

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Y Pwyllgor ar Faterion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol

The National Assembly for Wales The Committee on European and External Affairs

Dydd Iau, 22 Mehefin 2006

Thursday, 22 June 2006

**Cynnwys
Contents**

[Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau](#)
[Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest](#)

[Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Diwethaf a Materion yn Codi](#)
[Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising](#)

[Cylch Gorchwyl ar gyfer Adolygiad Polisi](#)
[Terms of Reference for Policy Review](#)

[Y Sefyllfa Ddiweddaraf gan Aelodau Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau](#)
[Update from Members of the Committee of the Regions](#)

[Blaenraglen Waith y Pwyllgorau Eraill](#)
[Other Committees' Forward Work Programme](#)

[Papur Gwyn Comisiwn Ewrop ar y Strategaeth Gyfathrebu](#)
[The European Commission's Communications Strategy White Paper](#)

[Canolfannau Europe Direct](#)
[Europe Direct Centres](#)

[Adroddiad y Prif Weinidog](#)
[The First Minister's Report](#)

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi 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 o'r Cynulliad yn bresennol: Sandy Mewies (Cadeirydd), Leighton Andrews, Rosemary Butler, Michael German, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Rhodri Morgan (y Prif Weinidog), Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Philip Bird, yr Is-adran Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol; Des Clifford, yr Is-adran Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol; Anna Daniel, Dadansoddwr Polisi'r Undeb Ewropeaidd, Gwasanaethau'r Pwyllgorau ac Ymchwil yr Aelodau.

Eraill yn bresennol: Rose D'Sa, aelod o Bwyllgor Economaidd a Chymdeithasol Ewrop; Philip Fiander, Cyfarwyddwr Ewrop, Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru; Andy Klom, Pennaeth Swyddfa'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd yng Nghymru; Sharon Thomas, Cyfawrwyddwr Gweithredol, European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation (ECTARC).

Gwasanaeth Pwyllgor: Chris Reading, Clerc; Olga Lewis, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Sandy Mewies (Chair), Leighton Andrews, Rosemary Butler, Michael German, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Rhodri Morgan (the First Minister), Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

Officials in attendance: Philip Bird, European and External Affairs Division; Des Clifford, European and External Affairs Division; Anna Daniel, European Union Policy Analyst, Members Research and Committee Service;

Others in attendance: Rose D'Sa, member of the European Economic and Social Committee; Philip Fiander, Director of Europe, Welsh Council for Voluntary Action; Andy Klom, Head of European Commission Office in Wales; Sharon Thomas, Executive Director, European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation (ECTARC).

Committee Service: Chris Reading, Clerk; Olga Lewis, Deputy Clerk.

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 2.03 p.m.

The meeting began at 2.03 p.m.

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

[1] **Sandy Mewies:** Good afternoon Members, standing invitees and members of the public. I will remind you of the house rules. We operate in Welsh and English; simultaneous translation is provided. There is also sound amplification for those who are hard of hearing. Translation is available on channel 1 and the verbatim is on channel 0. I have not been informed that we have any fire drills today, so, if there is an alarm, I ask people to follow the ushers. The assembly point is at the rear of the building. I ask everyone to switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys or any other electronic device that they might have with them.

[2] We are running slightly late today. The First Minister has other engagements until about 4 p.m., but he will present his report at that point.

[3] People have got slightly confused about the afternoon meeting. It was announced at the last meeting but it may have confused people. If it is any consolation, we do not have any other afternoon meetings on a Thursday for the rest of this term.

[4] I have received apologies from Nick Bourne, Christine Gwyther, Jonathan Morgan, Jonathan Evans, Jill Evans, Glenys Kinnock, Eluned Morgan and Janet Davies. Substituting for Jeff Cuthbert is Leighton Andrews. Welcome, Leighton; it is good to see you.

[5] You have all had the Members' European brief No. 12, prepared by the Members' research service, or at least I hope so. Part A includes a summary of EU business considered by other committees since the last meeting. The Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee has responded to the revised directive on TB without frontiers.

2.05 p.m.

Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Diwethaf a Materion yn Codi Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

[6] **Sandy Mewies:** If Members have any points of accuracy, they can draw them to our attention and then we can move on to any actions outstanding. A summary of the actions outstanding is provided, and if anybody has a question to ask, I am sure that one of the officials can answer it. One of the outstanding action points arising from the previous meeting was for Des Clifford to prepare a note on the use of the Welsh language. That has been circulated to Members: you should all have seen it. Are there any points of accuracy to be raised with regard to the minutes? I see that there are none. Are there any questions on the outstanding items?

[7] **Rosemary Butler:** In the last item, it talks about next year's Europe Day. It states that action by the clerk is pending. It might be helpful if, at the next meeting, or the one after that, we have a timeline of when things need to be done. If we are going to have a Europe Day, committee members need to be available and we need to see how we can get involved, and it would be very helpful to have some kind of timescale for when things will happen. We also talked about having a bit of a brainstorm on the kinds of things that could happen on that day, if that would help the clerk.

[8] In the last item on the next page, it says that I will be circulating some copies on natural disasters and air pollution reports from the Committee of the Regions. I am not in possession of those—it may be that they have been published but that I have not picked them up, but as soon as I have them, I will ensure that they are circulated.

[9] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you. How do you think the brainstorming session will go? Would it be part of a committee meeting, before or after committee, over lunch, or what?

[10] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that it will be informal, so that people just put ideas on paper or just talk to each other. It is probably not appropriate for the full committee to do that.

[11] **Sandy Mewies:** If I circulate some ideas through the clerk to Members, you can decide which one you prefer to do. A brainstorming session, with ideas coming in from everybody, is probably a good idea. Is everybody happy with that? I see that you are. If there is nothing else, there is the paper to note on the use of Welsh in European institutions. Andy?

[12] **Mr Klom:** I would add to the previous point, on Europe Day 2007, that it will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Rome. Celebrations will be centralised in March, probably in Rome itself, but it will be celebrated Europe-wide on Europe Day a bit later in May. So, it will have a special significance, and, currently, member-state Governments, together with the European Commission, are discussing what sort of centralised format or theme they could take on, and that should be known by early autumn.

[13] **Sandy Mewies:** Perhaps, Andy, it would be useful were we to also circulate to you what we are doing, and if you or the commission have any ideas, please feel free to send them to us, via the clerk, for consideration. We will try to get that done as soon as possible, because it will be upon us quite quickly, will it not?

[14] As I said, the last paper to note—thank you for that, Des, by the way—is on the use of Welsh by European institutions. Does anybody have any comments on that?

[15] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Croesawaf y papur hwn yn fawr. Mae Jill Evans ASE wedi bod yn ymgyrchu'n galed yn Senedd Ewrop. Cymerais y byddai hwn, am ryw reswm, yn rhan o adroddiad y Prif Weinidog, gan fod y papur yn ei enw. Nid wyf yn siwr a fydd yn cyfeirio ato. Os na fydd, sut ydych chi'n gweld hwn yn symud yn ei flaen, Des? Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn bwriadu hyrwyddo'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg mewn pedwar maes, os deallaf y papur yn iawn, a'ch bod chi am sicrhau canlyniadau cynyddol. Beth yw'r drefn yn awr wrth geisio cael cytundeb ar y pwyntiau?

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I very much welcome this paper. Jill Evans MEP has been campaigning hard in the European Parliament. For some reason, I assumed that this would be a part of the First Minister's report, as the paper is in his name. I am not sure whether he will refer to it. If he does not, how do you see this developing, Des? The Assembly Government intends to promote the use of the Welsh language in four areas, if I understand the paper correctly, and you want to secure incremental results. What are the current arrangements in aiming for agreement on the points?

[16] **Mr Clifford:** Yr ydym hanner ffordd drwy gyfres o drafodaethau â gwahanol sefydliadau Ewrop i weld beth yn union yw'r cwmpas a pha broblemau ymarferol mae'n rhaid inni eu goresgyn i gyflwyno'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y cyd-destun hwn.

2.10 p.m.

[17] Y cam nesaf yw inni gael cyfarfod unwaith eto—yr ydym wedi cael sawl cyfarfod eisoes ym Mrwsel—gyda dirprwyath o gyfieithwyr proffesiynol o Gymru i gwrdd â gwasanaeth cyfieithu'r comisiwn, sef gwasanaeth ar y cyd sefydliadau Ewrop, i drafod y pethau ymarferol ynglyn â chyfieithu a sut i fynd ati.

[18] If I may, I will switch to English, as, ironically in this instance, it is easier for me to collect my thoughts. Any interpretation that is provided in the institutions has to be done by interpreters who are registered with the European translation service—its acronym is SCIC. It is in the process of trawling through its own membership—its own professional body in Brussels has about 10,000 translators and interpreters—to see whether it has existing in-house capacity that can deal with Welsh. There may be some, although it is not likely to be very much. What it would then need to do is to contract with a translation service in Wales, possibly the Assembly or an outside body, to provide services of the kind that we will eventually be able to agree on.

[19] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Sylwaf bod y papur yn sôn am y defnydd o'r Gymraeg o fewn nifer o gyrff yr Undeb Ewropeaidd, gan gynnwys Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau, y cyngor a'r comisiwn, ond nid y senedd. Beth yw'r anawsterau posibl o wthio am hynny?

Mr Clifford: We are halfway through a series of discussions with various European institutions to see exactly what is the scope and what practical problems we need to surmount to introduce Welsh language use in this context.

The next stage is for us to hold another meeting—we have had a number of meetings in Brussels—with a delegation of professional translators from Wales to meet with the commission's translation service, which is a joint service across the European institutions, to discuss the practicalities involved with translation and how to go about it.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I note that the paper makes reference to the use of the Welsh language within a number of bodies in the European Union, including the Committee of the Regions, the council and the commission, but not the parliament. What are the possible difficulties in pressing for that?

[20] **Mr Clifford:** What is happening at the moment is that the European Parliament—which we have met at an official level—has declined, at a political level, to allow the use of the Welsh, Catalan, Basque and Galician languages for the time being, for reasons which would be for it to justify, not for us. It is partly political; there are sections of political opinion, both within the European Parliament and within some of the other institutions, which are opposed to the use of these languages on principle. There are also quite big practical problems to overcome for the European Parliament, in the sense that that is the institution where the greatest use is made of simultaneous interpretation. It currently has 20 official languages that require interpretation and that is very likely to rise to 23 in January next year if Bulgaria and Romania join and if Irish becomes invoked as an official language in a practical way, which it has not been previously. I guess that it is a combination of political circumstances and practicalities. The door is not closed on the European Parliament forever, but a political bureau of the European Parliament met to

discuss these proposals and it declined to facilitate the use of these languages for the time being.

[21] **Sandy Mewies:** I know that you may not be happy with that, Ieuan, and you may want to return to that when the First Minister arrives if there are further questions. We will now move on.

2.14 p.m.

Cylch Gorchwyl ar gyfer Adolygiad Polisi Terms of Reference for Policy Review

[22] **Sandy Mewies:** Anna Daniel is here to introduce this paper. Welcome, Anna; you are going to be busy today, I think.

[23] **Ms Daniel:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Yn y cyfarfod diwethaf, penderfynodd y pwyllgor yr hoffai ystyried ymhellach sut mae plant yn cael eu haddysgu am faterion Ewropeaidd a byd-eang. Mae'r papur hwn, felly yn edrych ar sgôp yr adolygiad ac yn cynnig amlinelliad o'r hyn y gellir ei wneud. Y prif beth i'w gofio yw nad oes gan y pwyllgor lawer o amser i wneud y gwaith hwn, felly bydd rhaid iddo fod yn adolygiad byr gyda ffocws clir iawn. Mae rhai o'r materion i'w hymchwilio wedi'u rhestru ym mharagraff 4, yn seiliedig ar y drafodaeth yn y cyfarfod pwyllgor diwethaf. Mae paragraff 6 yn awgrymu diffiniad byr i'r cylch gorchwyl. Mae'r pwyllgor eisoes wedi clywed sut mae'r pwnc hwn yn cael ei drin ar y funud gan rai sefydliadau perthnasol yn ei gyfarfod diwethaf. Byddaf hefyd yn cael cyflwyniad gan ganolfannau Europe Direct y prynhawn yma. Cynigiaf y bydd hyn yn cael ei ystyried fel tystiolaeth i'r adolygiad. Yn ogystal, bydd rhaid cael mwy o wybodaeth gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, ac yr ydym yn galw am fwy o dystiolaeth ar yr hyn sydd yn digwydd eisoes.

Ms Daniel: Thank you, Chair. In the last meeting, the committee decided that it would like to consider further how children are educated about European and global issues. This paper, therefore, looks at the scope of the review and proposes an outline of what could be done. The main thing to remember is that the committee does not have much time to undertake this work, so it will have to be a brief review with a very clear focus. Some of the matters to be investigated are listed in paragraph 4, based on discussion in the last committee meeting. Paragraph 6 suggests a brief definition of the terms of reference. The committee has already heard how this subject is currently being handled from some relevant institutions in its last meeting. I will also receive a presentation by Europe Direct centres this afternoon. I propose that this will be considered as evidence for the review. We must also get more information from the Welsh Assembly Government, and we call for more evidence on what is currently happening.

[24] Y mae gan y pwyllgor ddiddordeb mewn edrych ar enghreifftiau o waith da mewn rhanbarthau eraill yn Ewrop. Mae Andy Klom, o swyddfa'r comisiwn, wedi cytuno i roi peth gwybodaeth i'r pwyllgor am hyn, ac mae gwasanaeth ymchwil yr Aelodau hefyd yn edrych i mewn i'r mater. Gallwn ddod â mwy o wybodaeth i chi ar hyn yn fuan. Yr ydym felly yn gofyn am syniadau a sylwadau gan yr Aelodau ar yr hyn a gynigir, ac am eu cytundeb inni wneud y gwaith.

The committee has an interest in looking at examples of good work in other European regions. Andy Klom, from the commission office, has agreed to give some information to the committee on this, and the Members' research service is also looking into this issue. We will be able to bring you more information on this soon. We therefore ask for suggestions and comments from the Members on what is proposed, and for their agreement for us to undertake the work.

[25] **Mike German:** The timescale is tight, as the paper suggests. The only issue that I think will be somewhat tricky is the suggestion that we restrict this to European and global citizenship in the curriculum. There are others in the Assembly looking at citizenship in general, and we are probably dealing with a lot of the same issues. There is a big issue for the Local Government and Public Services Committee on how to teach politics and political education and awareness in schools. It touches on all of these issues, and I do not know how you can meld those together without doubling up on work. It strikes me that there will be quite a lot of common ground, and maybe we will have to find a way of building the two together. For example, if you were to take out the words 'European' and 'global', I think that it would be virtually the same terms of reference that would apply to the review of electoral arrangements, which the LGPS committee is doing. I do not know what the answer is.

[26] **Sandy Mewies:** Oh dear.

[27] **Mike German:** There may be some parts of the evidence that you might want to take jointly.

[28] **Sandy Mewies:** That is one suggestion, but another thing that we could do is ask the clerk to liaise on the work that is being done by the LGPS committee. We could have papers that are in preparation as background papers, or have papers presented to us individually or even jointly, as you suggested.

[29] **Mike German:** There is a wealth of papers on this matter that the committee acquired recently that could come winging its way to you, which reflects a worldwide perspective on this particularly narrow issue in terms of what we have to do encourage more people to vote and to participate in elections, which of course is one of the key issues in citizenship education.

[30] **Sandy Mewies:** To be fair, we are also looking at raising awareness. There are a lot of awareness issues here that fall into the citizenship category. Would Members be happy if we look at the possibility of liaising closely with other committees that might be looking at any aspects of this, and either have papers presented to us jointly, which might be difficult given the timescale, or at least ensure that we receive the same papers that other committees receive, or their deliberations on them?

[31] **Mike German:** I suggest to the clerk that we change the technical briefings that have now been provided, particularly those from the institute for development of education and awareness of democracy in Stockholm, and I ask whether we could, where appropriate, invite members of the LGPS committee to jointly hear and take evidence if they wish, if it is relevant to their work.

[32] **Sandy Mewies:** Those are good ideas, Mike, and I am more than happy with them.

[33] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn y Cynulliad brynhawn ddoe, codais y mater ei bod bellach yn hysbys bod tair canolfan yng Nghymru sy'n arbenigo mewn dinasyddiaeth fyd-eang, ac mewn paratoi cyrsiau ar ddatblygu cynaliadwy. Y mae un ym Mhrifysgol Cymru, Bangor, un yn Noc Penfro, ac un arall yn Llanidloes. Mae'r Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol yn San Steffan wedi peidio â chynnig cyllid iddynt barhau gyda'r cyrsiau hyn. Codais y cwestiwn gyda Carwyn Jones pan oedd yn sôn am ddatblygu cynaliadwy, ond mae'r un peth yn wir o ran dinasyddiaeth fyd-eang. Os ydym yn colli'r arbenigedd sydd i'w gael yn y canolfannau hyn ac yn y cyrsiau y maent yn eu paratoi, bydd hynny'n tanseilio llawer iawn o'r gwaith sy'n mynd ymlaen yng Nghymru.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: In the Assembly yesterday afternoon, I raised the issue that it is now known that there are three centres in Wales that specialise in global citizenship, and in preparing courses on sustainable development. There is one in the University of Wales, Bangor, one in Pembroke Dock, and another in Llanidloes. The Department for International Development in Westminster has not given them funding to continue with these courses. I raised the question with Carwyn Jones when he was discussing sustainable development, but the same is also true in terms of global citizenship. If we lose the expertise that exists in these centres and in the courses that they prepare, that will undermine much of the work taking place in Wales.

2.20 p.m.

[34] Caf ar ddeall oddi wrth y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, Jane Davidson, ei bod wedi cyfathrebu gyda'r adran yn Llundain, ond nad ydyw wedi cael unrhyw fath o addewid o gyllid hyd yma. Credaf y dylem, fel pwyllgor, nodi ein pryder ynglyn â hyn a, hwyrach, dylem ofyn i Lywodraeth Cymru edrych ar ffyrdd i sicrhau bod y cyllid hwn yn parhau, hyd yn oed os nad oes modd ei gael oddi wrth San Steffan bellach.

I understand from the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Jane Davidson, that she has liaised with the department in London but, to date, she has not been given any pledge of funding. I think that we, as a committee, should note our concern about this issue and perhaps ask the Government of Wales to look at ways of ensuring that this funding continues, even if it can no longer be provided from Westminster.

[35] **Rosemary Butler:** I cannot remember whether we discussed it here or whether I was talking about it somewhere else, but if we are doing a review of education for younger people, how are we involving younger people in choosing what they want to do and discovering how they would like to see it taught? Most schools now have a school council, and most local authorities have youth parliaments or councils, or whatever they choose to call them. I am just wondering whether we could write to them to ask, because it will not take any extra time.

[36] **Sandy Mewies:** What about Funky Dragon?

[37] **Rosemary Butler:** If you mention Funky Dragon where I live, you find that people do not actually know much about it. We could do that as well, but perhaps we could look at these youth councils or fora, or look at how the local authorities deal with this issue and ask for their opinions.

[38] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes; I am sure that we can do that. I would say that the same thing also applies in many ways, in terms of Funky Dragon, in my area. I think that there are a lot of people who are not involved in some of these organisations. My concern would be about how we contact those who are outside an organisation rather than those who have an organisation.

[39] **Mr Reading:** We could write to all secondary schools.

[40] **Rosemary Butler:** No, because it will then fall off someone's desk. I am sure that we can find out which part of the local authority deals with the youth councils.

[41] **Sandy Mewies:** Can you leave it with the clerk, Rosemary?

[42] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes. Can we also ask Urdd Gobaith Cymru what it thinks?

[43] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes; that is a good idea. Rhodri Glyn, you wanted to come back on this.

[44] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ar y mater hwn, Gadeirydd, mae'r Ganolfan Materion Rhyngwladol yn Cathays yn trefnu llawer iawn o gyfarfodydd a chystadlaethau gydag ysgolion. Bydd gan y ganolfan restr o bobl y gellid cysylltu â hwy, ac mae'n siwr bod ganddo'r holl rifau cyswllt y mae arnoch eu hangen.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: On this matter, Chair, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs in Cathays organises many meetings and competitions with schools. The centre will have a list of people who could be contacted, and I am sure that it will have all the contact information that you require.

[45] **Sandy Mewies:** That is another good idea. If anyone has any ideas regarding other people whom we should be contacting, do not hesitate to e-mail them to the clerk.

[46] **Michael German:** I thought that there was going to be help from Andy Klom in terms of where this has been done well elsewhere.

[47] **Sandy Mewies:** I was getting Members in first, Mike. I am now going to ask Rose to speak, as she has indicated that she wants to comment, and then I will ask Andy to comment.

[48] **Dr D'Sa:** I read this item slightly differently in that I looked at it from the viewpoint of educating citizens and improving their awareness and understanding of the European Union. In that context, I had a practical suggestion to make, which would not involve any doubling up but which might be useful for the Assembly to consider. A letter was distributed to all members of this committee, dated 19 June, from Ian Thomson, the manager of the new South Wales Europe Direct Information Centre. Buried in that letter, half-way down, is a reference to something called European Sources Online, which is a web-based information service. It is described as a comprehensive, authoritative and professional information service. There is a commendation from the Assembly's own librarian citing it as a search facility that is user-friendly and simple to use for people who are unfamiliar with EU terminology. I understand that this information tool is available, more or less, to be purchased at a low cost. It is extremely useful as an impartial and objective search facility and information resource on EU matters, which is not partisan in any way. Since it is a long-proven information product, and is readily available to you, I would commend those with the appropriate expertise to consider the possibility of the Assembly adopting it, and even putting it on its website. It would act as an easy and painless conduit for European information, and would enable you to build web links to other institutions and organisations throughout Wales into it.

[49] If I left this letter as it stood, it would get buried in the general discussion on the Europe Direct information centres, which it does not fit into. Therefore, I raise it now for your consideration.

[50] **Sandy Mewies:** Have all Members had a copy of this letter? It has been circulated to us all. It links in with the Europe Direct centres that we will be discussing later in the agenda. I will ask the clerk to investigate that possibility, Rose, if Members are happy with that. There seems to be much interesting information in there; I have not come across it before, although I am sure that other people have.

[51] **Mr Klom:** I am working on the request that was made to us by this committee in April. Knowing that the commission's 32 other representations are not charged with this task in particular, I have called in many favours to get input. I have given them long deadlines, focusing on this committee's meeting on 12 July, which I understood would deal, in particular, with education. To date, I have received many contributions—from Ireland, Finland, Austria and Germany—and contributions are still coming in, even today. They do not give a comprehensive overview of the state of teaching on EU affairs in all member states, but they at least give an impression of what is available in some of them.

[52] For the 12 July meeting, I hope to make a written submission for your consideration, describing some of the work that is being done in other countries, and providing several illustrations to that submission, in order for you to see how that is being dealt with in other countries. I discussed this issue with the Minister for education back in April or March, and I have written to her to suggest that, as a British Minister, she can also call on the network of British embassies in the 25 member states, at which there will be cultural and educational attachés who can undertake this type of activity more comprehensively than the representations to the commission could. However, be assured that it is not forgotten, and that it is on the agenda for 12 July.

[53] **Michael German:** It sounds to me like a plea as you are understaffed, and the British Government is perhaps overstaffed.

[54] **Sandy Mewies:** Chris has some information on timetabling. Could you share that with Members, Chris?

[55] **Mr Reading:** The timetable in the paper that Anna has just described focuses on collecting the information during the autumn term. One practical problem that we may have is that it is currently planned that the November meeting, which is the last meeting of the autumn term, will be largely taken up with standing items—the First Minister’s report, the Committee of the Regions, and so on—and we also hope to have a video link with three Members of the European Parliament. We may still have some room in that meeting for some information gathering for this review, but we will not be able to devote a great part of the meeting to that. I do not know how Members feel about maybe carrying on the information gathering into the first meeting of the spring term.

[56] **Sandy Mewies:** That is a matter for Members. It remains to be seen whether we have completed it or not.

[57] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** It is rather early—[*Inaudible.*] Perhaps we should see how it goes.

[58] **Sandy Mewies:** If you are happy to leave it like that, I certainly am. The video link will be the first one that we have done; I am sure that everything will go like clockwork and that there will be no problems. However, just in case there are some hiccups, it may be agreeable to extend that, because it sounds as if it would be interesting for us to hear about that.

[59] Unless anyone has further comments, there are terms of reference here in paragraph 6, which have been suggested by Anna. Are Members agreeable to that, or would they like to amend them? Please let us know also if you know of any organisations or individuals from whom you would like to take evidence.

2.30 p.m.

[60] **Michael German:** We have not included best practice from elsewhere outside Wales; this is all internal. Perhaps we could look at that.

[61] **Sandy Mewies:** That is fine. We can add that easily enough. We will also be considering your proposal, Rose; the clerk will investigate that. I cannot say at the moment how those links would be made or who would be making them, but Chris will make inquiries into that. We also suggested at the last meeting, or the meeting before, that we should not only take evidence from regions where things worked well but also visit one. Do Members wish us to continue to explore that? We were looking at Scotland and Ireland, as being within a shorter distance, were we not? Would you like us to continue to explore that?

[62] **Michael German:** I wish you luck in finding a link.

[63] **Sandy Mewies:** So do I. I think that that was why I was asking. Rose, do you feel that you would like to continue to do that?

[64] **Rosemary Butler:** Sorry, I was not listening. Yes.

[65] **Sandy Mewies:** That is fine. Could we move on to consider those additions? If anyone has any ideas on whom we should take evidence from, we will need to have them pretty early so that the agendas can be drawn up, as it will be focused.

2.31 p.m.

**Y Sefyllfa Ddiweddaraf gan Aelodau Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau
Update from Members of the Committee of the Regions**

[66] **Sandy Mewies:** Janet Davies from the Committee of the Regions has given us a written report, as she is unable to be here. As some of you know, there is another meeting in Colwyn Bay today, and so that is why some Members and invitees of this committee are not here. Does anyone have any comments on the written report that Janet has provided?

[67] **Rosemary Butler:** With the change of timetable, and the fact that we have gone back to fortnightly meetings, it is quite difficult to make it to some of the meetings in Europe. So, Janet and I are working closely with our colleagues in the Welsh Local Government Association to ensure that, if neither of us can go, Wales is still represented, which is quite important. My meetings in Europe have clashed with Plenary and with meetings of the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, so it has been quite difficult. I know that Janet attended the meeting in London, which was the United Kingdom delegation meeting that I did not attend, and she will also attend a meeting for me next Friday. So, we are trying to cover each other as much as we can. Hopefully, things will be a bit easier for us in the autumn.

[68] The Local Government International Bureau gives us very good briefings, but there will be a review of the services that it offers. I have spoken to Anna about it. Generally, Janet and I are very happy with the service that we get. On occasion, it tends to be more local-authority influenced, but, as Anna said, it is not much of a problem for us, as we also get other briefings via her. We would like to say that the service that we get from the LGIB is very good and, as I have said before, the service that we get from the Brussels office is exceptional. Other than that, I have nothing to report. Janet's meeting next week is a meeting of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs, European Governance and the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, so there may be something interesting to report from that.

[69] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you for that, Rosemary.

2.33 p.m.

**Blaenraglen Waith y Pwyllgorau Eraill
Other Committees' Forward Work Programme**

[70] **Sandy Mewies:** We have received the forward work programmes of the other standing committees, and these have been circulated. Do Members have any comments? I see that you do not.

2.34 p.m.

Papur Gwyn Comisiwn Ewrop ar y Strategaeth Gyfathrebu
The European Commission's Communications Strategy White Paper

[71] **Sandy Mewies:** Anna will introduce this paper. Anna has e-mailed everyone this morning—

[72] **Ms Daniel:** No, the e-mail was sent just to you.

[73] **Sandy Mewies:** Okay. Anna has e-mailed me this morning with some suggestions for additional comments. I do not know whether Members would like those to be tabled today, given that you have not seen them. Would you prefer it if they were sent out to you? It is fairly short. Do you have some copies with you, Anna?

[74] **Ms Daniel:** Just a copy for you.

[75] **Sandy Mewies:** Okay. Given that Anna does not have the copies, I think that it would probably be better if they were e-mailed out to Members. I thought that it had gone to everyone today, but it obviously has not.

[76] **Ms Daniel:** Cafodd y pwyllgor gyflwyniad am Bapur Gwyn y comisiwn ar bolisi cyfathrebu Ewrop yn y cyfarfod diwethaf, pan gytunodd y pwyllgor i ymateb i'r papur. Os cofiwch, pwrpas y Papur Gwyn ar gyfathrebu yw edrych ar ffyrdd o helpu dinasyddion i ddeall amcanion a pholisïau'r Undeb Ewropeaidd yn well ac i hybu partneriaid eraill i weithio gyda Chomisiwn Ewrop i wneud hyn.

[77] Mae'r ymateb drafft a geir ym mharagraff 7 yn seiliedig ar drafodaethau'r cyfarfod diwethaf. Mae'n canolbwyntio'n arbennig ar yr angen i wella addysg plant am yr Undeb Ewropeaidd ac mae'n tynnu sylw'r comisiwn at yr adolygiad y mae'r pwyllgor yn bwriadu ei wneud. Mae'n cynnig hefyd y gallai'r comisiwn chwarae rôl wrth hybu cyfnewid arferion da gyda rhanbarthau eraill o aelod-wladwriaethau'r Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Ms Daniel: In the last meeting, the committee received a presentation on the commission's White Paper on the European communications strategy, when the committee agreed to respond to the paper. If you recall, the purpose of the White Paper on communications is to look at ways of helping citizens to understand the European Union's aims and policies better, and to encourage other partners to work with the European Commission in doing so.

The draft response in paragraph 7 is based on the discussions in the last meeting. It concentrates especially on the need to improve children's education on the European Union and draws the commission's attention to the review that the committee intends to undertake. It also suggests that the commission could play a part in encouraging the exchange of best practice with other regions of EU member states.

[78] Mae gweddill y papur yn edrych ar faterion eraill a godwyd yn y cyfarfod diwethaf ac ar agweddau eraill o'r papur efallai yr hoffai'r pwyllgor ymateb iddynt, gan gynnwys y defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn sefydliadau Ewrop—bu ichi drafod hynny eisoes heddiw gyda Des—a rôl y cyfryngau. Ar gais aelodau'r pwyllgor yn y cyfarfod diwethaf, mae gwasanaeth ymchwil yr Aelodau wedi paratoi papur i'w nodi ar y sylw a roddwyd i faterion Ewropeaidd yn y wasg Gymreig. Fel y gwelwch, ers dechrau'r flwyddyn, trafodwyd amryw straeon Ewropeaidd yn y wasg, a dim ond ychydig o enghreifftiau sydd o erthyglau sy'n gamarweiniol ynglŷn â'r Undeb Ewropeaidd.

[79] Y trydydd pwynt yw rôl sefydliadau rhanbarthol, fel y Cynulliad, yn y broses hon a sut gall y comisiwn gefnogi hynny.

[80] Pwrpas yr ychwanegiadau a anfonwyd at y Cadeirydd yw tynnu sylw'r comisiwn at y trafodaethau rheolaidd a geir ym mhwyllgorau'r Cynulliad am faterion Ewropeaidd, a'r ffaith eu bod yn egluro effaith deddfwriaethau a pholisïau Ewropeaidd ar Gymru. Mae'n rhan o rôl y Cynulliad i hybu dealltwriaeth o'r hyn sy'n digwydd yn Ewrop a sut mae'n berthnasol i Gymru. Mae'r comisiwn yn cynnig nifer o syniadau eraill ac efallai yr hoffai'r Aelodau roi sylw iddynt hwy. Maent i'w cael ym mharagraffau 14, 15 ac 16. Mae'r cynnig ar gael i Aelodau eu trafod a'u cytuno.

[81] **Sandy Mewies:** Are there any questions on these items?

[82] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Hoffwn godi pwynt ynglŷn â pharagraff 9 yn yr adroddiad sy'n sôn am waith y comisiwn yng Nghymru a'r graddau y mae'r comisiwn yn defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn ei weithgareddau. A fyddai Andy yn gallu esbonio sut yn union y mae'r comisiwn yng Nghymru yn defnyddio'r Gymraeg?

The rest of the paper looks at other matters raised in the last meeting and other aspects of the paper on which the committee may wish to respond, including the use of the Welsh language in European institutions—and you have already discussed that today with Des—and the role of the media. As requested by committee members at the last meeting, the Members' research service has prepared a paper to note on the attention given to European issues in the Welsh press. As you can see, since the beginning of the year, several European stories have been covered by the press, and there have been only a few examples of misleading articles on the European Union.

The third point concerns the role of regional institutions, such as the Assembly, in the process and how the commission could support that.

The purpose of the additional comments sent to the Chair was to draw the commission's attention to the regular discussions on European matters in Assembly committees and the fact that they explain the impact of European legislation and policies on Wales. Promoting understanding of what happens in Europe and how it is relevant to Wales is part of the Assembly's role. The commission has put forward a number of other ideas, which Members may wish to comment on, which can be found in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16. The offer is there for Members to discuss and agree them.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I would like to raise a point about paragraph 9 of the report, which mentions the commission's work in Wales and the extent to which the commission uses the Welsh language in its activities. Could Andy explain exactly how the commission in Wales uses the Welsh language?

[83] **Mr Klom:** I would love to explain that, because, as the written statement of the Welsh Assembly Government states, in paragraph 7, Welsh is not a treaty language, it is not an official EU language and, because of that, it is not official for my functions either. I have to communicate in the language of the country, which is designated as English—one of 20 official languages to date—and, because of that, I do not get any resources to communicate and work in Welsh. Even though the Welsh Language Act 1993 obliges public authorities to work bilingually, we have to invoke European law, which has an overriding standing, to explain why we use only English. However aware we are of that, we are making our best effort, with the few resources that we have, to communicate in Welsh where possible. That does not mean that we have a comprehensive or a consistent policy in that respect, although we might want to have one.

[84] As I understand it, the current activities of the Assembly Government, stated in the document, are most encouraging in that respect. I know, for instance, that my colleagues at the representation of the commission in Barcelona, where there is also a bilingual working environment, try to provide services beyond just the spoken word, including communications in a written format, in the two languages of the country. Should the British Government and, under the umbrella of the British Government, the Welsh Government succeed in convincing and signing up to agreements with the various EU institutions that provide recognition and services to the Welsh language, that would strengthen the services of the European Commission's office in Wales enormously, because we could get allocations for resources, bringing in not just funding but also people, and provide a broader scope for services.

[85] 2.40 p.m.

[86] However, that decision is not one that belongs to the European Commission; it is the decision of member states of the Council of Ministers. Only they can decide what the official language is, or what status the other languages have. In that respect, it brings to mind the European Council decision of June last year, which created a generic facility for languages that are not official to get a number of services and a degree of coverage at the EU level, provided that the participating Governments make the effort and strike deals to get them included in that facility.

[87] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you. Ieuan will come in first and then Leighton.

[88] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Cwestiwn arall sydd gennyf, ac nid yw ar yr un trywydd.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I have another question, which is not along the same lines.

[89] **Sandy Mewies:** Is yours on the same issue, Leighton?

[90] **Leighton Andrews:** No, it is not.

[91] **Sandy Mewies:** Okay. Ieuan may come in then.

[92] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Sylwais, ym mharagraff 7, ein bod yn ceisio crynhoi ein hymateb i'r papur. Yr oeddwn eisiau gwneud sylw am baragraff 7(v), lle dywedir fod y pwyllgor yn edrych y tu hwnt i'r system addysg er mwyn ehangu ymwybyddiaeth o hawliau dinasyddion. Hoffwn eglurhad o'r hyn y gallai hynny fod, oherwydd yr unig ymwybyddiaeth gyffredinol sydd gan ddinasyddion yw yn sgîl ymdrech adeg etholiadau Ewrop i geisio perswadio pobl i bleidleisio. Mae llawer o hysbysebu yn mynd o gwmpas bryd hynny, ac mae rhywun yn ymwybodol o hynny ond hefyd yn casglu nad yw hynny'n ddigon ynddo'i hun i symbylu pobl i bleidleisio, am ei fod yn rhy hwyr o lawer.

[93] A oes gennym syniadau fel pwyllgor ynghylch y math o bethau ddylai fod yn digwydd rhwng etholiadau a thu allan i'r system addysg? Mae hynny'n iawn ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc sydd mewn ysgolion a cholegau, ond beth am bobl yn y gweithle, neu mewn cymdeithasau neu fudiadau gwirfoddol? Un gri gan lawer o bobl—yn sicr, yr wyf yn ei chlywed fel Aelod Cynulliad—yw a oes arian ar gael o Ewrop am brosiectau lleol.

[94] Diffyg gwybodaeth sy'n gyfrifol am y ffaith nad yw pobl yn ymwybodol o'u hawliau. A fyddai modd inni gryfhau'r paragraff hwnnw dipyn bach, drwy roi awgrymiadau o'r mathau o bethau y gallem eu defnyddio?

[95] **Sandy Mewies:** The purpose of the paper was to ask whether people had suggestions on how that could be expanded. We would be looking at other age groups, for example, would we not?

[96] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Yes, we would. That is right. Is it the European Parliament that is responsible for the big push that there always is just before a European election, through literature, posters and hoardings, to ask people to vote? That happens because of the low voter turnout, but nothing happens then until the next election. There is no information in that interim period between elections, and nothing seems to happen at that level. I am not sure whether it is the parliament or the commission that does the election promotion.

[97] **Mr Klom:** It is the parliament.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I noticed that we were trying to summarise our response to the paper in paragraph 7. I just wanted to comment on paragraph 7(v), where it states that the committee is looking beyond the education system for ways of raising awareness of the rights of citizens. I want an explanation of what that could mean, because the only general awareness that citizens have is following efforts made at European election time, to try to persuade people to vote. A great deal of advertising is circulated around that time, and one becomes aware of it, but one also appreciates that that, in itself, is not enough to encourage people to vote, as it comes far too late in the day.

As a committee, do we have any ideas about the kinds of things that should be happening between elections and outside the education system? That is all well and good for children and young people attending schools and colleges, but what about people in the workplace, or in societies or voluntary organisations? One call made by many people—and I certainly hear it as an Assembly Member—is whether European funding is available for local projects.

The lack of information is to blame for the fact that people are not aware of their rights. Would it be possible for us to strengthen that paragraph, perhaps by suggesting what kinds of options we could use?

[98] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** The parliament spends some money promoting that, but I do not see why certainly the commission and presumably the council could not do a similar exercise.

[99] **Sandy Mewies:** There is no reason why we cannot incorporate the message that you are giving, namely that other European institutions should also play a part on a constant timeline, rather than just at election time. I cannot see a problem with that.

[100] **Mr Klom:** I will just make Members aware of the fact that the commission provides information to citizens on a continuous basis, and the latest instrument for that is the Europe Direct centre network. We have had to battle against quite negative odds in the UK and in Wales in order to get a number of centres established. There could have been even more centres than those that are here now. In other countries, we have had to turn down offers for creating centres, but the commission, for its part, and it is only a partial coverage, is doing its best in that respect.

[101] I also wanted to share with Members the results of a recent Eurobarometer that I have seen, taken here in Britain. The public—the respondents—were asked about European information and who they expected should provide that to them in the first instance. More than 50 per cent of the respondents stated that it should be national or local government. So, there is also a huge task there.

[102] **Sandy Mewies:** Where has that information gone?

[103] **Mr Klom:** It will be published. I have seen the internal results. It is a Eurobarometer poll, taken in Britain, on a number of questions pertaining to European information. Once it is available, I will provide it to the committee.

[104] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you. If you could send it to the clerk, we will then circulate it to Members.

[105] **Mr Bird:** For the committee's information, the Assembly Government, as a whole, is looking at how we can raise awareness about the EU and Europe in general. As a part of the reorganisation of the European department, we are looking at the communications strategy within the Assembly Government and externally, and at how we can implement that through a series of events, revamping the website, literature and what we can produce. We have already had an initial meeting with Andy about where we can work together on certain programmes and, as Rose mentioned earlier, the Assembly Government website was recently revamped and contains a number of links to other websites. We are aware of the recent letter—the one that you read from, Rose—and we will look at whether we can also incorporate that particular link. So, we are aware of that and it also fits in with what Rosemary mentioned earlier about Janet attending that meeting where she was briefed by Geoff Hoon. Again, that was part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office approach to raising awareness generally as a result of some of things that Andy just mentioned in terms of the negative aspects of the Eurobarometer. That is just by way of information.

[106] **Leighton Andrews:** I am a little sceptical about this. The European Commission has been seeking better ways of communicating for the past 20 years. Five years ago, I carried out a study with the opinion pollster, Peter Kellner, for the Foreign Office's public diplomacy office on the communication of European Union institutions, issues, services and so on to the British public. We reviewed all the Eurobarometer material that existed, which has clearly not changed very much in five years. We then made a series of recommendations on how the UK, as a member state, might contribute to improving the understanding of EU institutions. Unfortunately, we did our report around two weeks before 9/11 and priorities for the public diplomacy unit of the FCO shifted after that. However, what always worries me about these things is that you end up with a series of initiatives. It is fine to talk about communication through education and about civic engagement and so on and there is a series of groups that one could appeal to—one could be thinking about how to communicate to different interest groups and age groups and so on. However, my perception of how this is done is that usually the money is spent poorly, the objectives are rarely clear, the direction and focus of the communications work is not consistent or coherent and it is never sustained, whether it is done by the commission or the member state. I do not know to what extent we have engaged as an Assembly in that. Clearly, some of the work that you are undertaking is looking at that. There are some very basic communications principles that operate in any sphere and I do not think that they have ever been managed coherently by the commission. Until there is a clear and coherent strategy, very little of this will change, unless there is a clearly grasped strategy, particularly in the UK context, where there is a much more severe media backdrop of scepticism to the EU, as the Eurobarometer polls pick up.

2.50 p.m.

[107] On the positive side in Wales, one of the things that was perhaps left out of the response is that we review the press coverage of European issues, but on the positive side in Wales, we should note that a media institution such as BBC Wales, for example, was one of the first to have a Europe correspondent—for S4C—some 15 years ago. So, the media organisations in Wales have had an engagement with the EU going back quite a long time. It may be, if the Assembly and this committee is going to get engaged on a more practical level other than responding to the White Paper, that it is worth drawing on some of the experience that media organisations in Wales have had of that.

[108] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Leighton; you made some interesting points. The sustainability of communications is one of the main planks of your argument, but I wonder whether one of the reasons why it is not a comprehensive strategy is that so many different organisations are taking responsibility for putting the communications issue to different groups. Government at a UK and regional level do it in one way, and we, as a committee, are trying to do it in another way. Education tries to do it in one way, and the effort is duplicated. I do not know how you would get around that. The commission is doing the work that it is doing. I do not know how well your meetings have gone, Andy, because you have had quite a few of them. Perhaps you would like to tell us about that afterwards. There are different organisations, which perhaps do not all have the same aim and their outcome is not the same. They may well be communicating what they want to communicate, but the outcomes may not be the same, and that is a huge difficulty, which we must overcome. In this committee, we have done our best, even at Assembly level, to try to raise the awareness of what our Government is doing in the work that is going on in Europe. The European

Commission is always helpful to us in what it does. There is a suggestion here. I do not know what Members think, and we certainly welcome the input from the European Commission, but would it be possible, if we were to have suitable subjects, to ask for commission officials to come to talk to us? I think that you said that this would be okay before, Andy, but perhaps the committee should be more proactive in doing that. Is that a possibility?

[109] **Mr Klom:** It is certainly a possibility, because in the series of plan D town hall meetings that we have held throughout Wales, on each occasion we have been able to fly in officials from Brussels, from the level of head of unit and above, to participate in those meetings and make themselves available on a one-day basis for a few hours to be questioned by audiences. In that respect, the committee would certainly be able to invite people to come over.

[110] **Sandy Mewies:** I think that it would be a good thing for us to sometimes have commission officials here to talk about the burning issues of the day, as it were. That might promote more media interest in the things that are being talked about. We are also trying to involve the Members of the European Parliament in a more direct way, and that is why we are starting the videoconferencing links. They are either sitting or travelling when we sit and so cannot come here, but it is important for us to have that linkage with MEPs. My view is that when MEPs' remit became regional, much of an MEP's identity was lost. I think that that has happened, and it is quite hard now for MEPs to identify with particular areas. Things are going on, so it would be good if you were to take that message back to the commission. Does anyone have any other ideas that we could add to this paper? Otherwise, we will incorporate those ideas into the draft response and circulate copies to members of the committee. Are you happy with that, and will you be able to respond? It has to be done quite soon, and we could copy the deliberations that we have had to the First Minister and to Geoff Hoon, the Minister for Europe. I see that we are agreed on that. We can share the information as we have had information shared with us—the House of Lords has sent us its publication on what it is doing in a scrutiny role. In the same way, we could make this information available to the Houses of Parliament committees, the Scottish Parliament and to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Are Members happy with that? I see that you are. We will get that firmed up and circulated, but I ask Members for a fairly speedy response, because we are expecting that.

[111] I congratulate Andy on his correcting letter; I like to see rebuttals going in straight away. I noticed your letter to the editor of the *Daily Post*, Andy. Was it printed?

[112] **Mr Klom:** That was the one from November. Yes, that was printed but just this Saturday there was another one in the *Western Mail*. You mentioned getting more attention for the EU in the media and we had huge attention last week when Bob Geldof visited Cardiff and made several comments about the EU, to which I thought that I had to react. However, at the same time, we are bringing Mrs Fischer Boel, the commissioner for agriculture, to Wales in July and, at this moment in time, we can hardly get any attention from the media for her visit. So, it just shows, as a concrete example, the extent of the imbalanced coverage that we are trying to counter.

[113] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you. We are whipping along here.

[114] We do not know whether our presenters for the next item are here. Could somebody make some inquiries as to whether they have arrived?

[115] The letter that Rose referred to crops up in the context of this agenda item, or it came in the context of this agenda item.

[116] **Dr D'Sa:** I will not raise it again.

[117] **Andy Klom:** If we have a little time, I can tell you about the fourth town hall meeting that we had last Friday in Llangollen—where I met Rosemary Butler, who was visiting the town—with the participation of Jill Evans MEP for Wales, Jaime Andreu, head of unit for education and culture at the European Commission, Martin Pollard, the director of the Council for Education in World Citizenship—Cymru, who was here at the last meeting, and Sharon Thomas, the director of the European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation in Llangollen. We had a very high turnout, with 70 people attending, of which 25 were students and pupils from the local comprehensive school. We had quite a strong discussion, and not just about education and culture. Especially from the younger people, there were all kinds of discussions about the euro, the constitution and other topics related to Europe right now. As the fourth meeting, it was quite rewarding and, in that respect, we will be continuing our series next month at the Royal Welsh Show with Mrs Fischer Boel and Carwyn Jones, the Minister, in doing another town hall meeting about agriculture.

[118] **Sandy Mewies:** Do you think that the interest was created because the European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation is in Llangollen anyway? People in Llangollen are therefore perhaps more aware about what goes on. Was that a factor?

[119] **Andy Klom:** It was the impression that, because of the strong participation of local authorities and local communities, there was a much higher turnout. The fact that we held the meeting for the first time during the afternoon rather than in the early evening might also have contributed to, let us say, raising turnout numbers, but we are just not sure.

[120] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you for that. The coffee will be ready in a minute or two, if people would like to break for coffee now. I suggest that we come back at around 3.20 p.m..

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 2.59 p.m. a 3.26 p.m.
The meeting adjourned between 2.59 p.m. and 3.26 p.m.*

**Canolfannau Europe Direct
Europe Direct Centres**

[121] **Sandy Mewies:** Welcome back. For this item, we welcome two presenters. Thank you both for coming. Philip Fiander will start off, and then Sharon Thomas will follow. Both will give presentations, and I will then invite questions from Members. Phil, would you like to start?

[122] **Mr Fiander:** Thank you for inviting me. When Chris telephoned and asked me to come to talk to the committee, he asked about my experience of providing Europe Direct facilities. I am afraid that I will slightly disappoint you, because we have only just started the process, so I cannot really give you an insight into what it is like to deliver Europe Direct facilities. However, with your permission, I will take this opportunity to try to explain why an organisation such as Wales Council for Voluntary Action is involved, and wants to be involved, in this type of programme and so on.

[123] For quite some years, we have been actively involved in promoting awareness of structural funds and the European Union, particularly in the role of trying to raise the level of information and knowledge in civil society of the European Union. While this has predominantly been about structural funds, we have also tried to open up the debate on the wider issues, such as Euro-governance, the role of civil society and its relationship with EU institutions and engagement with European non-governmental organisations. We have reached the conclusion that Welsh civil society has a great deal to offer, and, very often, one of the issues for us has been that it has been difficult to engage in that process. With most of the organisations of Europe that we deal with, were you to ask them about Europe, they would probably complain about some fairytale that the press has made up about straight bananas, or whatever, or they would be actively involved through structural funds, and that would, therefore, be much more in line with what they understand about Europe. We have been trying to get voluntary and civil society organisations more actively involved in understanding some of the policy implications coming out of Europe, because we felt it important.

[124] We started this work around 2002, once we had got over the first hiccup of trying to sort out the structural funds programme and things had settled down a bit. We started off with a Welsh colloquium of civil society, in which we took voluntary organisations over to Brussels and brought together other voluntary and civil society organisations from across Europe to discuss some of the issues that we felt were important for them. So, at that time, it was a matter of talking about the convention of Europe, the White Paper on Governance, the emphasis on increased civil society and consultation. We had fantastic support from the European Commission, the European Parliament, voluntary sector representatives, Government, Welsh Assembly Government, and so on, and that proved very successful. Importantly, that enabled us to establish a relationship with a wide range of organisations across Europe. However, I must add that, while we developed a good relationship with civil society organisations, we still struggled with the fundamentals of trying to influence—
[*Interruption.*]

[125] **Michael German:** That is the sound of a Eurofighter going overhead. [*Laughter.*]

3.30 p.m.

[126] **Mr Fiander:** Yes. We still struggled with trying to get involved at the Brussels level with the EU pan-European non-governmental organisations sector and getting engaged in some of the policy debates that were coming out of Brussels at that time. Our remit was as a national umbrella body, and because we were not thematic, we were not able to join some of the powerful pan-European NGO based in Brussels. Therefore, we had no influence in the debate that was going on with civil society, because the commission was debating with those organisations and relying on them to deal with their membership. As a non-thematic organisation, we were stuck. Even when we tried to reply directly to some of the consultation that came out of Brussels, by registering on the Connex—the database for the commission, which is used to engage in debate with the civil society in Brussels—we were not allowed to register. No matter what we tried, we were continually coming up against it.

[127] We were also finding, in building our relationships with other organisations across Europe, that national organisations and umbrella organisations were also feeling this. We were really struggling. We were getting quite a head of steam with a lot of organisations, which culminated in another event last year, which we held in the European Parliament, about strengthening civil society in an enlarged Europe. We raised some of the key issues that we felt that we should have an input into, but where we were not getting an opportunity—things like discussing the ratification of the treaty. If you look at the process of the way it has tried to ratify the treaty, had it engaged with some of the civil society organisations, there may have been a different approach to it. Again, we were not allowed to engage in the process of the development of the communication strategy. We were also concerned at that time about the structural funds and the fact that the Lisbon agenda was kicking in around jobs, growth and employment at a time when social cohesion was being forgotten. It was like a paradox—at one stage the commission was standing up and saying that the strength of a civil society is the engagement of the citizen and so on, but, on the other hand, that we do not need social cohesion. So, we were struggling with those sorts of issues.

[128] That again established a high level of interest, and out of that came a project that we are currently undertaking with our sister councils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, looking at engaging civil society with the citizen. We have successfully secured funding for that and we were working with pan-European NGOs and other NGOs in Austria, Slovenia and Poland—the European Anti-Poverty Network and Solidar are involved in it—to look at methods of trying to engage with the citizen. In some respects, this is why we have started to become involved in this type of project. We have struggled and we continue to struggle, but we recognise that there is a huge network out there. I hope that Europe Direct will not only enable us to engage with citizens in Wales and raise the debate at that level, but also, hopefully, give us access to a wider network that can push our message forward. For us, that is the process.

[129] That is it, Chair, but if you would like to invite me back in a year's time to tell you about my experience, I am more than happy to do so.

[130] **Sandy Mewies:** I am sure that we will. Are there any questions for Phil either on the paper or on the issues that he has raised?

[131] **Michael German:** I have a brief question, Chair. Some countries have a much stronger voluntary sector network and structure than others. Scandinavian countries do not have a very strong voluntary sector, because they are strong on social dependency. Has the WCVA sought to make any specific links with countries that have strengths in their voluntary sector as a strategic partnership? Is there a European network in which you become a key player?

[132] **Mr Fiander:** We are beginning to evolve a key network and we are looking at that. France, Austria and other similar countries are beginning to become involved in that process and are interested. We are finding that a lot of the European countries that had a much more thematic structure to their NGO sector are now beginning to move much more towards an umbrella-type approach, as we are in the WCVA. So, we are beginning to develop that. We are increasingly finding that there is a demand to join in with this sort of network. We are working with CEDAG—the European Council for Non-Profit Organisations—which is a French organisation that was originally set up primarily to support umbrella organisations across Europe. However, it has lost its way slightly, due to the French hijacking it around some of their models, and it has suffered because it is not engaged with the right people. So, we are now working with it to try to engage on a wider level. We are also finding that the new members states are tending to adopt a much more umbrella-type approach to NGO structures than, perhaps, some of the Scandinavian countries have done in the past.

[133] **Rosemary Butler:** It is fascinating and it is early days, but I am interested in how you will cascade the information down to groups across Wales. How are my little groups in Newport, for example, going to find out what you are doing in terms of representing them and getting information back that will concern them?

[134] **Mr Fiander:** Our intention is to use our website. We will be promoting the website. We will also hold sessions—because we do a lot of consultation around structural funds and so on, we will hopefully hold sessions with other Europe Direct members, in order to try to engage with those people. Does that answer your question?

[135] **Rosemary Butler:** I will ask you in a year's time.

[136] **Mr Fiander:** I think that that is what we will try to do, but, at the moment, it is very early stages for us.

[137] **Sandy Mewies:** Phil, we were talking earlier about communication and about raising awareness of Europe. I wondered whether the voluntary sector has the same problem that we have? Whenever I say that I am the Chair of the Assembly's Committee on European and External Affairs, people expect me to pull a chequebook out of my handbag straight away and hand over some money, which, sadly, I cannot do. There is a perception about Europe that it is really a funding body. Have you tried to tackle that with voluntary organisations, and how?

[138] **Mr Fiander:** We have tried to tackle this in the events that we have held, and by taking voluntary organisations to Brussels to try to get them to understand what the policy issues are, and to get them involved in the process. You are right; if you mention Europe in Wales, the majority of voluntary organisations will think of Objective 1, 2 or 3. That is what they know. We are conscious that we have to try to break that mould, and to try to move the agenda along.

[139] Equally, we need the commission to help us. We find that while the commission is always more than happy to speak to you, when it is developing things that you can promote in Wales—for instance, the communication White Paper—often the development is done by the department, and there is no obligation for them to check the validity of who they are consulting with. So, we struggle to engage in a conversation, in order that people can actually start to see the impact of their input. I think that that is a fundamental problem with communication.

[140] **Sandy Mewies:** Are there any other questions or comments that anyone would like to make? I see that there are none. So, we will move on to the second part of the presentation. Sharon Thomas has come from the European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation today. Welcome, Sharon; it is nice to see you. If you start with your presentation, people will ask questions afterwards.

[141] **Ms Thomas:** We have only just started with Europe Direct, but, in order to put it in perspective, I will give you a little of the background in terms of why we chose to apply for Europe Direct for north-east Wales. ECTARC has been in existence in Llangollen since 1982. It was an initiative of Clwyd County Council and other bodies in Wales to set up an European centre to carry on the theme of European activities all year round, not just during one week of the year when the International Musical Eisteddfod is held in Llangollen.

3.40 p.m.

[142] Since 2000, ECTARC has restructured and focused its energies in terms of youth and training on the EU education programmes of Grundtvig, Socrates, Comenius and Leonardo. Generally, there are four programmes, and that is where we specialise. Our doors are bursting at the seams with foreign students at present. We also work on behalf of the Assembly to send young people from Wales to other parts of Europe for language learning and work-based training. So, that is the focus of our work.

[143] Three years ago, we were fortunate to obtain a contract from the Assembly to provide a European public information and advisory service solely to further and higher education establishments in Wales. It was extremely beneficial in terms of putting ECTARC on the map in Wales, because we were known more in Europe than we were in Wales, and in terms of working with the commission for higher education in Europe on the committee of the four motor regions. We successfully completed that project in March, and we have now handed it back to the Assembly's lifelong learning division for it to continue with the work.

[144] Therefore, we had already started that public information service. As we are a European centre, people were always ringing, writing and e-mailing us asking various questions about Europe. The main question that they were always asking us, as the Chair said earlier, was, 'Can we get the money?'. Of course, we cannot get the money either, because we are a charity—a non profit-making organisation—but we can put them in touch with the right people. So, we have a very strong base in Llangollen to start with, and we are also running the contract with the Assembly for the information service. Given that Llangollen is an international town—we have the international eisteddfod, there is a very pro-European presence in the town and ECTARC is centrally situated—we felt that it was the right time to apply for a relay centre to be established in Llangollen, which we were successful in getting at the beginning of May.

[145] During the last few weeks, we have been trying to recruit someone to manage the centre in Llangollen. This week, we have successfully appointed the person who will be starting on 1 July. We have already completed one of the general training sessions offered by the European Union in Prague a couple of weeks ago. There is an enormous amount of training attached to having a European relay. As we discovered in Prague, where there are around 200 delegates from all over Europe from different relays, it is very prestigious to be a Europe Direct centre. We are very excited about the challenges ahead with this three-year contract.

[146] I suppose that our initiative is very different to Phil's in that we are just covering north-east Wales, which is our area. We had to apply for 50 per cent match funding in order to secure the contract. Therefore, we were fortunate to find match funding from Denbighshire County Council, the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education in Wrexham and the Dee Valley Learning Partnership. They all felt that they could benefit from having a centre in that part of Wales, and we are working in partnership with them. The specific objectives of what they would like from the centre have not been discussed in detail, but after talking to our colleagues in other parts of Europe—although I am yet to discuss this with European Commission representatives in Cardiff and other relays in Wales—there may be a possibility for us, as ECTARC and the north-east Wales partnership, to focus on education, culture and youth, which would seem to be the most realistic way of moving forward with our relay, especially as we are working with NEWI, Denbighshire County Council and the Dee Valley Learning Partnership, which are all involved in education and youth in the wider sense. As I said, we are in the very early stages, but we are hoping that we can develop that specific theme further when we meet with the other relays in Wales.

[147] As the centre is based in Llangollen, we will service the rural and urban communities. We hope to establish surgeries, public meetings and a drop-in facility—we have office space at ECTARC for Europe Direct. On a grass-roots level, we invite people to drop in at any time during the week, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., as there will be a full-time service. Therefore, that is generally how we want it to go.

[148] As Phil said, a year down the line, I will have much more information to give you. However, we are in the setting-up stage, we have the structure in place, and we have the reputation of Europe and a European organisation, as well as a lot of knowledge of European education programmes, which we want to strengthen. We would particularly like to work with schools, and develop European presentations and initiatives with them. It is important for them to engage in what is happening in Europe at an early age. European and global citizenship is a large part of what schools must do as part of their curriculum, and we would be interested in developing those themes.

[149] Many schools approach us regarding European partnerships and Comenius projects. Another way in which we could develop the links in north-east Wales is to develop ideas for Comenius projects. Our local school is Ysgol Dinas Brân, which is a comprehensive school of 1,200 pupils. This week, it won two awards—one for global citizenship, and one for its Comenius project on sustainability. We would like that to happen in other schools throughout north-east Wales, and we feel that we could do that. As I say, we have a strong base there, and we have several partners in Europe with whom we work closely. We have young people at our site every day of the week. Therefore, it is an ideal opportunity to get out there and to promote Europe proactively.

[150] That is all that I can say at present on what we hope to do. It fits in perfectly with what we are already doing, but the public information service would just add another dimension to the organisation's success.

[151] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Sharon. Are there any questions from Members?

[152] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Sonia Sharon am ei gobaith y gallwn rannu mwy o wybodaeth cyffredinol am yr Undeb Ewropeaidd drwy gynulleidfa ehangach, megis ysgolion, colegau a mentrau gwirfoddol. Nodir yn y papur mai un o amcanion penodol y rhaglen yw:

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Sharon mentions her hope that we will be able to share more general information about the European Union through a broader audience, such as schools, colleges and voluntary initiatives. The paper notes that one of the specific objectives of the programme is:

[153] 'Dissemination of general information on the European Union, its institutions and policies to a wider audience, i.e., schools, colleges voluntary organisations'.

[154] Gan ein bod wedi bod yn trafod y mater hwnnw yn fwy cyffredinol yn gynharach, byddai o gymorth i ni gael gwybod sut mae Sharon yn teimlo y gall y ganolfan hyrwyddo hynny yng ngogledd-ddwyrain Cymru. Gall hynny fod o gymorth wedyn i wybod sut i'w wneud mewn ardaloedd eraill.

As we were discussing that issue more generally a little earlier, it would be useful for us to hear how Sharon feels the centre can promote that in north-east Wales. That could then perhaps assist us to know how to do it in other areas.

[155] **Ms Thomas:** I missed the first part of your question. Are you referring to the specific objectives of the relay?

[156] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Yes.

[157] **Ms Thomas:** Fine; bullet point 3 is on how we intend to do that. As I have said, with schools, we will be going out and giving active presentations. Last week, we had our first public meeting in Llangollen, which was organised by the European representative. It was attended by 65 delegates from the local area, many of whom were schoolchildren, aged 16 to 18, from the local comprehensive school's debating groups. They were saying—and I believe that Andy would agree with me on this—that they only hear about Europe from the press and the media, and that they are not getting a true picture of exactly what is happening. They would like to see European Commissioners, Assembly Members and Members of the European Parliament going to schools and giving presentations on different European topics. They welcomed this debate in Llangollen, which was the first one. They were enthusiastic, and stayed for the duration of the two hours and were asking questions. We had a commissioner on education from Brussels there, as well as Jill Evans MEP, and Andy Klom. I think that I am right to say that was the most popular event in Wales.

3.50 p.m.

[158] In terms of colleges, the Dee Valley Learning Partnership is a conglomerate of adult learning colleges in north-east Wales. We will be working closely with it to see exactly what information it wants from the service or whether it would like help in drafting European-funding applications. We are not sure exactly how that will pan out at the moment, but our intention is to work closely with the match funders of this project.

[159] **Rosemary Butler:** It is an exciting project and it will be interesting to see how it develops. I am interested in how we spread this out across the rest of Wales. In terms of north-east Wales, ECTRAC has done some good stuff in Llangollen. However, in south-east Wales and west Wales—

[160] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** And north-west Wales.

[161] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not know where that is. I am talking about the important parts of Wales now, where the real people live. [Assembly Members: 'Oh.'] I have stopped digging now; I will not go any further.

[162] It will be interesting to see how you develop within the year. However, if it is our responsibility, before the year is up, I would like to look at how we could do something similar, or apply for more grants, for other parts of Wales, if at all possible. Otherwise, we will have parts of Wales that are really well-informed having the advantage of your service, with the rest not getting such a good service or a good advantage. I do not think that you can answer that—I think that it is more of a statement—but I think that we should look at it if we can, Chair.

[163] **Sandy Mewies:** Andy, do you have a view on that?

[164] **Mr Klom:** Yes. The Europe Direct network is financed by the commission for a period of four years, which started in May 2005. At the time, it could not be introduced in the United Kingdom; we started a year later, in May this year. So, the remaining funding period is three years. That is why these two organisations will be funded for three years, and then they will end up at the same point as the other 400 centres in the other EU countries. There will probably be a follow-up programme. However, that will be considered in due course.

[165] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** You said that the organisation will be funded, but Sharon told us that it has to get match funding. So, it is not totally funded by the commission.

[166] **Mr Klom:** No; it funds 50 per cent.

[167] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** So, the commission funds 50 per cent, and the rest has to be made up through local authorities and so on, as we have heard.

[168] **Mr Klom:** Not necessarily; any type of match funding could have been provided in other countries. For example, the ministry of education and the ministry of foreign affairs are providing the match funding because they want to have a network of European centres in their country.

[169] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** So, it could be provided by the Assembly Government.

[170] **Mr Klom:** Yes, but only in three years' time.

[171] **Michael German:** That will not happen now until 2009.

[172] **Mr Klom:** It is closed for the time being. There was a call for proposals from the beginning of December up to the end of January this year. We received five proposals from Wales, and all five have been approved. There could have been more. In the run-up to that call for proposals, we tried to make people, organisations and partners aware that there would be a call soon. We visited different parts of the country—Aberystwyth and the north-west, among others. We did not find any interest in the Aberystwyth area; in the north-west, there was a strong interest. Unfortunately, the different organisations involved could not get sufficient match funds together on time.

[173] **Rosemary Butler:** That is helpful. We need to ensure that, in two years' time, we have people lined up ready to run and ready to apply. On funding, can private businesses be funders, or does it have to be public funding?

[174] **Mr Klom:** I do not have exact knowledge about that, but I can check on it for you. In principle, a great variety of counterpart organisations are involved. It is not just about the way in which it has been realised now in Britain; it has been realised in other countries. We are talking about a different type of support, but I can check on that for you.

[175] **Mr Fiander:** The one thing that I am picking up in terms of the network of five different organisations is that we will all bring something different to the table in different forms. For me, the exciting bit is not only being able to operate on our own, but being able to look at the network and share experiences. That is what excites us as an organisation. It is not just about being a relay centre in Newtown; you are tied in to a wider network in Wales and Europe, and I hope that that will be of benefit to us.

[176] **Michael German:** I think that there is a lesson to be learned here, in that there were different relay centres doing different things in precisely the way that we are talking about for earlier programmes. I suspect that this is a bit of a policy gap, where we have not had strong continuity, and the only people who could take a continuous view are members of the Welsh Assembly Government, who could see these things through from one period of funding to the next.

[177] I have a specific question for Sharon. The British Council has always expressed an interest in Grundtvig and Socrates as an area in which it thinks it has a lead role. I do not quite know how that works or where the council is coming from at the present moment. Does the council have money on the table or is it using its relationship with the UK Government simply as a lever? One role that it used to play—and I do not know whether it still does—involved precisely the type of thing that you have talked about, such as finding partners for Socrates, searching out schools, providing information and, in a way, heading up the co-ordination on a UK level. Could you inform us whether the same process is still in use? Should there be a shift in the Welsh domain, as we were just talking about, to look at building up a strategic view of what we would like for Wales, to be taken forward from 2009 onwards?

[178] **Ms Thomas:** The British Council is now responsible for administering the youth programme on behalf of Wales, instead of the Wales Youth Agency. It has an education officer who is responsible for working with schools and further education colleges in Wales, and the British Council database is available if any schools are looking for a school in another country to form a partnership with. I suppose that the database is limited and people tend to approach ECTARC on an individual level when they are seeking partners. Given our reputation on Leonardo and vocational training in Wales, people see ECTARC as more of a grass-roots, approachable organisation, which they can phone and drop in on to discuss the possibilities of partnerships in other countries. We have built that up ourselves. Whereas the British Council is a UK-wide organisation that has a strong network, I think that, on a one-to-one or more informal level, a lot of people approach ECTARC instead of the British Council.

[179] **Michael German:** I do not know whether the Chair would like to take this on as an issue for future discussion. It strikes me that the British Council has a role in approving funds for some of these programmes, which you are talking about. However, as well as being the programme funding body for the commission and the British Government, it is also doing some of the work that you are attempting to do, though perhaps it does it differently. In other words, there is an area in which the council has a clear role, and another area in which its role is blurred in relation to the work that you are doing.

[180] **Ms Thomas:** We are not involved in the e-programme.

[181] **Michael German:** No, I am sorry, I was talking about schools; I was talking only about Socrates and Grundtvig. In that area, it has a semi-blurred role. It strikes me that we could usefully search out more clarity on the role of the British Council in these programmes and on what relay centres can do, and get that right in time for the 2009 round.

[182] **Ms Thomas:** Absolutely.

[183] **Sandy Mewies:** Sorry, Mike, but I do not think that Sharon can really comment on the British Council's role.

[184] **Michael German:** No, it is just that it carries on the work.

[185] **Sandy Mewies:** I have asked the clerk to talk to the commission to find out what will happen next with this programme and to circulate that information, so that we have a timeline for future reference. Perhaps he could look at the British Council's role vis-à-vis what is happening at ECTARC because, in fairness, it is still very early days.

[186] **Michael German:** Sorry, I am using historic data for what ECTARC used to do. Perhaps this was prior to Sharon's time in the programme, but there was a time when ECTARC activity overlapped with British Council activity. There has probably been a decade of this lack of clarity between the work that bodies such as ECTARC do, and that of the British Council.

4.00 p.m.

[187] **Sandy Mewies:** We will follow that through and perhaps get more information, which will be circulated. Rhodri Glyn, do you have another question?

[188] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** It has been answered.

[189] **Sandy Mewies:** Are you happy if we do that, Mike?

[190] **Michael German:** Yes, but I do not want to leave it, because the point that Rosemary was making about having preparation time for 2009 is important.

[191] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes, but we need to find out what the programme is now, do we not? It is closed for now, and we need to find that out. I am sure that we can do that through Andy.

[192] **Michael German:** All that I am saying is that you cannot look for the sort of role that you would like from the centres in Wales without looking at the role of the British Council in Wales as well. You cannot separate them.

[193] **Sandy Mewies:** No, indeed. From a personal point of view, I would be glad to hear how your information surgeries and so on are going at some stage, and what sort of response you are getting from them. Is it the usual suspects who turn up, or are you getting to people who would not normally go to that sort of meeting? That is what I would like to hear.

[194] I thank you both very much for coming and talking about this, particularly to Sharon for making the journey here. I am sure that you will be here again in the future to talk about it. I have put you on the spot a bit, I know.

4.01 p.m.

Adroddiad y Prif Weinidog The First Minister's Report

[195] **Sandy Mewies:** We move on to item 8, and I welcome the First Minister. The First Minister's report will provide us with an update on a range of issues arising since the last meeting. After that, Members will have an opportunity to ask questions.

[196] **The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** First, I apologise for having missed the rest of the meeting, owing to a prior engagement in Clydach. I start with an item that is not in my written report, because it happened too recently, namely the referendum in Catalonia, which was successfully passed last week. It will change the relationship between at least the three 'historic' national regions or regional nations—whatever the preferred title is at the moment—of Spain, namely Catalonia, where the referendum took place, the Basque Country and Galicia. It may have an impact on the other regions of Spain that do not have the status of being historic nation-regions. It will certainly have an impact on Catalonia's ability to represent itself or to be co-represented by itself and the Spanish state, I understand, in European negotiations. Therefore, it could have all sorts of implications for the status of regions or small nations below the member-state level, such as us, over the next few years.

[197] I will come back with a written report on that as soon as I can, but it has all happened too recently for us to digest it fully. It was done by negotiation between the Spanish Government and the Catalan Government, even though the fragile coalition of the Catalan Government promptly fell apart. Nevertheless, the referendum went through. So, that will have some long-running implications for European negotiations and the status of 'regions' at European level.

[198] As regards what is in my written report, I would like to emphasise my visit to Brittany last Friday, during which I addressed the Brittany Regional Council of 82 members in a plenary session. It is similar to the National Assembly in that, although it has no legislative powers, it has a significant role to play in economic and agricultural development and so forth. However, it has no responsibility for anything beyond executive powers—it has no responsibilities for health, for example. Critics of the level of devolution in France often point to the huge difference between its budget and ours, but they forget that it is the free budget that really counts, and not the size of the budget; it is how much liberty you have to spend your budget that is important. You should not just compare the size of a budget when one has to be spent on paying the salaries of teachers, doctors and nurses and so on—the French regions do not have to pay them, because they remain state responsibilities there. It is how much money is free, as it were, to spend on economic development or the other options that you might want to take, in which case, the Bretons still have a significant budget.

[199] They are very much up for an ever stronger and closer relationship with Wales. For the century and a half or more of the industrial revolution, Wales and Brittany grew apart hugely, and our histories diverged enormously, because Brittany did not have any coal or steel, so it did not really know what was happening in Wales. At the moment, we are very much growing together again, because of the western peripheral geographical position, the search for new types of employment, the knowledge economy, the Lisbon agenda, regeneration and so on. How you handle the relative priority to be given to what happens in Rennes, the state capital, and what happens further west, in the more Breton areas, culturally, is not unlike the kinds of issues that we face in Wales. They are very keen to work with us in all manner of ways, not only on culture and language, but also on tourism, sports development, economic development and transport. They have one huge advantage over us, which perhaps explains why they will soon experience a considerable population boom—not just in Rennes, but in all parts of Brittany—and that is the impact of the TGV, train à grande vitesse, which will bring Rennes within an hour and a half of central Paris. That is pretty massive in terms of making Rennes and Nantes—which is the historic capital of Brittany but is currently classed as being outside the boundaries of Brittany—the two fastest growing metropolitan areas in France. The TGV probably has a lot to do with that, for quality-of-life reasons. Their demography is similar to ours at the moment, except that they are beginning to experience a big population boom.

[200] On Abu Dhabi and Dubai, that was a very interesting trade mission for me to participate in, because, although Dubai has a population of only around 1.5 million—they are not quite sure exactly how much, because there is a big floating population—25 per cent of the world's tower cranes are upright in Dubai. Anyone who has been there will realise that it is the largest building site in the history of the world, by a very long way. They are creating at great speed not merely palaces of leisure and pleasure, with the Dubai equivalents of Walt Disney World, but also high-tech institutions in biotech industries and aerospace parks. They are very ambitious about what they are trying to do. They will not rest on their petrodollar laurels; they want to diversify the economy and become not only the world's No. 1 aerospace and tourism hub and so on, but also the world's No. 1 high-tech industries hub, based on huge tax-free concessions for 50 years, making it as attractive as possible.

[201] If they want a business school complex, Sheikh Maktoum al Rashid will simply ask, 'What is the most famous business school in the world?', and when he hears the answer, 'Harvard', he will offer Harvard X amount of money to go to Dubai, because then everyone else will follow. If they want a biotech industry, he will ask, 'What is the most famous biotech company in the world?', and the answer is probably 'Genentech', so he will offer it a 50-year tax concession to go to Dubai. He will pay for the company to go there and everyone else will want to follow. So, first they get the biggest and the best in, pay them whatever it costs and then everything else follows.

[202] Given the oil money available in Dubai and, in much larger terms, Abu Dhabi, there are a great deal of strategic routes to take, which we would not wish to go down; on the other hand, there are huge trade, business and educational opportunities there. For example, when I was last in Dubai, four years ago, Hyder Consulting employed some 400 people; it now employs 800 people there. That is how rapidly a well-run consultancy company can grow, giving it project management and engineering expertise and so on. That is the sort of business that you can transact out there, because of the speed of development. Dubai and the United Arab Emirates are huge customers for Airbus. The Emirates airline wants to become the world's largest, and Abu Dhabi's state airline, Etihad Airways, is coming along too, maybe five years later than Emirates. The relationship between Airbus and Emirates during the current wobble at Airbus is crucial given that Emirates is the No. 1 launch customer for the A380 alongside Singapore Airlines.

[203] I said last time that I would try to come back with some clarification on the services directive, on issues of private sector match funding and on avian flu. I will work backwards through those.

4.10 p.m.

[204] I think that Ieuan Wyn Jones expressed concerns about Ynys Môn directly here. Allegations were made that unlawful state aid was being offered because of the temporary collapse in the market for poultry meat in France and Italy. There were allegations that a huge surplus of meat was being dumped in the UK, and that it was being done with some sort of illicit state aid. The picture, as far as DEFRA can obtain it from the European Commission, is that state aid is certainly being proposed, and may even be being promised in the countries concerned, but it is being done on the basis of full notification to the commission. So, it is not some sort of hole-and-corner operation in which blank cheques are being signed to assist the poultry meat industry through its temporary crisis of market confidence in those countries. It appears that full notification is taking place to the commission of the proposed state aid regimes. If it were not, there would be some investigation into its legality. As it is, it is being investigated by the commission, because it has been notified, to see whether it is appropriate. Furthermore, I raised this issue when I was in Brittany last Friday, because Brittany is one of the major white-meat-producing areas of France. I asked what was happening with the poultry industry, because there were allegations that special subsidies are being brought in at a regional or state level. They were aware of it, and their main comment was that the market is now recovering because the scare is over, and French housewives are recovering their affection for reasonably large quantities of poultry. We will have to see, but as far as we know, the allegation that unlawful aid packages, of which the EU has not been notified, are being almost slipped to the poultry meat industries in France and Italy does not seem to have any foundation.

[205] On the question of private-sector match funding, it is still unclear how this issue will pan out. It is likely that private-sector match funding at a project level will be permissible in the new Objective 1 programme. Whether it will be allowed at programme level or what its impact will be on intervention rates is still unclear. The regulations have not been published, but the European Parliament is due to vote on them in early July, so they will be published shortly, with a view to gaining the approval of the Council of Ministers in mid July. I could easily be wrong about this, because little slips can happen in the last few weeks of negotiations, but we believe that there will be individual freedom for member states to include private sector match funding at a programme level and not just at a project level. However, we will not know that for sure until we get the text, which will be out very soon, and the European Parliament will vote on it in early July.

[206] Finally, on the service directive, that is, again, at roughly the same stage. It has been agreed at the Council of Ministers level, but it has not yet been approved by the European Parliament. It means that, roughly speaking, about 85 per cent of the original intent of liberation of services to open competition will have happened, and that will be of importance to protect the interests of companies. For example, Admiral Insurance in Cardiff is making its first steps into the Spanish market and it means that it cannot be kept out. If you run a good insurance operation, you cannot be told that regulations in the area mean that you must have a head office in Spain if you want to get into the industry. That would not be permissible, and it will be easier for insurance companies or banking and finance services, or whatever other service it might be, to move between member states. The only argument has been about what constitutes private services and what constitutes public services. It is appropriate for the state to run certain things with no competition or with modest degrees of competition and contestability, as in the case of the provision of health services, which is obviously a big interest for Wales.

[207] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae gennyf ddau gwestiwn. Mae'r cyntaf yn ymwneud â'r ymdrechion i ddatblygu cysylltiadau gyda Llydaw er mwyn manteisio ar y cysylltiadau hanesyddol rhwng Cymru a Llydaw, a'r ffaith eu bod yn debyg. Yr wyf wedi eich clywed, Brif Weinidog, yn y gorffennol yn siarad yn ganmoliaethus iawn ynglyn â'r wyl Geltaidd yn Lorient a'ch ymweliad â hi. A ydych yn ymwybodol bod y cyllid o Gymru ar gyfer yr wyl o dan fygythiad o gael ei dorri yn ôl, neu hyd yn oed o gael ei ddileu? A wnewch bob ymdrech i sicrhau ein bod yn parhau gyda'r cyllid ac i sicrhau bod cyfraniad Cymru i'r wyl bwysig hon yn parhau ac yn datblygu?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I have two questions. The first is about the attempts to develop links with Brittany to take advantage of the historical links between Wales and Brittany, and their similarity. I have heard you in the past speaking very favourably about the Celtic festival in Lorient and your visit to it, First Minister. Are you aware that the funding from Wales for that festival is under threat of being cut back or even discontinued? Will you make every effort to ensure that we continue with the funding and to ensure that Wales's contribution to this important festival continues and develops?

[208] Mae'r ail gwestiwn yn ymwneud â statws yr iaith Gymraeg o fewn Ewrop. Trafodasom hyn yn gynt yn y cyfarfod, a chodais y pwynt gyda chi yn y cyfarfod diwethaf. Mae cyfleoedd bellach, o bosibl, i bobl ddefnyddio'r iaith Gymraeg i gyfathrebu gyda'r comisiwn, os nad y Senedd. Byddai datblygu rhyw fath o statws i'r iaith Gymraeg ar y lefel honno yn Ewrop yn cryfhau sefyllfa'r iaith ac yn sicr yn cryfhau sefyllfa'r comisiwn yng Nghymru, a fyddai'n ei alluogi i ddarparu llawer mwy o'i weithgareddau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg oherwydd, er bod gennym Ddeddf iaith sydd yn sôn am gyfartaledd rhwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, mae Andy, yn y comisiwn, mewn sefyllfa lle na all ymateb i unrhyw un sydd yn cysylltu ag ef drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg oherwydd nad yw'n iaith swyddogol yn Ewrop. A yw Llywodraeth Cymru yn bwriadu manteisio hyd yr eithaf ar y cyfle hwn, sydd wedi datblygu yn weddol annisgwyl, i sicrhau bod yr iaith Gymraeg yn cael y statws uchaf posibl o fewn Comisiwn Ewrop? Beth y mae'r Prif Weinidog a'i Lywodraeth yn ei wneud i hyrwyddo hynny?

[209] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Codwyd y cwestiwn hwn o wyl Lorient pan oeddem yn Llydaw ac yr oeddwn yn falch iawn ei bod wedi enwebu Cymru unwaith eto fel y wlad arbennig at yr wyl yn y flwyddyn 2008. Cyn belled ag ydw i'n deall y pictiwr, nid oes problem ynglyn ag ariannu beth yr ydym yn ei wneud o ran cael ein henwebu yn 2008. Os oes problem dros dro ar gyfer y blynyddoedd eraill, nid wyf wedi clywed dim byd amdani. Yr wyf yn falch o hyn, a chredaf y bydd pawb yng Nghymru yn falch, oherwydd y cyfleoedd marchnata ac yn y blaen a'r cyfleoedd i ymuno â'r *boom* mewn cerddoriaeth Geltaidd sydd efallai yn gryfach yn Ffrainc, Canada a gwledydd eraill achos bod cymaint o ddiddordeb. Mae hynny efallai achos, er nad yw'r iaith wedi adferystal yn Llydaw, mae'r gerddoriaeth wedi adfer llawer yn fwy. Efallai achos bod yr iaith yn wan, mae'r gerddoriaeth yn gref—nid wyf yn siwr.

The second question is about the status of the Welsh language in Europe. We discussed this earlier in the meeting, and I raised the point with you in the last meeting. There may now be opportunities for people to use the Welsh language to communicate with the commission, if not the Parliament. Developing some kind of status for the Welsh language on that level in Europe would strengthen the language and would certainly strengthen the commission's situation in Wales, enabling it to provide many more of its activities through the medium of Welsh, because, although we have a Welsh language Act that mentions equality between Welsh and English, Andy cannot respond to anyone who contacts him through the medium of Welsh in the commission because it is not an official language in Europe. Does the Government of Wales intend to take as much advantage as possible of this opportunity, which has arisen quite unexpectedly, to ensure that the Welsh language has the highest possible status within the European Commission? What is the First Minister and his Government doing to promote that?

The First Minister: This question arose in the Lorient festival when we were in Brittany and I was extremely pleased that it had nominated Wales once again as the special nation for the festival in 2008. As far as I understand it, there is no problem regarding funding what we are doing in terms of being nominated in 2008. If there is a short-term problem for the intervening years, I have not heard about it. I am pleased about this, and I believe that everyone in Wales will be pleased, because of the marketing opportunities and so on and the opportunities to join in with the Celtic music boom, which is perhaps stronger in France, Canada and other countries because there is such an interest. That may be because, although the language has not recovered so well in Brittany, the music has recovered to a greater extent. Perhaps because the language is weak, the music is strong—I am not sure. However,

Fodd bynnag, yn sicr, mae cyfleoedd enfawr mewn cynnal gwyl agored rhyngwladol ar gerddoriaeth Geltaidd sydd yn ffasiynol dros ben, nid yn Ffrainc yn unig ond mewn gwledydd eraill, megis Iwerddon, rhai taleithiau yng Nghanada ac yn y blaen. Mae marchnadoedd enfawr i fanteisio arnynt a dyna pam yr wyf yn meddwl ei fod yn fantais fawr bod Cymru wedi cael ei henwebu fel y wlad arbennig ar gyfer yr wyl mewn dwy flynedd.

[210] O ran eich cwestiwn arall, mae'n ddrwg gennyf nad wyf wedi cymryd rhan yn y drafodaeth awr neu ddwy yn ôl, ond hyd y deallaf, yr ydym yn gorfod cael rhyw fath o dystysgrif neu achrediad i'n cyfieithwyr fel eu bod yn cael eu hystyried o'r safon angenrheidiol i gael eu derbyn yn sefydliadau Ewrop. Os nad ydych yn cael tystysgrif i ddangos eich bod o'r safon, ni fyddwch yn cael eich derbyn fel pobl sy'n gallu gwneud y gwaith cyfieithu. Yr ydym yn awyddus i fwrw ymlaen gyda hyn. Os ydych am sicrhau bod pobl yn gallu cael atebion i'w llythyron neu unrhyw fath o drafodaethau eraill yn y Gymraeg, boed dros y ffôn neu beth bynnag, rhaid rhoi rhyw fath o rybudd. Wedyn, byddem yn gorfod gwneud y gwaith y tu ôl i'r llen er mwyn sicrhau bod yr iaith Gymraeg yn cael ei defnyddio yn safonol neu na fydd yn cael ei derbyn fel rhywbeth swyddogol yn Ewrop. Yr ydym yn gwneud y gwaith paratoadol mor gyflym ag y gallwn.

4.20 p.m.

[211] Mae pobl yn ein cymharu â Sbaen, gan ddweud, 'Mae wedi digwydd yn gyflymach o ran y Catalaniaid a'r Basgiaid', ond yn ôl yr wybodaeth sydd gennyf, mae hynny oherwydd bod llawer o'r cyfieithwyr o Sbaen hefyd yn hollol rugl yn y Gatalaneg. Felly, nid yw'n broblem iddynt hwy, a gallant symud llawer yn gyflymach.

there are certainly huge opportunities in holding an open, international Celtic music festival, which is very fashionable, not only in France but in other nations such as Ireland, some Canadian states and so on. There are huge markets to be taken advantage of and that is why I think that it is a great benefit that Wales has been nominated as the special nation for the festival in two years' time.

On your other question, I am sorry that I did not participate in the debate an hour or two ago but, as far as I understand it, we have to have some sort of certificate or accreditation for our translators so that they can be considered to be of the necessary standard to be accepted within European institutions. If you do not have certification to show that you are of the required standard, you will not be accepted as being able to carry out the translation work. We are eager to progress with this. If you want to ensure that people can receive responses to their letters or any other discussions in Welsh, be they over the phone or whatever, you have to give some warning. We would then have to do the work behind the scenes to ensure that Welsh is used to a standard or it will not be accepted as being official in Europe. We are doing the preparatory work as quickly as we can.

People compare us with Spain and say, 'It has happened much more swiftly for the Catalans and the Basques', but according to the information that I have, that is because so many of the translators in Spain are also completely fluent in Catalan. Therefore, it is not a problem for them, and they can proceed much quicker.

[212] **Michael German:** With the regard to the state aids map, I understand that the DTI has now published a draft map that is due to go to the commission by the end of July, with a very short and tight consultation period. Can you tell us what your position was in the negotiation as to what would be achievable for state aids in east Wales, and what the current map, which is out, or is going out, for consultation, shows for east Wales?

[213] **The First Minister:** Unless it has happened in the last 48 hours, I do not think that that is a published document.

[214] **Michael German:** I understand that the map is going to the Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee on 5 July, and we have this map available.

[215] **The First Minister:** I am looking around for confirmation of what I said, and I think that I am getting that confirmation, that it is not published, as far as we know.

[216] In terms of what we are looking for, then, clearly, it is maximum coverage of east Wales, while recognising that maximum coverage there will not necessarily extend all that far. However, we are trying to ensure, as we bargain, that we bargain for the largest area possible to be included.

[217] **Michael German:** Will it include an area that covers the whole of parts of east Wales, rather than otherwise? There is a great difference between being in rural Powys and having a job opportunity in Newport and being in Wrexham and wanting a job opportunity in Flintshire. It is a question of geographical spread in east Wales. Has your negotiation been to get as broad a geographical spread as possible?

[218] **The First Minister:** Geoff Andrews and others can correct me if I am wrong, but the same principle will apply as last time, whereby you minimise the population in a ward, and maximise the size of the business park in that ward. What you are trying to do is to find wards that you can include that have a very small population and a very large business park, because, every time that you bargain, the currency in which you bargain is population. Let us say that you are told that you cannot have a population in excess of 100,000 in east Wales covered by tier 2. If you can therefore find 100 wards of 1,000 people each, with very large business parks in them, then you are really happy. That is roughly it, is it not? I am giving you a highly exaggerated example there, because the areas have to be continuous and contiguous, and they have to make sense and adjoin Objective 1, tier 1 areas. So, you do not have complete freedom just to pepper-pot it around, but that is the basic principle, and it is the same as it has been in the past: contiguity with Objective 1, and not giving away too much population for too small a business park potential, as it were. You must try to ensure that you have big business park potential for each bit of the territory adjoining Objective 1 Wales in order to give you maximum job creation potential.

[219] **Michael German:** Do the wards have to be alongside an Objective 1 ward?

[220] **The First Minister:** I think so, yes.

[221] **Sandy Mewies:** Okay. Rose, you have something very short to add to that, have you not?

[222] **Dr D'Sa:** Thank you, Chair. I have a small point to make in relation to private-sector match funding. The context in which the First Minister reported was in relation to the voluntary sector, but I am sure that the committee is aware that there is considerable concern in the private and commercial sector more generally about the impact of any change in the structural funds regulations as regards private-sector match funding. In my capacity as a consultant for Morgan Cole, I know that we have had several clients that are worried about this, and I have made some inquiries of my own, and as a result I am slightly concerned by one sentence in the First Minister's report:

[223] '...the decision on whether Private match funding can be included at a programme level is not yet finalised, [but] the new Structural Fund regulations will allow the use of private match funding at a project level'.

[224] I thought that I should say that, in my discussions with the head of unit in the regional policy directorate-general in the commission, and also in my discussions with Steven McGregor in our office in Brussels—incidentally, Steven was extremely helpful to me on this point—this distinction between programme level and project level was never drawn to my attention. I have looked at the last draft of structural funds regulation that I have, the relevant article of which appears to be article 51; it refers to contributions at the level of the programme and confirms the key point that both public and private sector expenditure will be eligible. However, I have always understood the programme level to be above the project level, and, therefore, whatever applies at programme level must apply at project level. I, therefore, do not understand why this distinction is now drawn in your report. I recommend that you ask officials to clarify that particular point.

[225] Also, notwithstanding that the Ministers involved in DTI have now changed, I recommend that you keep an eye on Alistair Darling and Margaret Hodge. It is true that changes are made at the last minute, sometimes, in relation to these regulations, but, on this particular point, there could be a significant and negative impact on Wales. Therefore, it is not a mere academic point.

[226] **The First Minister:** I must rebut Rose a little bit, because I was not talking about the voluntary sector; I was talking about the private sector. The voluntary sector issue, to which I have referred, is mostly about the counting of employees' and volunteers' time as in-kind match funding. Again, that is in exactly the same position of limbo for another couple of weeks as the question of private sector contributions. It is very important that the voluntary sector realises that the in-kind issue, provided that it goes the right way when it goes in front of the European Parliament in the next couple of weeks and back to the council for ratification, is quite possibly still going to be there—we hope that it is. However, the accurate keeping of timesheets and so on—and Phil from the WCVA can ram this lesson home—is vitally important. You must keep your timesheets; if you do not have timesheets, you have no proof, and if you do not have any proof, it will not be accepted. Therefore, that is terribly important.

[227] As regards private sector match funding, I have given my report in good faith. I defer to Rose having legal knowledge infinitely superior to mine, but it has certainly been a very tortuous process and the issue of project level is not an issue; in other words, we are very confident about project level, and programme level is still up for grabs. We will not know that until the regulations are published, which will be very shortly, because it must go to the Parliament in early July—there is probably only a week left before we see the text.

[228] Your point about late changes in the DTI Ministers is very well taken, but luckily we think that the lateness of the changes means that it is very unlikely that they will wish to undo all of the work that was previously negotiated between the devolved administrations and the DTI, which is in this slightly odd situation of negotiating for England with the three Celtic areas and then leading for the UK. I understand what you are saying about the issue of whether they would look after our interests if there were any last-minute negotiations. However, we do not think that they will wish to change the work that was done by their predecessors, but we need to keep the pressure up when it comes to last-minute negotiations; we are very conscious of that.

[229] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Diolch i'r Prif Weinidog am yr ymateb ynglyn â'r cymorth y mae Ffrainc a'r Eidal yn ceisio'i gael i'w diwydiant ieir. Diolchaf hefyd iddo am y llythyr a anfonodd ataf; yr wyf wedi pasio'r wybodaeth ymlaen i'r cwmni yn Llangedfni.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I thank the First Minister for the response on the aid that is being sought by France and Italy for their poultry industry. I also thank him for the letter he sent to me; I have passed the information on to the company in Llangedfni.

4.30 p.m.

[230] Y cwestiwn y mae'r cwmni'n ei godi, yn sgîl yr ateb, yw a oes modd i'r Llywodraeth yn y fan hon gael gwybodaeth ynglyn â natur y cais gan Ffrainc a'r Eidal? Mae'n dod yn eithaf clir yn yr hyn mae'r Prif Weinidog wedi'i awgrymu fod cais yn cael ei wneud am roi cymhorthdal, ond ni wyddom beth yw natur y cais. Hynny yw, beth sy'n gynwysedig ynddo? A fyddai'r Prif Weinidog yn fodlon gofyn, drwy DEFRA, efallai, am fwy o wybodaeth ar hynny a fyddai, o bosibl, yn help i'r cwmnïau sy'n dioddef, pe bai'r comisiwn yn caniatáu hyn, o ran y modd y gallwn ymateb?

The question that the company is raising, in the light of the response, is whether it is possible for the Government here to obtain information on the nature of the French and Italian request? It becomes quite clear, as the First Minister has suggested, that a request is being prepared for granting aid but we know nothing about the nature of that request. What is included in it? Would the First Minister, perhaps through DEFRA, be prepared to ask for more information on that, which would, perhaps, assist the companies that are suffering, if the commission does allow this, in terms of how we can respond?

[231] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Yn sicr. Yr wyf yn hapus i geisio olrhain y wybodaeth sydd ar gael. Ni ddylai fod yn ddirgelwch. Dylai'r mater fod yn gyhoeddus. Yr hyn yr ydym yn ei glywed yw bod y comisiwn wedi rhoi cefnogaeth i rai o'r mesurau newydd yr oedd wedi cael gwybodaeth amdanynt gan Ffrainc a'r Eidal. Mae'r comisiwn yn dal i ystyried rhai eraill. Yn sicr, dylem gael y wybodaeth honno drwy DEFRA. Ni ddylai fod yn ddirgelwch, ac ni chredaf y bydd felly.

The First Minister: Certainly. I am happy to try to find any information that is available. It should not be a mystery. It should be in the public domain. What we are hearing is that the commission has supported some of the new measures drawn to its attention by France and Italy. The commission is still considering other new measures. We should certainly be able to acquire that information through DEFRA. It should be no mystery, and I do not think that it will be so.

[232] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, First Minister. No-one else has indicated that they wish to speak, in which case I will declare the meeting closed. Thank you all for attending. I wish a safe journey back to those of you who have to travel. The next meeting will be held in the morning, on Thursday, 12 July. I look forward to seeing you then.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 4.31 p.m.
The meeting ended at 4.31 p.m.*