



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol
The Committee on European and External Affairs**

**Dydd Mawrth, 22 Mawrth 2011
Tuesday, 22 March 2011**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Nick Bourne	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Morgan	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Andy Klom	Pennaeth Swyddfa'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd yng Nghymru Head of the European Commission Office in Wales
Derek Vaughan ASE/MEP	Llafur—Cynghrair Flaengar y Sosialwyr a'r Democratiaid Labour—Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Keith Bush	Prif Gyngorydd Cyfreithiol a Chyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol Chief Legal Adviser and Director of Legal Services
Lara Date	Clerc Clerk
Gwyn Griffiths	Uwch-gyngorydd Cyfreithiol Senior Legal Adviser
Gregg Jones	Pennaeth Swyddfa UE Cymru, Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Head of Wales EU Office, Members' Research Service
Sarita Marshall	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Graham Winter	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.01 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.01 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Rhodri Morgan:** Croeso cynnes **Rhodri Morgan:** A very warm welcome to iawn i Aelodau, swyddogion ac unrhyw un Members, officials and anyone else in the yn yr oriel gyhoeddus. public gallery.

[2] I will explain for what will be my last time that headsets are available for translation and sound amplification. Translation is available on channel 1 and amplification is on channel 0. Please ensure that all your mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off completely, because they can interfere with the sound equipment. In the event of an

emergency, an alarm will sound and ushers will direct everyone to the nearest safe exit and assembly point. I have not received any apologies, which means that we anticipate that Eleanor Burnham, the only absent member of the committee, will be here, but she is not here at the moment.

[3] I invite Members to make any relevant declarations of interest under Standing Order No. 31.6. I see that there are none.

9.03 a.m.

**Trafodaeth ag Aelodau Cymru o Senedd Ewrop: Rhaglen Waith y Comisiwn
Ewropeaidd ar gyfer 2011 a Materion Etifeddiaeth
Discussion with Welsh MEPs: European Commission Work Programme for
2011 and Legacy Issues**

[4] **Rhodri Morgan:** I welcome Derek Vaughan, a Welsh Member of the European Parliament—thank you for being there at the other end of the video-conference line in Brussels—to discuss the European Commission work programme for 2011 and the legacy issues. We had half hoped that Jill Evans would be with us here, but she is not, and we knew that Kay Swinburne and John Bufton were not available.

[5] You have read the legacy report, Derek, so perhaps we should kick off with you, as it is an hour later in Brussels. Please tell us what you think of our committee legacy report and share any views that you may have on priorities for the fourth Assembly and the successor to this committee. The floor is yours; well, not the floor, but the airwaves.

[6] **Mr Vaughan:** I will take the floor and the airwaves at the same time. Good morning everyone; I hope that you are all okay back in Wales. As you said, Rhodri, unfortunately there are a few missing. John is still ill, Jill is somewhere in Wales, and Kay has a speaking engagement, so you are left with me, unfortunately.

[7] I have looked through your paper quickly, and I just wanted to briefly go through the potential priority areas for the committee in the next Assembly. The first three issues in the table on page 10 are probably the most important ones. The first is the future of cohesion policy. I have just left a meeting of the Committee on Regional Development, where, for the past few months, the sole topic of conversation has been the future of cohesion policy. We have made a lot of progress with regard to what we as MEPs wanted and what you as the Assembly wanted. I can go into more detail on that, but I think that you know what we wanted, and we have largely achieved that. We have now got down to some of the detail, as well as the important issue of what the budget's overall allocation for cohesion policy and structural funds will be post 2013.

[8] The second issue is the future of the common agricultural policy, which, again, is an important issue for Wales. There are many discussions in the Parliament and in the Commission, and, indeed, in the council, about the future of CAP. My impression is that there will not be an awful lot of change; I do not think that anyone has much appetite to change CAP post 2013. However, it is an important issue, and we can talk about it in more detail if you wish.

[9] The third item on your list is the review of the European Union budget, and all the important topics that I have mentioned will be dependent on how much is in it. There was speculation before Christmas that a deal had been done between Sarkozy, Merkel and Cameron on the future of the EU budget post 2013. The alleged deal was that there would be a freeze in the EU budget in real terms post 2013, that the UK would keep its rebate, that CAP

would remain largely unreformed, but that there would be some pressure on cohesion policy, particularly competitiveness. Other member states had something to say about that. We now have co-decision-making powers in the EU, so the Parliament will want its say on it as well, but that was the alleged deal coming from the three bigger member states. The Commission will publish its proposals for the next financial framework, probably in July of this year, and, again, I can go into more detail on that.

[10] There is quite a list of other issues that you might want to look at, and I will just pick out a few of them. The framework research programme is important for Wales and its academic institutions. The Commission is currently consulting on that, and I know that universities in Wales have made a submission to the consultation. I also wanted to mention energy efficiency, which is the next item on your list. Energy is becoming more important in EU discussions; following the Lisbon treaty, the EU now has competency over energy for the first time, and energy efficiency is an important element of that. You may recall that the European economic recovery plan, at the end of 2009, allowed European structural funds to be spent on housing for the first time, in relation to energy efficiency measures. That has been widely used in Wales, and I am encouraging the Commission to extend it post 2013. In other words, post 2013 we should still be allowed to use structural funds on energy efficiency in housing. I would like to see it extended to other aspects of housing as well. So, you might want to look at that topic, because it has benefits for Wales.

[11] The other things are largely about implementation. There will be a revision of the working time directive, and consultation is going on about that at the moment. There are various other pieces of social legislation, such as legislation on workers' rights, which you might want to look at. Another issue towards the end of your list is the directive on patients' rights to cross-border healthcare, which was voted on last month in the European Parliament. You will no doubt be aware of that directive and the implications that it might have for Wales. So, those are some of the key issues at the moment, and I have just pointed out a few issues that you might be interested in looking at in the future.

[12] **Rhodri Morgan:** Jeff wants to come in with a question, but I will ask the first question. You mentioned cohesion policy, and we believe, as I think that you were saying, that a dragon has been slain, namely that of repatriation back to the rich member states where they have a lagging region, such as west Wales and the Valleys. The question is whether there should be an EU programme covering it, through cohesion. Every five years, this pops up from the Treasury—it is in Treasury DNA to ask what the point is of having an EU-funded structural funds programme in a lagging region in a rich member state and to say that everything should be concentrated on the poorer member states, which are the new member states, by and large. We believe that that dragon has been slain, although, no doubt, it will pop up again.

[13] Do you think that this is now something that can be definitely planned on or is it the case that, although we know that cohesion will almost certainly cover lagging regions in rich member states, such as west Wales and the Valleys, we do not know how big the structural funds programme is going to be? Will it continue to have a multi-annual character; if it does have a multi-annual character, will it be seven years or will it be shortened to five years or lengthened to 10 years? How might it link with, for example, the non-regional-type programmes with no regionally imparted preference in them, such as the science and technology and research and innovation funding? With those, it would be nice, in a way, if there was some co-ordination between programmes to stimulate high technology, which tend to concentrate on rich regions and, in the case of the UK, on the golden triangle of Oxford, Cambridge, the M25, Heathrow, London and so on as well as central Scotland, and which tend not to see the claims of the midlands and the north of England plus Wales and Northern Ireland. Do you have any thoughts on those issues?

[14] **Mr Vaughan:** I will come back to the issue of repatriation when I have dealt with one or two of the other points you made. First, the duration of the next financial perspective is one of the details that have not yet been sorted. The Commission is suggesting five plus five, which is essentially a 10-year financial perspective with a strong mid-term review after five years. There are many in the Parliament, including most members of the Committee on Regional Development, which I just left, who would quite like to leave it at seven years, because that ties into the structural funds programme and makes things easier to plan. I think that the feeling is that, if you had a five-year structural programme, there would not be enough time to prepare and implement those programmes. So, I think that there is still a discussion to be had on that. The Commission certainly favours five plus five, but, as I said, there are many in the Parliament who would prefer seven years.

[15] On the other funds that you mentioned, again, if you look at the fifth cohesion report, you will see a huge emphasis on co-ordinating better links between all the different funds at an EU level. So, I think that there will be this common strategic framework, which will include most of the European funds. Underneath that, member states and regions will be able to negotiate and discuss a development contract with the Commission, pulling out their priorities from the menu in the common strategic framework.

[16] On the repatriation issue, the current Government, like the previous Government, initially argued for repatriating structural funds post 2013. The Commission initially suggested that as well, but there was such a backlash, particularly from some of the German Länder and regions, that that has now been dropped. The UK submission paper on the fifth cohesion report accepted that as well. I think that the Government's position now is that it will not argue for repatriation until after 2020—it will come back to haunt us post 2020. However, it also says that it wants to focus structural funds on the poorest regions and that, therefore, most of the money should go to tier 1, which is currently convergence. It is not very keen on much money going to transitional regions, and it is certainly not very keen on money going to competitiveness regions. That is why I said earlier that, in this alleged deal between Sarkozy, Merkel and Cameron, the pressure might come on cohesion funds, and particularly on competitiveness, where they do not feel much funding should go.

9.15 a.m.

[17] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I wish to follow up on the discussion about the future of cohesion policy. We have had the Eurostat figures for 2008 that suggest that we are still in line to qualify for convergence funding, or whatever it may be called post 2013. Mr Vaughan, I am interested in your remarks about transitional funding. If I heard you correctly, you appeared to be placing a question mark over how available that might be. We do not know for sure about this yet, as we have not had the 2009 Eurostat figures, and it is possible that we might not qualify for it, although in light of the biting recession, it would be surprising if that were the case. Maybe you could say a little more on that.

[18] I would also like to ask you about the FP8 programme. You talked about having a greater alignment of all European Commission moneys—the various funding streams. As far as you know, has any thought been given to whether there should be greater linkage and joined-up thinking between FP8 projects and cohesion or structural funds projects? I am talking particularly about higher education, which FP8 is aimed at, and industries working in the hi-tech sector.

[19] **Mr Vaughan:** I will start by talking about the structural funds issue and the various tiers involved. The proposal from the Commission in the fifth cohesion report was that there should be tier 1 funding for regions whose gross domestic product was below 75 per cent, that there should be a transitional status level and that there should possibly be a third tier as well. One of the big debates will be on the second tier. Some people argue, along the same lines as

the Commission, that there should be transitional status for those falling out of convergence. Others say that the tier 2 level should be much wider; in other words, it should be for regions with a GDP of between 75 per cent and 90 per cent. There is still a discussion to be had on that. I would be interested to hear the committee's views on whether arguing purely for transition status would be better for Wales, or whether we should be arguing for a wider tier 2.

[20] In terms of FP8, the consultation process is going on at the moment. Many of the points that are being made are ones that are commonly made by all of the academic institutions in Wales. One point relates to simplifying the process; another relates to helping academic institutions find partners across Europe, because that is part of the criteria; concerns have also been expressed about the call-in period, which is often quite short; and points have also been made about the links between universities and industry. In a previous life in a Neath Port Talbot context, this was something that I was very keen on, since we had some universities in the area in Swansea. However, we should be doing more in our universities and the public sector to enhance those links. One thing that will be looked at as part of the revision of FP7, which will become FP8, is how we can provide and encourage links between academic institutions and industry. In other words, the excellent work done by these academic institutions needs to be translated into products and jobs.

[21] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Derek, cyfeiriasoch yn gynharach at y sefyllfa ynglŷn â'r polisi amaethyddol cyffredin. Dywedasoch eich bod yn disgwyl i'r sefyllfa hon aros fel y mae ar hyn o bryd. A yw hynny'n golygu bod galwadau'r glymblaid yn San Steffan i leihau taliadau uniongyrchol i ffermwyr o dan y polisi amaethyddol cyffredin wedi cael eu hanghofio'n llwyr, neu a yw'r drafodaeth honno'n parhau i fynd yn ei blaen?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Derek, you referred earlier to the situation regarding the common agricultural policy. You said that you expect the situation to remain as it is. Does that mean that the demands made by the Westminster coalition for direct payments under the common agricultural policy to be reduced have been completely forgotten, or is that discussion still ongoing?

[22] **Mr Vaughan:** To be honest, it is quite difficult to tell. It seems that the UK coalition Government is saying one thing publicly on the importance of reforming CAP and reducing spending on it, but in its negotiations at the Council of Ministers and during meetings with the heads of Government at the European Council, it may be saying something slightly different. My own view is that there will be little change. I certainly believe that we will keep pillar 1 and pillar 2. There is a proposal to 'green up' pillar 1. The Farmers Union of Wales and the National Farmers Union across the UK are not too keen on that. They feel that it adds bureaucracy to an already bureaucratic system, but that is the proposal from the Commission.

[23] The big fight will be about the overall level of funding to the EU budget, because if it is frozen or cut, there will be less money available for structural funds and for CAP, which are the two big areas of expenditure. When we have the overall budget, there will be a big debate and fight. It has started already in this place, where people are arguing very strongly that structural funds should be the priority, but CAP is an important EU-wide policy and, therefore, it also has to have a large amount of funding. So, that debate has begun.

[24] Going back to the UK Government's position, I remind you of the alleged deal that I mentioned earlier because, ultimately, it will come back to that. There will be a last-minute discussion and a last-minute deal, and it would not surprise me if the deal were to involve the UK keeping its rebate, CAP remaining largely as it is and possibly some pressure on structural funds, particularly in competitiveness areas.

[25] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** O ran yr **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** With regard to the

alwad i greu mwy o gynlluniau amaeth- call for more agri-environment schemes
amgylcheddol o fewn piler 1, a ydych yn within pillar 1, do you think that that is likely
meddwl bod hynny yn debygol o ddigwydd? to happen? Is that the direction in which we
Ai dyna'r cyfeiriad yr ydym yn mynd iddo? are heading?

[26] **Mr Vaughan:** That is certainly the view of the agriculture commissioner. Whenever you speak to him, he talks about keeping pillar 1 and pillar 2 but greening up pillar 1. Some people see that as a bit of a sop; he may need all possible arguments to defend the common agricultural policy, because if he says that they are going to green up pillar 1 as well as pillar 2, that might help the argument to retain the CAP largely as it is.

[27] The other debate will be about the distribution of funding between pillar 1 and pillar 2. There are quite strong arguments to move money from direct payments to rural-development-type payments from pillar 1 to pillar 2. The Commission might well do that, although I do not think that there will be huge movement. There was a suggestion in the talk behind the scenes that the Commission would move about 5 per cent of the funding from pillar 1 to pillar 2, but then ring-fence pillar 1 and pillar 2, which equates to ending modulation.

[28] **Nick Bourne:** Good morning, Derek. There is a long list of issues to look at in the fourth Assembly, as the document outlines. The first three issues—cohesion policy, CAP and the EU budget—are central to that. To get a feel of some of the others, Derek, are in a position to give us the latest news on the working time directive? As a second string to that bow, perhaps my information is out of date, but has the postal services directive been completed, because that had potential implications for Wales and the whole of UK with regard to universal services at a uniform price?

[29] **Mr Vaughan:** On the last point, that has not quite been completed yet; there is a lot of lobbying going on here from postal workers, not just from the UK, but from right across Europe.

[30] In terms of the working time directive, the Commission said that it would undertake consultation in a number of parts and I think that it has just concluded part 1. You will not be surprised to hear that the trade unions were saying that they wanted the opt-out to end, whereas most employers' organisations wanted the opt-out to remain within the UK. The Commission has just moved on to a second level of consultation, which I believe involves more detailed consultation. That probably highlights how difficult the issue will be to resolve, and I am not sure what the resolution will be at the end of the day. For example, the Commission may look at some of the detail of what is and what is not included in down time. It may look at sectoral arrangements, because some of the problems in the UK have been in areas such as the health service and the fire service. I am not clear what it will come up with, but it has just moved into a second phase of consultation, so we need to wait for the outcome of that.

[31] There is a piece of legislation in the pipeline that may lead to a revision of the postal workers directive, which has been quite a big issue. There are also some discussions on maternity pay. The proposal was to have a minimum of 20 weeks' maternity pay across the EU. So, there are various pieces of legislation in the pipeline at the Parliament, apart from the working time directive.

[32] **Eleanor Burnham:** Good morning, Derek. One of the other European issues that we were going to suggest should be looked at as a possible priority in the fourth Assembly is the directive on energy efficiency and savings. Clearly, it is a really important issue, because it has implications for fuel poverty, and when you consider the situation with oil and what is happening in north Africa, it is for me one of the most important issues. Do you have

anything to say about how Europe will direct the UK in this matter?

[33] **Mr Vaughan:** A number of directives have been proposed already. One will include giving member states targets under a national energy efficiency action plan—that has already been proposed. There are other proposals for energy efficiency in buildings so that, when new buildings are erected, they will have to conform to energy efficiency standards. That is still being looked at.

[34] The other point of interest for me, as I mentioned earlier, is the use of structural funds to allow energy efficiency measures in homes. I was speaking recently to representatives from Community Housing Cymru who were very keen on this particular project. They feel that it is being used very well in Wales and they, like me, would like to see that extended into the next round of structural funds. As I said earlier, it might be something that the Assembly committee will want to look at. I can find out the views of the other Welsh MEPs, and if they are of the same view, it is possible that we could work together to expand the use of structural funds to include energy efficiency measures after 2013.

[35] **Rhodri Morgan:** There are two final questions from me, one of which relates exactly to that area. You made the interesting point that the inclusion of housing, which was originally excluded from structural funds, solely for the purpose of promoting energy efficiency could give rise to two types of healthy employment and technology. One would be the schemes to fit cavity wall insulation, draught insulation and all the usual stuff that we have funded through the home energy efficiency scheme, but there is also this new scheme that the Sandfields community initiative has been organising—it goes well beyond Neath Port Talbot, as I think that it includes a bit of my constituency, in Ely. The scheme involves renting roof space out to people who want to fit solar panels onto roofs, but do not have enough roofs. So, you rent out roof space and you get the benefit of the feed-in tariff. Obviously, that creates jobs to install the solar panels on roofs. Is that the kind of thing that you are talking about, or is it the more traditional home energy efficiency scheme approach? That is one question.

[36] The second question is much wider. Before I ask it, as this is the final meeting of this committee in this Assembly, I want to thank you and the other MEPs for the much closer working that we have enjoyed. The really big issue, it seems to me, is that of how you co-ordinate Europe 2020 and the belief that Europe, including its weaker regions, has to move into a knowledge-based economy. That is difficult to do in the weaker regions if the research and innovation funds of Europe tend to reconfirm the golden triangle that links the Paris region, London and the south-east of England, northern Italy and parts of west Germany. It is so difficult unless you can co-ordinate the ‘tomorrow’s technology’ parts of Europe, instead of almost accepting that what the weaker regions will get through the structural funds will probably be today’s or yesterday’s technology, though they will get a lot of it, while tomorrow’s technology is still being developed, insofar as it is being developed in Europe at all, in the traditionally wealthy regions around London, Paris, northern Italy and west Germany.

[37] **Mr Vaughan:** On the first question, the funds can be used for a wide range of initiatives relating to energy efficiency at the moment. What I am suggesting is that we should perhaps be able to use structural funds for wider housing issues in future, perhaps for adaptations, for example. I have always firmly believed that if you do small adaptations in properties to allow people to stay in them—should those people become disabled or elderly—that will have huge benefits for them and bring economic efficiency benefits as well.

9.30 a.m.

[38] I am just looking at the scope for the use of structural funds for housing after 2013,

and there may be many other examples. You mentioned the feed-in tariff; my understanding is that the UK Government is having second thoughts on that, which might be something that you would want to pursue.

[39] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is for large-scale installations. The definition of a large-scale installation is the problem. I think that the UK Government wants the private householder to be able to continue to benefit from feed-in tariffs, but not solar power farms; that is my understanding of the situation.

[40] **Mr Vaughan:** Finally, on Europe 2020, the knowledge economy is just one of the targets in that strategy. There are many others, but there is no doubt that the knowledge economy and the creation of an innovation union is a key part of the strategy if we are to make Europe more competitive in future. Interestingly, Professor Hübner and I have been working on a report on the innovation union from the point of view of the regional development committee. One point that we make in the report is that there needs to be greater involvement of regions in developing an innovation union and creating a knowledge economy in their areas. We are talking about regions having their own strategies—we already have one in Wales. We are also looking at the issue of funding, and how we can make it more accessible and available for regions for innovation and research and development for the future. Doing this will include the seventh framework programme and perhaps other funding instruments that the EU is looking at; it is certainly something that is on the agenda in the European Parliament and the regional development committee.

[41] **Rhodri Morgan:** Thank you again for your attendance and your very comprehensive set of answers to all of our questions this morning. I ask you to communicate to the other three Welsh Members of the European Parliament how much we want you all to continue with your team Wales approach to looking after Wales's interests with the different institutions in Europe. In the fourth Assembly yet further attempts will be made by the successor to this committee—and my successor as Chair—to try to secure this level of co-operation between us, because it helps to form the team Wales approach, it gives us a lot more clout to head off problems before they arise, and helps us to promote Wales's best interests.

[42] **Mr Vaughan:** On behalf of my three colleagues, I thank you, Rhodri, for the way that you have chaired the committee and the interest that you have taken in European affairs. I also thank the rest of the committee; it is a worthwhile committee, because it has built up this team Wales idea. It also has some practical use, and the obvious example of that was with the structural funds, where we were all arguing for the same thing; that had an impact in Europe, which has helped us to win the argument on the future of those funds. Thanks to you and everyone else involved.

[43] **Rhodri Morgan:** Thank you, Derek, and your colleagues.

9.33 a.m.

Cytuniad Lisbon a Phrotocol Sybsidiaredd: Adolygu'r Datblygiadau The Lisbon Treaty and Subsidiarity Protocol: Review of Developments

[44] **Rhodri Morgan:** We are pleased that Gwyn Griffiths is now present and correct, despite the loss of power on Arriva Trains Wales services. Members will have seen the full length of the paper on how subsidiarity monitoring is working. Is Gregg staying for this item? I see that he is, so we will wait for him to sit back down. Do people have any views on the question of subsidiarity monitoring, particularly on the issue that I raised informally at the last meeting? In the highly unlikely event of anything happening during the month or five weeks that we are not here before the election, I asked for advice to be taken on what would happen if Murphy's law were to operate and an issue came up involving subsidiarity at the devolved

level, having not done so when the Assembly was in session, and on what on earth we would do about it. Whereas the Assembly Government could impart its views to the relevant department in London, there would be no provision for us to advise the Houses of Parliament in the parliamentary sense, which is what the Lisbon treaty specifies. If you ask a lawyer, you will get a legal answer, but I do not think that that is the full picture. It seems to me that the lawyers' answer is that if Assembly Commission officials are contacted by officials in the House of Lords or the House of Commons and it is a regional issue, they will say that they cannot do anything about it until 6 May, and, in effect, not until after the new committee has been formed. However, it seems perfectly possible for us to be requested to give a view, wherever we may be on the campaign trail or whatever we are doing, even though that view would have no legal standing. That would be my view. Does anyone else have a view on this?

[45] Gwyn, beth yw'r sefyllfa o'r safbwynt cyfreithiol? Gwyn, what is the situation from the legal point of view?

[46] **Mr Griffiths:** Oherwydd na fyddwch yn Aelodau ar ôl diddymu'r Cynulliad presennol, ni fydd Cynulliad a ni fydd pwyllgor ac felly ni fydd statws i unrhyw beth a gaiff ei ddweud. Yr wyf wedi nodi ym mharagraff olaf y nodyn y bydd modd i ni barhau i ystyried y materion hyn a'u dwyn at sylw'r pwyllgor a sefydlir ar ôl yr etholiad. Yn sicr, gallwn ystyried barn aelodau'r pwyllgor hwn a gaiff eu hail-ethol nes y bydd pwyllgor wedi'i sefydlu'n ffurfiol. Byddai'n anodd i ni gymryd sylw o sylwadau ymgeiswyr yn ystod cyfnod yr etholiad. Yn anffurfiol, gallem basio sylwadau ymlaen i gyd-swyddogion yn San Steffan, gan ddweud ein bod yn meddwl y byddai'r materion hyn yn faterion y byddai pwyllgor am eu hystyried pe bai pwyllgor o'r fath yn cael ei sefydlu. Byddai'n anodd i ni fynd ymhellach na hynny.

Mr Griffiths: As you will not be Members after the dissolution of the current Assembly, there will be no Assembly and no committee, and therefore there will be no status to anything that is said. I have noted in the final paragraph of the paper that it would be possible for us to continue to consider these issues and to bring them to the attention of the committee established after the election. Certainly, we can consider the opinion of members of this committee who are re-elected until a committee has been formally established. It would be difficult for us to take note of comments made by candidates in the run-up to the election. Informally, we can pass comments on to our counterparts in Westminster, saying that we believe that these are issues that a committee would wish to consider should such a committee be established. It would be difficult for us to go any further than that.

[47] **Rhodri Morgan:** There is an eight-week window, which is extremely short. You could have the same problem in the summer recess, but at least you have the status of being an elected Assembly Member in that case. In the unlikely event that something should arise, is there any value to Assembly Commission officials, such as Lara, Sarita, Gregg or the lawyers, contacting those who were Assembly Members, even though they have no legal status whatsoever, simply to take a view? What I found as a backbencher, and as First Minister, was that if there is one thing that civil servants do not like, it is operating off their own backs without direction from politicians. Therefore, taking a sounding, even though it would be strictly informal, gives them great comfort as regards knowing what they are doing. There is a de facto, as well as a de jure, issue. You have given the de jure point of view absolutely accurately, but de facto it seems to me to be too restrictive to say that there is no value, in the unlikely event of this happening, in e-mailing the former members of this committee during the campaign period. However, that is just my view.

[48] **Jeff Cuthbert:** There is an issue that struck me in relation to this. The programme monitoring committee will continue to exist during dissolution. Indeed, my position as Chair is a WAG appointment, and I have to come here in April to give a report to the ad hoc ministerial group on behalf of the programme monitoring committee, which is due to meet

this Friday. At the very least, I could be contacted in that capacity, should a view, informal or otherwise, be required. The programme monitoring committee is not concerned with individual projects, but the programme as a whole. Therefore, provided that the matter is of some significance, a view could be obtained there, and possibly from relevant officials of the Welsh European Funding Office, depending on what the issue is. However, I would have thought that it would be appropriate for officials here—Lara and Sarita—to get the opinion of people such as us who have an interest in this matter and, presumably, could give a useful opinion, but it would be no more than that.

[49] **Rhodri Morgan:** Does anyone else wish to comment?

[50] **Nick Bourne:** I agree with Jeff de facto, but clearly we do not have any legal status. I suppose that that is the problem. Ministers obviously continue to be Ministers.

[51] **Rhodri Morgan:** Absolutely; they are covered.

[52] **Nick Bourne:** There is no reason for them being unable to act should something like that arise, presumably.

[53] **Rhodri Morgan:** No. I think that Ministers are covered. The problem is that the Lisbon treaty wants two streams and gives priority, if anything, to the non-governmental or parliamentary stream, does it not? That is the awkward point.

[54] **Nick Bourne:** I see the conundrum. I suppose that there is no parliamentary stream for five weeks or whatever, technically. I can see the legal point of view.

[55] **Eleanor Burnham:** Does that not show the weakness of the dissolution in many respects? What is the position of Rhodri Glyn and Christine Chapman, who are representatives on various European committees?

[56] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ar 31 Mawrth, byddwn yn peidio â bod yn aelodau o Gyngor y Rhanbarthau gan na fyddwn yn Aelodau etholedig. Ein gobaith ni, o gael ein hail-ethol ar 5 Mai, yw y byddwn, yn naturiol, yn dod yn aelodau o Gyngor y Rhanbarthau unwaith eto. Serch hynny, caf ar ddeall fod yn rhaid i Brif Weinidog Cymru ysgrifennu at y Prif Weinidog yn San Steffan er mwyn cadarnhau hynny. Y gobaith yw y gellir troslgwyddo'r llythyrau hynny a chael yr ymateb yn weddol gynnar rhag ofn inni golli cyfarfodydd a'r cyfle i fynegi barn ar ran y Cynulliad. Yn eironig, cynhelir cyfarfod llawn nesaf Cyngor y Rhanbarthau ar 31 Mawrth a 1 Ebrill. Felly, bydd Christine Chapman a minnau yno ar 31 Mawrth ond ni allwn fod yno ar 1 Ebrill, sydd yn anffodus.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: On 31 March, we will cease to be members of the Committee of the Regions because we will no longer be elected Members. Our hope is that, if we are re-elected on 5 May, we will naturally become members of the Committee of the Regions once again. However, I understand that the First Minister will have to write to the Prime Minister in order to confirm that. The hope is that we can exchange those letters as soon as possible so that we do not miss meetings and miss out on the opportunity to express our opinions on behalf of the Assembly. Ironically, the next plenary meeting of the Committee of the Regions will be held on 31 March and 1 April. Therefore, Christine Chapman and I will be there on 31 March but we will be unable to attend on 1 April, which is unfortunate.

[57] **Rhodri Morgan:** A fydd hynny'n golygu eich bod yn stopio hanner ffordd drwy'r cyfarfod?

Rhodri Morgan: Does that mean that you will stop halfway through the meeting?

[58] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Byddwn ni

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: We will be there for

yno am y diwrnod cyntaf.

the first day.

[59] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yna wfft i chi.

Rhodri Morgan: Then so much for you.

[60] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ni fydd gennym ran i'w chwarae ar yr ail ddiwrnod. Yn ffodus, cynhelir y drafodaeth ar y gyllideb, sef yr hyn yr wyf wedi ymwneud ag ef ar y pwyllgor ad hoc sydd wedi bod yn edrych ar gyllideb yr Undeb Ewropeaidd, ynghyd â datganiad Christine Chapman, ar 31 Mawrth. Felly, yn hynny o beth, yr ydym yn ffodus. Serch hynny, gallai fod fel arall a gallai'r gwaith yr ydym wedi bod yn ei wneud fynd yn wastraff. Ni fyddai datganiad Christine wedi mynd ar goll, ond gall fod ni fyddai wedi cael cyfle i siarad amdano. Mae'n sefyllfa rhyfedd braidd.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: We will have no part to play on the second day. Fortunately, the discussion on the budget, which I have been involved with on the ad hoc committee that has been examining the budget of the European Union, along with Christine Chapman's statement, will be held on 31 March. Therefore, in that sense, we are fortunate. However, it could have worked out differently, and the work that we have been doing could have been in vain. Christine's statement would not have been lost, but it could have been that she would not have had an opportunity to speak to it. It is a somewhat odd situation.

[61] **Rhodri Morgan:** Do committee members think that I should have a quiet informal word with the Presiding Officer just in case? It is highly unlikely that anything would arise during that five-week period, because nothing has arisen during the 14 or 15 months since the Lisbon treaty came into operation, which was a year last December. We could then see what he says. I will contact you as to whether he thinks that informal de facto—not de jure—views could be sought from ex-members of this committee during that month just in order to give a steer. It reminds me of army officers asking for me and Carwyn to give them instructions, which we had no right to give, during the foot and mouth disease crisis, when they were working in Cathays Park with us. They wanted a steer. It was not our business to give instructions to brigadiers and so forth. I was very shocked that they were asking us to do that. However, they just did not like to work in a vacuum. We were in the next room to them; they would come in of a morning and ask, 'What do you want us to do today?' I never expected that to happen in my lifetime. However, it did, as they wanted a steer.

[62] **Nick Bourne:** A sortie into Libya, was it?

[63] **Rhodri Morgan:** Quite. Well, this business over General Sir David Richards is very material. He will be taking his legal advice from the Attorney-General, rather than the Prime Minister, as to what is acceptable in terms of targeting. Matters will be directly referred to the Attorney-General's office.

9.45 a.m.

[64] The Attorney-General will then say, 'That is a legal rule of engagement, you would be in danger of being in front of a war crimes tribunal if you did that.' So, that is the de jure point of view. However, we are talking about the de facto point of view. This is not a Government issue, it is parliamentary; the Lisbon treaty is in a whole new ball game here by referring matters not down a Government channel, but to a national parliament and then to a devolved parliament or Assembly for a view. If there is no-one to give a view during the summer recess, you can cover that, but what about when there is no Assembly at all? Gwyn?

[65] **Mr Griffiths:** Mae un pwynt ychwanegol. Bydd y Llywydd yn parhau yn ei swydd dros gyfnod yr etholiad nes bod y Cynulliad newydd yn ethol Llywydd. Felly,

Mr Griffiths: There is one additional point. The Presiding Officer will remain in post over the election period until the new Assembly elects a Presiding Officer.

mae ganddo'r hawl i siarad ar ran y Cynulliad—o leiaf o ran materion technegol a gweinyddol. Therefore, he has the right to speak on behalf of the Assembly—at least on technical and administrative issues.

[66] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. I had forgotten that. So, the Presiding Officer is the one exception to the rule. It is not only Government Ministers who continue even though they are not elected Members—they are Ministers of the Crown, as are Westminster Ministers—but the Presiding Officer continues to hold the fort for the Assembly. So, in theory, the Presiding Officer could either do it all off his own back or he could refer it to me, for me to refer it to the ex-members of the committee. Okay. I will talk to the Presiding Officer.

[67] Do Members wish to raise any other matters in relation to subsidiarity?

[68] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ar y papur i gyd? **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** On the whole paper?

[69] **Rhodri Morgan:** Ie. **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes.

[70] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae paragraffau 17, 18 ac 19 yn peri peth pryder i mi, gan mai ychydig iawn o farn Llywodraeth Cymru sy'n cael ei chofnodi ar y materion hyn. Hynny yw, mae diffyg o ran Senedd yr Alban a Chynulliad Gogledd Iwerddon, ond mae'n ymddangos bod cyfraniadau Llywodraeth Cymru yn llai amlwg. Yr ydym yn sôn am bethau fel polisi cydlyniant, sef rhywbeth yr ydym wedi gweithio'n galed arno. Mae'n ymddangos nad yw Llywodraeth Cymru wedi mynegi rhyw lawer o farn ar hyn o gwbl—neu, o leiaf, nid yw'r farn honno wedi cael ei hystyried yn y trafodaethau. **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 cause me some concern, since the Welsh Government's views on these issues are scarcely noted. There is also a deficiency with regard to the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly, but it seems that the Welsh Government's contributions are less prominent. We are talking about things such as cohesion policy, which is something that we have worked hard on. It appears that the Welsh Government has not expressed much of an opinion at all on this issue—or, at least, that opinion has not been taken into account in the negotiations.

[71] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr wyf yn cytuno â sylwadau Rhodri Glyn. Efallai bod hyn yn dangos diffygion ac y dylem ofyn i'r Cynulliad nesaf wneud yn siŵr bod Llywodraeth Cymru yn gwneud ei gorau dros Gymru. **Eleanor Burnham:** I agree with Rhodri Glyn's comments. Maybe this shows deficiencies and we should ask the next Assembly to ensure that the Welsh Government does its best for Wales.

[72] **Rhodri Morgan:** A ydych am i'r pwyllgor hwn ddrafftio llythyr i'r Prif Weinidog i dynnu ei sylw at y ffaith fod mwy o sylw wedi cael ei gymryd o sylwadau gan Lywodraethau'r Alban a Gogledd Iwerddon, gan dderbyn, wrth gwrs, bod eu cyfrifoldebau yn llawer mwy helaeth na chyfrifoldebau Llywodraeth Cymru? A ydych am ofyn iddo a ydyw wedi ystyried y gymhariaeth rhwng yr hyn sydd wedi bod yn digwydd yn yr Alban, Gogledd Iwerddon a Chymru? **Rhodri Morgan:** Do you want this committee to draft a letter to the First Minister to draw his attention to the fact that more attention has been given to the Governments of Scotland and Northern Ireland, accepting, of course, that their responsibilities are much more extensive than those of the Welsh Government? Do you want to ask him whether he has considered the comparison between what has been happening in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales?

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** Rhaid inni ystyried ein bod nawr wedi symud ymlaen ac **Eleanor Burnham:** We have to consider that we have now moved on and we have greater

mae gennym fwy o bwerau, ar ôl cael y powers, following the ‘yes’ vote in the referendum.
bleidlais ‘ie’ yn y refferendwm.

[74] **Rhodri Morgan:** Iawn, gofynnwn **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay, we will ask for the am sylwadau'r Llywodraeth. A yw pawb yn Government's views on that. Is everyone hapus? Gwelaf eich bod. content? I see that you are.

9.48 a.m.

Y Diweddaraŷ am Weithgareddau'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd Update on European Commission Activities

[75] **Rhodri Morgan:** I welcome Andy Klom to the committee. I ask you to give your view on the latest activities of the Commission, both by way of your office in Wales and the European Commission more broadly.

[76] **Mr Klom:** Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to give you an update. I think that the last time I did so was in October last year, and that already seems a long time ago, considering the large number of activities taking place in Wales and Brussels.

[77] To give a little of the context, we deal with a regular range of issues at this time of year and we have dealt with them previously. The annual Erasmus reception was held in Cardiff for the fourth time, the European film evening was held in Cardiff for the fourth time, and the annual lecture to the Cardiff Business School was held in November. We also ran a network conference for information providers in Wales, and we held a Christmas reception for our stakeholders in the political, economic and third sector scene.

[78] However, many new issues have also arisen, in particular the Commission's adoption, or presentation, of the fifth cohesion report in November, for which we organised a large briefing session at the Commission's office in Cardiff. That session was exceptionally well attended. However, there have also been further, private briefings, for example to those interested in the digital agenda for Ofcom in Wales and on the innovation union for Cardiff University. We have also organised a major conference for the social sciences, trying to get an idea of the future funding streams under those two flagship initiatives, as part of Europe 2020. Furthermore, and continuing to the new year, we have had the third edition of the Wales, Europe and the World event. This is a school event, which has been organised by CILT Cymru, Cardiff Council, the British Council and the European Commission in the past. This year, we had a much more minor role in the arrangement, but, nevertheless, it went well again, with more than 500 school pupils attending.

[79] There are also many new elements. Through the Europe Direct centre in Wrexham, we have organised a teachers' conference for primary schools in north Wales on European funding, resources and teaching. I also attended a speech that was given by the Minister for Europe, David Lidington, at Cardiff University. He spoke positively about the European Commission and the European civil service and about careers in that respect. Last month, I attended the opening of a positive initiative in Wales of a new European centre—the Centre for European Studies at Aberystwyth University. That was opened on 17 February. It is a multidisciplinary centre, which focuses on the teaching and the research of different departments and schools at Aberystwyth University. It is setting up a European network. It is the first time in a decade that I have seen such initiative being taken in Wales without any support from the Commission, although we hope to support it in the future; we already see some of those elements now. I also spoke recently at the closure conference of a LIFE project. The LIFE project is part of the LIFE+ funding, which comes under the European Commission's director general for the environment. It is a blanket bog project, close to Lake

Vyrnwy in north Wales, which is done by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Cymru. That was a positive project, and an example of best practice, as well as being a different type of funding, which we do not find much here in Wales.

[80] Looking towards the future—towards the beginning of May, let us say—the Assembly Government has organised a conference on Europe 2020 and the national reform programme, which is currently being held at the Commission's office in Cardiff, and I will be speaking there later. However, that is again in the same vein of the Europe 2020 implementation of the so-called European semester, which we are going through now for the first time since January this year. All of that has taken a much more important role since last autumn. Under the Europe 2020 overall strategy, we are going through this exercise together for the first time, with a positive input from Wales.

[81] The beginning of May will see our traditional Europe Day events. We have a maximum number this year—there seems to be a growing interest in all things European in Wales. The European Commission, through our London office, is supporting a cultural charity called Transeuropa, to set up a festival on 7 May at Chapter arts centre in Cardiff. The Commission has previously financed and set up that festival during the past three years, and parallel festivals are held in London, Paris, Bologna and Cluj in Romania. This year, we are adding Cardiff and Edinburgh to that collection of parallel cultural festivals.

[82] Also, for the first time, Cardiff public libraries will be holding a Europe Day festival for schools and the general public on Europe Day, namely 9 May. That will be followed by a Euro quiz, which is usually run by the European documentation centre in Cardiff. The official Commission reception to mark Europe Day will be held the following day. As I previously mentioned, the new centre for European Day studies at Aberystwyth University is organising a large Europe Day festival, called Euro Fun, at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre during the same week. Therefore, there is a lot of regular activity, as well as exceptional new initiatives. At the local level, there is also a lot of contact with schools. Bridgend College, Cowbridge Comprehensive and Builth Wells High School have all contacted us, and I have visited them and spoken to students in the lower and upper years about all things European. I would say that there is a growing interest in Europe at a time where major shifts are taking place in the field of economic governance, macroeconomic financing and the whole context of the Europe 2020 discussion. I will leave it there for now.

[83] **Rhodri Morgan:** It was very interesting to hear what you said about the roughly participative or missionary work that is going on in schools, colleges and universities, and which you are helping to organise. On the broader issue of whether Europe is in difficulty because of the financial crisis and the recovery from the financial crisis, and the way in which one or two member states like Greece and Ireland have got into very severe difficulties—although the United Kingdom is a bit off-centre on this because we are not in the eurozone—will you give us your view as to the degree to which Europe is struggling to recover its mojo in terms of the eurozone, which is at least two thirds or three quarters of Europe? It is not so much because some countries are not doing as well as, for example, Germany, but rather because the very fact that Germany is doing so well, and Greece and Ireland are doing so badly, creates this divide between north and north-east, and south and south-west. How much of a strain is that going to be on Europe at its heart because the eurozone is fragmenting into successful and unsuccessful areas?

[84] **Mr Klom:** Our point of view is that there is no eurozone crisis. There are crises at national level, in particular with eurozone members, such as Greece and Ireland, and in that respect also, the profile of the situation here in Britain is very similar, even though it is not a eurozone country. The efforts made by the eurozone partners are to help these individual members overcome the crisis situation, which is different in both countries, of course. There was much more of a sovereign debt crisis in Greece, and the Ireland crisis was initiated in the

private sector. The efforts undertaken since then are now being channelled into the Europe 2020 European semester framework, which was set out in the middle of last year as part of the macroeconomic economic growth strategy for the next decade in Europe, which is trying to create coherence in all the 27 growth strategies and measures taken to reforming the member states. However, in these two particular countries, more than that was necessary, not just from the eurozone partners, but also from non-eurozone partners. Different financial mechanisms have been set up and some of them will also affect Britain. The different financial structures that are currently being set up, most recently 10 days ago at the special European Council summit, which adopted a pact for the euro, will be adopted by certain non-eurozone countries, such as Sweden, Poland and even Denmark, who are very interested in not being left behind.

[85] The measures being undertaken for closer economic governance and economic convergence—in a non-supranational and a much more inter-governmental way—are measures that aim to enhance competitiveness, creating stronger productivity and stronger growth through a similar growth strategy in all the members of the EU, whether they are eurozone or non-eurozone. In that respect, you are right to say that the UK is maybe off-centre; I am not sure whether that is a matter of choice or a matter of legal construction, where one is not a member of the eurozone and therefore does not participate. It is clear that certain other non-eurozone countries are very keen to participate in the measures being taken, and in that sense, I would not say that there is a divide between north and south.

[86] In the implementation and in looking at the current growth rates, you can probably recognise that there is a divide with Germany and its surrounding neighbouring countries moving forward very strongly into growth again and other parts of Europe, like the UK, not currently being able to catch up with that growth rate. However, if, as is currently expected, all 27 members of the EU go through this European semester and the national reform programmes, which will be much stricter and much more tied to conditionality than under the previous Lisbon agenda, we hope that, this time next year, we will be looking at a very different picture.

10.00 a.m.

[87] **Eleanor Burnham:** Education is an important issue. The Finns, for example, are always at the top of the international league table for education, and I was reading an article at the weekend about their small class sizes and their real urge to do well. How can we emulate that? In the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment, we were way down the league table, and when you look at places such as Germany, you see that they have strengths in manufacturing and are now recovering really well. We have a long way to go. It is heartening that you say that many people in Wales are interested in international matters, but language teaching in Wales, for example, is way down the league table. All those issues appear to be barriers. How will we overcome those barriers so that we can make headway with regard to our psyche, on the importance of Europe as well as the economy in general?

[88] **Mr Klom:** Education is clearly a national competence under the Lisbon treaty. The division of powers and competence is between the European Union and its members, although the European Union has competence in creating cross-border exchanges, best practice and co-ordination. We all agree that education is such an important element for national identity that we want to keep it as a national competence. Of course, in countries such as Wales, it is a devolved matter as well. So, there is a great variety, and we can all learn from that, through best practice and a willingness to look at examples and test what works better here or there. Clearly, there is no European format or European standard for the right approach towards PISA results.

[89] There are European elements that we have been working on, such as international

exposure, and creating an understanding and awareness of European governance structures, which are important for young citizens, the next generation, as are overcoming barriers to that, such as language barriers and awareness barriers. In that sense, all our work in Wales is being geared towards the official levels, including the Assembly Government, which is clearly the entity responsible for education and including the European elements, as well as the practical sense of reaching out to schools and pupils. That means sometimes even having to decline invitations, because the demand from schools is so strong that, at times, I am invited to teach in schools for whole days rather than for one or two hours to speak to student councils or assemblies. The competent authorities can do something and fill in there, at least in respect of Europe, which is comparable to what other European countries can do. You mentioned Finland, and there are other examples of course. All of that is done through best practice, and your own decisions in that respect.

[90] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I agree with you that there is an improved awareness of Europe, which is certainly the case in schools. I visit schools often—secondary and primary—and it is noticeable that there are charts and diagrams up about a particular part of Europe, and indeed about places further afield, such as Africa. It is pleasing to see greater international awareness and understanding among that generation, which, I hope, they will take into adult life.

[91] My question is about support for businesses. Recently, a number of smaller businesses, knowing that I have a role in European matters, have come to me for advice and guidance on exporting to Europe. There is a small department here, and I have tended to direct them to the Department for the Economy and Transport, but it has occurred to me to ask you whether you have a direct or indirect role in providing advice and guidance to businesses that want to do business in Europe.

[92] **Mr Klom:** We have had a network of centres for business support and business advice for many years, two of which are here in Wales. They are co-sponsored by the European Commission and the Assembly Government. That is currently called Enterprise Europe Network. There is one centre here in Cardiff and a subsidiary office in Mold in north Wales. They are specifically set up to provide that sort of advice to businesses, whatever the size of the business involved, and to guide them in their dealings with European contacts. Centrally, however, the Directorate General for the Single Market of the European Commission has a website where much of that practical information is also available to any citizen, be they a small business or an individual with a company.

[93] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Is that information made known directly, or is that done through chambers of trade and commerce? What is the link? I am very pleased to hear that, and I will certainly convey that information, but should business organisations be more aware than they appear to be?

[94] **Mr Klom:** I would confirm that they should be more aware, yes. There is a great lack of awareness in the business community, which takes many aspects of the single market for granted. Recently, I gave a speech/lecture to the new Wales consular business forum about the EU single market and EU external trade policy. Of course, the 27 countries do not just do business within the single market; it is also about how the system works with our external imports and exports with non-European countries and the regulations, tariffs, quotas and representation of our interests that apply there as well. I perceive that there is a lack of awareness, so that can be improved upon, yes.

[95] **Rhodri Morgan:** There being no further questions, the meeting is about to come to an end. As it is the last meeting, as well as noting the three papers on the agenda along with the minutes, I want to make two closing remarks. First, the legacy report that we discussed this morning will be formally laid before the dissolution of the Assembly. I presume that all committees will be doing the same, although their reports will obviously not be anything like

as good as ours. Secondly, I wish to thank all the members of the committee and Lara and Sarita, Gregg in Brussels and the legal and Members' research service support that we have had, represented today by Gwyn and Graham. I also thank all of the services of the Commission for their contribution to the work that we have done during my time as Chair; I am sure that I can also speak for Sandy Mewies with regard to her time as Chair. I want to say just how effective this committee has been in this always uphill job of raising the profile of European and external affairs issues and dealing with those in a manner that is understandable for people out there. I thank everyone and I wish the best of luck to my successor, whoever he or she is.

[96] **Nick Bourne:** I do not think that we can let the moment pass, Rhodri, without thanking you for the time when you were First Minister, when you attended this committee and gave reports regularly, and for chairing this committee as effectively and good-humouredly as you have over this last period.

[97] **Rhodri Morgan:** Thanks, Nick. I close the committee for the last time.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.08 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.08 a.m.*