

European & External Affairs Committee

Date: 27 May 2004

Time: 09:00 am

Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Minister's Report

Purpose

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

Recommendation

Members to note the content of the report.

Background

The Committee last met on 29 April. This paper provides an update.

First Minister's International Activities

5th May. State Banquet, Buckingham Palace, London. Diplomatic event in honour of the Polish President.

6th May. British-Polish Economic Reform Seminar, Lancaster House, London. I gave a presentation on how Wales is using Structural Funds to generate new jobs.

10th-11th May. Brussels Social Cohesion Forum. European Commission event the purpose of which was to consult with stakeholders on the EU Regulations on the structural funds for the period 2006-2013.

11th May. European Commission event to launch the distribution of sets of 10 beer mats displaying information on the new Member States. This is part of the Commission's European Enlargement information campaign.

11th May. Visit of Wan Jifei, Chairman of the China Council for the promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). Chinese business delegation visit to Wales, on the back of the visit to the UK of Wen Jiabo, Premier of China (he was not able to visit Wales).

12th May. Dinner at the Guildhall, London, hosted by the Lord Mayor of London. It is one of the FCO's flagship events to celebrate EU enlargement.

13th May. Meeting with the Latvian President, Dr Vaira Vike-Freiberga, at Tredegar House, Newport. The main focus was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. I signed on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales and the Latvian Minister of Economy signed on behalf of the Latvian Government in the presence of the Latvian President. I held a separate meeting with the President after the signing of the MoU and a bilateral meeting between the Minister for Economic Development and Transport and the Latvian Minister of Economy took place in the morning.

This event cements the relationship between Latvia and Wales which is underpinned by a number of co-operation initiatives. This is the first agreement between Wales and a full member state of the EU.

18th May. Meeting with Korean Ambassador. Ambassador Tae-Sik Lee, of the Republic of Korea, paid a call on me in my office at the National Assembly.

Other Issues

HM Treasury Report on Euro Preparations. April 2004. The Treasury have published the latest report on Euro Preparations within the UK. This report has previously been published on an annual basis. From 2004 it will be published twice a year, in Spring and Autumn. Copies have been distributed to Committee Members.

Joint Ministerial Committee (Europe), 27 May. The Committee is discussing (today) prospects for the next European Presidency and developments with the Working Time Directive.

Rhodri Morgan AM

First Minister

EEAC 27 May 2004. Minister's Report Annex 1.

Date	Assembly Minister/ Official/Division	Event	Objectives	Outcomes
------	---	-------	------------	----------

19 th -21 st April	Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services	Visit to Netherlands	<p>To develop spatial plan thinking and approach by learning about Netherlands experience both nationally and regionally.</p> <p>To learn about their approach to improving public services and sustainable development. Officials met:</p> <p>Dutch Government (Hague)</p> <p>Mrs S Dekker, Minister VROM</p> <p>Derek Martin, DG Spatial Policy Head of International Unit</p> <p>Rob Kragt DG Spatial Policy</p> <p>Andre de Jong, Director-General Dutch Ministry of Finance</p> <p>Wim Kuiper and Elisabeth Roussel, Association of Netherlands Municipalities</p> <p>Province of Limburg (Maastricht)</p> <p>Delegation led by Ed Eggink (Head of Environment and Water Policy), and Fred Offerein, Director</p>	Objectives achieved
5 th May	First Minister	State Banquet, Buckingham Palace, London	Event hosted by Her Majesty the Queen in honour of the President of the Republic of Poland.	Diplomatic event intended to honour the Polish President and deepen the already extensive relations with the people of Poland.
6 th May	First Minister	Economic Reform Seminar, Lancaster House, London	This event was organised as part of the State visit of the Polish President. Wales has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Silesia region of Poland. This event provided an opportunity to highlight the importance the Welsh Assembly Government places on this relationship and to reinforce Welsh links with Poland.	Delivered a speech on the imperative for economic reform in Europe which was well received.
6 th May	Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning	EU Enlargement Event – National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff	To celebrate enlargement of the EU and welcome 10 new Member States.	Demonstrated Wales’ engagement with accession states.

6 th May	Gary Davies, EEAD	Visit by Nick Khosla, 1 st Secretary Designate, British Consulate, Shanghai	Mr Khosla is touring the UK for briefings before taking up his post in Shanghai later in the month. He will be briefed on the First Minister's visit to China later in the year. Rob Thomas, WTI and representatives from WDA, Wales International Consortium and Cardiff /Cardiff University participated in a series of meetings with the visitor.	Useful opportunity to give a senior international diplomat an understanding of Welsh issues.
10 th – 11 th May	First Minister Minister for Economic Development and Transport	Brussels Social Cohesion forum	Opened by the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi and the newly appointed Commissioner responsible for regional policy, Jacques Barrot. This event brought together more than 1,200 key players from the national and regional level of 25 Member States to debate the future of cohesion policy after 2006. On 18 February this year, the European Commission adopted the Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion setting out a new vision for cohesion policy for the enlarged European Union for the period 2007-2013. The proposals include new priorities, a reform of the implementing system and the budgetary resources needed for cohesion policy in an enlarged Union.	The Welsh position relative to the UK position on the EU budget and structural funds after 2006 was clearly conveyed at the meeting.
11 th May	First Minister	Launch of the Enlargement beer mats in Welsh Public Houses.		
11 th May	First Minister Minister for Economic Development and Transport	Wan Jifei, Chairman of the China Council For the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and Business Delegation	Business delegation from China. Visit is on the back of the visit of Wen Jiabao, Premier of China (he was not able to visit Wales) Welsh Development Agency made the arrangements for the visit.	To increase trade and investment links between China and Wales.
12 th May	First Minister, Sue Essex, Minister for Finance Public Services and Local Authorities.	European Enlargement Event	One of the Flagship Events sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to celebrate the Enlargement of the European Union. Sue Essex and I represented the Welsh Assembly Government at the event.	Diplomatic event which helped enhance the UK relations with the New members States as well as those already in the Union.

13 th May 2004	First Minister Minister for Economic Development and Transport	Meeting with the Latvian President, Tredegar House, Newport	Signing of Memorandum of Understanding.	Cemented relationship between Latvia and Wales. Agreement underpinned by a number of initiatives.
18 th May 2004	First Minister	Meeting with Ambassador Tae-Sik Lee, of the Republic of Korea	Courtesy visit	
20 th May 2004	Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning	MTG - Hon Stephanie Key MP, Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the Status of Women) (South Australia	To discuss and share knowledge of developments within lifelong learning in both Wales and Australia and to strengthen links between the two Countries.	A successful visit with an interesting exchange of views on our approaches to education and developing additional links between our two communities.