

# European & External Affairs Committee

Date:	22 January 2004
Time:	09:00 am
Venue:	Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly for Wales
Title:	Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee - Consideration of European and external affairs issues

## Purpose

This paper sets out how the Committee has incorporated consideration of European and external affairs issues into its work programme and highlights some of its proposed future considerations.

## 1. Report on EU Funding for Cultural Projects

The Committee identified at an early stage of its existence the need to be aware of the main EU funding streams available to cultural operators in Wales. Concern was expressed that much of the responsibility for the promotion of funding programmes for the cultural sector was uncoordinated in Wales and that there was a need for better marketing and support.

On 15 October 2003, the Committee received a report

(CWLS(2)-04-03(p.5)) from Nia Lewis the Education, Culture and Youth Officer, in the Welsh Assembly Government's EU Office, Brussels. The report informed the Committee of the various EU funding streams available and proposals for support for minority language and sports projects.

The Committee discussed the EU's cultural and audio-visual programmes; Culture 2000 and Media Plus. Attention was also drawn to the impact of structural funds and youth and education programmes. It was suggested that there would be scope for the cultural sector to secure funding from other EU programmes particularly if projects contribute to achieving wider EU objectives such as economic re-generation or increasing employment or skills levels.

## **2. European Year of Education through Sport**

2004 is the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES) for which the EU has designated a small budget (EUR 11.5 million) budget. It is the Committee's intention to raise the profile of this programme and to encourage Welsh organisations to submit funding proposals. In November 2003, the Chair of the Committee attended the European Sports Forum in her role as a Member of the Committee of the Regions. The forum included the formal launch of the EYES 2004. The launch was attended by a number of Sports Ministers from across Europe.

The Committee supports the need to raise the awareness of educational and sports organisations of the need for co-operation to develop education through sport and its European dimension. The Committee intends to work closely with the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on this issue.

## **3. Policy Review of Participation in Sport and Physical Exercise**

One of the last activities of the previous Culture Committee was to complete its Policy Review of Participation in Sport and Physical Exercise. The Committee paid particular attention to overseas strategies and was keen to hear from stakeholders. In November 2002 senior Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, and Education officials from Finland were invited to give oral evidence to the review. Their evidence and statistics proved particularly valuable to the Committee's subsequent recommendations, many of which were highlighted in the Welsh Assembly Government's follow up 'Sport and Active Recreation in Wales, Strategy for Consultation'.

## **4. EUCLID**

The Committee has taken a keen interest in the work of EUCLID which is

the official EC Cultural Contact Point in the UK for Culture 2000. EUCLID provides support and assistance for potential applicants to this programme and guidance on other EU funding opportunities for the cultural sector. The Committee has ensured that it receives regular updates on their work and the progress they have made. In September 2003 the Committee sent one of its researchers to attend their seminar in Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff. The seminar programme offered the arts and cultural sector a guide on accessing EU funding. The Committee received a detailed report of this seminar and the programmes offered.

## **5. European Union Committee of the Regions (CoR)**

As mentioned earlier, the Chair of the Committee is also a Member of the European Union Committee of the Regions. The Committee organises its work through six specialist Commissions, made up of CoR members, who examine the detail of proposals on which the CoR is consulted and draw up a draft

opinion, which highlights where there is agreement with the European Commission's proposals, and where changes are needed. The Chair is a Member of the Commission for Culture and Education and has constantly sought to update the Committee on proposals that they might find of particular interest. The Committee were recently provided with an 'Opinion' prepared by the Chair which considered the importance of cultural activities at European level and the political relevance of the objectives of the Culture 2000 programme.

## **6. Overseas visitors**

The Chair of the Committee hosted a lunch for a delegation from the Flemish Community Mission in September. The Mission is essentially the legislative body for the Flemish speaking community in the Brussels Capital Region and its powers include arts and culture amongst others. The delegation were particularly interested in the previous Culture Committee's review of the Welsh language and the implementation of the subsequent Welsh Assembly Government strategy. Discussion was also held concerning the Committee's current review of English medium writing in Wales and the reasoning behind its choice.

## **7. Committee visit to Västra Götlandsregionen (VG), West Sweden**

The Chair of the Committee has held discussions with amongst others the Chair of Västra Götlandsregionen Culture Committee and the Director Cultural Affairs, Västra Götlandsregionen. Initial discussion took place concerning

comparison of cultural policy making between Wales and VG region. Exchange of best practice issues were also highlighted, including that of co-operation in community arts and sports for all. It was felt that in the longer term this could lead to joint projects, artists residencies, staff exchanges, touring, and increased participation at festivals for example.

The parties agreed to explore the possibility of a possible visit from Welsh cultural administrators/experts in January to coincide with the Gothenburg film festival, to be followed by a possible spring visit from the Committee. Such a visit would also coincide with the Committee's policy review on the contribution of arts and sport to community regeneration.

## **8. Ministerial Reports**

The Committee is also kept up to date on developments with a European and external dimension by the Minister. Developments such as Welsh presence at the Venice Biennale, Welsh language funding in Patagonia and meetings with foreign Minister's have recently been included. The Minister also recently attended the EU Culture Council and provided the Committee with an informative account.

## **9. Cross Committee communication**

The Chair of the Committee is also a member of the European and External Affairs Committee and this has proved of great assistance in disseminating key information to CWLS Committee members as and when required.

Members' Research and Committee Services