



Simon Thomas AM
Chair, Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

9 May 2018

Dear Mr Thomas

Inquiry into preparations for replacing EU funding for Wales - Consultation

ColegauCymru is pleased to respond to the National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee's 'Inquiry into preparations for replacing EU funding for Wales'. I attach a copy of the ColegauCymru response to the Welsh Government's consultation on 'Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit' which is relevant to the work of the inquiry.

It should be noted, that in response to the Welsh Government's proposals for the future of structural investment, ColegauCymru wrote to the Secretary of State for Wales in December 2017. In our letter we asked for clarification as to the way in which the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund would be put in place in Wales. Whilst we received an acknowledgement of our query, no further information as to the operation of the fund has been forthcoming.

I also attach a copy of the ColegauCymru research "Involvement of Welsh Further Education colleges and institutions in EU funding: An overview of the financial uptake". Further Education colleges across Wales have benefitted from European funding, using this to support and upskill the population of Wales through European programmes. These activities have made an important contribution to business and the economy, often in the most deprived areas of Wales. Over the past 10 years, FEIs in Wales have been involved in the delivery of EU funded projects to a total value of almost £600m, both as project lead or project partner. The high degree of concern about the potential loss of this funding across the FE sector must not be underestimated

In addition to the support provided for regional structural assistance, participation in the Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes has proved valuable for learners in Wales. Since submitting our response to the Welsh Government consultation on 'Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit', ColegauCymru has had further success in bidding for Erasmus+ funding, building on our established and solid track record in applying for, and project managing, Erasmus+ funds on behalf of the FEIs in Wales. Since the launch of Erasmus+ in 2014, ColegauCymru has secured over €3.2million of Erasmus+ funding through its pan Wales consortium applications for staff and vocational

learner/apprentice mobility projects. In 2018, ColegauCymru has been successful in securing over €1.3 million of European funding for its learner mobility project:

All Wales Vocational Learner Mobility 2018/20

TOTALS

584 participants, 11 FE colleges, 1 employer, 19 subjects and 12 countries

= €1,383,808.00.

Furthermore, ColegauCymru secured funding of just over €40k in 2018 for a pan Wales staff mobility project to Helsinki, Finland to explore how the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) has worked with vocational colleges in the city on the design and implementation of an internationalisation strategy for vocational education and training (VET).

Examples of past staff mobility projects include:

- 2014-15: Senior leaders from FE colleges in Wales, Estyn and Welsh Government visit Finland to explore how literacy and numeracy are embedded in a vocational curriculum.
- 2015-16: A visit to Basque Country, Spain to explore innovation and VET. Tknika, a centre of innovation in San Sebastian hosted the visit. Since the staff visit, ColegauCymru's CEO and Alun Davies AM, then Minister for Welsh and Lifelong Learning returned to San Sebastian to look in more detail at the Basque Country's strategy for innovation in relation to VET.
- 2016-17: A visit to Catalonia, Spain to explore bilingualism and employer demand for language skills in that region. Representatives from ColegauCymru, the FE colleges, Welsh Government and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol also participated.
- 2017-18: A visit to Denmark to see what actions are in place to deliver higher-level skills in a vocational setting and how capacity building amongst teaching staff is undertaken to deliver these skills.

ColegauCymru and the sector would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Bowen

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