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review implications in Wales any changes to the rules governing the application of internal market rules to services of general interest, in particular in terms of delivery of social services.</li> </ul>
<b>Draft Directive on Patients' Rights to Cross-Border Healthcare</b>	June 2008 (Commission published draft directive)  April 2009 (EP first reading)  June 2010 (Council position)  Second half 2010 (EP second reading. potential adoption?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee to continue to monitor progress in adoption of the Directive, following its inquiry into the Draft Directive during 2009.</li> </ul>



## **D. Potential issues to be referred to other Assembly Committees**

The table below presents policy proposals expected from the Commission during 2010-2011 that the Committee may wish to refer to other Assembly Committees for their consideration: this Committee is limited in the number of European issues it will be able to follow during 2010 and some proposals fall clearly within the remit of other Committees.



**Table 3: Policy proposals to be referred to other Assembly Committees**

European Commission proposed activities	Timeframe (2010 unless indicated)	Committee/Sub-Committee
<p><i>Agriculture and Rural Development (various)</i></p> <p>Communication on the future of the Common Agriculture Policy</p> <p>Milk/dairy sector - follow up to the High Level Group on milk</p> <p>Legislative proposals for a new Animal Health Law</p> <p>Package on agricultural product quality</p> <p>Less Favoured Areas (legislative proposals)</p> <p>New policy for GMO cultivation</p>	<p>November</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> quarter</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> quarter</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> quarter</p> <p>July</p>	<p>Rural Development</p>
<p>Communication on a new post-2010 EU biodiversity policy and strategy</p>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> quarter</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>
<p>Proposals for Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy</p>	<p>Autumn 2010 (impact assessment)</p>	<p>Rural Development</p>
<p>Mid-term review of the Small Business Act</p>	<p>October</p>	<p>Enterprise &amp; Learning</p>
<p>Rights of the Child 2011-2014</p>	<p>June (consultation)</p>	<p>Children &amp; Young People</p>



Table 3 (cont)

European Commission proposed activities	Timeframe (2010 unless indicated)	Committee/Sub-Committee
<p><i>Energy (various initiatives):</i></p> <p>Energy Infrastructure Package</p> <p>Energy Action Plan 2011-2020</p> <p>Revision of Energy Taxation Directive</p> <p>Communication on Clean and Energy Efficient Vehicles</p>	<p>November</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> half 2010 (consultation)</p> <p>July</p> <p>Published in April</p>	Sustainability
<p><i>Transport (various initiatives):</i></p> <p>Recasting of First Railway Package</p> <p>White Paper on the future of transport</p>	<p>July</p> <p>December</p>	Enterprise & Learning
Proposal for creation of a European Heritage Label	Proposal published in March	Communities & Culture
eHealth Action Plan	?	Health, Wellbeing and Local Government