

# **Y Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol**

**EUR(3)-09-09 : Papur 5 : 30 Mehefin 2009**

**Dirprwyaeth y DU i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau: Nodyn gwybodaeth**

## **Diben**

Nodi er gwybodaeth yr agenda a'r papurau amgaeëdig i'w hystyried gan Ddirprwyaeth y DU i Bwyllgor y Rhanbarthau yn ei chyfarfod nesaf a gynhelir yn Llundain ar 22 Mehefin.

**Gwasanaeth y Pwyllgorau  
Mehefin 2009**

## Agenda

12.15	Registration and Lunch	Conference Rooms 1&2
13.00-13.30	<b>Plenary part I - Glenys Kinnock, Minister for Europe followed by Q&amp;A</b>	Bevin Hall
13.30-14.00	<b>4 National sections – meetings</b>	
	Scotland	Meeting Room 5
	Northern Ireland	Meeting Room 3
	Wales	Meeting Room 2
	England	Bevin Hall
13.30	Refreshments available	Conference Rooms 1&2
14.00-14.45	<b>4 Political Group meetings and Contact Group</b>	
	Labour	Meeting Room 5
	Conservative	Bevin Hall
	Liberal Democrats	Meeting Room 2
	Independents	Meeting Room 3
	Non aligned	Open Council 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor
	Contact Group	Media Room 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor
14.45	Refreshments available	Conference Rooms 1&2
14.45-16.30	<b>Plenary part II</b> <b>UK Delegation meeting – continued</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adoption of agenda</li> <li>2. Note of last meeting (attached Doc 2)</li> <li>3. June elections – issues arising (oral)</li> <li>4. Mid year round up of activities (attached Doc 3)</li> <li>5. Plans for the next mandate (attached Doc 4)</li> <li>6. Expenses (to be tabled at meeting)</li> <li>7. AOB</li> </ol>	Bevin Hall
16.30	Close of meeting	

## ANNEX 1 Mid-year review 2009



### Changes to the delegation

There have been several changes to the delegation in the first six months:

#### (a) members leaving CoR

- Keith Brown MSP (Scottish Nationalist Party) has been appointed Minister in the Scottish Executive and has resigned his CoR place. His successor has not yet been nominated.
- Keith Walters (Conservative) chose not to stand in the June 2009 local elections and has therefore forfeited his CoR place. He will not be replaced for the remainder of this term.
- Milner Whiteman (Independent) lost his electoral mandate when Bridgnorth District Council was abolished under local government reform from 1 April 2009. He will not be replaced for the remainder of this term. For information, he was elected to the new Shropshire unitary authority on 4 June 2009.

#### (b) members joining CoR

- Cllr Chris Holley (Liberal Democrat, Swansea) has been appointed to replace WJ Williams, who stood down May 2008. He will sit on the COTER commission as permanent alternate to Cllr Bob Bright.
- Sue Ramsey MLA (Sinn Fein, Northern Ireland Assembly) has been appointed to replace Conor Murphy MLA, who was appointed Minister in the NI Assembly Spring 2008. She will sit on the COTER commission.

#### (c) members nominated to join CoR

- Cllr Roger Evans AM (Conservative, GLA) is nominated to replace Bob Neill MP who stood down in May 2008. He will sit on the COTER commission as permanent alternate to Cllr Keymer.
- Cllr Roger Stone OBE (Labour, Rotherham) is nominated to replace Muriel Barker, who stood down May 2008. He will sit on the EDUC commission as permanent alternate to Jennette Arnold AM.



## In commission

### ***Constitutional Affairs (CONST)***

The main work of the CONST commission has been in monitoring the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, preparing for the June EP elections, and preparing the CoR White Paper on multi-level governance.

- On 27 February, **Lord Tope** was appointed as rapporteur for the package on Better Lawmaking. **Cllr Doreen Huddart** presented her working document on the future Common European Asylum System II.
- On 6 May, Cllr Huddart presented her draft opinion on asylum, and there was a roundtable debate on better lawmaking as preparation of Lord Tope's opinion. Opinions on multilevel governance and migration were adopted.
- The Fourth Conference on Subsidiarity was held in partnership with the Region of Lombardy and under the auspices of the Italian Parliament in Milan on 8 May 2009. Lord Tope participated in one of the panel discussions.

### ***Territorial cohesion and transport (COTER)***

The main work of COTER has been to lay the ground for future reform of EU cohesion policy. In this context the Director-General has been a regular visitor to COTER meetings. In the transport field, after the announcement by the European Commission that it would not publish the Action Plan on urban mobility, the European Parliament took the decision to issue its own Action Plan and to consult the CoR.

- On 13 March, COTER appointed **Cllr Sir Albert Bore** as rapporteur-general on urban mobility. Mr Dirk Ahner, Director General of DG REGIO, presented briefly the recovery plan adopted by DG REGIO.
- The meeting on 5 May adopted the draft opinion on maritime and coastal policy, and considered a working document on rail freight.

### ***Sustainable development and agriculture (DEVE)***

An important event was the signing of the Covenant of Mayors on 10 February 2009, in the framework of the annual European Sustainable Energy Week. DEVE will continue to follow up on its work in this field. The CoR Bureau in February approved the launch of a study under the auspices of DEVE into "Instruments of effective implementation of sustainable development policy and adaptation to climate change in large European cities and their metropolitan areas." DEVE was represented at the "Local Government Climate Change Leadership Summit" in Copenhagen on 2-4 June 2009.

Cllr Paula Baker attended various events of the EU Sustainable energy week from 9-13 February 2009 as follow-up to her recently adopted CoR opinion on renewable energy.

- On 17-18 February DEVE adopted an opinion on the energy performance of buildings, and on patient safety. They considered draft opinions on

pharmaceuticals policy, consumer rights, adaptation to climate change, biowaste. **Cllr Sir Simon Day** introduced his draft report on fisheries control system in the presence of the EP rapporteur.

- On 7 May DEVE adopted an opinion on biodiversity loss, management of biowaste, adaptation to climate change, and Sir Simon Day's opinion on fisheries control.
- The revision of the WEEE Directive has been a priority for the UK Delegation, but CoR took the decision not to issue an Opinion. The UK secretariat consequently lobbied the CoR DEVE secretariat and it reversed its decision. The Opinion is being drafted by the chair.

### ***Economic and social policy (ECOS)***

The major opinion for ECOS this year is Christine Chapman's on the future Lisbon strategy. At the roundtable discussion held at the 29 April ECOS meeting she spoke about the need to re-balance the strategy, giving a stronger emphasis on sustainable development, addressing climate change and social cohesion, in particular in the future, as well as focusing efforts on creating sustainable jobs, investing in all members of society, and supporting development of dynamic and innovative businesses, embedded within their wider communities.

- On 19 February **Christine Chapman AM** was appointed rapporteur on the own initiative Opinion on Future Lisbon Strategy. Opinions were adopted on the economic recovery plan and violence against women.
- On 29 April ECOS adopted an opinion on non-discrimination and equal opportunities, and held a roundtable discussion on the Lisbon strategy.

### ***Education and Culture (EDUC)***

As part of the follow-up to his opinion on broadband, **Cllr Bob Bright** took part in an event on better ICT connections in Torino in Italy, 2-3 April 2009. In May, Jyrki Myllyvirta (FI/EPP) was appointed as successor to **Keith Walters** as first Vice-President of the EDUC Commission

- On 4 March, draft opinions were adopted on Interoperability of public administrations, and on International science and technology cooperation.
- On 12 May, Miranda Bird (Cornwall County Council) gave a presentation about the campaign to create a new EU 'region of culture' award and network to complement the 'capital of culture' award which is only open to urban areas. The draft opinion on the EU strategy for cooperation in education and training was adopted.

### ***External Relations (RELEX)***

In 2009 RELEX has focused on a number of geographic areas, in particular responding to the Czech Presidency initiative on the "Eastern Partnership" and preparations (ultimately fruitless) for an inaugural meeting of the Mediterranean assembly, ARLEM. Its working groups on various candidate and pre-candidate countries have also been active with good UK participation, and CoR has participated in election monitoring missions under the auspices of the Congress.





- On 16 February, RELEX adopted opinions on Local authorities: actors for development, and on the Baltic Sea strategy and considered draft opinions on The Africa-EU partnership and **Cllr Gordon Keymer's** working document on pre-candidate countries.
- On 28 April, RELEX adopted two opinions on Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2008-2009, including that of Cllr Keymer, and another opinion on The Africa-EU partnership

## In plenary

### *February 2009*

The economic downturn, the start of the Czech EU Presidency and preparations for the European Parliamentary elections in June were the main themes.

Opening the session, CoR President Luc Van den Brande denounced the potential return of protectionism in Europe in an official declaration: "Common solutions based on common principles are required to help face the existing challenges for the European economy." He added: "it is now that Europe has to show its solidarity and added value by coming up with a coordinated response."

In an exchange of views with Cyril Svoboda, Minister for Regional Development, and representative of the Czech EU Presidency, the Minister underlined the importance of a strong European regional cohesion policy as a top priority for the Presidency: "The European Union is a unique political project in which cohesion policy plays a key role as this policy is based on the principle of solidarity contributing to the quality of the European citizens' everyday lives."

In his opinion on broadband, **Cllr Bob Bright** called for the EU to guarantee that services and high quality communications are offered at reasonable prices to all citizens, regardless of their social or geographical situation: "I am concerned that a divide has been created in terms not only of a digital nature but a social and economic one that is ever more reliant on digital technologies."

In his final opinion for CoR, **Cllr Whiteman** welcomed the EU Green Paper on Agriculture Product Quality, with its aim of making a stronger consumer connection to EU agricultural quality production and the fact that it acknowledges that agricultural quality is linked to regional traditions, development and sustainability. He felt that local and regional authorities are key to establishing priorities and implementing the programmes which have achieved success in developing and delivering real advantages to EU farmers.

**April 2009**



**United Kingdom Delegation**  
Committee of the Regions

The CoR celebrated its 15th anniversary during the April 2009 Plenary session, an occasion marked by the launch of its Mission Statement, which outlines the role of the CoR, its values and its aspirations. "Our Mission Statement describes a body that is fit for a Europe of the 21st century, built on cooperation between each level of government, connected with the daily life of the citizens, based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and on a shared commitment to economic and territorial cohesion" said CoR President Luc Van den Brande.

The European Commission must come forward with proposals for an Action Plan on Urban Mobility if it wants Europe to benefit from lower greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Opinion by **Cllr Sir Albert Bore**, which urged the Commission to make more funding available for cities looking to develop sustainable infrastructure and low-carbon vehicles in order not only to help reduce emissions but also to boost competitiveness and create jobs.

During the April plenary, Cllr Sir Albert Bore was appointed Vice-Chair of a new interregional group on the automobile sector. Six English members participate in the group, representing regions with significant motor manufacturing industries: **Sir Albert Bore, Flo Clucas, Martin Heatley, Doreen Huddart, Dave Quayle and Dave Wilcox.**

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## ANNEX 2: UK leads

At the last full UK Delegation meeting a set of “UK lead” members were appointed to follow and promote UK interests on priority topics. The idea is that members will seek rapporteurships and speaking opportunities when these items arise in CoR and will assist in the follow-up to opinions and more general lobbying, both in Brussels and in the UK.

The idea was piloted with some success in 2008 (Cllr Baker on renewable energy; Cllr Taylor on enlargement; Lord Tope on combating terrorism).

The following are being prioritised in 2009:

- **Cllr Sir Albert Bore: urban mobility**

Following the CoR Opinion for Urban Transport for which Cllr Bore was rapporteur, LGA has been in contact with Cllr Bore to keep him informed of progress within the Commission and to liaise on next steps. Since the Commission has delayed publication of its urban transport action plan which was expected in the Spring of 2009, the latest news we have is that the Commission will publish a paper on urban transport between ‘late July and October’, so further liaison between Cllr Bore and LGA will be required in the Autumn on this topic.

In addition, we are also expecting publication on 17 June of a more general paper from the Commission about how transport in Europe should develop over the next 20-40 years – the so called Communication on the future of transport. CoR may of course be required to respond to this, and again LGA will look to Cllr Bore in his lead member role to be involved to promote the local government position to the future rapporteur, the European Parliament and other stakeholders.

- **Cllr Sir Albert Bore: general lead on Territorial Cohesion, EU Budget Review and EU Economic Recovery Plan**

Work between the UK Secretariat (LGA) and Cllr Bore, often via officials in Birmingham CC has helped to simplify and speed up the delivery of structural funds in the UK, and also to kick-start a debate amongst the local government sector about possible post 2013 arrangements. In particular, Cllr Bore was signatory to a letter sent to the Government Minister ahead of the meeting of Ministers for EU Regional Development which took place on 22–24 April 2009. The letter outlined a number of simplifications which were required to the current round of structural funds. LGA has also had some useful exchanges with Cllr Clucas on these issues.

### *Budget review (funding post-2013)*

The UK Secretariat (LGA) agreed some key messages in response to the Budget Review and Territorial Cohesion Green papers, which have been subsequently taken forward with a range of stakeholders. We are keen to encourage debate, and have shaped thinking on the future role of EU funds both in London and Brussels.





The Barca Report, published in April 2009, is an independent report commissioned by the European Commission to make proposals reforming it for the period post-2013. It reflects many of our key messages such as: importance of targeting funds at sub-regional level, greater mobilisation of local actors.

Although no legislative timetable has been confirmed, the Commission is expected to publish some proposals on the future budget at the end of this year. The UK government has not been clear on its thinking for post-2013, but we will be stepping up engagement with BERR and the inter-departmental working group. To reinforce councils' messages on the future of EU funds, we are working up proposals for a survey of council officers involved in the administration of EU funds. It is hoped the results will offer useful stats.

#### *European Economic Recovery Plan*

The Commission has made some efforts to simplify the use of EU Funds to speed up investment during the recession, but are keen to hold on to the long-term aims of EU programmes. Simplifications are welcome, but councils believe far more cost-free, simple and effective amendments to the administration of funds can still be made.

Cllr Sir Albert Bore and the LGA Chair of the LGA Regeneration Board wrote to BERR Minister Pat McFadden to highlight the need for further simplifications to make the investment of EU funds more effective on the ground. These arguments are clearly set out in the LGA publication '*EU funds and Local Authorities: changes for now, changes for the future*' which sets out key issues for local government and makes recommendations for better use of EU funds during the recession.

The EU is likely to publish proposals for further simplification in late June 2009, which should be implemented before the end of the year. Local government's messages have fed into the UK's line on the Simplification Task Group – a group of Member State representatives set up by the Commission – and we expect one of our recommendations (flexibility around N+2 spending targets) may be picked up. The Commission has confirmed these will be the final set of simplifications.

- **Christine Chapman AM: Lisbon jobs and growth strategy post 2010 strategy**

Christine Chapman AM is not only UK lead member on Lisbon but CoR rapporteur on the future of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. Her Opinion will be first tabled at the September meeting having had an initial discussion with members at the February ECOS meeting to generate the debate. Christine's CoR opinion will be pivotal in terms of feeding up the official local and regional views through to the European Commission communication which will be launched later this year.

The UK secretariat has assisted Christine in meeting key players in the Lisbon process such as the UK stakeholder meeting being organised by the Treasury on behalf of the UK government, as well as an EU wide conference on local and regional involvement in the future Lisbon agenda which is being organised by the Swedish LGA and the Swedish government (which holds the EU presidency in the second half of 2009). From a policy perspective, the LGA, like other associations will be looking to refresh their positions on Lisbon. LGA will, over the summer, and subject to local authorities responding to our call for views, hope to feed this through to Christine's opinion.



- **Cllr Kay Twitchen: general lead on environment and energy**

*Update on the revision of the energy performance of buildings directive (EPBD):*

This is a priority because the revision calls for the public sector to take a leading role in addressing energy efficiency in buildings. While we welcome the principles, we have concerns that the new provisions of the Directive will have administrative and financial consequences on local councils, whose energy managers are just getting to grips with the original Directive which was only implemented in 2006 in the UK. The revision calls for the threshold to be lowered for Display Energy Certificates (from 1000m<sup>2</sup> to 250m<sup>2</sup>) to be displayed in public buildings by December 2010.

The EP is due to hold its second reading during the new mandate and national governments are holding discussions on Council of Ministers' view. LGA encouraged CLG to talk to other public sector colleagues (beyond central government) about the revision. Since then, they have involved us in an impact assessment they commissioned. LGA is keen to evidence base arguments to EU decision makers. EPBD revision is addressed in an LGA climate change survey so we hope to get some data from this to inform our lobbying. We are seeking to arrange a meeting between Cllr Twitchen and a key UK MEP on the EP energy committee.

*Management of Bio-waste Green Paper*

The Green Paper consultation will influence whether the European Commission brings forward any legislative proposals on this issue, which could have significant implications for councils' collection and treatment of garden and kitchen waste. Of particular concern to UK councils is the possibility of mandatory separate collection, which could jeopardise existing investments and plans. We are keen to support product standards to encourage higher quality output and to develop consumer confidence and end-use markets.

At the DEVE meeting on 7 May Cllr Twitchen secured several amendments to the CoR opinion to ensure the situation of UK councils is better reflected, including: highlighting the significant investment made by local authorities so far to meet the requirements of the Landfill Directive; recognising the need for standards for both compost and compost-like output; and ensuring that reference to EU targets are clarified as non-statutory. Two amendments were tabled to the plenary session on 18-19 June.

A meeting is being sought with the European Commission in order to reinforce local government key messages while the consultation responses are considered. We are currently awaiting a reply from the Commission. Further meetings with the Commission, European Parliament and UK Government will be sought in 2010 if the Green Paper is followed by legislative proposals.

*Revision of the WEEE Directive*

Whilst the Directive does not place any direct obligations on local authorities, any changes are likely to have a knock-on impact for local authorities that have a role in its collection at civic amenity sites. The Commission's proposals for revision are largely positive and should help to increase the amount of WEEE collected and reduce illegal shipment. However, provisions for producer responsibility for the



costs of separate collection from households should be strengthened to ensure that recycling is maximised and costs are not borne by polluters, not local authorities.

The UK Secretariat lobbied DEVE secretariat on the importance of producing an opinion, and although Cllr Twitchen put herself forward for rapporteurship, it was allocated to the Chairman of DEVE. However she made contact with him at the DEVE meeting and this was also followed up with some key messages and an offer of assistance by the UK Secretariat. Work will now be on-going over the summer to ensure that a strong draft opinion reflects UK local government concerns.

The proposals are due for 1<sup>st</sup> reading in the European Parliament and discussions between national governments will proceed at the same time, so we are setting up meetings with MEPs and UK Government.

#### *Climate Change Adaptation White Paper*

The European Commission published the White Paper “Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European framework for action” in April 2009, setting out a framework to reduce the vulnerability of the EU to the impacts of climate change.

Cllr Twitchen secured amendments to the CoR opinion at the DEVE meeting on 7 May, which highlight further the need to develop flexible skills and link to the EU Jobs and Growth Strategy, and call for the Clearing House Mechanism to include an interactive function. We will track the progress of this in the European Parliament, and once the rapporteur is announced, will look to get further involved at that stage.

- **Lord Tope: the Lisbon Treaty and better regulation**

#### *Lisbon Treaty*

This is currently a watching brief, awaiting an expected Irish second referendum in the Autumn and confirmation of Polish and Czech ratifications. If the Treaty enters into force, we will launch a strategy towards its full implementation on the issues of key interest to local government (better consultation, reducing burdens, subsidiarity protocol and CoR role etc). If the Treaty is not ratified, we will seek to ensure that these benefits are rolled out anyway as facets of “good governance”.

#### *Better regulation*

Lord Tope has been appointed rapporteur by the CONST commission and will prepare his report for approval in CONST in September and by plenary in October/December. The general line is that whilst we welcome the EU strategy, it is rather slow to deliver results generally and the local government dimension needs uprating in particular. The revamping of the impact analysis process (which estimates the likely impact of new laws on the environment, SMEs etc) needs to have a local dimension, and will be required by the Lisbon Treaty. The impact of ECJ case law is a new line of enquiry.

Supporting actions: CONST held a public hearing in May at which key stakeholders participated (Stoiber Group on Administrative Burdens; Commission; CEMR; a think tank; a business ngo). A meeting with the ECOSOC rapporteur and European Commission lead official is planned in July and with UKREP possibly in June.

- **Cllr Gordon Keymer: Enlargement strategy - pre-candidate countries**

Cllr Keymer was appointed rapporteur on the pre-candidate report. His opinion was presented to plenary for adoption on 17 June 2009. In his capacity as rapporteur, he participated in a recent meeting of the CoR working group on the Western Balkans.



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