

**WEST MIDLANDS EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL  
AFFAIRS PARTNERSHIP**

**Notes of meeting held on 11 November 2005  
At the TechnoCentre, Coventry**

**PRESENT:**

**Members:**

Cllr Sir Albert Bore (WMLGA) – Chair, Cllr Eddie Boden (WMLGA), David Burton (CWMCC), Cllr Martin Heatley (WMLGA), Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMLGA), Doug Mahoney (AWM), Isabella Moore (AWM), Cllr David S Smith (WMLGA), Cllr Paul Tilsley (WMLGA), Val Tomlinson (AoCWM)

**Observers:**

Neena Gill MEP, Cllr Sir William Lawrence (Heart of England Tourism), Agnieska Scott (Environment Agency), Leonardo Piccinetti (Emlilia-Romagna Region), Cllr Milner Whiteman (CoR)

**Officers:**

Richard Bindless (CWMCC), Jon Bloomfield (AWM), Louise Chilton (WMLGA), Trudi Elliott (WMRA), Esther Knight (WMRA), Kishor Pala (Birmingham Chamber), Jill Robinson (Birmingham City Council), Glynis Whiting (WMIÉ)

**Apologies** had been received from:

**Members:** Cllr Philip Atkins (WMLGA), Michael Clarke (WMHEA), Chris Crean (Friends of the Earth), Mick Laverty (AWM), Cllr Mike Whitby (WMLGA)

**Observers:** Philip Bradbourn MEP, Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, Michael Cashman MEP, Malcolm Harbour MEP, Liz Lynne MEP, Cllr Liz Tucker (CoR), Chris Watson (Shizuoka Management Group)

**Officers:** Helena Muskett (Chair REIOG), Patrick Willcocks (Birmingham City Council)

Jon Bloomfield, Interim Head of European Policy at AWM, facilitated the session, the aim of which was to make some decisions on how best to take forward the morning's conclusions. JB explained that the region now needed to focus on three key issues:

- (1) Identification of priorities. Key programmes for the region are:
  - FP7, which with 70 billion euros available is an absolute priority
  - the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme for which 13 billion euros are available (although this amount may shrink)
  - Lifelong Learning, for which 13 billion euros are available.
- (2) Examination of the quality of the Region's networks ie its various connections/partnerships and how these have been built.

- (3) Establishment and development of links into the various Directorates-General, a crucial role for the WMiE Brussels Office.

There are six key tasks for the Region regarding these issues:

- (i) Taking responsibility to ensure that the Region makes the most of the remainder of FP6 and of FP7 (Xavier Rodde is to help drive the process forward). Research/Development and Innovation is core AWM business, with links with the Innovation Technology Council and the EU R&D Group.
- (ii) Taking forward the Rural strand (no individual/organisation has yet been identified to do this).
- (iii) Taking forward the Lifelong Learning strand (no individual/organisation has yet been identified to do this).
- (iv) Production of a detailed report regarding the quality of the Region's connections.
- (v) Production of a report detailing the case for future structural funds programmes (the Cohesion Group is already tasked to produce this).
- (vi) Production of a list of funds that will be available and thereby identifying the need for regional expertise in certain areas.

**It was agreed:**

- The Transnational Working Group (Chair: Kishor Pala) to prepare report for 24 February meeting on the Region's key partnerships – Jill Robinson to liaise with KP.
- WMiE Brussels Office to prepare report for 24 February meeting based on the update of their policy and funding database which would enable identification of individuals who could act as conduits towards the Directorates-General.
- David Burton to prepare report for 24 February meeting setting out what intermediaries (such as the Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce) need to do to make funding and policy changes accessible to SMEs, to include the benefits SMEs can obtain from the changes.
- Neena Gill MEP to bring a paper to a future meeting of the Partnership on possible benefits for the Region of the new strategic partnership between India and the EU. New financial resources will be available for this partnership and links already exist (eg Asia Invest Programme).

- Doug Mahoney to bring the following papers to the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb meeting, one detailing the proposals for prioritising international partner regions, a second on updating progress on AWM's International Business strategy.
- Trudi Elliott to find lead organisation/individuals to work on the Lifelong Learning strand, which is being examined by the Regional Skills Partnership.
- Andy Smith to speak to TE regarding which individuals/group could take forward the Rural strand.
- Glynis Whiting to prepare report for 24 February meeting on Regional Project Support Centre.
- It is important not to lose sight of the value of the transnational links the Region currently has (eg much work has been done in Poland).  
Isabella Moore to bring paper to future meeting regarding this.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY AT 1.30 PM**