

EUROPEAN & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Date:	25 March 2004
Time:	09:00 am
Venue:	Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly for Wales
Title:	Minister's Report

Purpose

1. To provide an update on a range of issues arising since the last meeting of the Committee.

Recommendation

2. Members to note the content of the report.

Background

3. The Committee last met on 25th February. This paper provides an update.

First Minister's International Activities

- 1st March. Paris. Wales in Europe - St David's Day Celebrations. Lunch time event to celebrate St David's Day and raise the profile of Wales in France.
- 1st March. Brussels. Bibliotheque Solvay, Brussels - St David's Day celebrations. Evening event to celebrate St David's Day and raise the profile of Wales with the European Commission and in Europe.
- 3rd to 4th March.-Visit of George R MacLaren Agent- General of Quebec, Quebec Government Office, London. Discussed devolution arrangements within Wales and the UK. Highlighted the perceived benefits to Wales. Discussed the extent of devolved powers and the differences between Wales and those of the Scottish Executive and Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 15th March. Visit of Provincial Governors from Mozambique. Discussed devolution arrangements in the UK and Wales, including electoral arrangements and the day to day operating procedures of the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 16th March. Visit by Texas Bar and Bench Group. Delegation of 55 legal and law enforcement personnel led by Judge Larry Gist. Carwyn Jones and I met them to discuss devolution and the legal system plus Welsh culture and history.
- 22nd to 25th March. Cardiff City Hall. Sustainable Development Conference. The fourth "Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development" (NRG4SD) conference on sustainable development. The overall theme of the conference is challenge and opportunity.

Other Issues

- Wales Euro Preparations Committee, 8th March. The Secretary of State convened the Third meeting of the Committee on 8th March, which I attended. The meeting focused on communications issues in the event of a euro change over and HM Treasury provided an update on developments across the UK economy since the last meeting in September.
- Euro Ministers Meeting, 11th March. I was unable to attend and the Deputy Minister responsible for Transport, Brian Gibbons AM, attended in my place. The meeting covered the issues of Local Authority preparations, general communications matters and the next phase of public sector preparations.
- Joint Ministerial Committee on Europe, 18th March. I attended this meeting. We discussed on going negotiations in respect of the Working Time Directive, preparations for the coming European Spring Council and Regional Aid.

Rhodri Morgan AM

First Minister

EEAC 25 March 2004. Minister's Report Annex 1.

Date	Assembly Minister/ Official/ Division	Event	Objectives	Outcomes
15 th and 17 th February 2004	Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport	Bilbao, Renewable Energy research.	The visit served to facilitate discussions between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Regional Government of Navarre, Northern Spain to gain an insight into their development of renewable energy policies and create an 80% public support rate for renewable energy. This was achieved through meeting key Government officials and viewing of the various and innovative renewable energy	A greater level of diplomatic relations between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Regional Government of Navarre. An insight into a highly successful model for renewable energy development that showed how renewable energy can be developed in a socially and environmentally responsible way, whilst at the same time encourage a supply chain with benefits for manufacturing and service sectors.

installations in Navarre that have largely been developed by the company Hidroelectrica de Navarra (EHN). The Minister met Mr Miguel Sanz, President of the Government of Navarre, and Mr Jose Javier Armendariz, Minister of Industry and Technology for the Government of Navarre. Mr Armendariz is also the President of SODENA, the Development Agency of Navarre. The Minister also met Estaban Morras, CEO of EHN to discuss from a company's perspective and the framework of co-operation between SODENA and EHN in achieving the renewable energy developments in Navarre.

<p>26th February 2004</p>	<p>European and External Affairs</p> <p>Official.</p>	<p>Madrid. 2nd Meeting of the Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective Project Steering Committee.</p>	<p>To consider the first Interim report of the Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective Interreg IIIB project. This included presentations by the Member State's national experts and validation of the next stage of the study.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to identify the conditions necessary for the implementation of a polycentric model of development in the Atlantic region of Europe.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee discussed the contents of the report and agreed that phase 2 should now involve a strategic evaluation of the Atlantic Area using the data collected and a closer look at the criteria being used to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.</p>
<p>26th February – 1st March 2004</p>	<p>Andrew Davies. Minister for Economic Development and Transport.</p>	<p>Visit to New York and Philadelphia</p>	<p>A wide-ranging programme of business and awareness raising activities to promote Wales on and around St David's Day, culminating in the official opening of the Wales International Centre in New York.</p> <p>All aspects of the Economic Development and Transport portfolio were covered in a programme which included meetings/ speaking</p>	<p>Media coverage is still being collated but it is already evident that this year's coverage exceeded that of previous years.</p>

			<p>engagements with tourism trade and travel writers; Greater Philadelphia Partnership; USA based companies; food trade press and buyers; prominent Welsh Americans; the Welsh diaspora.</p> <p>The launch of Keeping Up With the Jones – the story of Wales and the Welsh in the USA and The Joneses in Manhattan – a Welsh Tour of NYC, both raised significant interest in Wales and USA and provide a solid base for future profile raising activity</p>	
1 st March 2004	Rhodri Morgan First Minister.	Paris. Wales in Europe – St David’s Day Celebrations in Paris.	Business Lunch to mark St David’s Day hosted by British Ambassador to Paris.	Successful event, discussed Welsh products and inward investment opportunities with guests.
1 st March 2004	Alun Pugh, Minister for Culture Welsh Lang & Sport.	Paris. Wales in Europe – St David’s Day Celebrations in Paris.	The primary objective of the events around St David’s Day is to raise the international profile of Wales. Paris and France are also key markets for Team Wales partners.	Successful and well organised event. Too early to determine the outcomes.

<p>1st March 2004</p>	<p>Carwyn Jones Minister, for Environment, Planning & Countryside</p>	<p>Brussels. Co-hosted St David's day lunch with the British Ambassador.</p>	<p>Lunch to mark St David's Day hosted by British Ambassador to Belgium. Carwyn Jones AM Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside was guest of honor.</p> <p>The Minister met the new British Ambassador for the first time. A number of influential people attended the lunch, including Vice President of the European Commission, Neil Kinnock; members of the Byrne and Fischler Cabinets; Welsh MEPs; and private sector organisations such as the Financial Director of SPA (a Belgium company that markets water). The Minister also took this opportunity to launch the new brand of Welsh single malt</p>	<p>Successful event discussed Welsh products and Welsh branding of agricultural products, particularly those connected with the "organic" market.</p> <p>A high profile event which helped raise awareness of Wales in the centre of Europe with representatives from a number of major governments and prominent companies.</p>
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1 March 2004	Carwyn Jones, Minister for Environment, Planning and countryside	Gave a keynote address at a seminar on hydrogen organised by Wales European Centre partners.	The seminar took place in the context of a series of Brussels "Wales Week" events organised by Welsh partners around St David's Day. It aimed to showcase research and pilot projects being undertaken in Wales exploring hydrogen as a clean source of energy for the future. One aspect of this was to showcase the partnership between the WDA, Welsh university research, business and different levels of government in this type of undertaking.	The Minister's address to an audience of European regions highlighted the commitment of the Assembly to sustainable development and the link with clean energy issues. It allowed for promotion of forthcoming events, co-ordinated by the Assembly Government, in the context of its leading roles in two sustainable development networks (the European SD network and the global NRG4SD network). Around 50 people attended the seminar, including representatives from the European Commission.
1 st March 2004	Rhodri Morgan First Minister.	Brussels. Biblioteque Solvay Brussels St David's day reception.	Evening reception to mark St David's Day.	Building on the afternoon event, the reception increased Welsh exposure in the heart of Europe.
3 rd to 4 th March 2004	Rhodri Morgan First Minister.	Visit of George R MacLaren Agent- General of Quebec Quebec Government Office London.	Head of Quebec Government office in London - to look into devolution. Meeting First Minister and party leaders and Richards Commission on powers of the	Mr Maclaren had several lengthy discussions with Assembly Officials and Ministers and expressed satisfaction with his visit.

			Assembly.	
7 th to 8 th March 2004	<p>Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside.</p> <p>Sir Jon Shortridge, Permanent Secretary</p>	<p>Barcelona. Alimentaria Food Fair.</p>	<p>The Minister attended at the invitation of Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales. The Fair, held every 2 years in Barcelona, is one of the three most important food shows in Europe and attracts more than 3,000 companies from around the world involved in foodservice, catering, seafood, meats and poultry, among others, areas. This is also a further opportunity to increase Wales' profile in Catalonia</p>	<p>Welsh stands received a lot of attention at the food show.</p>
8 th to 9 th March 2004	<p>Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside .</p>	<p>Visit of Robert Sauvé Dept of Economic & Regional Development</p> <p>Quebec Canada.</p>	<p>Study visit to explore cooperation with the Welsh Assembly Government in regional and sustainable development.</p>	<p>Welsh Assembly Government and Quebec officials to identify areas of co-operation and consider the practicalities and implications of co-operating in regional and sustainable development fields.</p>
11 th to 12 th March 2004	<p>European and External Affairs officials.</p>	<p>Visit of His Excellency Count J.de Marchant et d'Ansembourg and delegation from provincial government of Friesland.</p>	<p>Friesland delegation to study bilingualism. Ambassador accompanying delegation for his first official visit to Wales.</p> <p>Delegation met officials and</p>	<p>The visitors expressed their appreciation of the time and information provided.</p> <p>The visit was an opportunity to highlight the achievements of Wales in successfully maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity. without cultural conflict.</p>

				discussed the history of the Welsh language, the Welsh language campaign of the 1970's and the Welsh Language Act. Practical applications such as Welsh language policies, bilingual publications and media channels where also covered.	
11 th and 12 th March 2004	Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside	Visit by HE Count JMVA De Marchant et D'Ansembourg, Ambassador to The Netherlands		First visit to Wales. Interested in spatial planning, potato ring-rot, Europe & devolution.	A general fact finding mission. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation of the time, effort and hospitality given.
15 th March 2004	Rhodri Morgan, First Minister.	Visit of Provincial Governors from Mozambique.		Foreign Office sponsored visit: study visit relating to devolved government at national, regional and local level. In particular the Governors are keen to look at the relationship between central Government and the Devolved Administrations and between	Visitors expressed their appreciation of the time spent answering their questions on Devolution.

			<p>levels of local government. Through a study of the UK's practice and policies the visit aimed to generate debate and discussion amongst the Governors on the promotion of good governance at national and regional level and on ways of combating political corruption.</p>	
16 th March 2004	<p>First Minister and Carwyn Jones Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside</p>	<p>Visit by Texas Bar and Bench Group</p>	<p>Delegation of 55 legal and law enforcement personnel led by judge Larry Gist. The visitors are interested in devolution, Welsh culture and history.</p>	<p>Ministers answered questions raised by the visitors on Wales and its history.</p>
18 th March 2004	<p>Jane Davidson - Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>MTG - General Assembly of the Association of the European Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL) Brussels, Belgium</p>	<p>Wales' position as a founder member of EARLALL and the ELL Minister's election to the Board of EARLALL gives Wales the opportunity to raise its profile amongst European regions and influence the decision making processes within the Association.</p>	<p>No information as yet.</p>

<p>19th March 2004</p>	<p>European and External Affairs officials</p>	<p>Visit of the Hon. John Banks QSO Mayor of Auckland.</p>	<p>Foreign Office sponsored visit: study visit relating to development of sports facilities involving public private partnerships, combating youth crime, preservation of historic buildings and redevelopment of Cardiff Bay.</p>	<p>Wide ranging visit offering the opportunity to highlight Welsh policy achievements in these areas and to share ideas with our visitor.</p>
<p>22nd to 25th March 2004</p>	<p>Rhodri Morgan, First Minister, Carwyn Jones, Minister for Environment, Planning & Countryside.</p>	<p>Cardiff City Hall. Sustainable Development Conference.</p>	<p>International Conference for the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development.</p>	<p>No details. Ends on the 25th of March.</p>