

News and information for Wales from:

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An important new forum for the Welsh language

Earlier this month, a new chapter opened for the Welsh language in Europe.

On Wednesday, July 14, Welsh was used for the first time as one of the working languages of a major statutory European organisation in Brussels.

Following requests from the Welsh Assembly and UK governments and WCVA, an agreement has been signed with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to provide

simultaneous translation from Welsh in the plenary meetings.

Although Welsh is not recognised as a full State language it is now categorised as a national-regional language, which is welcomed by the European Economic and Social Committee in its formal plenaries.

Tom Jones OBE, Vice President of WCVA and a member of the EESC welcomed the announcement and spoke Welsh at the meeting for the first time.

Call to help raise profile of Trustee Week

The Charity Commission is launching its first ever Trustees' Week in October and it is looking for volunteers from across Wales to help raise the profile and increase understanding of trusteeship.

The aim of the awareness week, which will run between 25 and 31 October, is to highlight the vital role trustees play in the sector and encourage more people to consider becoming trustees.

As part of the media campaign, the Charity Commission is looking for case studies of people who are willing to support the campaign and would be happy to talk through the benefits of trusteeship in the context of their charity.

Trusteeship provides the opportunity to learn and develop new skills, meet people who share a passion for a particular cause or issue, and make a real difference through the work of a charity. If

you are a trustee and are willing to share your experiences, please contact Rosie Stokes on 01633 225510 or email rosie.stokes@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

The media campaign is just one part of the week. The Commission also hopes that under the umbrella of Trustees' Week other organisations and charities will hold events celebrating and promoting trusteeship around that October week.

WCVA is holding its annual Trustee Conference on Thursday 11 November in Wrexham. The provisional plans for the conference include advice on collaborative working and mergers, the practicalities of making a legal challenge to a funding decision, WASPI : the data sharing protocol, an interactive presentation from the Charity Commission on its new website and online filing service and Community Interest Companies: what are they and how do they operate in the third sector? Further information on content will be made available on www.wcva.org.uk.

National Assembly to review European Union funding procurement process

A review of the procurement process involved in accessing European funds is one outcome of a report commissioned by the National Assembly, based on representations made by WCVA.

Earlier this year, WCVA submitted written and verbal evidence to the Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee inquiry on the implementation of the current Structural Funds programmes.

In that evidence, WCVA argued that the use of procurement in EU funded projects has been at considerable cost and risk to project sponsors, has caused significant delays to funding reaching local organisations, and has worked against the usual third sector practices of collaboration and sharing good practice.

The Enterprise and Learning Committee responded in its report by recommending that WEFO undertakes an evaluation of the procurement process as a priority, with particular focus on its impact on non-Government sectors.

The recommendation also concluded that 'the evaluation should include identifying when and where procurement is most effective, and where it is not, not only in terms of good governance and value for money, but also in the quality of the service provided to the user.'

WCVA Director of Enterprise and Regeneration Phil Fiander was present at the inquiry.

He said: 'The evidence we provided was based on our experience as a project sponsor, and also upon having consulted with numerous third sector organisations across Wales.

'It is pleasing that our views have been taken on board. The conclusions of this report have the potential to be a very positive step forward in terms of the accessibility of European funds to the third sector in Wales.

'We're now looking forward to seeing how these recommendations are turned into concrete actions.'

In response to further WCVA evidence submitted to the inquiry, the Committee recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government considers the feasibility of six-year funding for appropriate projects in future rounds, and that WEFO conducts an analysis by sector of contract awards in order to assess whether the third sector has fair access to the funds.

The Committee also recommended that WEFO should continue to secure the eligibility of volunteer time as in-kind match funding for Structural Funds to allow the third sector to bring added value to the delivery of future programmes.

'To view a full copy of the report, titled 'Structural Funds: Implementation of the 2007-13 Programmes', visit www.assemblywales.org.uk.



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