

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

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Date:	Wednesday 9 March 2005
Venue:	Committee Rooms 3&4, National Assembly for Wales
Title:	European Commission Work Programme

Purpose of Paper

1. At its meeting on 11 November 2004, the Assembly's European and External Affairs Committee (EEAC) agreed a new approach to the scrutiny of EU legislation, which was subsequently endorsed by the Panel of Chairs on 7 December 2004. It was agreed that the Commission's Annual Work Programme would be the starting point in future for identifying priority policy issues for further monitoring and scrutiny by Committees over the course of the year.
2. This paper provides ELL Members with an overview of the year ahead in the EU. It offers suggestions for Committee monitoring of EU policy priorities for 2005, based on i) an analysis of the Commission's 2005 work programme; and ii) work carried forward from 2004.
3. The Committee is invited to note the approach presented here, and agree the issues, if any, on which it will focus in 2005.

The EU 2005 context

4. 2005 will see a major review of the European Union's long-term objectives, the future of the "Lisbon Strategy" will be discussed by Member States at the Spring Council (March 2005). Already the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso has presented its contribution in the form of a new strategy for the EU "Growth and Jobs" (31 January 2005).
5. The draft EU constitutional treaty will be subject to referenda in several Member States, sparking political debate across the EU. Spain was the first to hold a referendum (on 20 February), followed by the French referendum in May/June 2005.

6. The negotiations over the future EU budget 2007-2013 will continue during this year and will decide the future shape and scope of EU funding programmes, including the structural funds programmes. The Luxembourg Presidency is aiming to reach an agreement at the June Council, although given the divergent views on the issue agreement may not come until the end of 2005 or even 2006.
7. The UK assumes the Presidency of the EU in the second half of the year, giving the UK the opportunity to steer the EU towards some of its own priorities. The Informal Competitiveness Council (10-12 July) and an informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers, referred to as the Gymnich (1-2 September) will be held in Wales. Wales will also host a Youth Event (25 – 27 October).
8. The European Commission's strategy for its five year mandate (2005-2009) and its work programme for 2005 were both adopted and presented to the European Parliament on 26 January 2005, by Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso.
9. As with the Commission's five year strategy, the 2005 work programme is organised under the key headings of: prosperity, solidarity, security and external priorities, all under the overarching objective of sustainable development. Of the 600 or so legislative and non-legislative proposals, Barroso has selected around 170 political priorities.
10. There are a number of legislative proposals from preceding years which are still under discussion in Council and the European Parliament which are likely to have more far-reaching consequences for Wales than many of the major proposals in this year's work programme. It is proposed that they should be considered as priority issues alongside those of the new Commission programme.

Suggested ELL policy priorities for 2005

11. Staff from the Members' Research and Committee Services (MRCS) division have examined the items contained in the work programme for 2005 and proposals from previous years. Proposals which relate to areas of policy which include devolved powers and are likely to have an impact on Wales have been identified as high priority. Other items which relate to policy areas and which are considered of lesser interest, have been identified as lower priority. Members may wish to concentrate on high priority areas only, or may wish to select some, or all, of the lower priority areas in addition to high priority areas.
12. 2005 work programme. There are no items in the 2005 work programme considered high priority and therefore of specific interest to the Committee. Lower priority items contained in the programme which Members may wish to note are summarised at Annex A.
13. Work carried forward. There are no outstanding items considered high priority and therefore of specific interest to the Committee. Lower priority items contained in the work carried forward which Members may wish to note are summarised at Annex B.

14. A list of suggested priority issues from the Commission's 2005 work programme for the Assembly's other Committees is attached in Annex C (of high priority).

Influencing EU policy proposals: potential for Committee engagement

15. Each subject committee (and the Equality of Opportunity Committee) will receive a paper prepared by MRCS for consideration on the Commission's work programme. Once they have identified their priorities, if any, it will be for the committees and clerks to decide how to pursue their interest as they would for any other item: commissioning papers from the Welsh Assembly Government or other sources, and, where appropriate, responding directly to the EU institutions.

16. In support of this, MRCS will provide Members with regular updates to Committee, following each item's progress through the Council and the European Parliament, with further suggestions on opportunities for influencing the process. One of the key roles of the Assembly Parliamentary Service Brussels officer will be to feed in intelligence and to provide Members with an "early warning" of upcoming issues.

17. For legislative proposals, it will be particularly important to focus on discussions in the Council and the European Parliament. Committees should consider adopting a more systematic approach to scrutiny of the Welsh Assembly Government's input into the UK negotiating line at Council discussions with feedback on the outcome of Council meetings. This would help make the decision-making process more transparent, in particular the impact on Welsh stakeholders.

18. Where proposals are subject to the co-decision procedure, (eg environment, services directive, working time directive), the European Parliament will have an equally strong voice in the adoption of the legislation. One element of the work of the Brussels office will be to keep Welsh MEPs informed of the Assembly Committee's European business and to facilitate the flow of information between the two institutions.

19. Other bodies and associations such as the Committee of the Regions, Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power (REGLEG), Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE) and Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) will be active on these issues as well. It is intended that MRCS will keep Members informed of their responses to EU proposals and their lobbying activities on these issues.

Action

20. Members are invited to:

- give their views on the approach set out above;
- consider the analysis of the Commission's 2005 work programme as contained in the annex, and the analysis of the work carried forward and agree the issues on which it will focus;

- note the priority issues suggested for the attention of the other Committees; and
- note the list of documents deposited in the UK Parliament (from 6 October 2004 to 28 February 2005) at Annex D

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Annex A

Suggested low priority areas from the 2005 annual work programme

Title	Description of scope and objectives	Type of proposal or act	Other Assembly Committees also considering this legislation
Communication de la Commission sur les politiques à l'égard de la jeunesse (Commission communication on youth policy)	Youth policy needs to be developed in an integrated and holistic direction, encompassing each young person's life from school to active citizenship and working life, and enabling all young people to have access to the full range of tools and facilities with which to make a success of their lives. It would bring together, in a coherent whole, the main policy initiatives (social, education, citizenship, mobility, health, immigration, entrepreneurship...), rebalancing policies giving greater priority to issues affecting youth, addressing the cross-cutting issues, and grounded in an approach based on knowledge-based policymaking. One proposed approach on these lines would be a European Pact for Youth.	Non-legislative action / Commission Communication	EDT SJR HSS CWLS EOC EEAC

<p>Proposition pour une décision du Conseil établissant une Année européenne de la mobilité des travailleurs 2006 – Vers un marché européen du travail</p> <p>(Proposal for a Council decision establishing a European Year of Mobility for workers 2006 - towards a European labour market)</p>	<p>The decision will designate 2006 as the European Year of Mobility for workers as a means of promoting geographical mobility within and between Member States as a contribution to improving the efficiency of European labour markets, economic performance, the professional prospects of workers and the quality of living and working conditions.</p>	<p>Legislative Proposal / Decision</p>	<p>EDT EEAC</p>
<p>Communication de la Commission concernant un Programme européen sur la Nutrition et la Santé (Livre vert).</p> <p>(Green Paper on a European programme on nutrition and health)</p>	<p>Tackling the rise of obesity particularly among young people.</p>	<p>Non-legislative action / Green Paper</p>	<p>HSS</p>

<p>Livre blanc sur "Une meilleure formation pour des denrées alimentaires plus sures"</p> <p>(White Paper on an improved training strategy for food safety officials)</p>	<p>The heart of the problem is a lack of a harmonised approach to the design and developments of national control systems. The White Paper on Food Safety placed particular emphasis on this and clearly indicates the need to address the issues with appropriate actions to achieve a high standard of consumer protection across the EU. The EP and the Council, on 29 April 2004, adopted Regulation No 882/2004 on official control which identifies training as a key issue. Article 51 of the Regulation empowers the Commission to develop training programmes for staff of competent authorities of the Member States, which may be open to participants of third countries, in particular developing countries. This action will develop a White Paper on a Community training strategy in the area covered by Regulation 882/2004.</p>	<p>Non-legislative action /</p> <p>White Paper</p>	<p>HSS</p>
<p>Communication portant sur un programme d'action relatif à l'immigration légale</p> <p>(Communication on an action programme relating to legal immigration)</p>	<p>To list a series of proposals and measures to be put forward in the area of legal migration, as a follow up to the "Study on the links between legal and illegal migration" (COM(2004)412) and of the Green Paper on economic migration (to be published end 2004).</p> <p>Such measures could include: the revision of the 2001 proposal for a directive on the admission of economic migrants (COM(2001)386); proposals on a common approach to the issue of regularisations, and on the pooling of information on the legal migration channels for third country nationals; the establishment of recruitment and training centres (including cultural and language training) in the countries of origin for skills which are needed at EU level.</p>	<p>Non-legislative action /</p> <p>Commission Communication</p>	<p>SJR</p> <p>EOC</p> <p>CWLS</p>

Annex B

Suggested low priority areas from the Commission's work carried forward

Title	
Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications	(2002/0061/COD)
Proposition de décision du PE et du Conseil établissant le programme « Jeunesse en action » pour la période 2007-2013 (Proposal to establish a Youth in Action programme)	(2004/0152/COD)
Proposition de décision du PE et du Conseil établissant un programme d'action intégré dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation tout au long de la vie (Integrated programme for Education and Lifelong Learning)	(2004/0153/COD)
Proposition de recommandation du PE et du Conseil concernant la poursuite de la coopération européenne visant la garantie de la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur (European co-operation on quality in further / higher education)	(2004/0239/COD)

Annex C

European Commission Work Programme 2005: Suggested EC priority areas for Assembly Committees

No priority issues were identified from the work programme for CWLS, ELL and LGPS.

EDT

- Communication on the future of state aid policy
- Action plan on innovation
- Framework programme for competitiveness and innovation
- European strategic guidelines for cohesion policy
- Seventh framework programme for research
- A new social agenda (2006-2010)
- Green Paper on a European Energy Efficiency Initiative
- Communication on renewable energies

EPC

- EU Strategic Guidelines for rural development 2007-2013 programmes
- Thematic Strategy on air pollution: Clean Air for Europe (CAFE)
- Thematic strategy on waste prevention and recycling
- Thematic strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources
- Thematic strategy to protect and conserve the marine environment
- Thematic strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides
- Thematic strategy on soil protection
- Thematic strategy on the urban environment
- Halting the decline of biodiversity to 2010
- Action on climate change post 2012
- Managing the impact of air transport on climate change
- Revision of rules on conditions for aquaculture animals and control of certain fish and mollusc diseases: eg farming mussels, clams and abalones.

HSS

- Directive updating measures for the control of avian influenza
- Green Paper on a European programme on nutrition and health
- Regulation updating food additives legislation

SJR

- Communication on Youth policy
- Communication on an Action Plan on the fight against drugs (2005-2008)

EOC

- Communication on a policy approach to non-discrimination
- Communication on e-Accessibility

- Communication on Youth policy

Annex D

Legislative proposals of interest to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, deposited in the UK Parliament (from 06

October 2004 to 28 February 2005)

MRCS Ref.	Title	Commentary and relevance to Wales	Opportunity and timescale for action
None for this committee.			

Non-legislative documents of interest to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, deposited in the UK Parliament (from 06 October 2004 to 28 February 2005)

MRCS Ref.	Title	Commentary and relevance to Wales	Opportunity and timescale for action
1467	<p>EU ref: COM(2005) 15 final</p> <p>Title: COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005</p> <p>Communication from the President in agreement with Vice-President Wallström</p> <p>Link:</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg050221/com-05-15.pdf</p>	<p>This document identifies the priorities of the European Commission's Work programme for 2005. For education and youth, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposition de décision du PE et du Conseil établissant le programme « Jeunesse en action » pour la période 2007-2013 (2004/0152/COD) <p>(Proposal to establish a "Youth in Action" programme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposition de décision du PE et du Conseil établissant un programme d'action intégré dans le 	<p>To note these priorities for education and youth.</p>

		<p>domaine de l'éducation et de la formation tout au long de la vie (2004/0153/COD)</p> <p>(integrated programme for education and lifelong learning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposition de recommandation du PE et du Conseil concernant la poursuite de la coopération européenne visant la garantie de la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur (2004/0239/COD). <p>(European co-operation on quality in further/ higher education)</p>	
1462	<p>EU Ref: 6603/05</p> <p>Title: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: "Consultation on options for developing the European Schools System".</p> <p>Link: http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg050221/6603-05.pdf</p>	<p>For the last 50 years, the European Schools have provided a high-quality, multi-cultural, multi-lingual education service to the children of the staff of the EU institutions.</p> <p>The aim of this consultation is to take stock of the development of the European Schools and to open a debate, seeking to establish a consensual approach to their future evolution and possibilities for change, rather than make any concrete proposals.</p>	For information.

1080	<p>EU Ref: 13495/04</p> <p>Title: Proposal for a Recommendation of the Council and of the European Parliament on further European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education.</p> <p>Link: http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041018/13495-04.pdf</p>	<p>On the 24th of September 1998, the Council of Ministers adopted the Recommendation on European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education.</p> <p>As a result of this Recommendation, there have been positive developments but these developments are not sufficient.</p> <p>The Commission therefore propose to the Council and to the European Parliament to adopt a new Recommendation which would contribute further to the aim of mutual recognition of quality assurance systems and assessments across Europe.</p>	None at this stage.
1124	<p>EU Ref: 13969/04</p> <p>Title: Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Implementation of Council Recommendation 98/561/EC of 24 September 1998 on European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education.</p> <p>Link: http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041101/13969-04.pdf</p>	The proposal (EU ref: 13495/04 listed on previous page) is based on the evidence in this report by the European Commission.	For information.

1279	<p>EU Ref: 15538/04</p> <p>Title:</p> <p>SEC(2004) 1524 - COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER</p> <p>New Indicators on Education and Training</p> <p>Link: http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg050103/15538-04.pdf</p>	<p>The policy demand for using indicators to measure progress towards the common objectives has been increasing. Consequently, the Detailed Work Programme presented in 2002 included an indicative list of 33 indicators for measuring progress towards the agreed 13 concrete objectives of the education and training programme.</p> <p>The European Council has welcomed the indicators and added a further objective, namely that of "making [European] education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010."</p> <p>The Commission is identifying potential sources of data for measuring short, medium and long term indicators.</p>	For information.
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Remaining legislative and non-legislative documents deposited in this subject area - for information

MRCS Ref.	Title
1397	<p>COM(2005)12 final - Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on "Strategic Objectives 2005-2009 - Europe 2010: A Partnership for European Renewal - Prosperity, Solidarity and Security".</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg050207/5916-05.pdf</p>

1122	<p>Communication from the Commission to the Council Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth: Evaluation of activities conducted in the framework of European co-operation in the youth field.</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041101/13856-04.pdf</p>
1244	<p>Report on the annual accounts of the European Training Foundation for the financial year 2003</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041206/15797-04.pdf</p>
1239	<p>15802/04 - Report on the annual accounts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2003</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041206/15802-04.pdf</p>
1038	<p>Draft Resolution on common objectives for voluntary activities of young people</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041011/12563-04.pdf</p>
1039	<p>Draft Resolution on common objectives for a greater understanding and knowledge of youth</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041011/12564-04.pdf</p>
1254	<p>Draft Operational Programme of the Council for 2005 submitted by the incoming Luxembourg and United Kingdom Presidencies.</p> <p>http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemeuropeancomm2/content/euleg041213/15503-04.pdf</p>