

COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Date	28 June 2001
Time	2.00pm
Venue	Committee Room 3
Title	Chair's Report

Purpose

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

Recommendation

2. Members note the content of the report.

Background

3. The Committee on European Affairs last met on 23 May 2001. A number of developments have taken place since then, and are listed below.

Visits

European Commission

4. The Minister for Health and Social Services, Jane Hutt, met David Byrne, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection in Brussels on Monday 25 June to discuss European Community policy developments and to consider their relevance to the Assembly and Wales. The meeting was the core component of the visit, but Ms Hutt also met MEPs from Wales, other MEPs with a specific health/public health role and the Director of the European Network of Health Promotion Agencies. Ms Hutt also visited UKRep and the Wales European Centre.

Council of the European Union

5. The Assembly continues to strengthen its participation in Council meetings. Jane Davidson, Minister for Education and Life-Long Learning attended the European Council on Education and Youth on 28 – 29 May as part of the UK ministerial delegation. The Minister also had a separate meeting with the Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding, to discuss youth policy.
6. Jenny Randerson, Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh language attended a meeting of the European Culture Council on 21 June. The

purpose of the meeting was to discuss European Community policy developments and to consider their relevance to the Assembly and Wales. It was also an opportunity for her to raise the profile of Welsh culture by meeting key players in the key European institutions.

Ambassadorial visits

7. I was very pleased to meet the Polish Ambassador, His Excellency Stanislaw Komorowski, during his visit to Wales, on 1/2 June and welcomed the opportunity to speak at the conference "*White Eagle, Red Dragon – Poland and Wales: Partners in an enlarged EU*" which was organised by the European Commission Representation in Wales and the Polish Embassy. The conference took place on 1 June at Jury's Hotel, Cardiff. It was very successful and reflected the warm relations that exist between Poland and Wales.
8. The Czech Republic Ambassador, His Excellency Pavel Seifter, visited Wales on 20/21nd June. During his visit he met with me, and separately with a small number of representatives from businesses in Wales, at a private dinner. He also gave a presentation at a seminar on enlargement arranged by the European Commission Representation in Wales to coincide with a visit by Graham Avery, Chief Advisor to the European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement.

Relations with UK Rep

9. Relations are constructive and friendly and awareness of the Assembly's needs is increasing. The relationship has been cemented by a series of senior visits to Cardiff by Nigel Sheinwald, Giles Paxman, Antony Vinall and, most recently, Shan Morgan, who will have responsibility for many of the policy areas devolved to Wales. The Permanent Secretary made a reciprocal visit earlier this month. It is important that this level of engagement is maintained.

Committee of the Regions Activity

10. John Griffiths attended plenary session on 13th and 14th June where life long learning and young farmers were among the agenda items. Elin Jones represented the Assembly to speak at a reception organised by the WEC in Brussels on 12th June to raise the profile of the Welsh membership of the Committee of the Regions. Her speech drew attention to the second anniversary of devolution in Wales and how the creation of the Assembly had generated fresh opportunity for Wales to look outwards and engage with Europe.

Compliance

11. Standing Order 15 covers the Committee's activity. The Assembly Compliance Office has been consulted and is content with the compliance

aspects.

Financial Implications

12. There are no financial implications for the Assembly arising from the issues covered in this report.

European and External Affairs Directorate