



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor ar Faterion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol

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

Dydd Mercher, 25 Hydref 2006
Wednesday, 25 October 2006

Cynnwys
Contents

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol a Materion sy'n Codi
Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising
- 9 Adroddiad y Prif Weinidog
First Minister's Report
- 21 Adolygiad Polisi: Oxfam Cymru
Policy Review: Oxfam Cymru
- 30 Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau
Committee of the Regions
- 31 Llywyddiaeth yr Undeb Ewropeaidd: Ei Ardderchowgrwydd Jaakko Laajava,
Llysgennad y Ffindir
European Union Presidency: His Excellency Jaakko Laajava, Ambassador of Finland

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), Nick Bourne, Rosemary Butler, Jeff Cuthbert, Janet Davies; Michael German, Christine Gwyther, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Rhodri Morgan (y Prif Weinidog), Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Philip Bird, yr Is-adran Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol; Anna Daniel, Swyddfa Brwsel; Gary Davies, yr Is-adran Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol; Rob Halford, Prif Ddadansoddwr Polisi; Damien O'Brien, Swyddfa Cyllid Ewropeaidd Cymru; Siân Wilkins, Clerc, y Pwyllgor ar y Rheolau Sefydlog.

Eraill yn bresennol: Stephen Brooks, Swyddog Polisi ac Eiriolaeth Oxfam Cymru; Rhodri Griffiths, Ymgynghorydd Addysg Oxfam Cymru; Ei Ardderchogrwydd Jaakko Laajava, Llysgennad y Ffindir; Päivi Pohjanheimo, Prif Ysgrifennydd (Gwleidyddol) y Ffindir.

Gwasanaeth Pwyllgor: Chris Reading, Clerc; Abigail Phillips, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Sandy Mewies (Chair), Nick Bourne, Rosemary Butler, Jeff Cuthbert, Janet Davies; Michael German, Christine Gwyther, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Rhodri Morgan (the First Minister), Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

Officials in attendance: Philip Bird, European and External Affairs Division; Anna Daniel, Brussels Office; Gary Davies, European and External Affairs Division; Rob Halford, Principal Policy Analyst; Damien O'Brien, Wales European Funding Office; Siân Wilkins, Clerc, the Committee on Standing Orders.

Others in attendance: Stephen Brooks, Policy and Advocacy Officer Oxfam Cymru; Rhodri Griffiths, Education Adviser Oxfam Cymru; His Excellency Jaakko Laajava, Finnish Ambassador; Päivi Pohjanheimo, First Secretary (Political) Finland.

Committee Service: Chris Reading, Clerc; Abigail Phillips, Deputy Clerk.

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.04 a.m.

The meeting began at 9.04 a.m.

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

[1] **Sandy Mewies:** Good morning. We will start this morning's meeting. I welcome Members, standing invitees and people in the public gallery, which is empty at the moment. We have headsets available for simultaneous translation and sound amplification; translation is available on channel 1 and verbatim on channel 0. I ask everyone to switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys and any other electronic devices. We have not been warned that there will be a fire alarm today, but if the alarm sounds, follow the ushers—I will be directly behind them, so follow me to the nearest exit.

[2] Jeff Cuthbert must leave part way through the meeting. We have received apologies from Jonathan Morgan, Members of the European Parliament, namely Jonathan Evans, Jill Evans, Glenys Kinnock and Eluned Morgan, and from standing invitees Andy Klom and Rose D'Sa.

[3] I believe that all Members have had European brief no. 15 from the Members' Research Service to refer to, which gives details of all the business dealt with by us since the last report.

9.05 a.m.

Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol a Materion sy'n Codi Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

[4] **Sandy Mewies:** Do Members agree the minutes? I see that you do. Are there any corrections to them? I see that there are not. Are there any questions on the actions outstanding, which are outlined in the report? I am confident that the clerk can handle any questions on those.

[5] Moving on to our response to the Committee on Standing Orders, everyone will have received correspondence about that. Siân Wilkins is here to introduce this item, and she will be followed by Anna Daniel. We will then have questions and/or suggestions from Members. At the end, I will ask Anna to summarise the proposals, and then we will hopefully have our draft response from Chris.

[6] **Ms Wilkins:** I am one of the clerks to the Committee on Standing Orders. I thought that it would be helpful to put the request from the Committee on Standing Orders into context. The committee is still discussing drafts of the Standing Orders relating to committees for the third Assembly, but its current approach is to provide a generic Standing Order, covering procedures and rules in all committees, and then a separate Standing Order for each committee, or type of committee, which will set out, as permissively as possible, its remit, plus any specific rules that may apply to that committee. That might apply specifically to the Audit Committee and the Committee on Standards of Conduct.

[7] The Committee on Standing Orders has asked several committees, including this one, what they think the functions of any successor committee might be. The aim will then be to draft a Standing Order that is as permissive as possible, so that it will allow the successor committee to at least carry out those functions, but also to allow it to develop its role without there being any restrictions by the new Standing Orders.

[8] **Ms Daniel:** I do not have much to add to that. I draw Members' attention to paragraphs 7 and 8. In paragraph 7, you will see a list of functions, from a to f, which should capture all that the committee currently does in terms of its functions. In paragraph 8, there are suggestions for other specific functions that the committee may wish to consider including in the list, namely to consider the implementation of EU legislation and policy and how that procedure is undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government, for example, and also the consideration of the budget in relation to European and external affairs. However, this is for Members to discuss.

9.10 a.m.

[9] **Michael German:** I support the two extra points. In the new Assembly, it will be important that European legislation is properly scrutinised, and that we see the transposition of it. One of the major roles of the new Assembly will be its scrutiny of, and voting on, legislation in its totality; we must not forget the European legislation that is part of that. We have looked at the difficulties of huge amounts of European legislation and the difficulties of scrutinising that. Obviously, this is not about technical scrutiny; it will be about the content and the nature of the legislation. It might well be about areas where, perhaps, the Assembly might not wish to gold-plate European legislation in the same way as Parliament has done it. Whether or not we will have the time to do that is another consideration. Given the number of pieces of European legislation that currently go through the Assembly, or have European derivation, could officials tell us whether they have given any thought, as yet, to what the workload would be if we took on paragraph a of the extra additions? What would that mean for the number of committee meetings?

[10] It is also important in respect of the second point—paragraph b—because one of the key roles of the new Assembly will be to vote through budgets for everything. Any changes in budget will need to be seen and approved by the Assembly as a whole in a much more parliamentary process. In that case, the budget for this whole process will have proper scrutiny before it gets to the proper budget process. As I said yesterday, there will be a completely different process for us, as an Assembly, to deal with the budget in the future, and this will be one of those elements. However, it has an implication on timescales and meeting times. I will not raise the issue of whether we have sufficient time to do it, but knowing roughly how many extra meetings that would mean would be useful this stage. However, I certainly support paragraphs a and b.

[11] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Cytunaf â'r hyn a ddywedwyd, ond efallai y byddwn am roi gwelliant iddo, os yw Mike yn ei gynnig yn y ffurf hwnnw. Credaf y byddai'n gwbl amhosibl i'r pwyllgor archwilio'r holl ddeunydd sy'n dod o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd. Awgrymir yma mai'r unig beth a wnelem fyddai ystyried ac adrodd ar weithrediad y Llywodraeth o bolisi'r Undeb Ewropeaidd. Felly, mae'n awgrymu'n gryf mai'r unig feysydd yr edrychem arnynt fyddai deddfwriaeth Ewropeaidd yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli. Felly, credaf, efallai, mai'r unig beth y byddai angen i ni ei wneud fyddai cryfhau'r cymal, i'w gwneud yn glir mai dyma'r meysydd y byddem yn eu trafod ac na fyddai gennym yr amser na'r adnoddau i drafod materion yn ymwneud â'r polisi tramor, amddiffyn, mewnfudo ac ati. Mae'n rhaid inni ei gwneud yn gwbl glir mai dim ond yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli y byddem yn gwneud hynny. Serch hynny, credaf fod Mike yn gywir oherwydd, yn y Cynulliad newydd, bydd pwerau ychwanegol o safbwynt deddfu. Mae'n hynod o bwysig yn y cyd-destun hwnnw bod gan unrhyw gorff sy'n deddfu y gallu i graffu ar ddeddfwriaeth sydd ag effaith wirioneddol ar hynny, sef deddfwriaeth Ewropeaidd.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I agree with what has been said but perhaps I would amend it, if Mike is proposing it in that way. I think that it would be quite impossible for the committee to scrutinise all material emanating from the European Union. It is suggested here that we would merely consider and report on actions by the Government in terms of EU policy. Therefore, it strongly suggests that the only areas that we would consider would be European legislation on devolved matters. Therefore, I would think, perhaps, that all that we would need to do would be to strengthen that clause just to make it clear that these are the issues that we would cover and that we would not have the time or the resources to discuss matters such as foreign policy, defence, immigration and so forth. We should make it quite clear that we would only work in those devolved areas. However, I think that Mike is right, because the new Assembly will have additional powers in terms of legislation. It is extremely important in that context that any body that legislates has the ability to scrutinise legislation that has a real impact on that, namely European legislation.

[12] **Sandy Mewies:** I do not know, Mike, whether you were suggesting anything other than what was in the—

[13] **Michael German:** No; I am suggesting support, but I am trying to identify this for the reasons that I think that Ieuan was alluding to. If you took every single piece of European legislation coming to this committee, with a certain time commitment with extra meetings for the successor committee, and if you took it that you would be selective and that you could apply filters, you could produce that amount of work. So, I would like to know what work officials have done in looking at those extremes so that we have a feel for where in the middle we might be and how many extra meetings that may entail. At one extreme we might be talking about twice weekly meetings, I presume, and at another extreme we might be talking about weekly meetings. I do not know what the position is, but if you took the one extreme of taking on all the European legislation that the Assembly considers, you might well be talking

about meeting more than once a week.

[14] **Ms Daniel:** The idea behind suggesting these lists of functions is to allow the committee to do whatever it wants, in a way, within this remit. It will be for the committee and the third Assembly to decide on procedures and the extent to which they will want to look at every single piece of legislation or only at those that are the most strategic and important to Wales. No work has been undertaken to consider that, apart from comparisons with what happens at Westminster, Scotland and in other legislatures. The idea behind this list is to allow the committee to undertake these functions, if it so wishes, and to be permissive in its list of functions.

[15] **Michael German:** What are the cycles of meetings in Parliament and in Scotland? Are they both held weekly?

[16] **Ms Daniel:** The Scottish Parliament's European and External Relations Committee meets every two weeks and, in Westminster, I think that the European Scrutiny Committee meets every two weeks. They look through the whole list of legislation.

[17] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** However, there are some committees—

[18] **Ms Daniel:** They are additional, yes.

[19] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** [*Inaudible.*—it is quite extensive, I imagine, but I do not think that you are suggesting that.

[20] **Sandy Mewies:** No, I do not think that we are.

[21] **Michael German:** It is only one of the functions.

[22] **Sandy Mewies:** There will have to be a lot of debate on the process up to the time that it occurs, because we have already had difficulties with filtering what we do, and ensuring that what we look at is relevant to what we do. The point that I think that you are making is that we cannot look at everything—and we would not want to.

[23] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** My own view is that you can leave it even a little bit in limbo. The Assembly must give a clearer indication as to how often we think this committee should meet, because there is an implication for other committees.

[24] **Sandy Mewies:** I do not think that any committees yet know what cycle they will have in the third Assembly. That is the reality, is it not?

[25] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Yes, but it will be difficult for people to do all of that work in the three or four weeks after the election. It would be better if we could give an indication of the kind of frequency of meetings that we want now, which would then inform the process rather than leaving it all for when we all come back and asking, 'How often shall we meet?'. I find that a bit—

[26] **Sandy Mewies:** Perhaps we should turn that on its head and ask officials to consider this, because no-one knows yet what the cycle will be. The form will have to fit with what we need to do.

[27] **Nick Bourne:** Thank you, Chair; it is good to see you back. I endorse what Mike and Ieuan said and I thank Siân and Anna for the presentation. It is difficult to look at this in a vacuum without knowing what the other committee cycles will be. I feel that we will have to be more focused. In a way, we are unaware that there will be a quantum leap in the next

Assembly—not initially, perhaps, but it will build up, and the commitment of time needed from Members will be draining. So, much as I think that we will need to meet more frequently, we will probably have to be a bit more focused in what we do. It is such a broad canvas and Europe is getting more important as well. It will need to be more focused and, I suspect, more frequent.

[28] I also want to mention briefly that we also seem to fall down on the involvement of MEPs—and I do not know how to solve that conundrum. We would benefit greatly if we could get them to come to more meetings. I know that that ties in with the timings. I am very good at highlighting problems, but I do not offer too many solutions.

[29] **Rosemary Butler:** We noticed that yesterday.

[30] **Nick Bourne:** Oh, that is cheap, Rosemary. You are worthy of better. [*Laughter.*]

[31] **Sandy Mewies:** We have said that we could turn to video links with the MEPs.

[32] **Nick Bourne:** It would be a helpful way of solving that.

[33] **Sandy Mewies:** We must carry on with the involvement of the standing invitees, who have been very useful. The video link is one way of doing that.

9.20 a.m.

[34] **Rosemary Butler:** This is an interesting group of suggestions. The difficulty is that the work will build up, is it not? On 5 May, we will not suddenly be meeting every day. I would like it to be flexible so that we can increase or decrease the number of meetings as we choose. The difficulty at the moment is that the system is so rigid that you have to have a meeting at a particular time. The point has been made that trying to fit other meetings into the diary is difficult. The use of videoconferencing is very important. It is also important that there is flexibility in the days that we meet, so that other invitees can come along—even if we say that we will have a specific meeting once a quarter or once every six months where we know that everyone can come, because meeting people face to face is so much better. So, I just hope that we keep flexibility to allow us to increase the number of meetings, or not, as we choose. As Anna carefully put it, we can do what we like within this framework. I think that that is the way that we ought to keep it, if we can.

[35] **Sandy Mewies:** Before I bring Janet in, we have to remember that the number of meetings in the cycle will not go into Standing Orders. We do not have to put that in our Standing Orders, so that is how some of the flexibility works.

[36] **Janet Davies:** In relation to what Mike said about the definitions and guidelines you had to choose and what legislation you would want to look at, the things that the Committee of the Regions looks at might be a guide, because it is looking at things that affect regions and local government. It would not be exclusive, and there would not be time to look at everything that the Committee of the Regions chooses to look at, because it does not look at all legislation, but just picks certain things. The problem is that everything comes through so slowly from there. However, a list of the things that it will look at is published well ahead of time. It would probably be helpful to members of the Committee of the Regions to have some guidance, particularly after my experience last Friday. I felt totally lost at one point. Would it be helpful to look at what it is considering, and see what you want to take from it and what you want to add in?

[37] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes, I think that that would be useful. We would be looking at all sorts of issues and that could be one of them. There can sometimes be a feeling with things

like this that you are working in isolation. It is sometimes about getting a broader feel for what is going on. So, we can make a note of that. Are you finished, Janet?

[38] **Janet Davies:** Yes.

[39] **Christine Gwyther:** In this discussion, we have started to tie down how often we might have to meet, and it will be more often than monthly and less often than weekly. That has become clear from people's contributions. In relation to Standing Orders and picking up on what Rosemary was saying, I would like us to ensure that we can develop our own ad hoc working groups, as I think this afternoon's will be called. If that has to be incorporated in Standing Orders in some way, we need to ensure that this committee has the capability to do that.

[40] On the work stream that will have to begin next May in this committee, or its successor, we can look through the European forward look at the kinds of issues that might be coming up, because, after Christmas, officials will have to be working up certain areas. So, although we cannot dictate to the next Assembly what it scrutinises, we should at least enable it to have the work done beforehand, should it choose to scrutinise certain areas.

[41] **Sandy Mewies:** As I said before, there will be other areas, not just the Committee of the Regions. We look at the European Commission's work programme now to see what is happening there, and I am sure that that will continue.

[42] If Members have finished with questions, would you like to say anything, Siân, before I bring Anna in?

[43] **Ms Wilkins:** As I said at the beginning, the aim, under Standing Orders, would be to take on board what this committee sees as the role for its successor committee, and to write the Standing Order in such a way that it allows you to carry out all of those functions and develop the role, whether it is to do with legislation or whatever.

[44] As Sandy said, the frequency of the meetings is not a matter for the Committee on Standing Orders, but the committee is conscious of it. It is a bit of a jigsaw puzzle, because an awful lot will depend on the political balance of the third Assembly, whether the d'Hondt system will be used, or whether there will be agreement on the size of committees. That decision in itself will determine the frequency of meetings, but that is a whole other issue.

[45] **Ms Daniel:** To summarise—[*Inaudible.*]

[46] **Rosemary Butler:** Chair, can we have Ms Daniel's microphone on? None of the microphones are switched on.

[47] **Christine Gwyther:** I do not think that Anna's microphone is working.

[48] **Rosemary Butler:** They are not switched on. We cannot hear Anna or Siân.

[49] **Sandy Mewies:** The point is that no-one needs to touch the microphones.

[50] **Ms Daniel:** Is my microphone on yet?

[51] **Sandy Mewies:** It is now.

[52] **Ms Daniel:** In terms of some of the points that you have raised on the frequency of meetings and using the dossiers of the Committee of the Regions as a guide for the committee's work programme, these are issues that could be picked up in the legacy paper

that the committee will produce next spring. We can make some concrete recommendations for the committee to consider how it could work in the third Assembly.

[53] In terms of the proposal to the Committee on Standing Orders, on the functions of this committee, I think that Members have accepted the list in paragraph 7(a) to (f), and to add points 8(a) and (b), with a qualification to point (a) that it should relate only to devolved matters.

[54] I believe that you also agreed to make reference to the standing invitees, so we would ask the Committee on Standing Orders to ensure that the practice of inviting standing invitees to participate in meetings is allowed to continue, as well as allowing for ad hoc working groups, if possible. Let me make those two additional points.

[55] **Sandy Mewies:** Are we all happy with that?

[56] **Christine Gwyther:** No, Chair. Just to pick up on 8(a), I do not think that we should be scrutinising only devolved matters; we should also scrutinise those principles that will affect us as a devolved institution, so we may want to have an influence on a non-devolved issue. I do not think that you said that, Anna.

[57] **Sandy Mewies:** The working times directive and suchlike would be included in that, would it not?

[58] **Ms Daniel:** Yes, certainly. There is a difference between the implementation of legislation, which is undertaken only by the Welsh Assembly Government if it is a devolved matter, and looking at any EU legislation policy proposals and any other EU issues in paragraph 8(a).

[59] **Christine Gwyther:** I would like a stronger reference to that.

[60] **Ms Daniel:** We can remove reference to that, if it makes it easier.

[61] **Sandy Mewies:** Are we clear now on where we are going with that, because it is a valid point? I see that we are. We can move on now. Thank you, Siân and Anna.

*Cadarnhawyd cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol.
The minutes of the previous meeting were ratified.*

9.28 a.m.

Adroddiad y Prif Weinidog First Minister's Report

[62] **Sandy Mewies:** First Minister, I ask you to introduce your report.

[63] **The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** Thank you, Chair, and welcome back. I will refer briefly to the five diary events that have been listed here. I think that they are all worth a brief mention. I want to thank everyone who was involved in the launch of the international sustainable development framework, just across the way in the Senedd, with Hilary Benn, the Secretary of State for International Development, and Kandeh Yumkella, the elected Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. Although it is not the best-known part of the United Nations, I thought that it added a global relevance to our proceedings on that evening. The sums of money involved are small, because this is primarily not a devolved matter, but we have some capacity to act in this area, and there is a thirst in

Wales for us to do so. I want to thank Jon Townley in particular, who did 99 per cent of the work on arranging the successful launch, and will be responsible for a lot of the work of ensuring that the framework now proceeds. It was likewise for the Czech Republic launch, which was held in the same area, just outside this room. Peter Ferda, the new honorary consul, is opening an office in Cardiff. An honorary consul is not the same as a full-time consulate—and the Irish consulate is the only full-time consulate in Cardiff—but at least it will have a largely full-time office, under Peter Ferda. Most of the honorary consuls operate from home, but he is choosing not to do so, perhaps because the number of Czech nationals now working in Wales means that a greater volume of work will be required by the honorary consul.

9.30 a.m.

[64] On the Cape Verde islands, I am told that, because it is Portuguese, the correct pronunciation is with a silent 'e', as in French. That is the key difference when distinguishing Portuguese from Spanish. Cape Verde has a historic link, particularly with the port of Cardiff, and possibly other ports along the south Wales seaboard—the old coal-exporting ports. It wants a link with Wales, to some extent because of the history and tradition and the existence of a diaspora community from the Cape Verde islands in and around Cardiff. However, it also wants us to help it to achieve a better recognition of its diplomatic status as an independent country by the UK Government. Relations broke down around the time of the Falklands war because it would not allow refuelling of the expeditionary force, or at least that is what I was told. It has never been 'forgiven' for that. It also wants our assistance in applying for full EU membership. It is a country, in the sense of being an archipelago.

[65] Only one of the islands, I think São Vicente, has the historic link with Wales. The port of Mindelo on the island was the coal bunkering station for the Royal Navy in the 'good old days'. The Cape Verde society is reasonably active. We must consider how much effort we should and could put into that link. It is very keen on that link because it wants our assistance on those two matters. It sees a link with us as a way of helping it on EU membership and better recognition. I do not think that it has an embassy in Britain yet. It is an independent country, but it somehow thinks that it has not been properly recognised as such, particularly in Britain.

[66] On the forum on European affairs, I am unable to report on the whole day's proceedings because I was feeling ill that day with a chest infection and because I had to co-ordinate my opening speech to the Wales Forum on European Affairs with nipping in next door to the Corus headquarters. Phil Dryden, the manager of Corus Strip Products UK, had made his presentation to the workforce on the takeover announced the previous day, so I had to see him for an hour so that he could do the same presentation for me.

[67] I spoke just now to Phil Bird, who had organised the forum. It was very well attended and demonstrated that there is a thirst for further fora. We have gone a bit quiet on European fora, but given the attendance at Port Talbot, I would say that there is a thirst for continuing that pattern. Phil Bird said that he spoke to people as they were leaving and asked them whether he should assume that people would attend further fora because they had attended that forum. He said that work was needed on the forum pattern and asked whether people would keep coming if we continued to organise them. He wanted to know whether there was a wish to have more stakeholder-type meeting with wider civil society on European issues, and the answer, overwhelmingly, was 'yes'. I do not know whether Phil wants to add anything on that. If anyone wants to ask questions, Phil could come in on this.

[68] Turning briefly to Peter Mandelson's visit on Monday, I did not go to the Cardiff Business Club dinner. I was conserving my energy as I was not completely fit and well. However, I had a meeting with him at which we discussed the Galileo supervisory

headquarters bid and many other issues, such as the Tata bid for Corus, his position as trade commissioner in negotiating trade deals, and his relationship with the Brazil-Russia-India-China group, on which he said he was spending a huge amount of time. That is obviously relevant in light of the fundamental decision of the Corus board that it needed a link with what it calls the BRIC countries—Brazil, Russia, India and China, which are the new giants on the world scene—rather than a link with another European producer similar to Corus itself.

[69] I should mention Chongqing. Gary can elaborate on that, because he has returned from a big trade and education delegation there at the weekend. It was a successful visit to Chongqing, during which—again, I will try not to overuse the word ‘thirst’—the thirst by the Chongqing authorities to establish a link with Wales was palpable. I did not go on that visit, but Gary will answer any questions on that.

[70] I will now turn to the structural funds and assisted areas, if I can refer to them as one package, although it is better to consider them separately, and the assisted area boundaries outside Objective 1 in Wales. I do not know if we have enough copies of the map to circulate to everyone, but there was an announcement on those about a week ago. You will remember the long discussions that we have had in previous committee meetings, on our hammer-head pattern or device, as Europe thought it was, to get as much tier 2 assistance into north-east and south-east Wales as possible, and which it vetoed on this occasion. The new pattern for Wales is pretty good—particularly good for you, Chair, in Flintshire, as you will be aware. You can see from the pattern that the hammer heads have gone and that the areas are now much more in the shape of blocks, which is what Europe told us to do.

[71] The final pattern differs from the draft pattern in that we managed to take three wards out of the big expansion of the Flintshire tier 2 area and put them into south-east Wales, so that south-east Wales does not lose as much as it was originally going to lose—that is along the bay and in the part of Cardiff in which we are sitting. The areas in Flintshire that were taken out of the map were those with no or little business park potential, and with no industrial land, but significant population. We exchanged those for areas in south-east Wales where there is relatively little population, but where there are significant business parks—Creigiau, Pentyrch, Lisvane and Old St Mellons and Pontprennau—so that Cardiff Gate and junction 33 and the Eastern Gate business park came in. We still have a significant area on the Newport waterfront included, along both sides of the river Usk, but it is not in a hammer-head shape, because we now have a nice thick area connecting into Objective 1, and it is now connected to the eastern part of Cardiff, namely Trowbridge and Old St Mellons and Pontprennau, which adjoin Newport, and to Creigiau, Pentyrch and St Fagans, which adjoin the Pontypridd and Llantrisant area. So, the no-hammer-heads-objective of the European Commission has been achieved, and we have lost the minimum amount of business park potential. That is mostly along the coastal strip of Cardiff from the River Rhymney across to the River Ely.

[72] To switch to the other European aspect, which is much more recent, on Monday, we announced the successor to the Objective 2 and 3 programmes. You can forget about geography, as there are no wards involved in this—it covers the whole of east Wales. The sums of money are far less than before; with a 46 per cent cut in Wales and a 50 per cent cut overall in the UK. Therefore, our money has been cut slightly less. You have to think about to what purpose this money will be put. It is not much money; it is around £12 million a year for those seven years, which adds up to £82 million. That will be rebased at 2006 prices, so it will eventually come out as £85 million, but that still is roughly £12 million a year for seven years. The key issue is what it will be used for by stakeholders. We have to agree a programme, but the broad thrust of it is that it will be used to assist skills development, innovation, enterprise, reducing economic inactivity and so forth. We hope that those programmes can start next summer. They are behind the Objective 1 programme, because it has taken a long time to agree on the sums of money.

[73] My final point is on the announcement made by the Home Secretary yesterday on restrictions on migration from Bulgaria and Romania, although I cannot give any definitive answers on this. I have not had any official information on this, so I will just state what I understand the position to be, based on watching news reports and not on official communications, which is that a distinction is being made between Bulgaria and Romania and the A8 countries that joined the EU two years ago.

9.40 a.m.

[74] The distinction is that there will be restrictions. However, the restrictions themselves also make distinctions, not between Bulgaria and Romania, but between industries in this country. The food processing industry, and the agricultural side of food processing, that is, fruit and vegetable picking and packing, and so on, is still indicating strongly that it wants Bulgarians and Romanians to have free rights to immigrate, if that is the right word, to Britain. So, the Government has said that unskilled people can come in to work in agriculture and food processing, but, if people are not going into those industries, then they have to have a skill. How that will work, I cannot tell you, and we will have to supply a written document on that. I can attempt to answer questions, but I would not put to high a price on me taking part in a university mastermind challenge on John Reid's announcement yesterday; we will do our best.

[75] **Sandy Mewies:** Phil, did you want to add anything?

[76] **Mr Bird:** I just want to reiterate what the First Minister said about the event, which was extremely well attended. We had almost 100 people at the event in Port Talbot, which was on 'Wales: the Role of the Regions and Localities in Europe'. The audience was broad, in that we had people attending from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and from local authorities, as well as a large number of students from universities around Wales.

[77] As the First Minister said, and I will use his word again, there was definitely an enthusiasm and a thirst for more of these fora. In the next stage we intend to hold a smaller, more technical forum on the EU forward work programme, which we will hold in two locations—in north and south Wales—so that it is easier for people to attend. There will probably be 30 to 40 people attending those events, given the nature of the interest, but we also intend to write to all the people who attended, and others on our database, to invite them to come forward with suggestions for future subjects for a forum. There were six speakers at the forum, and we were particularly pleased that Kurt Gaissert came over from Baden-Württemberg, which is one of our partner regions. He spoke quite enthusiastically about the role of the regions from a Baden-Württemberg perspective. There were also speakers from the Committee of the Regions, including Councillor Williams from Anglesey, Eluned Morgan, and Andy Klom, so, all in all, it was a very well-received day.

[78] **Mr Davies:** I will say a few words on the trade and education delegation visit to Chongqing last week. As you know, we signed a memorandum of understanding with Chongqing at the beginning of March, and since then we have received two delegations into Wales from Chongqing and last week we took a trade and education delegation over. The trade delegation went to Shanghai and to Chongqing with 14 Welsh companies, nine of which came to Chongqing. There was a focus on environmental services, which is a key area that we have identified for collaboration with Chongqing, as there is lots of potential there. We held a seminar, which was arranged jointly by us and the environmental protection bureau in Chongqing. About 50 people attended, and it set out the broad range of the environmental services sector in Wales, and four of the companies specialised in that area. The seminar went very well, and some of the companies were then asked for meetings following the seminar. The companies themselves had already arranged one-to-one meetings with Chongqing

companies and, although no deals have been signed as yet, the prospects are very good, and there is significant market potential there.

[79] On the education side, we took representatives from the higher and further education sectors. I think that it is the first time that both higher and further education have come together in that sense. Again, it was a successful visit. We held a seminar for the international directors of about a dozen Chongqing universities. We visited three universities, South West Normal University, Chongqing Normal University and a school of tourism, and had meetings with them. All three of the universities expressed an interest in working with us on student and staff exchanges, on the development of joint courses—two plus one and two plus two—and so on.

[80] We also had a meeting with the education commission in Chongqing and again had a very positive reaction from it—there was keenness and an eagerness to work with Wales. There is no other part of the UK represented in Chongqing. We have received significant support from the British consulate and the British Council on the ground, and also in Wales. We also had a formal meeting with vice-mayor Tan from Chongqing, whose portfolio includes tourism. He was keen to add tourism to the areas identified in the memorandum of understanding, and he was keen to see us back there. What came across to me was the importance of personal relationships in China—it really makes a difference—and also the fact that this is a Government-to-Government relationship, which opens up all sorts of doors. We are also thinking of doing something around St David's Day in Chongqing. We have floated that idea with them, and they are very keen to see us back there. So, it has really taken off and we are putting a fair amount of effort into it, because the potential is so significant. We now have someone in the British consulate in Chongqing who is looking after Welsh affairs, and working with us.

[81] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Gary. Would Members like to have a report on the forum? I certainly would. It would be quite interesting to know what was said in the forum. I have received good reports from other people who attended. Would Members like to see that report circulated? I see that you would.

[82] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yng nghydestun y fframwaith datblygu cynaliadwy rhyngwladol, a yw'r Prif Weinidog wedi rhoi mwy o ystyriaeth i ddatblygu cysylltiadau agosach â Lesotho, gan fod cysylltiad traddodiadol eisoes yn bodoli rhwng Cymru a Lesotho? A oes modd i Lywodraeth y Cynulliad estyn cymorth ymarferol i Lesotho, ac a oes modd gwneud trefniadau cyfnewid ar wahanol lefelau?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: In the context of the international sustainable development framework, has the First Minister given more consideration to developing closer links with Lesotho, as a traditional link between Wales and Lesotho already exists? Would there be a means for the Assembly Government to provide practical support to Lesotho, and would we also be able to organise exchanges on various levels?

[83] O ran y trafodaethau a fu am fynediad Twrci i'r Undeb Ewropeaidd, yr oeddwn yn falch o weld fod yr adroddiad yn parhau i fod yn feirniadol o record Twrci ar hawliau dynol. Yr oedd cymal yn yr adroddiad yn galw ar Dwrci i gydnabod hlladdiad yr Armeniaid, ond mae'r cymal hwnnw wedi cael ei ollwng. Mae'n fater a drafodwyd yn y Cynulliad ac mae cefnogaeth draws-bleidiol i'r angen i gydnabod yr hlladdiad hwnnw, a chredaf fod y Prif Weinidog hefyd wedi bod mewn cyfarfodydd

In terms of the discussions regarding Turkey's accession into the European Union, I was pleased to see that the report remains critical of Turkey's record on human rights. There was a clause in the report calling for Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian genocide, but that has been dropped. This issue has been discussed in the Assembly and there is cross-party support for the need to acknowledge the genocide, and I believe that the First Minister has attended meetings to acknowledge that genocide. Can the

i gydnabod yr hil-laddiad hwnnw. A yw Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn gallu gwneud unrhyw beth ar y mater hwnnw?

Assembly Government do anything on that particular issue?

[84] Darllenais gyda diddordeb bod Jane Hutt, yn rhinwedd ei swydd fel y Gweinidog â chyfrifoldeb dros blant, wedi cyfarfod â Raun Kaufman, sydd wedi dioddef o awtistiaeth. Fel cadeirydd y grŵp amlbleidiol ar awtistiaeth, byddai gennyf ddiddordeb derbyn adroddiad o'r cyfarfod hwnnw. Ni wn a fyddai modd gofyn i Jane Hutt am adroddiad drwy Gadeirydd y pwyllgor hwn neu drwy'r Prif Weinidog, oherwydd mae'r hyn sydd gan Raun Kaufman i'w ddweud am ddulliau addysgu pobl sy'n dioddef o awtistiaeth yn hynod o bwysig.

I read with interest that Jane Hutt, as the Minister with responsibility for children, met with Raun Kaufman, who has suffered from autism. As chair of the all-party group on autism, I would be interested in receiving a report of that meeting. I do not know if Jane Hutt could be asked for a report through the Chair of this committee or through the First Minister, because Raun Kaufman's views on teaching methods for people suffering from autism are very important.

[85] **Y Prif Weinidog:** O ran Lesotho, yr hyn a ddywedasom yn y ddogfen i lansio'r strategaeth oedd y byddai'r cysylltiad gyda Lesotho o ran Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn parhau. Nid yw'r cysylltiad gyda Lesotho wedi cael ei arwain gan Lywodraeth y Cynulliad, ond gan gymdeithas sifil Cymru a'r eglwysi Cristnogol yn bennaf. Hen ffrind i mi, sef Elaine Morgan o Elai, gwraig Bob Morgan, cyn-arweinydd Cyngor Sir De Morgannwg os cofiaf yn iawn, a ddechreuodd y cyfan tua chwarter canrif yn ôl. Fel Llywodraeth, yr ydym wedi adeiladu ar y cysylltiad sy'n tarddu o gymdeithas sifil drwy roi ysgoloriaethau i athrawon ysgol—credaf fod cymaint ag 20 y flwyddyn yn awr yn mynd yno i ddysgu—gan eu bod yn dychwelyd yn well athrawon ysgol.

The First Minister: In terms of Lesotho, we said in the document to launch the strategy that the link with Lesotho would continue in terms of the Assembly Government. The link with Lesotho has not been led by the Assembly Government, but mainly by Welsh civil society and the Christian churches. An old friend of mine, Elaine Morgan from Ely, the wife of Bob Morgan, the former leader of South Glamorgan Council if I remember correctly, started it all about a quarter of a century ago. As a Government, we have built on the traditional link emanating from civil society by providing scholarships to schoolteachers—I think that as many as 20 per year now go to Lesotho to teach—because they return as better schoolteachers.

9.50 a.m.

[86] Byddwn yn ymestyn y cyfoeth a gânt o ran gwella'u hunain fel dinasyddion ac fel athrawon, yn ystyr eu gyrfa yn y diffiniad cul, gan y byddwn yn eu helpu i gymryd rhan mewn prosiectau eraill y tu allan i'r ysgoldy tra'u bod yn Lesotho am chwe mis neu flwyddyn. Nid ydym am gysylltu'r hyn a wnawn gydag Affrica islaw'r Sahara â gwlad Lesotho yn unig. Yr ydym am ymestyn y cysylltiad—nid canolbwyntio ar un wlad yn unig ond canolbwyntio ar rai o'r cysylltiadau eraill sydd ar gael. Ar yr ochr feddygol, ceir cysylltiad rhwng ardal Pontypridd ac ardal Mbale yn Uganda, a chysylltiad rhwng ysgol ddeintyddol yr ysgol feddygol yng

We will extend the wealth of experience that they have in improving themselves as citizens and as teachers, in the narrow definition of their careers, because we will be assisting them to participate in other projects outside the schoolhouse while they are in Lesotho for six months or a year. We do not want to link what we do with sub-Saharan Africa just with Lesotho. We want to extend those links—we should not just focus our attention on one country as there are other links available. On the medical side, there is a link between the Pontypridd area and the Mbale area in Uganda, and there is a link between the Cardiff school of medicine's dental school

Nghaerdydd a chyfadran feddygol prifysgol Makerere yn Uganda, ac yn y blaen. Felly, bydd hynny'n ymestyn ac yn parhau o ochr y Llywodraeth a cheisiwn wau'r hyn a wnawn gyda'r hyn mae'r gymdeithas sifil a'r eglwys Cristnogol yn ei wneud.

with the Makerere university medical faculty in Uganda, and so forth. Therefore, those links will be extended and continued by the Government and we will try to weave our activities with what the civil society and the Christian churches are doing.

[87] Yn ail, o ran Twrci, mae anghytundebau wedi codi yn y trafodaethau rhwng Twrci ac Ewrop. Mae un o'r agweddau y bu i chi ganolbwyntio arnynt, sef hawliau dynol, a'r hyn a ddigwyddodd i'r Armeniaid yn ystod y rhyfel byd cyntaf, yn rhan o'r anghytundebau sydd wedi codi. Yr un mwyaf allweddol ac amserol ar hyn o bryd yw'r un ynglŷn â Chyprus a'r hollt yn y wlad honno. Felly, mae llawer o anghytundebau sy'n mynd i achosi llawer o broblemau rhwng Twrci a'r Gymuned Ewropeaidd cyn y gallwch ddod at y cwestiwn mawr o safbwynt pryd y bydd Twrci'n ymuno. Yn sicr, nid yw'r drws wedi'i foltio na'i gau ac mae'r trafodaethau'n parhau. Serch hynny, mae'r pwyntiau anodd hyn yn rhan o'r agweddau a fydd yn peri i'r trafodaethau barhau am flynyddoedd.

Secondly, in terms of Turkey, there are some sticking points in the discussions between Turkey and Europe. One of the aspects that you mentioned, on human rights, and what happened to the Armenians during the first world war, contribute to the sticking points that have arisen. The most crucial and timely at present is the issue of Cyprus and the division in that country. Therefore, there are a number of sticking points that will cause a number of problems between Turkey and the European Community before you get to the big question of when Turkey will accede to the European Union. The door certainly has not been bolted or closed and discussions continue. However, these extremely difficult points form part of the aspects that will cause discussions to continue for a number of years.

[88] O safbwynt eich pwynt olaf, gallaf gyfleu'r neges i Jane Hutt ynglŷn â'r cyfarfod yr oeddech yn cyfeirio ato.

In terms of your final point, I can take that message back to Jane Hutt regarding the meeting that you referred to.

[89] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Derbyniaf yr hyn mae'r Prif Weinidog yn ei ddweud ynglŷn â'r cysylltiad â Lesotho, a deallaf y cymhelliad i ymestyn hynny, ond mae rhywbeth i'w ddweud am gael perthynas arbennig gydag un wlad lle cafwyd cysylltiad traddodiadol, er mwyn datblygu hynny.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I accept what the First Minister said about the link with Lesotho, and I understand his reasoning for extending that, but there is something to be said for having a special relationship with one nation where there is a traditional link, so that we can develop that.

[90] I droi'n benodol at y pwynt am Dwrci, yr hyn a oedd yn peri gofid imi oedd y ffaith bod yr alwad ar Dwrci i gydnabod hil-laddiad yr Armeniaid wedi'i ollwng yn ystod y trafodaethau hynny. A oes unrhyw beth y gall Llywodraeth Cymru ei wneud er mwyn ceisio sicrhau bod yr alwad honno'n cael ei hailsefydlu? Credaf ei bod yn bwysig ein bod yn sicrhau bod llais gan y Cynulliad, gan fod y mater hwn wedi'i drafod yn y Cynulliad.

To turn specifically to the Turkey issue, I was concerned that the call for Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian genocide had been dropped during those discussions. Is there anything that the Government of Wales can do to try to ensure that that call is reinstated? I think that it is extremely important that the Assembly's voice is heard, as this matter has been discussed in the Assembly.

[91] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Ni chredaf y gallwn wneud unrhyw beth, ond yr wyf yn siŵr y crybwyllir hynny yn ystod y blynyddoedd maith cyn i Dwrci ymuno fel

The First Minister: I do not think that there is anything that we can do, but I am sure that the matter will be raised in the many years before Turkey becomes a member state of the

aelod-wladwriaeth o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd. Ni chredaf fod gennym yr hawl i gynnwys eitem yn y trafodaethau diplomataidd a fydd yn para am o leiaf bum mlynedd. European Union. I do not think that we have a right to have an input into those diplomatic discussions, which will continue for at least five years.

[92] **Jeff Cuthbert:** As the local Assembly Member and Chair of the Objective 1 programme monitoring committee, last Monday, I was pleased—jointly with councillor Harry Andrews, the leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council—to welcome Peter Mandelson to Tredomen, which is in the centre of the Caerphilly borough. He had a good meeting with around 40 local businessmen, and he addressed them on the issues of European support. He made the interesting point that he had never met any businessman who had asked him for more regulation, but he made it clear that it was his intention to do whatever he could as the trade commissioner to ease the relationship between businesses and Europe, so that businesses could grow. All those businesses were pleased to report that they had all had financial support, in one way or another, through our membership of the European Union and it was a positive meeting, which was well reported in the *Western Mail*. I was concerned by how that might appear, but the report seemed fairly accurate.

[93] I appreciate what you have said about Bulgaria and Romania, First Minister, and that you have not received official communications, so this is based on what we have heard in the press. I have general issues about not having an open-door policy, but I was a little concerned when it was said that those with particular skills could apply to come, apart from general labourers for fruitpicking and things like that. I have expressed concerns to this committee before about the impact that this appears to be having on the training of young people in Wales in craft skills. It seems that some employers are more reliant on eastern European skilled workers, and are cutting back in terms of their demands for skills training. I appreciate that this overlaps into Jane Davidson's and Andrew Davies's portfolios, but I wonder whether there are things that we can do to try to ensure that any movement of those skilled workers does not have adverse effects on the training of our young people in those craft skills.

[94] **The First Minister:** This is the \$64,000 question about any form of migration across national borders, whether it is of Mexicans into the USA or the A8 immigrants coming into Germany, Britain and so forth—is there any displacement? At one level, that displacement may be of people who might otherwise benefit from welfare to work programmes. It may make employers able to tap into a labour supply of welders, plumbers and so forth. If they can pick them up by getting an agency to send 10 Polish plumbers over, why would they pay to train locally?

[95] If you are talking about the building industry, the shortage in the building industry in parts of the UK—London and the south east of England particularly—means that it will take every single building worker and building apprentice that it possibly can, on top of the Polish plumbers, Czech carpenters and so forth. The same would apply to Bulgarians and Romanians. As far as I am aware—Phil Bird has brought me an official note, so I am pleased to say that I am not relying completely on press reports now—Romanian and Bulgarian workers with high levels of skills and experience will continue to be admitted, as they are now, under the highly skilled migrants programme. So, in the building industry, we will probably want every building worker from eastern Europe that we can get, otherwise, we will not be able to deliver the Olympic Games in 2012, the widening of the M25, the completion of terminal 5 at Heathrow, the cross-link programme and all the huge construction programmes that are linked with the Olympics or that we hope can be completed in time for the Olympics and so forth.

[96] The impact on what might be called factory skills, like welding, might be slightly different. In terms of the impact in Wales, and in the Welsh Valleys, I think that the point that you made before was on welding programmes and suchlike, rather than on building industry

skills such as those of plasterers, plumbers, electricians and so on, where there is a huge shortage. The restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants are based on their being skilled, and if unskilled, only in those two industries where the employers have been saying, 'Please, please can we have more of them', which are agriculture and food processing. I should have mentioned this earlier—it is an aspect that I completely forgot about—but genuinely self-employed people will be able to come here freely from Bulgaria and Romania.

10.00 a.m.

[97] **Nick Bourne:** Partly based on the issues that have just been raised by Jeff, and Rhodri's response, I am concerned about the vision of the free movement of workers and of people in Europe, and saying that this is so that we can build the M25. That does not seem to be what this should really be about. I am concerned about the restrictions that are being imposed, because, in his statement, the Home Secretary quite rightly said that there is no way in which we can send these people home to Bulgaria or Romania; the only possibility is to fine them or their employers. I cannot see how this will work. Under the EU rules, they have every right to be here. I understand that there is a seven-year transition period, and I know that this is not illegal, but I have doubts about how it will work. I probably take a different stance from many in my own party on this, but I would have thought that the evidence of the impact of the accession of the last 10 countries—eight from the old eastern Europe—to the union has been wholly beneficial in economic terms, with few problems. I cannot understand why we have brought in these restrictions. Has there been an input from Wales to say that we have had no problems as a result of the last influx from member states? Have we queried why this is happening, because I cannot understand it?

[98] **The First Minister:** There has been no input from Wales on this. Well, there may have been input from Welsh MPs or from the Wales Office, but there was certainly no input from us. I am not aware of any input from Wales on this. Employers from Wales may have voiced their pleas, as part of the food-processing industry manufacturers' federation, for Bulgarians and Romanians to be allowed to immigrate. I think that I can say that companies such as RF Brookes in Rosemary's constituency and Memory Lane Cakes in Cardiff North would be strongly of the view that there should be no restrictions on allowing the new A2 immigrants to continue to come in, because they praise to the skies the work ethic of those people who have arrived from Poland, Hungary and so on. They say that it has had a beneficial effect, it provides yeast within the workforce, and so everyone is lifted by their strong work ethic. They are willing to go on any training programmes, to take on additional responsibilities, as well as to work overtime and all of the things that you would expect from people who arrive with only a few bob in their pocket. So, I do not want to be the Home Secretary's spokesperson here; I am not in a position to do that, because we have not had any direct contact with the Home Office on this, to be honest.

[99] **Nick Bourne:** There was a second, wholly unrelated question. First, I apologise, because it was not until I looked at the action column that I recalled that I should have given you some information on modulation, and on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals directive in order for you to be able to answer a question that I asked last time. However, I asked another question last time about the Brazil, Russia, India and China comparators on the growth figures. It was agreed that we could have those in addition to the figures for Japan and the US. Have we got anywhere on those?

[100] **Mr Davies:** I took that to mean that that comparison would be made in any future reports. I was not aware that you were asking for the figures for the last period.

[101] **The First Minister:** Shall we supply that in writing? I am sorry that it is not in the report today. We will note that as an action point. Phil was also going to give some additional information about Turkey.

[102] **Mr Bird:** I cannot comment on the Armenian question, but I would like to make one factual point. The commission's annual progress report on Turkey, Croatia and the western Balkans will be published on 8 November. Attached to that will be a report on general absorption capacity as well as a future enlargement strategy paper. That was just for information on the next stage with Turkey. It is likely that that will then roll forward to the December council for discussion.

[103] **Michael German:** At the last meeting, when we talked about the convergence programme, I asked the First Minister about the number of items within the new funding programmes that would be within the control and remit of the Welsh Assembly Government. I got the impression that nearly all of them would be. As you know, some concerns are being expressed in parts of Wales about the way in which we are channelling people into a framework that may be too rigid. I think that I may have a practical example of that.

[104] For the past six months or so, I have been working with the prison service in Wales along with Careers Wales, the national offender management service, and the probation and housing services to look at one of the major problems facing us in Wales: the re-offending rate of prisoners is very high and we do not succeed in getting people into jobs. The number of people who come out of prison and whom we get into work is very small. There has been no tracking process in the UK for people who come out of prison, to help them into jobs. The programme that the prison service in Wales was looking at, involving all the prisons in Wales, was going to fit into the new structure within a strategic framework.

[105] I now look at the thematic frameworks that the Government has provided—the European social fund frameworks, of which there are seven for Wales—and the project that I have described does not fit into any of them. You could turn corners and say that we will try to do a bit of this and a bit of that, but that does not address one of Wales's major social problems. The fact that we do not have enough room in our prisons has been a headline item, and one way of dealing with that is by getting people into meaningful employment and training. I have asked the First Minister before about the link between the two. There is a severe difficulty in getting people to acquire the right skills and getting them into employment. There is a system that the prison service has developed with NOMS to deal with that problem, which would require European funding, yet the convergence frameworks laid out before us do not provide us with that pathway.

[106] I do not expect the First Minister to give me a detailed answer on that. That would not be appropriate, but could he take this away and provide the committee or me with a note on whether such a major project—which is not a project, but actually a major strategic framework—involving housing federations, the probation service, the whole NOMS empire, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus and the prison service could fit into a potential framework? This programme should be addressing that.

[107] **The First Minister:** I will ask Damien to respond in a second, but I think that you put your finger on it when you said that it is not a project; it is a much wider issue. I wish to make some general comments that relate, in a way, to what Nick Bourne said. It is certainly true that there is a huge shortage of skilled labour in the half a dozen key construction skills in this country, and the prospect is that this will get worse over the next 10 years, as we have a huge infrastructure renewal programme for schools and hospitals. Nick may disagree, but I maintain the view that I expressed earlier in relation to big construction projects, especially those in the London area, some of which are directly connected to the Olympic Games and so on, which is that this cannot be done without A8 immigration, and nor can it be done without a major effort in the UK. The particular problem, which you have referred to in questions in the Chamber, of the fact that you cannot get fully motoring on any sort of apprenticeships or a format because prisoners cannot go out on building sites as things stand could, theoretically,

be turned into a project. However, I am not aware of it having become a project yet, and I think that you have confirmed that. The prison service may wish to turn it into a project, and there would be considerable benefit in doing so. Damien, do you want to add to that?

[108] **Mr O'Brien:** Yes. We have had a response from the prison service to the consultation on the convergence programme, along with 130 other responses, which we are currently analysing. We will take the issues that they raise on board. We need to be able to anchor activity somewhere within the programme, but that does not mean that we cannot be flexible in the way in which we support projects under the new programmes. We are moving to a situation in which we will have far broader priorities. For example, we will have one priority with regard to getting people into work. The project that you outlined picks up skills issues, and that is one way of helping people into employment. However, it also picks up on issues of social inclusion and so on.

10.10 a.m.

[109] The aim would be to anchor that activity within one of these broader priorities, while recognising that we will now have the scope to draw in actions and activities from other priorities. We also have the scope under the new programmes to utilise what is called the 10 per cent flexibility, where, within the European social fund programmes we can spend 10 per cent of the money on capital, and, within the European regional development fund programmes, we can spend 10 per cent of the money on people-related issues. That is a flexibility that we hope to use to encourage more joined-up action.

[110] We are currently consulting on the strategic frameworks. We are consulting until the end of October, and have a meeting with the external stakeholders group on 7 November. We will take stock of the comments that are received, including those from the prison service.

[111] **The First Minister:** One other point that I should have mentioned earlier is that there is a difference of view between the European Commission and the British Government on the question of Romanian and Bulgarian immigration. Given that the actual figures for immigration from the A8 countries were so much higher than that strange estimate of 13,000 that got into the public domain from, I think, a partially Home Office-funded university estimate, the British Government may feel more nervous this time around. It is probably saying, 'Oh my God, if that figure was so much below what happened, we do not want to give estimates for Romanian and Bulgarian immigration in case we are as wildly out as the first estimate was for the A8 countries'. The commission's view is that the historic links of the Romanians and Bulgarians with southern Europe are so strong that almost all Romanian and Bulgarian immigration will go to southern Europe, namely to Spain, Italy and southern France. That is where the historic links of those countries are. Whether that is right or not, I do not know, but the commission takes the view that, if you had an open-door policy in Britain, you would struggle to get many Bulgarians and Romanians to come, because they will all want to go to Spain, Italy and France. Rightly or wrongly, that is the view of the commission.

[112] **Janet Davies:** I have a short question, Chair, on the draft assisted areas map. Will you clarify—

[113] **The First Minister:** It is not draft now; it is final.

[114] **Janet Davies:** Sorry.

[115] **The First Minister:** Sorry, you are right. It has yet to be rubber-stamped in Europe.

[116] **Janet Davies:** Perhaps you know more than we do. Will you clarify why Creigiau, St

Fagan's and Penttyrch are now included because, on the surface, they seem to be quite prosperous areas, and, apart from a small part at the eastern side of Penttyrch, there is nothing there in the way of business parks?

[117] **The First Minister:** That is a simple question with a simple answer. It is not based on the prosperity of the individual ward; it is based on how much business park potential there is in the ward and how small the population is. Therefore, you are looking for a big business park and a small population, not a prosperous or a poor population, because it is based on its adjacency to the Objective 1 area. You have a massive business park potential at junction 33; it is one of the biggest prospective business parks in Wales, with a small population, which is perhaps the basis for it. The same applies to a lesser extent to the other two wards in Cardiff that have come into the latest adjustment: Pontprennau, and Lisvane and Old St Mellons. You would not say that Lisvane and Old St Mellons were a byword for deprivation, either.

[118] **Christine Gwyther:** My question is on structural funds, First Minister. The announcement has been made that Wales will be auditing its own structural funds programmes, which is good news and is a vote of confidence for our financial rigour. However, I have been involved with applicants in previous programmes who have fallen foul of the audit process and have had a difficult time getting through, often through no fault of their own. What plans are we putting in place to ensure that applicants will have a financial toolkit, if you like, and to ensure that the way in which they audit their projects will be how we want it for our financial auditing? I am sure that it will be rigorous, which is a good thing.

[119] **The First Minister:** I wonder whether you could indicate whether the difficulties that you are aware of in terms of auditing and form filling were on the European social fund side or the European regional development side. My reason for asking is that the self-auditing approval that we now have does not apply to the European social fund, only to the regional development fund. This does not permit us to action anything to simplify European social fund applications and they are usually the ones about which people have said that they have been sent right round the twist in trying to cope with the volume of form filling and audit procedures and so on. The danger is, if that is the problem that you are referring to, that there is no prospect of it getting any better in the future through the self-audit business because that only applies to the regional development fund.

[120] **Christine Gwyther:** Do you want me to respond, Chair, before Damien comes in? The specific problems related to INTERREG funding. However, I think that the principle applies that if we are to be in charge of our own auditing, we have to ensure that all project applicants know exactly what their responsibilities are before they enter the project timetable.

[121] **The First Minister:** I will ask Damien to come in—I knew that there was a third one that I should have thought of.

[122] **Mr O'Brien:** INTERREG is funded through the European regional development fund, so the contract of confidence covers that as well as the mainstream ERDF programmes. As part of the new programmes, WEFO is re-orientating its operations somewhat to put more of a focus on supporting project ideas during the development phase and providing aftercare services to projects, so that projects do not unknowingly fall foul of the audit regulations. We are also, as part of the strategy for the new programmes, aiming to try to support larger projects. There will still be smaller projects within the system, but we want to try to get projects to be more joined-up, in a way that gives them the capacity to meet the audit requirements.

[123] The audit requirements for European structural funds are quite tight. We need to satisfy the European Commission that we have systems in place; we have satisfied the

commission in terms of ERDF and we now need to do so in respect of ESF. Having larger projects will mean that the projects will, hopefully, have more capacity to ensure that those requirements are met. It is an ongoing challenge for WEFO to work with projects to ensure that they understand the requirements of the regulations and have the support that they need to implement them. Things have improved quite significantly over recent years, as is evidenced by DG Regio's contract of confidence. We hope to move forward soon on the same basis in terms of the European social fund.

[124] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you. That completes the questions, First Minister.

[125] **Mr O'Brien:** May I just correct one piece of information that I gave to Mike? The next meeting of the post-2006 external stakeholders' group is on 8 November, not 7 November.

[126] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you.

10.19 a.m.

Adolygiad Polisi: Oxfam Cymru Policy Review: Oxfam Cymru

[127] **Sandy Mewies:** This item is a continuation of the process of gathering evidence for the review of global and European citizenship education. Steve Brooks and Rhodri Griffiths are coming forward to the table for this item. I think that the document has been circulated to all Members, either electronically or in hard copy.

[128] **Christine Gwyther:** I do not have that document.

[129] **Sandy Mewies:** We will try to get some more and get them circulated, but I believe that it has also gone out electronically.

[130] Welcome Steve and Rhodri, and thank you for coming. I invite you to begin your presentation and then Members will ask questions.

[131] **Mr Brooks:** We welcome the opportunity to inform the committee's considerations on this subject. Before I hand over to Rhodri, I will say a few brief words by way of introduction.

[132] Oxfam has been involved in development education for over 30 years, producing educational materials for teachers in the classroom. Over the last 10 years in particular, we have been advocating for the inclusion of global citizenship in the national curriculum in Wales, Scotland and England, with some success. For Oxfam, there are three key elements of responsible global citizenship—knowledge and understanding, skills, and values and attitudes. These are the three key elements that underpin Oxfam's teaching methodology and our advocacy work in this area. Rhodri will now put some meat on the bones and expand on some of these points.

[133] **Mr Griffiths:** Thank you for inviting me to give evidence about education for sustainable development and global citizenship. It is a mouthful—it is referred to as ESDGC. I want to share some of what I know, but I cannot cover everything. ESDGC is vibrant, it is not static, and it is evolving as I speak. I speak to you this morning wearing two hats. I have my personal views on ESDGC as a teacher, and my views as an education adviser with Oxfam Cymru. I will speak to you for about 15 minutes, and I will then refer to my paper and take questions.

[134] In Wales, we have education for sustainable development and global citizenship. So, what is ESDGC? Oxfam has worked with strategic partners across Wales—including, latterly, on the Welsh Assembly Government ESDGC panel—for over 15 years to promote the principles and good practice of education for global citizenship. We warmly welcome the significant commitment over recent years shown by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Qualification, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales—ACCAC—and Estyn, the Welsh inspectorate.

[135] In Wales, those involved in the implementation and delivery of ESDGC are guided by three key documents. The first document was published in 2002, and it is available for teachers in schools. It contains the principles of ESDGC, its key concepts and examples of good practice.

[136] **Sandy Mewies:** Can you make sure you speak into your microphone, because I am not sure that everyone can hear? Also, we have received your paper, so you can assume that we have read it; it has been circulated to all Members. You are free to pick up on some points and expand further on them.

[137] **Mr Griffiths:** Okay, thank you. The second document is the sustainable development action plan. In response to that the education for sustainable development and global citizenship strategy for action has just been published, and you have it before you. Wales is justifiably proud of its decision to develop an ESDGC strategy. It is ambitious, visionary, and not without its challenges, but it reflects Wales's desire to completely transform the mindset of future Welsh generations.

[138] ESDGC has been built on the premise that good education is not just about an acquisition of knowledge, but that all learning should be framed with the development of skills and an appreciation of attitudes and values. ESDGC is about questioning, critical thinking and exploration. Above all, it is about caring. It is about saying to children, pupils, students and young people that it is important to care, whether that is caring about poverty, family, friends, pandas or the Brazilian rainforest. It is the realisation that caring is also political, and that when young people are passionate about an issue, they want to become active and find out how that issue can be resolved.

[139] They move from becoming critical thinkers to becoming constructive thinkers. So, ESDGC has a set of underlying principles and concepts. However, what does ESDGC look like in our schools? It could involve, as part of school planning, children in the infant department of Ysgol Penybryn in Caernarfon finding out about the life of an Ethiopian child, and exploring the similarities and differences between their lives and her life. It could involve children at Ysgol Rhyd-y-grug in Rhondda Cynon Taf inviting their local MP, Dai Havard, to school as part of the global campaign for education, asking him why there is such a shortage of teachers in Africa and handing him a tree of hope—very simply, a list of rights that children should enjoy. It could also involve children from Ysgol Gwaungynfi in Gwynedd, exploring fair trade, following the journey of a banana and finding out how bananas reach their supermarket, who is responsible for growing bananas, how they are transported, who receives what for their efforts, whether those responsible earn a sustainable wage and how banana growers benefit from belonging to fair trade co-operatives. It could involve pupils from Bedwas Comprehensive School investigating organic vegetables with the help of the Organic Wales Centre in Aberystwyth, or making paper from recycled paper pulp with the Forestry Commission, or designing wind turbines as part of a technology project. ESDGC is all of those things. The real challenge for ESDGC is turning policy into practice.

[140] In September 2006, the education for sustainable development and global citizenship strategy was launched. I cannot do that strategy justice in 15 minutes. It is comprehensive and

sets out how ESDGC will be integrated into schools, into youth and further education and work-based learning, into higher education and into adult and continuing education.

[141] I will focus on the schools sector, although each sector is of equal importance. However, it is my personal view that if ESDGC policy can become embedded practice in schools, then there will be a significant impact on other sectors. So, what are the strengths of this ESDGC strategy? It is ambitious and it needs to be; it needs to reflect the pace of change. Young people are being asked to adapt to a rapidly changing world, so we need a strategy that reflects that. It is visionary because it recognises that sustainable development and global citizenship are entwined and that issues relating to sustainable development have human consequences. ESDGC is visionary because it is issue-led. Young people see the relevance because the issue is real for them; it is about the things that they care about. ESDGC is also visionary because it hands creativity back to the teacher, to echo the words of Jane Davidson in 2002. She described it as being inspiring for teachers and for learners alike, and I agree.

[142] It is challenging for all the teachers, schools, colleges, institutions and organisations involved because it is not just about curriculum change. As the document states:

[143] 'It advocates an integrated approach to the development of ESDGC from subject content through to teaching and learning and school ethos and management'.

[144] It is inspirational. The strategy embraces educational change whether curriculum or pedagogy based. ESDGC features strongly in the foundation stage, in the learning pathways 14-19 framework, in the Welsh baccalaureate, the Welsh Joint Education Committee's AS and A2 on world development and in the AS in citizenship studies. ESDGC will feature more strongly in the national curriculum orders following the curriculum review, which will be implemented in September 2008.

10.30 a.m.

[145] Estyn has produced further guidance on how ESDGC is to be inspected and how schools can self-evaluate their progress using ESDG school frameworks. ESDGC embraces pedagogical change; it encourages critical thinking. Pupils learn to question and justify, and state their opinions and explore; it is learning by doing. It talks about participatory methodology, and elements of the ESDGC are being used to look closely at the transition between primary and secondary education.

[146] Finally, it is necessary. I quote from the document:

[147] 'The world in which we live is the only one that we have—its resources are finite. To live sustainably and to be globally aware of the impact of our own lifestyle is, therefore not an option but a necessity.'

[148] I will focus on two challenges for schools, both of which are stated in the paper that I wrote. I quote from the document:

[149] 'ESDGC is currently being delivered inconsistently in schools in Wales. There are examples of excellence and areas where little is happening. Mostly this is reliant on enthusiastic individual teachers or visionary head teachers.'

[150] Therefore, why is there this inconsistency? The ESDGC concepts are complex. We know global issues to be complex; so, knowledge of how sustainable development and global citizenship interrelate needs clarifying and simplifying. In our schools, we have fair trade being taught more and more widely. It is a great example of successful ESDGC teaching, because it covers the ESDGC concepts of interdependence, needs and rights, diversity,

sustainable change, quality of life, values and perceptions. Teachers can see how examining fair trade issues relates to the concepts; it is clear.

[151] There is also the question of commitment and trust. Schools must receive assurances that ESDGC is here to stay, that it is an educational priority, seen by the Welsh Assembly Government as long-term, that it receives cross-party support and will not change next May. Schools have been bombarded with initiatives in the last 15 years. Some have stayed and some have fallen by the wayside. Teachers need to see this commitment, so that they can plan for it effectively in the long-term.

[152] Support for teachers is developing, but it must continue. There needs to be assured funding in Wales for development education centres that support ESDGC teaching in schools, which annually seem to have to clamber for funding. There needs to be continued support for Cyfanfyd, the Development Education Association for Wales, and for the Department for International Development's enabling effective support strategy. There needs to be a greater commitment to bilingual ESDGC resource production and the Welsh Assembly Government's ESDGC website.

[153] There is a time factor. Schools are still reeling after years of curriculum change. There is still an over-focus on assessment, school performance and school league tables. This perpetuates a climate of competition rather than co-operation. ESDGC should lie at the heart of every school's ethos and mission statement, and should feature in all aspects of school life.

[154] In terms of planning, ESDGC is cross-curricular and not limited to certain curriculum subjects. It may be easier to plan and manage initiatives within primary education than secondary education, but overcoming subject-based, modular, syllabus-driven methods of working and timetable implications is achievable.

[155] In respect of the second challenge, current evidence indicates that the majority of schools embarking on ESDGC are tackling the green elements—the sustainable development elements—and then finding it difficult to expand their actions to consider the full range of ESDGC. Basically, that means that, in our schools, there is more sustainable development happening than global citizenship. I think that that is slightly misleading. I think that schools are generally unaware just how much global citizenship they are doing. Most reflect cultural diversity and ensure that learning materials reflect a multi-cultural society. Most, if not all, have school councils, as it is now a legal requirement, allowing pupils to be included in most decisions affecting their school.

[156] Many schools have strong community links, and examine global issues as part of their personal and social education curriculum. The majority adhere to equal opportunities and have anti-bullying and anti-racism policies and strategies in place, as well as policies and strategies to improve behaviour. However, it is true that education on sustainable development is easier to introduce in school than education on global citizenship. ESD seizes upon the legacy of environmental education. The results may be more tangible and quickly visible, such as recycling paper, pollution, waste awareness and water use. We need to build on these positive first steps and, as the document says, aspects such as global poverty, rights and responsibilities, energy usage and climate change are lesser explored aspects of ESDGC that need to be developed and mainstreamed.

[157] Some teachers lack confidence or feel that they lack expertise, and want more grounding in teaching controversial issues such as poverty and diversity. There is a need for training, support and appropriate bilingual resource materials to help them.

[158] We must remember that Wales and other countries cannot afford the luxury of examining issues related to sustainable development and global citizenship in isolation. The

issues are so inextricably linked that it makes no sense to countless young people who realise that their actions, the actions of others in the world and the actions of those in government, have a profound impact in environmental and practical terms on the lives of people across the globe.

[159] I will conclude by examining what will be needed. We will need commitment from all involved, particularly from those that steer. We will need commitment from the Welsh Assembly Government, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Estyn, advisers and local education authorities to ensure that ESDGC is built into their educational strategic plans. We need perseverance and dedication, because there will be significant hurdles. We need to hold the faith, as this will take time to integrate effectively. We need clear thinking and clarity. We need to demystify ESDGC for schools and build on existing good practice by providing a body of evidence. We need to identify common ESDGC standards and success frameworks that are clear and simple to understand. We need to consider quality marks, but be mindful not to denigrate ESDGC to a tick-box evaluation for schools. There will need to be training—ESDGC is already built into the revised qualified teacher status standard—in terms of continuing professional development and initial teacher education. There needs to be scope to include it into middle-management awards and the headteachers training qualification.

[160] There needs to be effective communication. We need uniformity. Curriculum and concepts need to be conveyed simply and clearly, and be relevant to all, so that we are singing from the same hymn sheet. There needs to be support, whether it is financial support, human expertise or material support.

[161] Finally, the passion is out there. Teacher commitment is growing. This is what it is about—it is important enough to go through the hard times for. ESDGC is not the reason I came into Oxfam—it is the reason I came into teaching.

[162] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you for that, Rhodri.

[163] **Christine Gwyther:** Thank you for the good presentations from Steve and Rhodri. I feel bad that I have not read the Welsh Assembly Government document.

[164] **Sandy Mewies:** I am told that it is an interim document, and that the posh version is on the website.

[165] **Christine Gwyther:** Right, I will print it off at lunchtime. I have seen citizenship teaching in action. There is a very good organisation called Global Connections where I live and work. It does very good work in schools. It is all about empathy, which is very difficult to teach. It is best if you can learn it on your mother's knee—or your father's knee; that is the best time to learn empathy. Teaching it in the classroom is a very skilled and time-intensive operation. Should it be done by teachers, or should organisations be brought into the classroom to help to deliver that message?

10.40 a.m.

[166] **Mr Griffiths:** I feel that there is the ability within the classroom; there are teachers who have the ability to teach empathy. It is particularly strong in primary and secondary schools. It is a question of trusting teachers to have those skills, to give children a voice, to present materials in an unbiased way, and to enable them to draw out the opinions of children. I mentioned in my paper what I call 'the hidden electorate'. Anyone who has stood up in front of a class of children will have found that there is a significant minority, or, on occasion, a majority, of children who are quite reticent to state their opinions. Whether that is down to the teaching or the environment of the classroom, it is there. The real skill of a teacher is to bring

out those views, to give that child the confidence to state his or her views regardless of what it is about, and to create that issue-led momentum that makes that child want to state his or her opinion about something and then build on it.

[167] My view is that far too many children leave at the age of 16 without that experience. If you are looking at the people who do not exercise their right to vote, I think that you will find that quite a large proportion of them were never given the chance to learn or state their opinions, or have confidence in them.

[168] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Mae fy nghwestiwn yn ymwneud â'r ardaloedd yng Nghymru sy'n gweithredu'r mentrau hyn. Ceir ffigurau yma ynglŷn â faint o ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd sy'n cymryd rhan ar hyn o bryd. Serch hynny, nid yw'n dweud, ar sail ddaearyddol, lle mae'r rheiny'n debygol o fod. A oes ardaloedd daearyddol lle caiff y gwaith hwn ei glystyru, sy'n golygu eu bod, efallai, yn llwyddiannus mewn rhai rhannau o Gymru ond heb fodoli mewn rhannau eraill? Ym mha ardaloedd yng Nghymru, neu ym mha ysgolion ac ym mha siroedd y maent ar hyn o bryd? Byddai'n ddefnyddiol inni gael gwybod, er mwyn gweld a oes ardaloedd lle ymdrechir i ehangu'r defnydd a mynd i mewn i'r ardaloedd newydd.

Ieuan Wyn Jones: My question relates to the areas in Wales that are implementing these initiatives. There are some figures here as to how many primary and secondary schools are participating at present. However, it does not tell us, on a geographical basis, where those schools are likely to be located. Are there geographical areas where this work is clustered, which means, perhaps, that they are successful in some parts of Wales and non-existent in others? Which areas of Wales, or which schools and which counties are participating at present? It would be useful for us to know, so that we see whether there are areas where an effort is being made to roll out the use and to go into new areas.

[169] **Mr Griffiths:** I do not really have that information. I know that there are pockets of excellence in Wales. Christine Gwyther mentioned Global Connections; in that area, in Pembrokeshire, there is a tremendous amount of good work taking place as regards ESDGC. I know that in north Wales, around Bangor, where the World Education Centre is another development education centre, there is significant work happening.

[170] **Sandy Mewies:** Can I just ask you to speak into the microphone because we are not hearing you?

[171] **Mr Griffiths:** It is interesting to me. The development education centres are in rural areas rather than in urban areas, which is something that I have tried to get my head around before now. You look at the development education centres in England and see that some of the larger ones, such as the Reading International Solidarity Centre and the Birmingham Teachers in Development Education centre, are in established urban centres. It seems that we do not have that in Wales, but that is not to the detriment of ESDGC teaching. There is good ESDGC teaching taking place throughout Wales, but it is difficult to look at patterns and isolate why something is happening in one place better than elsewhere. I would say that the development education centres are significantly inputting in schools and giving support. Obviously, there is also the enabling effective support initiative, so where fora have been established within EES, they also show developing signs of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

[172] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Mae gennyf gwestiwn arall. Byddai'n ddefnyddiol inni gael gwybod ymhle yn ddaearyddol y mae'r ysgolion. Nid wyf yn gwybod a yw'r wybodaeth honno ar gael. Un mater arall yr hoffwn ei godi yw i ba raddau y mae

Ieuan Wyn Jones: I have another question. It would be useful for us to know where these schools are located geographically. I do not know whether that information is available. Another issue that I want to raise is the extent to which there is continuity. You mentioned a

dilyniant yn digwydd. Bu ichi sôn am nifer o ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd. A oes tuedd i'r un ardaloedd wneud y gwaith, sef bod ysgolion cynradd yn cario'r gwaith hwn ymlaen yn nalgylch yr ysgol uwchradd, neu a ydych yn sôn am ysgolion cynradd mewn un ardal ac ysgolion uwchradd mewn ardal arall? Hynny yw, i ba raddau y mae dilyniant yn yr ardaloedd?

number of primary and secondary schools. Is there a tendency for the same areas to carry out the work, so a primary school will carry out this work in the catchment area of a secondary school, or are you talking about areas where the primary schools are in one area and the secondary schools in another? To what extent is there continuity within areas?

[173] **Mr Griffiths:** That is a good question. The whole question of continuity between primary and secondary schools is interesting anyway, with the transition debate about some of the practice and pedagogy of primary schools and how that facilitates the teaching of education for sustainable development and global citizenship more favourably than the modular-based, syllabus-driven secondary schools. I have not picked up any patterns of a successful primary school leading to innovative change at a secondary school. However, I can look at that and get back to you.

[174] **Sandy Mewies:** Ieuan, Estyn's reports are all available on its website, and multiculturalism has been inspected for some considerable time, as have the transitional arrangements between schools. So, if you wanted to look in your own area particularly—and I know that inspection reports are cyclical—you could look there for a snapshot. I am not sure where else this sort of information would be collected. I cannot think of a place, but we can explore that.

[175] **Ieuan Wyn Jones:** The point is that the report refers to 10 per cent of primary schools. If there is a figure, where is that 10 per cent? That is all that I am asking.

[176] **Sandy Mewies:** We will see whether we can trace that, but if Members want to look up their areas, that might be helpful. Mike is next, and then Nick.

[177] **Michael German:** Thank you for the presentation. I want to ask you about the content of the report that you have submitted and then about making it happen, which seem to be the two key areas. You say that political literacy is not taught in isolation, as a discrete unit, but as part of the underlying principles. How far does political literacy impact upon the ability of young people to understand sustainable development and global citizenship? Is there a clear understanding of political literacy and how it is interpreted? Another Assembly committee has just received an answer from one element of Government, and it is not clear to me that this is widely understood or widely used. So, could you give us your view on whether there is a wide interpretation, broadly shared, of what political literacy is and how far it impacts on global citizenship and sustainable development?

[178] The second question relates to how you make this happen. You rightly say, as does the paper, that this is inconsistent. It happens in some places, but not in others, and you gave a host of examples of where that is the case. Could you venture a view as to how you then make it universal, because I presume that that is your intention? Do you make personal and social education a statutory part of the national curriculum, or do you simply train more teachers or put in more money? If so, what would be your priority area for spending the money?

[179] **Mr Griffiths:** In the paper, I allude to the four principles of education on sustainable development and global citizenship. Principles 3 and 4, the relationship between power, resources and human rights, and the local and global implications of everything that we do—the actions that individuals and organisations can take in response to local and global issues—are, for me, where political literacy comes into the ESDGC document. Where ESDGC differs from curricula elsewhere in the UK is that we have that joined-up thinking on sustainable

development and global citizenship.

10.50 a.m.

[180] We also have the view that it is issue-led. If a child, young person, student or pupil is sufficiently interested in and passionate about an issue, they will find out the process by which they can raise their concerns and state their opinions. That is a fundamental argument.

[181] **Michael German:** I will intervene at this point, because my question was about whether political literacy is a widely understood concept and has a definition that is widely shared and which underpins all of this. If you do not have a widely accepted definition of political literacy, these things can be interpreted in many different ways.

[182] **Sandy Mewies:** Are you asking whether that is a general principle in the world or in the education sector?

[183] **Michael German:** I am asking about this in the context of education. I am picking up on the previous paragraph in your paper, in which you say that political literacy is not taught in isolation as a discrete unit but as part of the underlying principles. If you are to have it as part of an underlying principle, you need to know what it is. That is what I am trying to get at. Is there an understood definition among those who work in this arena of what political literacy is and is there a definition of it?

[184] **Mr Griffiths:** My feelings—rather than those of Oxfam—are that, if you look across the board, you see that the citizenship curriculum in England has a clearer political literacy dimension. The concept of political literacy may not be as clear in Wales. I spoke yesterday to a colleague from London who used to teach politics. We talked about the lengths that he had to go to to drum information in to his students, so that they became aware of democracy, democratic processes and the role of local, regional and national government. He said, ‘The great thing about your curriculum is that, if you start from an issue, the children are so passionate about that issue that they will find things out and will make those links, and it will have far more relevance to them’. So, I think that that is the strength of this document and this strategy. There is more joined-up thinking, it is more logical; it starts with what young people are passionate about, and encourages them to become active citizens. By becoming active and being constructive, they find out how they can change.

[185] **Sandy Mewies:** Nick, you are next.

[186] **Michael German:** What about my second question?

[187] **Sandy Mewies:** I have to move this on.

[188] **Michael German:** I have already asked my second question.

[189] **Sandy Mewies:** Can you keep it short, because other people would like to ask questions? Please keep your questions and your answers short.

[190] **Michael German:** It was about making PSE statutory.

[191] **Mr Griffiths:** I would have to think about that. I would find it difficult to give you an answer straight away.

[192] **Sandy Mewies:** Fine. Nick is next.

[193] **Nick Bourne:** I will try to keep it brief. I thank Steve and Rhodri for their extremely

interesting presentation and for their passion in presenting it. To what extent is there a possibility of an exchange of good practice between schools in urban Wales, such as a school from Butetown, which is culturally diverse, and schools in rural Wales, where Welsh may well be spoken and where it may be easier to tap into environmental concerns? Is the possibility of twinning or an exchange of information being looked at, because that seems to be a device that would allow you to do what you want to do, and it could be a rich source of information?

[194] **Mr Griffiths:** That is an excellent idea, and I am not sure whether that has been suggested. It makes absolute sense, and I would endorse that. Any methods by which schools in certain parts of Wales co-operate with schools in other parts of Wales is to be relished and grabbed as soon as possible.

[195] **Sandy Mewies:** I will raise a few points now, and I am looking back to my perhaps dubious experiences as an inspector with Estyn and Ofsted. Schools already look at different schools in different areas from theirs, and, often, it is a school in Africa or Europe. However, they will also look at schools that are like them. That will also be part of the project. So, there is work going on, where they will identify such things. However, three issues concern me.

[196] First, you talked about embedding. Do you mean embedding this education within the educational system from start to finish? You talk about primary and secondary, as well as higher and further education; we have looked at resource materials from other countries, which embedded this sort of education in the curriculum from start to finish. How do you break down the barriers that stopped it happening here?

[197] You also mentioned that anti-bullying policies exist in most schools now, but they should exist in every school. There is not a school in this country that should not have and be operating an anti-bullying policy, and so I would be concerned to learn of any that was not doing that. If not, why not, in your experience?

[198] Thirdly, you quite rightly said that we must have bilingualism here. However, as you might have heard, we were talking earlier about the A8 countries that have come in. I have many pupils in my area from Poland and Portugal, and that may surprise people in Cardiff, who are used to having different communities working in schools. For some of us in rural areas—as well as in urban areas—who may not have been used to it so much in the past, it is becoming more widespread. So, when you talk about materials being bilingual, it must be remembered that, these days, we are educating children in our schools from all over the world. Surely, that is what multiculturalism and this sort of education is all about. It is about being a global citizen. Those pupils are global citizens, too, and have a lot to share with us. That is important. How do you embed all this into the curriculum from start to finish?

[199] **Mr Griffiths:** It will not be easy; we have significant hurdles to clear. I started teaching in about 1985. In the 1980s, there was a huge movement to include environmental education in geography, science, and so on, and schools really picked it up. That was due, in no small part, to those people advocating that we needed to look at it. Twenty years on, those people who I taught are now 30 years old, and they are making decisions about environment education. So, if we are serious about ESDGC, there is a success model out there. As a matter of course, we recycle, and environmental issues rarely leave our newspapers or television screens. Within ESDGC, we want people to think as much about people as about the environment. So, there is a tried and tested example of good practice in schools. It is about sharing good practice.

[200] **Sandy Mewies:** Shared good practice is an issue. However, I am also interested in your answer on bilingualism. Are we promoting other languages, as well as Welsh and English?

[201] **Mr Griffiths:** We are promoting Welsh and English, but it is fair to say that we also need to look at community languages.

[202] On your other point, when I said ‘most schools’ in my report, I did mean ‘all schools’ should have anti-bullying, anti-sexist and anti-racism policies. I was being slightly generous.

[203] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you both for that. We are always eager to welcome you and, again, there was a lot of food for thought in that and it has contributed greatly to the evidence that we have received so far. I think that it will inform further consultation for us, perhaps to answer the questions that Ieuan has raised.

11.00 a.m.

Pwyllgor y Rhanbarthau Committee of the Regions

[204] **Sandy Mewies:** Rosemary, you are on next, and then Janet, if you want to add anything.

[205] **Rosemary Butler:** I will be brief, because I have not been to any meetings since the last meeting here. My next meeting is in December. However, I understand that Janet has been to a meeting this week and has had some interesting experiences.

[206] **Janet Davies:** I went to the Committee of the Regions’s commission for economic and social policy meeting last Friday, where two draft opinions were discussed. The other items on the agenda had to be dropped because the discussion went on for so long. The first one was on the road map for gender equality and the second was ‘Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Social services of general interest in the European Union’. There were 27 amendments to that and 41 amendments to the draft opinion on gender equality, which we received when we got to the meeting.

[207] Opinion was very much equal on the amendments, so they were going through—or not going through, on the whole—on the basis of one or two votes. That is one reason why I would like this committee to look at more things that come out of the Committee of the Regions in the future. I felt that the general thrust of most of the amendments on the opinion on gender equality was such that they were braking mechanisms.

[208] On the opinion on social services of general interest, as well as bringing the health service in, there was an attempt to open up competition and privatisation. I will read from the beginning, which states that a stable, transparent legal framework at EU level is required to develop these in strict accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. That can mean quite a lot, when it comes down to it. The way that I look at it is that it is an enabling framework. Various areas deliver in very much the way in which they wish and their people wish them to do so, but, of course, it is liable to other interpretations. As there was such a split of opinion on the documents, they are going to Plenary, so Rosemary will have the pleasure of looking at them, but she will be aware of the amendments and what was done about them.

[209] As these amendments are gone through, compromises are put forward, so you are trying to understand what the compromises are, sometimes actually trying to hear them and, of course, sometimes they are said in a different language, which is then translated, but the translation is not always spot on. The translation is very good, but these things do not always come over in quite the same way in a different language, so it does lead to some problems.

[210] **Sandy Mewies:** I see that there are no questions for Janet. Thank you. I think that it is time to take a break now.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11.03 a.m. a 11.25 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 11.03 a.m. and 11.25 a.m.*

**Llywyddiaeth yr Undeb Ewropeaidd: Ei Ardderchowgrwydd Jaakko Laajava,
Llysgennad y Ffindir
European Union Presidency: His Excellency Jaakko Laajava, Ambassador of
Finland**

[211] **Sandy Mewies:** I welcome His Excellency, Mr Jaakko Laajava, and his colleague, Päivi Pohjanheimo, to the meeting. Welcome to you both. We always invite the ambassador of the country currently holding the EU presidency. I have had a chance to look through your programme, which is very ambitious, and we are all looking forward to hearing your views on it. Afterwards, Members will ask questions.

[212] **HE Mr Laajava:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee, thank you, first of all, for your kind invitation to me to be here today. It is a wonderful opportunity for me to present an evaluation of the priorities and challenges facing the current Finnish presidency of the European Union. I look forward to a lively discussion after my introductory remarks. I am glad to be in Wales, as we Finns want to further strengthen our bonds of friendship with you. We talked about these things with the First Minister a while ago. We have a lot in common to build upon—both Finland and Wales have gone through difficult times in their history, but now things look much brighter.

[213] As you know, I am not here to talk so much about Finland or Wales, but about the European Union and its current state. As many of you know, Finland took over the presidency of the EU on 1 July, so this is a kind of mid-term review at this point in time. You may have watched television last weekend when all the cameras were focused on the Finnish city of Lahti, where the heads of state and Government of the European Union member states conferred informally and then dined with Mr Putin, the President of Russia. I will come back to the results of that meeting a little later on.

[214] Based on those images, for a fleeting moment, the European Union seemed to have regained its self-confidence and found its purpose, after many months of silence. However, the unfortunate truth is that the last few years have been extremely difficult for the European Union. Many have asked questions about the relevance of the EU in the era of globalisation, and popular trust in our efforts at the European level is, we must admit, quite low. It is an almost everyday phenomenon to blame the EU for the many ills that plague today's Europe, and even to ridicule the EU for its many seemingly bizarre actions to over-regulate. It is true that it is clear that Europe lags behind in a number of areas. We will not be the most competitive region in the world in 2010, as we proclaimed in one of our common strategy papers. Europe does not seem to be on the winning side of globalisation, and it is always easy to blame our common institutions for this poor state of affairs.

[215] Yet the truth is that most answers to the challenges posed by globalisation, particularly economic challenges, can be found on the national level, in the member states themselves. The responsibility for economic wellbeing rests fundamentally with our separate Governments and parliaments and, also, our regions, not with the EU. At the same time, our new world is immensely interdependent. While, in the past, foreign relations seemed a kind of luxury or added extra to other national pursuits, they are now an absolute necessity. We are part of an ever-growing network of mutual influences, actions and reactions.

11.30 a.m.

[216] Our nation's wellbeing is increasingly dependent on what happens elsewhere in the world. Climate change is the perfect example of that. We need to work together and combine our forces. Our future is increasingly becoming a common future; isolation is no solution. Therefore, while recognising that the European Union may indeed be part of the problem, I would like to say that it can and must also be part of the solution. The key is to be able to make the European Union work.

[217] When Finland took over the EU presidency three and a half months ago, our fundamental idea was just that: to focus precisely on making the EU work better. We wanted to concentrate on the concrete tasks ahead. However, in politics, as I am sure you all know, the unexpected is often to be expected. No doubt, everyone was aware of the volatility of the middle east, but we could not have anticipated a war in Lebanon. As a consequence, the first weeks of the Finnish presidency were dominated by these outside events.

[218] The crisis in the middle east tested the EU's international role and the co-ordination and coherence of our actions. Obviously, these kinds of crisis situations are always difficult and complex. Nevertheless, the EU was able to find common ground and was able to play an important role, not only in the area of political and military action, but also in providing humanitarian assistance and launching reconstruction efforts in Lebanon. However, the crisis also demonstrated the need for the EU to act together, if it is to become a truly effective force internationally. The conclusion is that we must seek coherence and strengthen the EU's unity. We must be able to speak with one voice in these kinds of situations in order to be able to act as a responsible international actor should.

[219] We faced another challenge of this kind, namely the challenge to be able to speak with one voice on energy matters, last week in Lahti. The theme was our co-operation in this energy area with Russia. As you know, the Russian president, Mr Putin, had been invited to attend a dinner after the EU summit. We knew that, if the EU wanted to be taken seriously by third countries, including Russia, we must have a coherent and unified message about our aims. In Lahti, everyone seemed to understand that, if our goal was to seek solutions that served the interests of the whole of the EU, our messages to Mr Putin needed to be clear, well-thought-out, consistent and unified. We achieved that. The union presented its views on its future partnership with Russia in energy matters, and emphasised the role of markets, the importance of long-term predictability, the investment environment in Russia, as well as the role of European energy companies in helping Russia develop its energy sector.

[220] It was a very useful exchange of views in Lahti but we did not get 100 per cent agreement there. In our co-operation with Russia, we need to address more difficult issues, such as human rights. The Lahti summit was generally considered to be a good event, moving things forward between the EU and Russia and also within the union.

[221] However, there are deeper issues of concern within the union. The core problem for the European Union, in my mind, is clear—the diminished legitimacy of the European Union in the eyes of its citizens. Some say that since the two negative referenda on the constitutional treaty in spring 2005, in France and the Netherlands, the EU is facing its most severe crisis ever. At the same time, Europe faces many challenges posed by globalisation, the pressures of competition an ageing population, security concerns, immigration pressures and even the challenge of climate change, just to name a few.

[222] Finland's main objective is to get the union to look towards the future with optimism and regain its self-confidence. We perceive that the most imminent danger for the European Union is immobility; that Europe becomes a museum of our past achievements. The world around Europe is moving forward at an ever-faster pace and will not wait or make allowances

for us just because we in the EU are afraid of change. We believe that it is high time that we considered what kind of union we want to have in 10 or 20 years and how we can achieve that. Europe must stop turning inwards. A confident and determined union of more than 450 million people can and should assume global leadership in the future.

[223] Making the union function more efficiently is the best way to deliver Europe to its people. In order to be credible, we need to demonstrate the added value that the European Union brings to the everyday life of its people and to the solution of our common problems in an increasingly interdependent world. We need fewer words and more action. We need concrete results, which would not be passable by any member country, big or small, acting alone. The best way to proceed is to demonstrate that the union is working coherently, efficiently and transparently. Finland also wants to emphasise better regulation, and the need to ensure quality of legislation as well as the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

[224] I have a few words to say about enlargement. The European Union today is quite different from the union that Finland joined in 1995. The enlargement from a community of 15 members to 25 members has naturally altered the union's dynamics quite a bit. There is no reason to over-emphasise the difficulties emanating from enlargement, but reaching consensus and arriving at common decisions is often more difficult. Coalitions change, depending on the issue at hand. We need to address this question; unfortunately, the instrument designed to do just this, the constitutional treaty, cannot move forward today. However, the process of reform must continue. The European Union must be able to make decisions, adopt policies and act to implement them. Whatever the present inconveniences, in reality and in proper perspective, the enlargement of the European Union has been a great, even historic, tool to force peaceful change and enhance democracy in Europe. The integration of the 10 former Warsaw pact countries has been not only a political, but also an economic, success and is a truly historic achievement.

[225] Let us pause for a moment to think about the fundamental justification for the union's existence. It is to secure peace and to enhance the stability and prosperity of Europe. With the cold war over, how would Europe look today without the enlarged EU, without the dynamics and cohesion that have emerged from the process of integration? Without enlargement, we would have missed a historic opportunity to make Europe whole and free. It is true that enlargement has also given rise to fears and anxieties. There is an enlargement fatigue in Europe. However, we cannot and will not stop the clock of Europe. The process of enlargement will proceed during the Finnish presidency. Accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia will continue and the situation of the western Balkans will receive the attention and action that it deserves.

[226] Last month, the commission published its monitoring risk reports on Romania and Bulgaria. The accession date for both was defined by the commission on the basis of real progress achieved by these countries. This means that we can congratulate Sofia and Bucharest on their EU membership from the beginning of next year. However, the commission proposes to use safeguards or other remedial measures in a number of areas.

11.40 a.m.

[227] We need to discuss enlargement. At the end of the Finnish presidency during the December European Council, there will be an opportunity for member states to express their views in detail. The commission will give its input into the discussion. Finland's point of departure will be that, in the future, the union should be developed in such a way that it does not deliberately create different classes of membership. The union must remain a union, and all member states must remain equal. After this debate, we hope that we can confirm our consensus on enlargement in the December European Council conclusions.

[228] Another crucial area for Finland has been enhancing European competitiveness in the global economy. Although the situation is different for each member state, on the basis of our experience, Finland may have something to offer in this regard. Finland is often highly ranked in various competitiveness indices, and Finland's solutions include an emphasis on education, research and development, innovation, the search for intelligent and sustainable energy solutions, improvement in the quality of work and productivity, openness to global trade, deregulation and competition, fostering immigration and a well-functioning and cost-effective social-welfare system. The key is to use your strengths and competitive advantage. We could have further exchanges on these things, particularly with Wales, as both nations encounter similar problems.

[229] The issue of competitiveness and innovation was also touched upon during the Lahti informal summit. Important political guidance was shared at Lahti to lead the council's work during the coming months. As always, the answers should come in the first place from the member states. Issues of growth, employment and competitiveness are largely within the national domain of the member states. However, the union can, and should, deal with some of these problems, and help by creating a competitive and enabling European environment.

[230] Citizens also expect the European Union to fight effectively against international crime, human trafficking and terrorism. Finland has proposed that we should explore the possibilities of streamlining the decision-making procedures of police and judicial co-operation. We recognise that these are sensitive issues, but we believe that steps must be taken to ensure that the EU functions more effectively in this important domain in the future.

[231] Promoting citizens' access to justice, and strengthening the international judicial system, is also very important. Finland has initiated a thorough political review of progress towards building an area of freedom, security and justice; in other words, the conduct of a so-called mid-term review of the Hague programme.

[232] Last but not least, I will return to the area on which I began my contribution, namely the external relations of the European Union. Politically and economically, the EU participates in efforts to strengthen peace and stability on our own continent and beyond. The union is involved in crisis and conflict management, with civilian and military resources. The union's citizens expect it to be active and responsible internationally, while the expectations from outside the EU are that it will act decisively and assume leadership in solving international issues. The union has a broad and comprehensive set of instruments at its disposal, from financial assistance to military crisis management. The EU can make a difference. In view of this, the Finnish presidency aims to strengthen the EU's international role, and reinforce the consistency of its actions.

[233] The EU's relations with our biggest neighbour, Russia, are also given a specific emphasis in the Finnish presidency programme. We hope to extend these relations between the EU and Russia to a broad-ranging partnership in which we can promote our European values, seek Russia's commitment to them, and promote co-operation with Russia in solving urgent global problems.

[234] The agenda for the western Balkans is also very demanding, especially when it comes to the Kosovo status process. Our aim is to bring the western Balkans area, as a whole, closer to the European Union.

[235] We will also pay special attention to climate-change issues. We are very pleased that, as I speak, the Europeans and the Americans are gathering in Helsinki to re-engage in high-level dialogue on climate change and energy issues. This topic is also prominently on the agenda of all EU summits with third countries, including with China and other Asian countries.

[236] I believe that all of these issues will keep the Finnish presidency very busy over the last weeks before the December European council. Finland took over the presidency of the European Union with a pragmatic approach, which is our way—the Finnish way—of doing things. We do not like to brag so much about ourselves. Someone once said that the word ‘challenge’ is only for the weak, and that the brave should use the expression ‘opportunity’. That is a word that the Finns like, and I believe that you, in Wales, also like it.

[237] The European Union should not be afraid of change that seeks success. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to talk to you. I wish your endeavours the very best of success.

[238] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Ambassador. That was very interesting. If we are not calling them challenges, I look forward to seeing how you tackle these many opportunities, which will be very exciting and demanding, I am sure, during the presidency. Are there any questions?

[239] **Michael German:** I start with an opportunity, which I know that the Finnish presidency has taken as one that is quite important. It is also very important to us in Wales. I refer to the working times directive. Do you think that you will reach a compromise or an agreement by the end of December on this matter? What sort of shape would that have, in terms of compromise, presumably, between the positions that we have seen before?

[240] I also have a very simple second question, which is about the Cyprus issue. Are you making progress in terms of resolving the problems between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus?

[241] **HE Mr Laajava:** I was sitting in Mr Kim Darroch’s office yesterday talking about the working times directive. Let me say that intensive Finnish efforts are going on in this matter. I think that, today, the Committee of Permanent Representatives is discussing the Finnish compromise proposal that we tabled last week in a formal paper. Tomorrow, there is a small gathering in Brussels of those who have had the strongest views on this issue. Therefore, efforts are under way although, obviously, this has been tried before. We all know that it is not a very good situation in that, as things stand today, 23 out of 25 countries are acting illegally. It is not a very comfortable situation and we need to do something.

[242] I also think that most European countries have realised that it is very difficult to cope with health service systems within the present regime. Finland would also have severe difficulties in this area. Therefore, there are things that need to be fixed and, at the same time, we strongly feel that we would need something like this to guarantee that the single market works in the way that we want it to work. I think that we have tried to collect all of the pieces that are on the table and tried to invent a way forward. However, whether we can guarantee to pull this out should be covered in one of the informal meetings of the labour Ministers on 8 November, and we should have some results. So, I am still hopeful, but I cannot guarantee the result.

11.50 a.m.

[243] Cyprus is a complex and complicated issue, and there, again, the Finnish presidency is on the move. We have talked to the parties and we have had some ideas, which we have proposed to them. You will have seen that they focus on the better movement of goods, services and people and take as a starting point the commitments that the parties have entered into. At this point, no-one has clearly rejected our ideas, but there is still a long way to go from that point to arriving at where we could have agreement. It would be a little premature for me to start speculating on these things. The effort is going on. We would all prefer a brighter future to a darker future, and we are dealing with extremely important issues here regarding Europe’s future. We should not miss the opportunity that is now at our disposal.

[244] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you for your interesting presentation, Ambassador. I have a general and a more specific question. First, you have set yourselves a very ambitious programme. It is one of opportunities rather than challenges, but it is ambitious, and the presidency is for a short period. How can you work to ensure continuity when your term comes to an end, and ensure that some of the things that you have tried to achieve are carried over into the next presidency? That is the general question.

[245] The specific question is to do with Turkish accession to Europe, because there are more issues than there were with Cyprus. There was a highly critical report in September on the penal code in Turkey, and there is the general problem of its record on human rights. We have a group here that centres on Kurdish issues, and it was interesting to hear that the Kurds involved in the discussions were in favour of accepting Turkey into the European Union, because they felt that it was an opportunity for some of the issues relating to their human rights to be aired, and, hopefully, for conditions for the Kurdish people in Turkey to improve. During the discussions with Turkey, the clause that calls on Turkey to recognise the Armenian genocide as a pre-condition of its membership has been dropped. Do you feel that there is still hope for that issue to be aired and discussed during the moves towards Turkey being accepted as a member of the European Union, which might take five years or more? In your mind, will that continue to be an issue that will be discussed? We have discussed this in the Assembly and in Wales. There are strong feelings among many of us that recognition of that genocide is a central issue.

[246] **HE Mr Laajava:** First, on the issue of the presidency and continuity, we can, de facto, today speak of team presidencies already being in practice in many ways. We designed the main elements of our programme together with the previous presidency, and we are constantly in contact with the upcoming German presidency. The same themes are present in the programmes, and the Germans have started to speak with the next presidency, so there is continuity there.

[247] One should also keep in mind that it is not the presidency that makes the union; it is the member states, the commission, the community, the method, and so on. The presidency should ensure that the right papers come to the agenda at the right time. So, the presiding country acts as a servant for the other member states and the union as a whole. So, in the first place, there is the service function.

[248] However, in today's media word, there are now wide expectations about what Angela Merkel will do during Germany's presidency and so on, and so it may not be that easy. The work programme is very ambitious, but I can guarantee that many of these things that I have enumerated will continue during the German presidency. We will make sure, as will the Germans, that they know how the issue has been evolving and developing and so on. There is continuity there. There are always priorities and ways in which matters come forward, because of the presidency personality. I have tried to explain what the Finnish personality might be. However, there is far more continuity than one would think. So, all of the things that I have talked about have been there for a long time; this is not a new invention.

[249] On Turkey and the enlargement, I think that we are dealing with a longer term perspective, as you indicated. It is very important for us in Europe that the Turkish reform process continues. It is important that Europe and Turkey continue to work together and see each other as true partners in this. That is fundamental. Its membership will not be a matter for tomorrow, but for many years to come. It is crucial that we continue with the accession process, with all of its elements, discussions, and freedoms and so on, including the area that you mentioned. Perhaps there is little benefit to be gained from discussing it formally at this stage, but Turkey as a whole, with its history and its present-day problems and prospects, will come to the debate in the coming years. So, today, we are in precisely the situation that was

referred to in the previous question. If we cannot find a way to cope with the situation that we will be in in the next couple of weeks, the prospect of continued European-Turkish integration is put in jeopardy. Therefore, the Cyprus issue and the Ankara protocol are the core problems in our conduct of European business these coming weeks.

[250] **The First Minister:** Would the ambassador like to say any more about the feedback that he has had from the Lahti informal council summit on these allied issues of relationships with Russia, with our overdependence on Russia as a source of energy, especially gas, clean energy in western and central Europe and the EU, as well as the issue of global warming and climate change, in getting other big players on board, including Russia, the USA, Australia, and so on?

12.00 p.m.

[251] **HE Mr Laajava:** We had two main issues at Lahti, as I think I tried to indicate. One was to do with innovation and competitiveness, and the other was to do with energy, particularly external aspects of energy policy. In the union today, we do not have a common energy policy; we have some co-operative elements, we have some principles, and we have the energy charter, but we do not have a truly common community policy on energy. That has been left for nation states.

[252] However, we are fully aware of the fact that we are increasingly dependent on imported energy in Europe, including here in the United Kingdom. To a great extent, that energy comes from Russia. So, we are in for a long-term energy partnership and relationship with Russia, which is growing. We can see that it is a genuine partnership, if we get it right. Europe is the biggest customer for Russian energy companies. At the same time, Europe can invest, and it has the technology, and so on, to help Russian companies and Russia to develop the energy sector. The fundamental problem is that Russia is increasingly incapable of providing more and more energy for export, because its own domestic demand is increasing rapidly. So, Russia needs a tremendous amount of investment in its energy sector, including the technological know-how, and so on. This is a fact of life; otherwise, the partnership will not function. Once we truly understand the long-term, mutual benefit of investments, supply, demand, and so on, only then will we have a good balance here, and we can then have a sustained relationship. That was the focus of our discussions.

[253] Although Mr Putin stated clearly that Russia will not implement the energy charter, he nevertheless wanted to emphasise that Russia understands and abides by the principles enshrined in that treaty. In the G8 framework, we have already established some basic principles about the importance of markets, the long-term security of investments, the investment climate, and so forth. So, all these principles are there, but we would seek better implementation of those principles in our partnership with Russia.

[254] In a few weeks' time, Russia and the EU will start negotiations about a new framework agreement, which will replace the old partnership and co-operation agreement. The idea is that we would incorporate the principles of the European energy charter and those enshrined in the G8 documents in the framework of that new treaty, which would then be a good start for that kind of long-term partnership. Therefore, we talked clearly. Europe was able to focus and come forward with a unified message, and this part of the debate was good. Of course, Mr Putin also had his points that he wanted to get across, and we registered those points; they were to do with access to downstream networks, downstream business, and so on. So, it was a good debate, which cleared the air.

[255] Climate change issues were also taken up with Russia, which were mentioned by the Finnish Prime Minister when he briefed the press; they are a prominent part of our future partnership with Russia and other countries. As I mentioned, today, we are, for the first time,

re-engaged in dialogue on energy and the climate, on a high level, with the United States. That is no small achievement after all these years when it has been very tough going for us with the Americans regarding the Kyoto agreement and so on. We now have a new beginning and I think that we are on a good track. This is not to say that everything that we discussed with Mr Putin was all that smooth and pleasant. He also had some criticisms to put forward and so did European countries. Let us put it this way: it was a lively debate.

[256] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you for your presentation. I will just change tack, if I may, from outward-looking to more inward-looking matters. One thing that you were going to emphasise during your presidency was the principle of proportionality and subsidiarity. How have you addressed that? You also mentioned human trafficking; how have you set about trying to make progress on that issue?

[257] **HE Mr Laajava:** I would like Päivi Pohjanheimo to help me in this matter, to give more detail.

[258] **Ms Pohjanheimo:** When it comes to subsidiarity, this presidency has interpreted that it was given a mandate last June, during the European Council, to keep on working on subsidiarity and proportionality issues. It is not an intention of this presidency to organise a special conference on the issue, but to try to mainstream these questions through transparency, better regulations and a simplification of the legislation procedure, which we feel are horizontal themes for the presidency. We look forward to the forthcoming presidency that will take over from us.

[259] **Rosemary Butler:** Do you have anything to add on human trafficking, which the ambassador mentioned earlier?

[260] **Ms Pohjanheimo:** As part of the so-called mid-term review of the Hague programme, human trafficking will be one of the topics to be discussed more thoroughly towards the end of the presidency. We had an informal justice and home affairs council meeting in Tampere at the end of September, where these issues were touched upon by the Ministers. The presidency is prepared to take forward the Hague programme by focusing on four or five specific fields, and special emphasis will be put on migration and illegal immigration issues, where human trafficking will, of course, play an important part. Political guidance was given during these informal discussions in Tampere, where we tried to work and reach the so-called Tampere spirit from 1999, for the presidency to move on, and any decisions would be taken at the December meeting of the European Council.

12.10 p.m.

[261] **Sandy Mewies:** Are there any other questions from Members? I have an observation to make and a question to ask. You talked, quite rightly, about the diminished legitimacy that Europe seems to have, or has had, in recent times and the efforts that you will be making to renew optimism in the future of Europe, to ensure that we do not have a Europe that is a museum of past achievements; I concur with that. This is such a huge opportunity—how will you tackle that? Does Finland have any ideas on pushing this agenda forward? On your plans for the constitution, do you have any ideas on how this can be done? We have discussed in this committee the diminished perception that people in some countries have of Europe. Do you have any ideas—accepting that you are the servant—that you will be putting forward for discussion yourselves?

[262] **HE Mr Laajava:** On the constitutional treaty, there are decisions by the European Council regarding how this question is being taken forward. The current thinking is that it is to be left to the German presidency to come up with a report next spring about how this should go forward. In the meantime, we are only required to conduct informal consultations

with the member states, as we have done with several of them. However, we do not want to do this in public. These are not public positions yet, but just informal consultations to understand how member states feel about this issue, and how they think about the future and the procedures to be followed. Therefore, this is for the German presidency to take up next spring. We have elections, as we all know, and it is improbable that we could come up with any clear solution to this issue any time soon; it will probably be later—in 2007 or 2008—that we would be able to find out what the avenue for the future would be.

[263] However, one of the main elements of the constitutional treaty was to improve the European Union's ability to work, act, design policies, and make decisions—the normal things that are needed in the 25-plus member union. Therefore, it was designed to address precisely these issues. The European Union is perceived today as being quite weak by the public, and rightly so. This focuses very much on legitimacy—that Europe must be perceived by our electorates as being an efficient, matter of fact, and to the point organisation. Therefore, unfortunately, this reform of the decision-making procedures is not going forward today. However, in the meantime, we should make use of the existing possibilities offered by the present treaties; we should not stop here.

[264] Obviously, what we did recently in Lahti was an effort by the Finnish presidency to try to address the legitimacy issue. We need to take the important issues that we deal with, determine what our concrete common line is, and then convey it to our partners. We are then perceived, perhaps, to be doing something to advance our common good, and bring added, tangible value from the European Union to the solution of problems such as climate change and others, which are very much in people's minds.

[265] Therefore, we need this added credibility in every single area. It is only through these actions that we can build the kind of legitimacy that we all want to see in the European Union. The way in which we try to push these things forward—and the next presidencies will do the same—is tantamount to addressing, or is designed to address, the issue of legitimacy in its broadest and deepest sense.

[266] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, that was very interesting. I see that Members do not have any more questions. Thank you, Ambassador. It was most interesting and I hope that we will continue our discussions over lunch. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 29 November, when there will be a video link with three Welsh Members of the European Parliament. So, we will be able to link up with them, which will be a first for this committee—the first of many, I hope. Thank you all for attending.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.15 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.*