

European And External Affairs Committee

EUR2 05-05(p8)

Date: 16 June 2005

Time: 9.00 – 12.30

Venue: National Assembly Building, Cardiff Bay

Title: Draft forward work programme for European and External Affairs Committee: June 2005 – Dec 2006

Purpose

1. This paper provides an outline forward work programme for the European and External Affairs Committee.

Recommendation

2. Members are invited to comment on the draft forward work programme, attached at Annex A, and agree a final version.

Background

3. The statutory basis for the European and External Affairs Committee is set out in Standing Order 15 which is reproduced at Annex B.

4. The Committee's remit is to keep under review:

(i) the Assembly's relations with the regions, other nations and institutions of the European Union, and its methods for informing and advising those institutions of the needs of Wales;

(ii) the Assembly's liaison arrangements with UKREP, and with United Kingdom government departments on European issues;

(iii) the Assembly's methods and procedures for the consideration of documents, issues and questions emanating from European institutions, having particular regard to the need for liaison with Members of Parliament responsible for scrutiny of European matters of particular relevance to Wales; and

(iv) the Assembly's relations with regions and nations external to the European Union and the Assembly's involvement in European and international organisations.

5. The forward work programme draws on the Committee's activity over the last year and on forthcoming areas of interest.

Action

6. Members are invited to comment on the forward work programme and agree a final version.

Sandy Mewies
Chair

Annex A

Forward Work Programme For The European And External Affairs Committee May 2005 - July 2006

The Committee will normally consider at each meeting:

A report from the First Minister

Reports from Members of the Committee of the Regions, Welsh MEPs, the Commission Office in Wales and Members of ECOSOC, if present

The Committee will consider the following items at the appropriate time during the year:

EU Commission Annual Work Programme - published in December each year and a mid-year review. From this it will identify issues for further more detailed examination. The Committee will also consider progress reports from the Commission and strategic documents such as its Annual policy Statements.

The forthcoming EU presidency inviting representatives of the country to hold the presidency to address the Committee (twice a year).

The Committee will consider developments with the following issues:

European Structural Funds and Cohesion policy. It will maintain an overview of the operation of the existing programmes and developments for future years. It will have particular regard to the priorities for Wales post 2006.

European Regional Policy including examining the draft Regional Guidelines and the State Aids Road

map when available;

The proposed European constitution;

Progress with the Lisbon Agenda. A particular issue will to consider the National Action Plan, expected in October, and the role that Wales will play in contributing to the UK meetings its targets.

Annual updates from various EU and international bodies;

Preparations for the Euro;

EU enlargement;

The subsidiarity early warning system, including further developments in relation to the Committee of the Regions, CALRE.

The Committee will consider developments with the following issues as appropriate

Progress in the World Trade Organisation's negotiations on the Doha Development agenda;

The EU Services Directive;

The EU Working Time Directive;

The REACH system for the EU chemicals strategy;

Proposed EC Rural Development regulations;

EC Communications strategy.

The Assembly's relations with its partner regions;

The Assembly Government's External Relations Strategy

The Committee will continue to review of process for scrutinising European legislation by Assembly committees.

Annex B

National Assembly European And External Affairs Committee

extract from Standing Orders

STANDING ORDER 15 - Committee on European and External Affairs

Title and Terms of Reference

15.1 There shall be a Committee on European and External Affairs, which shall keep under review:

- (i) the Assembly's relations with the regions, other nations and institutions of the European Union, and its methods for informing and advising those institutions of the needs of Wales;
- (ii) the Assembly's liaison arrangements with UKREP, and with United Kingdom government departments on European issues;
- (iii) the Assembly's methods and procedures for the consideration of documents, issues and questions emanating from European institutions, having particular regard to the need for liaison with Members of Parliament responsible for scrutiny of European matters of particular relevance to Wales; and
- (iv) the Assembly's relations with regions and nations external to the European Union and the Assembly's involvement in European and international organisations.

15.2. The Committee shall monitor the general impact and consequences for Wales of policies pursued by institutions of the European Union, and ensure that there is adequate liaison with the Members of the European Parliament representing Wales and Welsh representatives on the Committee of the Regions.

15.3. The Committee shall avoid duplicating the work of Subject Committees, but may draw particular issues to the attention of relevant Subject Committees and, with the agreement of the relevant Subject Committee, may consider any matter falling within Standing Orders 15.1 or 15.2 which is otherwise wholly within the remit of that Subject Committee. The Committee may assess and where necessary report on the significance of proposed European legislation affecting Wales which falls within the remit of more than one Subject Committee.

15.4 The Committee shall consider, or arrange for the consideration of, the subsidiarity implications of proposed European legislation and shall liaise with the UK Parliament and other devolved legislatures in the consideration of these implications.

Membership

15.5 The members of the Committee shall be elected by the Assembly having regard to the desirability of each Subject Committee being represented on the Committee and so as to ensure that, so far as practicable, the balance of political groups in the Assembly is reflected in its membership. The Assembly shall elect one of the members of the Committee to chair the Committee, but it may not be

chaired by a Minister.

15.6 A Committee member who has given advance notice to the chair may be represented at a meeting, or a part of a meeting, of the Committee by another Member from the same political group who has been identified in advance. In giving such notice, the Member shall indicate the reason for the need for substitution. The nominated representative may participate in the meeting of the Committee in all respects as if he or she were a member of it. No Member may represent more than one Committee member at a meeting.

15.7 Members of the European Parliament representing Wales, and the Assembly's representatives on the Committee of the Regions, may attend and, with the permission of the chair, speak at the Committee's meetings when these are in public, but they may not vote.

15.8 Assembly Members who have specific constituency or regional interests to pursue in relation to the work of the Committee may in advance of any meeting seek the chair's permission to make representations to the Committee at that meeting, but they may not vote. Members may also write to the chair requesting that their observations on any aspect of the Committee's work be tabled for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting, and the chair shall arrange for such tabling to take place.

Reports

15.9 The Committee shall report to the Assembly from time to time.