



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

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

**Dydd Mawrth, 19 Hydref 2010
Tuesday, 19 October 2010**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg. Mae hon yn fersiwn ddrafft o'r cofnod. Cyhoeddir fersiwn derfynol ymhen pum diwrnod gwaith.

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. This is a draft version of the record. The final version will be published within five working days.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

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

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

| | |
|--|---|
| Nick Bodycombe | Rheolwr Swyddfa Ewropeaidd, Is-adran Ymchwil a Masnach, Prifysgol Caerdydd European Office Manager, Research and Commercial Division, Cardiff University |
| Faye Hindle-Lewis | Pennaeth Cyfathrebu a Rhaglen Trawslin, Ecorys Head of Communications & Transversal Programme, Ecorys |
| Madeleine Rose | Pennaeth Rhaglen Grundtvig, Ecorys (ECOTEC gynt) Head of Grundtvig Programme, Ecorys (Formerly ECOTEC) |
| Yr Athro/Professor Elizabeth Treasure | Dirprwy Is-Ganghellor, Prifysgol Caerdydd Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff University |
| Yr Athro/Professor Roger Whitaker | Prifysgol Caerdydd Cardiff University |

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

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Marc Wyn Jones | Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk |
| Sarita Marshall | Clerc Clerk |

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.16 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.16 a.m.

[1] **Ms Marshall:** Good morning, everyone. In the absence of the Chair, I will invite Members to elect a temporary Chair until the Chair becomes available. I call for nominations.

[2] **Nick Bourne:** Jeff Cuthbert.

[3] **Ms Marshall:** As there are no other nominations, I declare that Jeff Cuthbert is elected as temporary Chair.

Penodwyd Jeff Cuthbert yn Gadeirydd dros dro.
Jeff Cuthbert was appointed temporary Chair.

9.16 a.m.

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[4] **Jeff Cuthbert:** We have had apologies from Andy Klom, who normally attends. There are no substitutions that I am aware of. We know that the Chair, Rhodri Morgan, will arrive in due course and will take over chairing at that point.

[5] Under declarations of interest, I should declare that I am a member of the court of Cardiff University, which could be relevant for our next item. Are there any other declarations of interest? I see that there are none. Thank you.

9.17 a.m.

**Ymchwiliad: Cyfranogiad Cymru mewn Rhaglenni Ymchwil, Arloesi a Dysgu
Gydol Oes yr Undeb Ewropeaidd—Casglu Tystiolaeth
Inquiry: Welsh Participation in EU Funding Programmes: Research and
Innovation—Evidence Gathering**

[6] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I welcome Professor Roger Whitaker, Nick Bodycombe and Professor Elizabeth Treasure from Cardiff University.

[7] We have had your paper, which all Members will have read. Would you like to start with a brief introduction, perhaps for five minutes? We will then turn to Members for questions.

[8] **Professor Treasure:** Thank you very much for inviting us to give evidence here today. We are very grateful for the opportunity.

[9] Our short paper represents an overview of Cardiff's involvement in European funding over recent years and currently. We followed your guidelines of keeping to three pages, which means that we would very much like to take the opportunity in the full submission that we will be sending to you to give you any more information that becomes clear that you need from questioning this morning.

[10] For a university such as Cardiff, and many others in Wales, European funding is critical to our mission and our role in the Welsh community. We see a nice convergence of the aims of framework programme 7 and the aims of Wales in developing the economy and our own research interests, and I draw you to our three new major research institutes of neurosciences and mental health, cancer stem cells and sustainable places.

[11] Of our 26 schools in Cardiff, currently 17 have actively running FP7 grants, and that gives you an indication of the breadth of research that we are doing and the key importance of this to our schools. Currently, we have awards out of FP7 amounting to some £21 million and over £11 million of other European Commission awards. In comparison, in the previous framework we had 84 projects, which brought in over £18 million.

[12] The majority of our projects are generously funded Marie Curie fellowships, and I think that it is important to highlight how important these are to developing expertise. They are both intra-European exchanges between member states, but are also bringing in international scientists from elsewhere in the world, which is critical. It is possibly going to be challenging—that is probably the correct word—in the near future due to alterations to immigration regulations and limitation on tier 2 visas. We can also send scientists out, and

have done, to institutions such as the National Institutes of Health in Washington. Initial training fellowships for PhD students are also critical to developing the university's research profile and, therefore, to taking forward the work as I have described as being relevant for the broader society.

9.20 a.m.

[13] I just want to say a little about the Erasmus programme. We currently have nearly 300 students annually participating in Erasmus, and we currently receive approximately 400 a year from the European member states. My students value it immensely. My previous students were dental students, and they were able to experience treatment practice in a different way, have contact with different diseases, and compare the situation with a Welsh and a UK scenario. In addition, staff can participate in Erasmus, with the same sorts of benefits, namely learning how other people do things and the pluses and minuses of that.

[14] You have asked us to talk about funding issues, and we can go through them in more detail for you. Some of the funding is relatively straightforward, and the level is adequate for what is required. Other streams are more challenging, and there is some element of it being difficult to participate in the projects. Other issues that are challenging to us are things like the short deadlines that sometimes come out of Europe and the fact that the bulk of calls arrive at the end of July. That bid is probably the most difficult to put together of any European bid and is considerably time intensive. The rewards are excellent when we get there, but there is no question that, to be successful in Europe, you have to submit the highest quality of bid to win the money, as is entirely appropriate. I think that that is enough for an introduction.

[15] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Nick and Roger, is there anything that you wish to add before we turn to Members and I hand over the Chair?

[16] **Mr Bodycombe:** I would endorse everything that Professor Treasure has said about the importance of framework programme 7. In the paper, we have tried to mention that framework 7 is not the only European research funding source that we go after, but it acts as a catalyst to allow us to go after other schemes. Some of them are listed on the second page and are also referenced in the summary and recommendations. I suspect that perhaps Members will want to come back to those when asking questions. Roger, do you have anything to add?

[17] **Professor Whitaker:** Not at the moment.

[18] **Jeff Cuthbert:** In that case, I will hand back to the Chair to Rhodri Morgan.

[19] **Rhodri Morgan:** My profuse apologies to Members and to witnesses for my late arrival. By way of explanation, there was very heavy traffic on the bridge and in the tunnel coming across the Taff this morning.

[20] I read your paper last night, and there are a couple of questions from me before I throw it open to Members. How do you think that Cardiff University—or, indeed, any other Welsh university—is doing relative to other British universities in the league table of accessing FP7 money and the other sources of European funding? On the surface, it looks as though Wales, as a collective whole, is not getting what you might call our population share, or our share relative to the size of student numbers in Wales. That is what it looks like on the surface, but Cardiff could be an exception. Just give us a feel for how well you think that Cardiff and/or Wales more widely is doing. Do you have any observations?

[21] **Mr Bodycombe:** If we had been asked to answer that question this time last year, we would have said that Cardiff was some way behind the Russell Group universities, which I guess everybody around the table is aware of, namely, the leading research universities in the

UK: the Oxforas, the Cambridges, Imperial College London, University College London and so on. However, in the past year, Members may well be aware that we have had record success in accessing research funding, and the £150 million—

[22] **Rhodri Morgan:** The £150 million for the academic year ending 31 August 2010.

[23] **Mr Bodycombe:** Indeed. In fact, reference is made to the figure of just over £11 million coming in awards predominantly from FP7, which takes us up the table in comparison with other Russell Group universities. However, your general observation, I think, is accurate in that—

[24] **Rhodri Morgan:** I do not think that we expect Cardiff to compare well with the inner sanctum of the Russell Group, namely Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and University College London, but how does it compare with the other 18 non-inner sanctum members of the Russell Group: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and so on?

[25] **Professor Treasure:** The comments are still valid. We are improving but, in all honesty, we still have some work to do. Over the past couple of years, we have seen two substantial European Research Council grants. We are aware that it is extremely tough to get a European Research Council grant, so we have to run an extremely strict internal peer-review process to make sure that the grant bids being submitted are of the highest quality and that we weed out the poor ones. That is just critical. In doing that, it will take a little time to make sure that our performance continues to improve, but we are seeing an improvement, and it is just up to us to make sure that that continues.

[26] There are a number of ways of doing that, as well as an internal review of performance, and they are to do with ensuring that we use the facilities that are available to us through Wales House in Brussels and through the RCUK offices in Brussels to make sure that we are also targeting our research at those areas where the funding is directed.

[27] **Rhodri Morgan:** This is the last question from me for now, before I throw it open to Members. How vexed is the issue of overhead recovery? Whenever I have spoken to people in the research field in Welsh universities, they always talk about this question of balancing out those grants which give full recovery of your overheads, as in the case of UK Research Council funding, and those where you do not, such as from medical charities. I am never quite sure where the Wellcome Trust fits into this, but your typical medical charity, possibly by the rules of the Charity Commission, does not allow you to put in for a huge sum of money that is the overhead recovery standard, which is well over 40 per cent of your total costs. So, it is pretty critical whether you get overhead recovery, which you do with research council funding but not with a charity.

[28] If you have too many medical charity grants, it is bad news, and the college bursar or finance officer would ask you please not to win any more of those or, if you do, to make sure that you have some research council grant money coming in as well, to share the overhead recovery. Where does FP7 stand? Does it give you full overhead recovery, partial overhead recovery or no overhead recovery?

[29] **Professor Treasure:** First, I thank you for the contribution that the Assembly Government has made to charitable overheads, because you have moved to address that issue in part, but your analysis is entirely correct. It varies depending on the type of grant that we go for. If you want detailed information on this, I am sure that Nick will provide it for you outside the meeting. In summary, a European Research Council grant comes with 100 per cent overheads, so that is really top-quality money and is excellent. Other FP7 grants—and I have to get this right—provide 100 per cent management costs and, for research, technology, and development, 75 per cent of the overheads are paid. Sorry, it is 60 per cent overhead on

everything, of which the union pays 75 per cent of the research, technology and development costs and 100 per cent of the management costs. So, it is not bad.

9.30 a.m.

[30] However, there are some programmes where there is a fixed 7 per cent overhead and then, if they only pay 50 per cent of the costs and want 50 per cent match funding, it becomes very problematic.

[31] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae gennyf ddau gwestiwn. Mae'r cyntaf yn ymwneud â'r modd yr ydych chi, fel prifysgol, yn gwneud eich ceisiadau. Yr ydych wedi sôn am adolygiad mewnol o geisiadau sy'n cael ei gynnal. Nid yw'n glir o'ch papur pwy sy'n gyrru'r agenda o ran ceisiadau. A yw'r gyrriant yn dod oddi wrth academyddion unigol, adrannau neu ganolfannau addysgu, neu a ydych chi, fel prifysgol, yn cydlynu'r ceisiadau er mwyn sicrhau y fantais fwyaf?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I have two questions. The first concerns the way in which you, as a university, submit bids. You have mentioned an internal review of bids that is being conducted. It is not clear from your paper who is driving the agenda in terms of bids. Is it driven by individual academics, departments or centres of learning, or do you, as a university, co-ordinate bids in order to secure optimal advantage?

[32] Mae fy ail gwestiwn yn ymwneud â Chymru gyfan. Prifysgol Caerdydd, o bell ffordd, yw'r sefydliad sy'n llwyddo orau fel sefydliad ymchwil. A ydych yn cydweithio â sefydliadau addysg uwch eraill er mwyn sicrhau bod mas critigol gennych o ran ymchwil, neu a ydych yn gweld pawb arall fel cystadleuwyr yn y maes?

My second question concerns the whole of Wales. Cardiff University, by a long chalk, is the most successful research institution. Do you collaborate with other higher education institutions in order to ensure that you have the critical mass in terms of research, or do you see everyone else as competitors in the field?

[33] **Professor Treasure:** So, there are two questions. The first is about the drivers for research. It varies. Inevitably, when you are looking to seek research money, you have to see what funders are calling for in terms of bids and match that to your own expertise and tie the two together. The key elements that a university has in that are selective funding of research groups that may meet national and international objectives, performance management of research staff and research group leaders, and the provision of facilities that are appropriate to the research that is desired to be done. There is another element as well, which is participation with colleagues internationally, but also participation in the grant-reviewing process, be that in the UK or in Europe, which allows knowledge of the direction in which a granting body may be moving. In summary, there is not one simple answer. There are a number of devices that an individual and a university would use to try to maximise the return into itself.

[34] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What I was looking for was whether the strategy comes from the centre. Are bids made just because you happen to have certain academics who are interested in research and are prepared to complete the very complicated application process or do you, as a university, plan centrally?

[35] **Rhodri Morgan:** It is an age-old question. [*Laughter.*]

[36] **Professor Treasure:** I am trying to say that it is not one answer. We have recently had a competition for research institutes and we have awarded money to the three research institutes that we listed: neurosciences and mental health, cancer stem cells, and sustainable places. That is the university having a centrally driven strategy to have groups of researchers working together. At the same time, in other areas, you will have individual researchers who will have the necessary expertise to take forward a bid. Any researcher who we employ, as

part of their employment, should be seeking and getting research money. That is, in a sense, where the other angle of performance management comes in. We will set targets for schools as a central university, I would expect schools to set targets for individual researchers, and I would expect them to be monitored back. Is that all right?

[37] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yes.

[38] **Professor Treasure:** As to your second question on the need to collaborate, my understanding is that a number of universities in Wales are members of Welsh Higher Education Brussels. That includes Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea, Newport and Glamorgan. Have I missed someone?

[39] **Mr Bodycombe:** As far as Welsh Higher Education Brussels is concerned, there is 100 per cent subscription from Welsh universities.

[40] **Professor Treasure:** I am sorry, that was the UK research office.

[41] **Mr Bodycombe:** It is the UK research office that a number of institutions in Wales subscribe to.

[42] **Professor Treasure:** The balance in a European grant between collaboration and competition is quite fine and depends on the sort of money that you are going for. In some grants, you will be going for collaboration, but the key thing has to be expertise and that each collaborator will bring something to build the strength of the proposal. You cannot just put a collaborator on an application for the sake of collaboration; they have to have a role. I can see areas where we and Swansea would both bring something to the application and that would strengthen it, and that is not the only example. Those collaborations will be within Wales, they will be within the United Kingdom, and then they will be within Europe.

[43] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Part of the question that I was going to raise concerned the collaboration issue, but that has been dealt with. The second part of my question was about the overall volume of money that we win through FP7. It has been mentioned here, in Plenary questions and statements that we could do better across the board in terms of FP7. One of the suggestions is that because all of Wales qualifies for structural funds in some way—convergence or competitiveness—FP7 is a bit on the back burner. Do you think that there is evidence to support that and, if that is the case, how can we change that?

[44] **Mr Bodycombe:** If we look at structural funds in Wales, the second point in the recommendations—on the third page—is about the complementary nature of structural funds. I think that probably everyone is aware of how keen the European Commission is to see synergies between its various funding streams. It picks up on the point that was made earlier on collaboration with colleagues.

[45] Members will be aware that the Chair launched last October, I think, the Low Carbon Research Institute, which Cardiff University is leading on. That is a prime example where universities from across Wales are working very closely together, fitting in with particular areas. That should then lead ultimately, when that funding comes to an end, to the likes of the framework programme where we can collaborate together. The point that is being made there is in terms of using existing funding within the structural funds to allow pump priming of potential framework applications. Using the Low Carbon Research Institute as it is running now as an example, there is no reason why moneys from that cannot be used to link up with other partners across Europe. There is a transnational element. I understand that it is purely to allow these types of projects to collaborate with similar projects in other convergence areas. So, in terms of using those funds, that would be a really good way to develop that.

[46] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Are you aware of work that is under way to develop that co-ordinated approach at this point? Do you work on this issue with the Welsh European Funding Office, for example? You mentioned earlier, and I do understand the issue regarding the complexity of the application process and that, for a variety of reasons, it has to be thorough and rigorous, but are there any shared experiences or shared working on those?

9.40 a.m.

[47] **Mr Bodycombe:** There is. This afternoon, I am meeting Sue Price from the Welsh European Funding Office, who is coming to talk to us about the framework programme. So, yes, we want to have a dialogue. We see that there are opportunities. We might be able to report back after that meeting on areas that we can be looking at.

[48] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. Could you give us a written note on that after you have digested the outcome of the meeting with WEFO? I will move on now to Eleanor Burnham and then Nick Bourne.

[49] **Eleanor Burnham:** A oes rhywbeth ychwanegol y gall Llywodraeth Cymru ei wneud i gefnogi ac annog cyfranogaeth prifysgolion a busnesau o Gymru a rhanddeiliaid eraill yn FP7?

Eleanor Burnham: Is there more that the Welsh Government can do to support and encourage the participation of universities and businesses from Wales and other stakeholders in FP7?

[50] Yr ydych yn nodi yn eich papur bod angen cydweithrediad gwell rhwng prifysgolion a diwydiant ar draws Cymru. Sut mae eich prifysgol chi yn gweithio gyda busnesau o Gymru a'u cynnwys yn y mentrau hyn? A ydych yn eu gwneud yn rhan o'r prosiectau eu hunain neu ydynt yn masnachu'r gwaith ymchwil? A yw'n bosib ichi wneud mwy?

You mention in your paper the need for better collaboration between universities and industry across Wales. How does your university work with businesses in Wales and include them in these initiatives? Do you make them part of the projects themselves or do they market the research? Is it possible for you to do more?

[51] Yn olaf, yr ydych yn sôn eich bod yn rhan o'r Grŵp Russell; sut ydych yn cymharu yn rhyngwladol, gan fod cystadleuaeth fawr yn rhyngwladol? Sut ydych yn cymharu gydag America, Tsieina neu India yn y mater pwysig hwn?

Finally, you mention that you are part of the Russell Group; how do you compare internationally, as there is considerable international competition? How do you compare with America, China or India in this important matter?

[52] **Professor Treasure:** Is the very part of your question how we work with business?

[53] **Eleanor Burnham:** Well, the three aspects are important, because I am trying to get in three questions. The first is about how the Government is supporting you; the second is how you co-exist with businesses; and the third is probably one of the most important points about international standards and competing, particularly perhaps with China, America, India, or even Brazil these days, as it is part of the BRIC.

[54] **Rhodri Morgan:** This is one of Eleanor's 'game, set and match' questions. Nothing is excluded. *[Laughter.]*

[55] **Mr Bodycombe:** I will come in on the first question regarding what the Welsh Government can do to encourage greater collaboration in FP7. It has already been doing things and, again, there is a reference to this in the first of the recommendations at the end of the paper. I came to give evidence to this committee back in May 2005, when I and

colleagues from across higher education in Wales made reference to a scheme in Scotland that had been set up to allow Scottish universities and business to develop their applications to the framework programme. The Wales European collaboration fund came on-stream in 2007 and it has been a very useful fund. It has supported travel and subsistence, up to 50 per cent of costs, and also engaging consultants, where appropriate.

[56] With regard to the scheme, I understand that the word that has come through is that the focus will now be on the key areas highlighted in the economic renewal programme, which is totally understandable and fits in, certainly, as far as Cardiff is concerned, with areas that we are interested in. So, that is one tangible way in which support can be given from the Assembly Government to what universities and business are trying to do.

[57] One thing I would like to mention here, and perhaps it will lead on to Roger's point, is that, as far as business is concerned, what we lack in Wales is an understanding of who exactly is involved in the framework programme. Obviously, we work closely with our counterparts in other Welsh universities, so we have an idea of what people are doing. Who is involved in the business sector, whether they are small to medium-sized enterprises or the larger companies, is not a clear picture. If the Assembly Government was in a position to try to make that information more readily available, then there would be greater engagement across the piece and universities would take businesses with them. We talk about European funding and everybody assumes that you have to have European partners—and, in fact, it is an international programme, so you can bring in international partners—you can take people with you. Perhaps this is a point that Roger can pick up in terms of his own projects within the framework programme.

[58] **Professor Whitaker:** I speak as a co-ordinator of two current FP7 projects. Cardiff University is the co-ordinating partner. I will refer back to the point that Elizabeth made about the need for expertise within a bid. It is very important that any SME or business inclusion adds weight to the bid; that is absolutely a fundamental point. It can be quite challenging to find the right type of expertise. To my mind, if there was greater transparency on expertise and willingness to be involved in the creation of FP7 bids from the industry side, that would really help to expedite high-quality proposals.

[59] On a practical basis, certainly from within the university, we look towards our research and commercial division and the links and relationships that are held there. It is often a front for people entering the university to look for expertise. So, it is quite an important part of the institution. That is one way in which matching can occur between the expertise, academics and industry. Beyond that, it is then down to individual researchers, the directory of expertise that we hold, matchmaking between partners out there, and the expertise that we have through exposure regarding our research and what we are about. Our web presence is very important in that regard.

[60] **Eleanor Burnham:** Can I ask a supplementary question?

[61] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes. I have a supplementary question as well on this but Eleanor first, then.

[62] **Eleanor Burnham:** Lots of Oxford activity is perhaps embryonic and then it becomes a big business, and so on. Would you expect to be doing more of that? I am only using Oxford as an example; Cambridge is probably the same, in scientific terms.

[63] **Professor Whitaker:** Yes. One of the projects I mentioned is a joint project with both Oxford and Cambridge and it is funded under the future and emerging technologies programme, which is pre-exploitation, if you like. So, it allows blue-sky thinking and a degree of freedom to try something that is higher risk and they are willing to tolerate higher

risk for greater potential pay-off. Targeting schemes like that downstream will potentially lead to exploitation activity.

[64] One of the problems with exploitation is that the legal agreements that surround multiple-partner consortium agreements can become quite complex and we have to work quite hard as an institution to make sure that they are watertight.

[65] **Rhodri Morgan:** I will come back to my supplementary question on matchmaking, but Nick Bourne has a question.

[66] **Eleanor Burnham:** They have not mentioned the international—

[67] **Rhodri Morgan:** Sorry, yes, the fourth of your three questions. [*Laughter.*]

[68] **Professor Treasure:** This was a brief that we prepared for international universities. Cardiff is examining its performance very closely. There would be some evidence that other universities are getting better faster than us which, inevitably, leads to a relative decline. We are taking quite serious action within the university to tighten performance in all areas. As you said, there are a number of countries that we have to watch, the established rivals and developing ones, and we are doing so at the moment.

9.50 a.m.

[69] **Nick Bourne:** It is not just a ‘game, set and match’ question, but a long five-setter without a tie break, I think. [*Laughter.*]

[70] Thank you very much indeed for the presentation and answering so many questions; it is very helpful. I have one remaining question left.

[71] **Professor Treasure:** Sorry. [*Laughter.*]

[72] **Nick Bourne:** No, it is not a problem, having them answered is good. You mentioned earlier about the UK research office and, obviously, we dealt with the Welsh research office. I am just interested about collaboration. Clearly, the competition element comes in here and much broader questions about fees and the funding of research and so on, but leaving that to one side, if you are seeking to collaborate with another HE institution, what would be your first instinct? Do you look elsewhere in Europe rather than in the UK? Do you look to Europe or do you look to Wales? I understand that you may not end up where you start from, but what would be your first instinct?

[73] I have just one very quick supplementary, which is totally from out of left field, probably: does the Erasmus programme operate outside of the EU, because you talk about links elsewhere?

[74] **Professor Treasure:** Yes, it does.

[75] **Nick Bourne:** Oh, it does, does it? That is news to me. I saw Norway down and I thought, ‘That is surprising’.

[76] **Professor Treasure:** And more exciting places than that. [*Laughter.*]

[77] **Nick Bourne:** Okay, good. Thanks.

[78] **Professor Whitaker:** To answer your question, initially, I would not look at the sort of spatial geographical constraint. I would look at the quality of the partners, what they can

add to the bid, how well they would synchronise in terms of management, so that—

[79] **Nick Bourne:** Sure, but where would you go first? I understand that that is where you want to end up, but where do you look first?

[80] **Professor Whitaker:** To get to that point, personally speaking, it is really about developing a network and collaborations over time to find those partners and seek out their presence. That involves going along to European Union events. It involves going to the research community as well. Notwithstanding that, you have to make sure that geographical considerations are taken into account, because one of the criteria for FP7 bids is that there is a spread of geographical presence from across Europe.

[81] **Professor Treasure:** Very quickly, we have sent students to and received students from Turkey and they had a very different experience of the healthcare system.

[82] **Nick Bourne:** That is a candidate country, but how is Norway involved?

[83] **Professor Treasure:** European Economic Area.

[84] **Nick Bourne:** I see. I did not realise that. Thank you.

[85] **Rhodri Morgan:** This really follows on from Eleanor and Nick's line of questioning on this question of matchmaking, and in a way it follows on from Jeff's previous question as to what extent a central resource in your university and other universities comes into play here, or whether you leave it to the initiative of individual academics. When you look for business collaboration, would your first port of call be a business in another member state? That meets the qualification that there must be an involvement beyond the one member state.

[86] If you take, for instance, the announcement overnight that one of the very few areas of increasing expenditure from the Government is going to be cyber warfare, with an extra £0.5 billion for that, would you think at a central level, 'Oh well, yippee. Let us see whether Cardiff University can now find a collaborating partner in cryptography or whatever'? We do happen to have a major private sector cryptography research campus in Wales. Do you think, at a central level in Cardiff University, 'Now, let us see how much of this extra £0.5 billion we might be able to get if we collaborate with a private sector partner in Wales', or do you have to look for a private sector partner in Germany or France or Holland to help give it that transnational element? Or do you leave it to an individual academic, and, if they happen to know somebody in this field, fine, they get on with it and you approve it? Or do you drive it thinking, 'Hell's bells, we have to look for areas of increasing public expenditure when all around public expenditure is going to be reducing'?

[87] **Professor Treasure:** I think that we have to go back a stage. If we are thinking about it today, we are too late. We have had to crystal-ball gaze and read the signs and say, 'Cyber warfare is likely to come up at some point', because if we do not have the sort of expertise already within the university to go out and recruit a team now, we are going to miss it.

[88] Having said that, I am going to pass this to Roger. Assuming that I have read the crystal ball right and I have the right sort of expertise within the university—we have developed it or we have bought it in, or maybe we have been able, through some lobbying process or through some work that we are doing elsewhere in the university, to start to express the need and the possibilities from research that we are doing—we would then look to areas of expertise. I am going to look to Roger, who is from computer services, and ask how he would then take that forward. Would you go local or international?

[89] **Professor Whitaker:** Although we need geographical spread in FP7, there is no

reason why we cannot have multiple partners from Wales or the UK. One of the projects that I am leading has three sevenths of the research being conducted in the UK. Therefore, there is absolutely no reason why we cannot have SMEs and commercial partners involved from within the UK.

[90] I will refer back to the point about expertise. To make something work properly, it does boil down to the quality of the partners, what they can offer and, for the bid, whether there is a critical mass there. So, very large companies such as EADS, BT and so forth are natural bedfellows, and it is through the individual relationships that we hold with such organisations that you can start to gain leverage.

[91] **Rhodri Morgan:** Am I wrong in assuming that you have to have an overseas or another member state involved as a partner, either at the academic level or at the private business level?

[92] **Professor Whitaker:** You do, yes. You have to have a spread.

[93] **Mr Bodycombe:** There is a minimum of three from different member states or associated states and I think—

[94] **Rhodri Morgan:** Could that be private business or another university or Government research institute or a body of that sort?

[95] **Mr Bodycombe:** Indeed. If I could just come in on the international dimension, that must be kept in mind in the sense that I think that I am right in saying that the country outside the EU 27 that has the biggest involvement in the framework programme is the USA.

[96] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, you would call in Bill Gates.

[97] **Mr Bodycombe:** You could call in Bill Gates. [*Laughter.*] In terms of your potential collaborators, you can look worldwide and, in the vast majority of cases, the framework programme will pay for another country to be involved—the likes of China, India, Brazil and so forth. The USA has a reciprocal arrangement on the health programme. We can go after the National Institutes of Health funding, so it has been opened up, and hence you have quite a lot of US involvement in the health programme.

[98] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. The most recent example of a successful collaboration that I saw between a Welsh university and a Welsh business—whether it had European funding I cannot remember—was one where Swansea was collaborating with Corus, now Tata, of course, and an Australian company, Dyesol, in Shotton, on spray-on solar cells on the sides of buildings. I do not know whether you saw it; this is in the last two or three days now. In order to get European funding for that, would they have to bring in somewhere either a Dutch university or the Dutch end of Corus's research centre—Tata, sorry—or something of that sort in order to be able to qualify for FP7 or, further down the line, FP8?

[99] **Professor Treasure:** Yes. In the situation that you have just described, it would not be too difficult.

[100] **Rhodri Morgan:** Not in that particular case, you are right. On FP8, just very briefly, what do you think we should be inputting from Wales—either the university sector, the Assembly Government or business in Wales—into the design of FP8 to make it better, easier, more successful in promoting European technological advancement compared to FP6 and FP7? Do you have any thoughts on that, or is it too early?

[101] **Professor Treasure:** Yes, I am sure we all have. If you go back to my comments

about crystal-ball gazing, you will know which way your institutions are thinking, because our thinking is determined by your thinking, to a degree.

10.00 a.m.

[102] So, if you can help to frame the questions that you require to be asked, we will probably be prepared to help to answer them. However, there is also a need for some assistance, if possible, to keep the fund that Nick referred to earlier, for pump-priming and consultancy on developing bids. That would be very useful, as well as something around the matchmaking of businesses and universities. Those are the three elements.

[103] **Rhodri Morgan:** Good. Do you think that matchmaking can be done by Government, not just by vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors and European funding officers meeting together and such like?

[104] **Professor Treasure:** Yes, I do, actually. It can be done in a country the size of Wales in a way that it cannot be done in bigger states.

[105] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I have a point for clarification. We have touched on the question of creating a critical mass in Wales and whether that would give Wales a competitive edge. I take on board the point that Roger has made that any prospective partner has to offer something over and above the ordinary to aid the application. Do you, as a university, have a view as to whether creating a critical mass in Wales would offer a competitive edge, and do you, as the leading research higher education body in Wales, feel that you have some responsibility for creating that type of critical mass?

[106] **Professor Whitaker:** May I respond? Yes, there has been a step change in creating a critical mass, certainly in the computing domain in Wales. I would point to RIVC, the research institute of visual computing, which has brought together some really quite significant researchers from across Wales who are synchronising well together. To me, that puts it in a strong position to move forward and lever in European funding, should that be consistent with what it is trying to achieve. I think that investment like that has a benefit, from a European perspective.

[107] **Rhodri Morgan:** All right. There are no other questions, so I thank you very much for coming. I apologise once again for having missed your oral presentation right at the start. It has been an illuminating session. Thank you for your answers to our questions. There was at least one supplementary note that you were going to send us, so we would be very grateful for that and for any other further thoughts that you may like to supply the committee with. We all have a mutual interest in trying to maximise the sources of increased public funding that may be available given that there may be reductions elsewhere, in research council funding and so on.

[108] **Mr Bodycombe:** Yes, indeed.

[109] **Rhodri Morgan:** Are Members happy to continue to the next item without a comfort break? I see that you are.

10.03 a.m.

**Ymchwiliad: Cyfranogiad Cymru mewn Rhaglenni Ymchwil, Arloesi a Dysgu
Gydol Oes yr Undeb Ewropeaidd—Casglu Tystiolaeth
Inquiry: Welsh Participation in EU Funding Programmes: Lifelong Learning
Programmes—Evidence Gathering**

[110] **Rhodri Morgan:** I now welcome our next witnesses. Please sit down. I am sorry, but my eyesight does not permit me to read the names on your nameplates now. I am waiting for my cataract operation, after which I am sure I will be able to do so. ‘Madeleine’ I can just about make out. This is like an optician’s exam now: ‘X, L, H, R’.

[111] **Ms Rose:** I am Madeleine Rose.

[112] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** I am Faye Hindle-Lewis.

[113] **Rhodri Morgan:** Thank you for that. My understanding is that you want to make an oral amendment to your written evidence, which is not a problem. Your jail sentence will be kept well below five years with good behaviour. [*Laughter.*] There is no sentence to the tower, so you are not to worry. So, do you want to just run through the paper until you come to the bit that you want to amend, or do you want to do the amending right from the start? Do whichever you prefer. If it is weighing heavily on your shoulders, you may want to get it over with now or you can do it as you go.

[114] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** We will do it as we go.

[115] **Rhodri Morgan:** Fine.

[116] **Ms Rose:** We thought that, first, I would give you an overview of Welsh participation in the lifelong learning programme, and then I will hand over to Faye, who will just outline the promotional activities for the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes in Wales.

[117] From the paper, you will have seen that there has been an increased number of applications in Wales since 2007, and we are really pleased that the participation of Welsh organisations and the amount of funding granted to them is high in comparison with our percentage of the population. For example, in 2009, more than €2 million was granted to Welsh organisations and individuals, which is approximately 8 per cent of the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programme budgets.

[118] We also think that there is a really good variety of projects happening in Wales covering all three programmes. They range from individual experts in education and training having the opportunity to go abroad to meet their peers, to groups of students or apprentices undertaking work placements that will help with their employability. There are also many examples of organisations working in partnership with European partners.

[119] Finally, there is generally a good distribution of projects geographically throughout Wales. I will just outline some of the programme information. We have provided you with quite a lot of statistics about the variety of different programmes but I can sum those up generally. The Leonardo programme focuses on raising the quality and relevance of vocational education and training across Europe. The participation of Welsh organisations in this programme has increased considerably since 2007, especially in the mobility programme, which focuses on sending young people abroad on work placements, and also the partnership projects.

[120] The Grundtvig programme aims to strengthen adult education and lifelong learning, and participation in this has steadily increased as well. There are still opportunities this year for Welsh organisations to access funding for the mobility activities. So, this is for individuals to go abroad for continuing professional development.

[121] Finally, the Transversal programme covers all areas of lifelong learning and provides study visits for education and training experts. There has been a decline in the amount of funding available in this programme. That has happened generally at the European level, but it is really positive that Wales is still benefiting greatly from this programme. A number of experts in the Welsh Assembly Government have undertaken a variety of study visits between 2007 and 2010. They have also managed to host two successful study visits in 2008 and 2009, so this is an opportunity to showcase the good practice that is happening in Welsh education and training to peers across Europe.

[122] **Rhodri Morgan:** As a matter of interest, where did the name Grundtvig come from? We all know that Leonardo was a Brazilian mid-fielder, but who was Grundtvig? Why did they choose that name?

[123] **Ms Rose:** For a similar reason why they chose Leonardo and Erasmus, but Grundtvig is less well known. He was a Danish scholar and clergyman, and he firmly believed in lifelong learning. He particularly believed in learning for the love of learning, so that is why his name was attributed to the Grundtvig programme.

[124] **Rhodri Morgan:** He was a great Dane.

[125] **Eleanor Burnham:** What have you had this morning, Rhodri?

[126] **Rhodri Morgan:** Sorry, it is the muesli, you know. [*Laughter.*] All right, Faye, is it in your evidence that you want to make the amendment?

[127] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes, that is right. I want to talk to you about how we promote the programmes, with particular reference to Wales. Part of our remit as the national agency for the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes is to ensure that the education and training community in the UK knows about them and about the opportunities available. We conduct a range of activities throughout all countries of the UK to promote the programmes. Our approach in Wales has been to add on to these activities by working closely with stakeholders, projects and policymakers in Wales, getting them to advise us on the best ways of promoting the programmes to the organisations that we ought to be reaching, and to get a view on our activities and how we could improve them.

10.10 a.m.

[128] The main way that we do this is by running a Welsh advisory group, which has been running since June 2007. It meets twice a year and comprises experienced project stakeholders across the education and training community in Wales to give a good balance across vocational training, community learning and adult education. The Assembly Government has also helped us to organise the meetings since 2007. So, we have a good mix of different kinds of organisations. The purpose of the advisory group is, as its name suggests, is to advise us on how we could improve our activities. We look at the statistics each year for applications and successful projects in Wales, we look at the geographical balance of successful projects, and we take advice from the advisory group on how we could improve geographical coverage, how we could reach different kinds of organisations, and we consider whether enough colleges and civil society organisations are participating. It has advised us on where to hold our events and what promotional materials we could produce. It is very active and uses its networks, newsletters and events to promote the programmes. It will invite us

along to its events and forwards our newsletters to all of its contacts. That is the main way that we try to stay in touch with the education and training community in order to ensure that we are reaching everybody that we need to and that the programmes are becoming better known in Wales.

[129] That is the work of the advisory group. Additionally, every year we hold a series of information days and advice sessions around the UK and we always hold one of each in Wales. This year, the—

[130] **Rhodri Morgan:** Who do you invite to that?

[131] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** It is an open invitation.

[132] **Rhodri Morgan:** You put it up on the web, and anyone who wants to can answer it.

[133] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes.

[134] **Rhodri Morgan:** I see. Okay.

[135] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** We also promote it through the advisory groups. This year's information day is taking place in Llandudno on 11 November. That was a location that was specifically suggested to us by the advisory group to help to increase our coverage in north Wales. We are also holding an advice session. Information days allow people to come and sit in workshops and find out more about the programmes, and then there are advice sessions, where they can book a slot to come and talk to us individually about their project ideas and receive advice and guidance on putting in a better application.

[136] **Rhodri Morgan:** I would like to ask you about the passive and active mode; when you put something up on the web, it is a bit hit or miss. Obviously, it is a wonderful device because it is almost cost-free and so on, as long as you have a good address list. Do you think that is enough in terms of hitting a target population of potential applicants? You mentioned Llandudno in north Wales; presumably, you are concerned that there are not enough applications from north Wales. How does the web solve that problem when you think that you are not really reaching the target population who might be potential applicants? Somehow you have to try to reach them through having open days, but you can only invite the people you know because they are going to be the ones that will be on your address list.

[137] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** We do not just depend on the websites. We publish everything on our own websites and we also use our list of subscribers. We have tens of thousands of subscribers to our e-mail updates across the programmes. However, this is where our contacts in the advisory group come in because, through the advisory group, we can reach organisations that we would not necessarily have direct contact with. So, we are able, for example, to ask our advisory group members to send out the information to their networks and to promote the opportunity through their networks and organisations. So, we do not just rely on putting something up there and expecting people to come to us. We also go to events that are organised by other organisations and look at different sectors. This year, for example, we went to an event that was all about how libraries could participate in funding, and that was in mid Wales, I believe. So, we try to get out there as well and actively update people; we do not just rely on them coming to us and finding out about us independently.

[138] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. Which was the bit that you wanted to amend?

[139] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** I wanted to amend the information about an event we have in Cardiff at the Wales Millennium Centre in November.

[140] **Rhodri Morgan:** What page are we on?

[141] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** We are on page 4, third paragraph down, and it starts,

[142] ‘In November 2010, we will hold a Thematic Networking Event in Wales’.

[143] The correction is that the mail-out that took place in Scotland this year was to Members of the Scottish Parliament giving constituency information about the amount of funding that goes to the constituencies and case studies. We will be following up our event in Wales with a mail-out to Assembly Members. The original paper was incorrect as it said that this would be to MPs instead of Assembly Members.

[144] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is fine. We will not tell our colleagues in the Scottish Parliament that you have referred to them as Scottish MPs, because that would be a hanging offence, I think.

[145] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes, I apologise. The event is on 30 November and we are expecting to launch registration on Monday. At the time of writing the paper, we had not secured a speaker from the Welsh Assembly Government. However, we now have a speaker: the head of the skills strategy and policy department.

[146] **Rhodri Morgan:** Fine, good. Was this a briefing that you originally intended to send to the House of Commons, not to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales? Perhaps I am wrong. Okay, never mind.

[147] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Next year, it is going to go to MPs.

[148] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. We will move to the next questions now. Have you finished by the way; sorry?

[149] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** I just wanted to add a little bit of information. We produce materials in Welsh: we have programme brochures in Welsh, and we translate our event information into Welsh. I just wanted to draw your attention to that.

[150] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. I have one question and then I am going to throw it open to Jeff, Rhodri Glyn, Nick Bourne and Eleanor, in that order. The critical thing is how you think we are doing. It looks patchy but not that bad if you average it across all the different programmes, with so many different slots into which people might fit. Sometimes, Wales seems to be doing quite well, even above its population share—a quick 5 per cent figure that we would use as a check. In others, we sometimes have 0 and sometimes 2 per cent, or whatever, but it is about what you would expect. In fact, if anything, it is slightly better than you would expect. Now, is that your assessment, but do you nevertheless think that we could do better with more matchmaking, more selling and more proactive operations on your part?

[151] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** The key is that the performance since 2007 has been consistently positive. There is some movement up and down every year, but it never goes too far down. So, we feel that it is consistent. There are always other opportunities that people could take advantage of, but we would not look at it and think that there is a real problem anywhere.

[152] There are certainly some parts of the programme where we could do better; for example, the large-scale Leonardo transfer of innovation project, which seem to be quite difficult to access. It is a very competitive project, so there could be improvement there. It is very difficult because, as you said, there are so many opportunities. It is very hard to ensure that, every year, every opportunity is getting the right percentage. However, overall, we are pleased with the performance of Wales. There is really good diversity of organisations.

Organisations are also accessing more than one programme. What we hope to achieve is to help organisations to see that they are not just a Leonardo organisation, or a Grundtvig organisation; that if they work with lots of different target groups they can access the different programmes.

[153] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. We will start now with Jeff Cuthbert, then Rhodri Glyn, then Nick, then Eleanor.

[154] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you very much, Rhodri. This is a question that I put to the previous presenters as well. You make the point quite specifically on page 5, under the transfer of innovation projects—the paragraph underneath table 3—that the majority of approved applications are from England and that participation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is consistently low. You then go on to say that this could be because all of Wales is covered by the structural funds, convergence or competitiveness. We have heard this before. Indeed, these are matters that have been raised in Plenary meetings here. Is there a feeling that all other forms of European funding are perhaps a little bit on the back burner because we are focusing solely on structural funds?

10.20 a.m.

[155] To a degree that is understandable, but clearly that is not to our advantage. You say that it could be the case. Is it just a thought or do you have evidence that that could be the case? If the latter, what is being done about it? For example, are you seeking to work with the Welsh European Funding Office to see whether there is scope for joint working here so that some aspects of structural funds could be used to support the ventures that you are referring to? If you feel that is not appropriate, fine, but then, in terms of giving an equal focus to structural funds and the other forms of funding that you are concerned with, how do you think that we can improve the situation in Wales?

[156] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** I would say that this is something that we have had said to us. No one has formally written to us and said that that is the reason why they are not applying, but, at advisory group meetings and through our conversations with projects, it has been said to us, ‘The deadlines are around the same time. There is a lot more money in other programmes and in comparison to other funds Leonardo or Grundtvig can be quite small beer’. So, it is something that we have heard anecdotally. It is not just said in Wales; we have had the same comments made in Scotland as well. There is an issue here, because, as I say, the amount of funding through Leonardo is not necessarily comparative and also the purpose for which it can be used is different. Transfer of innovation is all about devising new training materials or methods or frameworks. It is not about delivering training or that side of things. So, it is a different focus.

[157] On the other hand, we have had some extremely good transfer of innovation projects in Wales and we have some very experienced project promoters who have had several very successful bids and very successful projects. So, when people are applying they are doing a really good job. I hope that answers the first part of your question.

[158] In terms of what we could do to overcome this, we do try to use the advisory group to encourage organisations to promote the opportunities, particularly colleges who tend to be the main people who have access to transfer of innovation funding.

[159] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Do you mean the FE sector?

[160] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes.

[161] **Rhodri Morgan:** You do not think that we are complacent because structural funds

are around and they get all the press coverage, do you?

[162] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** No, it is not about being complacent.

[163] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay, that is fair enough. Jeff, you have a mini supplementary question, do you?

[164] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes, if I could. I take your point about a different type of project, but, clearly, the transfer of innovation project would link in and would support and be compatible with mainstream, let us say, structural funding programmes that are linked to the Lisbon agenda. There is clearly a link here. Has there been any approach to the Welsh European Funding Office by you to see what scope there could be for collaborative working either with it or with its project providers?

[165] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Not directly that I know of. We have had meetings with the Welsh Assembly Government and members of the ESF team there.

[166] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Well, that could be the same thing.

[167] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes, so it could be the same people; I am not entirely sure.

[168] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It might be worth something.

[169] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** Yes, absolutely, we will take that on board.

[170] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. We now have questions from Rhodri Glyn, then Nick, and then Eleanor.

[171] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae dau gwestiwn gennyf. Mae'r cwestiwn cyntaf yn ymwneud â chymhlethodau'r broses o wneud cais am arian Ewrop. Dywedodd cynrychiolwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd, oedd yma yn gynharach, fod y broses yn gallu bod yn un cymhleth iawn, a buodd y Cyngor Prydeinig, oedd yma yn trafod cynllun Erasmus, yn pwysleisio bod unrhyw un oedd yn gwneud cais yn gorfod profi eu bod yn gallu hyrwyddo'r prosiect a'i weinyddu. A ydych yn gweld hynny fel problem o ran y rhaglenni yr ydych yn ymwneud â hwy, ac a yw'n golygu bod rhai pobl a sefydliadau yn methu â gwneud cais gan nad oes ganddynt y gallu i weinyddu'r cais ac i wneud y cais sylfaenol?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I have two questions. The first question relates to the complexities of the process of making a bid for European funding. The representatives from Cardiff University, who were here earlier, said that the process can be very complicated, and the British Council, which was here discussing the Erasmus scheme, emphasised that anyone making a bid had to prove that they could promote and administer the project. Do you see that as a problem in relation to the programmes that you deal with, and does it mean that some people and organisations cannot make a bid as they are not able to administer the bid and to make the basic application?

[172] Yn ail, a oes gennych unrhyw dystiolaeth ynghylch dosbarthiad daearyddol y bobl sydd wedi llwyddo gyda cheisiadau yn y meysydd yr ydych yn ymwneud â hwy?

Secondly, do you have any evidence as to the geographical spread of the people who have succeeded in bids in the fields that you deal with?

[173] **Ms Rose:** The programmes are slightly different from other European funding. A lot of the programmes offer lump sums, so there is no requirement for people to provide receipts for every single euro that is spent, as long as the activity takes place. So, as long as they can demonstrate that they went on the study visit—they have travel tickets or a certificate of

attendance—then the activity is deemed eligible and they receive the funding. The fact that there are lump sums simplifies the assessment process as well. Unlike the Erasmus programme, where an organisation has to apply for a charter to start with and can then draw down funding, the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes do not have that mechanism. You just apply directly to Ecorys. There is an assessment process, which is the same across all the different countries. The bids are assessed and if they meet the right criteria then they are funded.

[174] The way that we promote the programme is to say that, in contrast to other experiences that people might have had in the past with European funding, the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes are very easy to apply for. They are easy to administer as well. That is particularly important for the Grundtvig programme, for example, where a lot of the applicants are community organisations that might not have had experience of managing European funding before. We use that as an attractive offer to those organisations to say to them that it is easy and they are able to draw down the funding.

[175] We have some initial information about the geographical distribution. I have brought some maps with me, if that would be of interest. Generally, over the years, we have noticed that we are getting out there to different areas in Wales and having the information events in the areas that have been suggested by the advisory group has been really beneficial. For example, last year we had the advisory group in Carmarthen and we have seen a real flurry of activity in west Wales and a lot of successful applications. We think that that is a direct result of having the information events there. As part of the event, we will also do this mapping exercise as well, after the thematic event, which will give us a much more accurate picture of the distribution of projects in Wales.

[176] **Nick Bourne:** Thank you very much for the presentation. First, could I pick up on a point that I think that you have just been covering, in a sense? You say in your challenges, right at the end of your paper, that there is a perception that the process is complicated and needs simplifying, whereas at the same time, obviously, there is a need for rigour. From what you have been saying it is just a perception, not a reality then, because you have been saying it is quite straightforward. I would appreciate some comments on that.

[177] The second point is that I understand how you publicise this on the web and e-mails and so on. From the point of view of good practice and publicising some of the successes, what use do you make of people who have had good experience of Transversal, Grundtvig, Erasmus and so on? What do you do in relation to that? I should imagine that that would encourage applications and be useful as well, even for people who do not necessarily take it up.

[178] The third is a very specific point, and it is on the figures. On the whole, you say it is pretty smooth, above the national position of 5 per cent or whatever it should be, which, indeed, it is. However, there seems to be a considerable drop on Transversal in 2007 to 2008 and, indeed, 2009, although it recovers a little bit. What was that all about? It is fewer than 50 per cent in 2007. It may be just that 2007 was exceptionally good, but it does seem notable in those figures.

[179] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** I will start with the Transversal question, because there is quite a simple explanation.

10.30 a.m.

[180] In 2007 there were two study visit programmes. One was the Arion programme and one was European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training visits programme. They were both run at European level, were merged in 2007, the programmes were

reconfigured and the amount of funding and places, per country, was reconfigured across the programmes. So, it is not that the number of applications went down against the same level of funding; it is that the number of places available was reconfigured. So, 2007 was a transition year and then 2008-09 is what we would consider normal. That, hopefully, covers that.

[181] On the perception that European funding is bureaucratic and complicated to administer, this is something that we have come across a lot. I have been working on European programmes for nearly 10 years now and it is something that you encounter all the time. The lifelong learning programme has made great strides in simplifying the application process and in simplifying the methods of funding. The use of lump sums is becoming more and more prominent and we are feeding back positively to the European Commission that it is very welcomed.

[182] Additionally, there is a lot of opportunity under the programmes for individuals to apply for small grants. That makes a big difference, because they can apply for a grant of around €1,000 for a one-off short activity, so they are not committing themselves to a two-year project or a lot of administration. It is a very simple process. They get a small grant and they just have to fill in a report saying 'I did the activity' to get the grant. There is progress being made in simplifying procedures and our aim is to make sure that we produce good guidance that can help people apply and understand what the programmes are about. There are a number of organisations and individuals who will just switch off if you say this is European funding. They imagine very large ESF projects, with very complex management of finances. There is a barrier that you have to overcome, but we get positive feedback that the lifelong learning programme is simpler and more effective.

[183] Finally, we use the successes of people who have been involved in the programmes, because it is a very powerful message. We use these in a variety of ways. We collect case studies of successful participants and from organisations and we use those in our programme leaflets. We have also done videos for each country of the UK, with a number of case studies. At our information days we invite those involved in local cases along to talk about their experience and about their projects and what they have got out of the programme. We try to present people with relevant case studies, either from their sector or from their region or country, so that they can see that there are people like them doing the programmes and learn from that.

[184] There is a big push now to present the results of the projects. Each year we have events and publications looking at the successes of the programme. This year we are going to be producing a case study looking at how the programme has helped to support projects combating poverty and social exclusion, linked to the European year. So, we make good use of the case study information like that.

[185] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr wyf yn falch o gael yr eglurhad hwnnw, gan fy mod i, cyn clywed yr hyn oedd gennych i'w ddweud, yn cymryd mai WEFO oedd yn gwneud y gwaith hwn i gyd. Mae eich cyswllt a'ch perthynas â WEFO yn ddiddorol. Yr wyf yn eithaf newydd i'r pwyllgor hwn, ac yr oeddwn dan yr argraff mai WEFO a oedd yn rheoli'r holl arian Ewropeaidd. A oes cyrff eraill tebyg i chi yn gweinyddu rhaglenni Ewropeaidd? Hefyd, a allwch ymhelaethu ynglŷn ag aelodaeth y grŵp cynghori? A oes ganddynt arbenigedd, a ydynt yn bobl fusnes ynteu a ydynt yn bobl sydd wedi elwa ar

Eleanor Burnham: I am glad to have had that clarification; before hearing what you had to say, I thought that WEFO did all this work. Your contact and relationship with WEFO is interesting. I am a fairly new member of this committee, and I was under the impression that WEFO controlled all the European money. Do other organisations like yours administer European programmes? Also, can you elaborate on the membership of the advisory group? Do they have expertise, are they businesspeople or are they people who have benefited from European funds in the past? Have any of the initiatives

arian Ewropeaidd yn y gorffennol? A oes rhai o'r mentrau a gefnogir yng Nghymru wedi cael eu hamlygu fel enghraifft o'r arfer gorau ar draws Ewrop? A oes unrhyw gynlluniau penodol yn eich taro?

supported in Wales been highlighted as examples of best practice across Europe? Do any specific plans come to mind?

[189] **Ms Hindle-Lewis:** We are not the only organisation providing a national agency service under the lifelong learning programme. We run, if you like, half of the lifelong learning programme and we work closely with the British Council, which runs the other half. We collaborate closely with the council to make sure that all the programmes are promoted.

[190] **Eleanor Burnham:** You are running half of them and the British Council is running half of them. If we do not have time now, could we have a note on that? Have we had a note from the British Council about what it does? I just want to clarify the position.

[191] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes, we have had British Council evidence.

[192] **Eleanor Burnham:** Fine, that is okay.

[193] **Rhodri Morgan:** What was the other question?

[194] **Ms Rose:** The second question was about the Welsh advisory group and about the members. A wide variety of different people come along to the group. For example, we have representation from CollegesWales—the organisation that represents all of the colleges in Wales; it will look at the funding that is available and what sort of offer there is and publicise that within its networks. We have a number of community organisations, such as Community Learning Wales, Learning Disability Wales, and the Trades Union Congress Wales. We have a couple of projects that are quite active in Gower College Swansea and also with ECTARC. Their representatives sit on the advisory group and also help us with our thematic work. We have a couple of sector skills councils as well who sit on the group.

[195] **Jeff Cuthbert:** May I ask you which ones?

[196] **Ms Rose:** Yes, we have Creative and Cultural Skills and the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils—the umbrella organisation that sits on top of sector skills councils. We also have the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and CILT Cymru. There are quite a wide variety of organisations and they are interested in all of the different types of programmes that we have to offer. Quite a lot of them participate as well, so that might have been where the initial interest was or it might be that, as part of the group, they have been promoting it but they have also participated in the visits.

[197] **Eleanor Burnham:** The last bit was about best practice across Europe.

[198] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes. Do you have any examples that jump out at you of best practice in Wales?

[199] **Ms Rose:** Yes. For example, we have a college in north Wales that is working with apprentices and sending apprentices abroad.

[200] **Eleanor Burnham:** Which college is that?

[201] **Ms Rose:** It is Deeside College. It has been accessing the funding for a number of years. We are really keen to promote Deeside College, because we are trying to promote Leonardo mobility programme opportunities for further apprentices. ECTARC has also been operating in the programme for a long time. It sends a number of individuals abroad to

undertake work placements. It has also started branching out into other areas of activity, so it has drawn down quite a lot of Grundtvig funding recently, and also study visits. You see this snowballing happen: someone accesses the programme, they start doing a couple of projects and then it grows from there.

[202] **Rhodri Morgan:** You have made Eleanor Burnham very happy now, because the two examples that you mentioned are in north-east Wales, within spitting distance of her home on a windy day. [*Laughter.*]

[203] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely.

[204] **Rhodri Morgan:** Thank you for your evidence this morning and for your answers to questions. We are all very happy really, but Eleanor is particularly happy.

10.39 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[205] **Rhodri Morgan:** We will now move into private session for a few minutes. I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37.

[206] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.39 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.39 a.m.*