

COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Date: Thursday 14 October 1999

Time: 9.30am

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

Title: POLICY REVIEW – A STRATEGY TO ASSESS THE IMPLICATIONS OF EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Purpose

To agree a process to assess the implications of European Union policies for the National Assembly for Wales.

Recommendation

1. That the Committee Chair should write to the Chairs of Subject Committees to ask them to review the European dimension of their work.
2. That the Committee should receive a report on the progress of subject committees in due course.

Timing

This strategy should be implemented as soon as possible.

Background

At its first meeting on the 1st July 1999 the Committee on European Affairs agreed that "each subject committee should be asked to consider the European dimension of their work and assess and identify their priorities in respect of Europe".

The European Strategy Group's report proposed that the National Assembly should undertake a review of the European Union's policies and their impact on Wales. The recommendation stated,

"We propose that a succinct review of the linkages between each of the devolved policy areas

and EU legislation, policy and initiatives be prepared by the Welsh Office".

At its first meeting on the 1st July the Assembly's European Committee endorsed the report and accepted a proposal that this would be actioned in coming months.

Review of European Union Policies

An initial review has identified a range of European Union policies which have an impact on the work of subject committees. A list is attached at Annex A. This is only a starting-point, and it may well be that other policy-areas become apparent as the work progresses. Some policy-areas will be relevant to the work of more than one Committee. Subject Committees will also need to be aware of new European policies, particularly those that emanate from new European Union competencies as Treaties are amended by Inter-governmental Conferences.

Action for Subject Committees

The attached annex identifies all those topics falling within Assembly Secretaries' portfolios which have a European dimension. Some of these topics will not have been included in subject committees forward work programmes for this year. It is not proposed that this review should divert subject committees away from their agreed forward work programmes. The review will provide them with background information on the European Union's interests in their fields and allow them to take account of the European dimension where it affects topics already included in their forward work programmes.

Compliance

This report is presented to the Committee for discussion and agreement. There are no issues about regularity or propriety, or any financial implications.

Cross-cutting Themes

The content of this report has implications for Subject Committees and all Divisions within the National Assembly for Wales.

Contact

European Affairs Division

ANNEX A

EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES RELEVANT TO

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES SUBJECT COMMITTEES

Economic Development

- Structural Funds, including Community Initiatives (in particular INTERREG and URBAN)
- State Aid
- Economic and Monetary Union, including the Euro
- Competition Policy, including Single Market, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship 2001-2006
- Report of the Business Environment Simplification Task Force (BEST Report)
- Tourism Policy
- Research and Technological Development (Fifth Framework Programme)
- Trans-European Networks (roads, rail and IT)
- European Employment Strategy/National Action Plans
- Legislation on Working Conditions and Consultation of Workers

Agriculture and Rural Development

- Common Agricultural Policy
- Fisheries Policy
- Structural Funds, including Rural Development Plan and LEADER
- State Aid
- General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

Post 16 Education and Training

- European Employment Strategy/National Action Plans
- Structural Funds, in particular ESF elements and EQUAL Community Initiative
- Education and Training Initiatives - Leonardo and Socrates
- Culture 2000 – programme for 2000-2004
- Minority Languages Programme
- College of Europe, Brugge and the European Institute, Florence

Pre-16 Education and Training, Schools and Early Learning

- EU does not have competence over mandatory education, though elements of Socrates (Comenius) may be relevant
- Eligibility for ESF funds is limited to those over 16, though there can be exceptions to this in certain circumstances

Local Government and Environment

- Environment Policy and related legislation
- Environment Programme - LIFE
- European Spatial Development Perspective
- Programmes for Spatial Development - INTERREG IIC and INTERREG IIIB
- Trans-European Networks (Transport, Energy and Telecommunications)
- Transport Policy
- Pilot Action on Combined Transport
- Energy Policy

Health and Social Services

- Public Health Policy
- Consumer Health Protection
- European Action Plan to Combat Drugs
- Health and Safety of Workers

Equality of Opportunity

- Equal Opportunities policies and legislation
- Social Policy
- Structural Funds, including EQUAL Community Initiative

A comprehensive review may well lead to further items being added to this list.