

International Relations Monitoring Report

December 2024 – Issue 5



Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. International relations.....	5
Wales-US relations.....	5
US election	5
Trade with the US	6
Alabama delegation.....	6
International Strategy	6
International Delivery Plan	7
Overseas offices.....	7
International Strategy refresh	7
Welsh Government response on international relations budget.....	8
Wales in India 2024.....	9
Hornbill Festival	9
Cardiff Airport investment	9
Links to the International Strategy	9
Competition and Markets Authority.....	9
Middle East	10
Ukraine	11
Senedd support.....	11
Holodomor	11
Wales and Africa.....	12
Hub Cymru Africa.....	12
Investment summit	12
Diaspora.....	12
Wampis Nation.....	13
United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	13
3. Europe	15
UK-EU reset.....	15
New UK post to lead on EU relations	15

Meeting of EU foreign ministers.....	15
UK-EU engagement.....	16
European Political Community.....	16
Wales-EU trade.....	17
Wales-Germany trade	17
Wales-Ireland relations	18
Ireland – Wales Forum.....	18
Wales-Ireland trade.....	18
Planning and places.....	19
Wales-Ireland technology sectors.....	19
EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)	20
Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA).....	21
4. Written questions.....	22
International relations	22
Refugees and asylum seekers	23
United Nations	24
Cardiff Airport.....	25
Climate.....	25
Trade.....	25
Tourism.....	26
Sport.....	27
5. Welsh Government ministerial outward/inward visits:	
September - October	28

1. Introduction

In March 2022, the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee (the Committee) noted its intention to conduct regular monitoring of international activity undertaken by Welsh Ministers as part of its strategy and priorities for the Sixth Senedd.

This monitoring report is intended to provide Members of the Committee with an update on key policy developments related to the Committee's international relations remit. This includes relevant statements made by the Welsh and UK governments, as well as public bodies, delivery partners and stakeholders. Relevant publications from Senedd Research will also be included in the report.

The report covers the period September - December 2024.

2. International relations

This section summarises key developments related to the Welsh Government's International Strategy and other relevant updates.

Wales-US relations

The US election took place on 5 November, with President Donald Trump re-elected to serve a second term. His inauguration is to take place on 20 January. This section provides an overview of discussions in the Senedd which relate to the election. It also outlines engagement between Wales and the US due to its status as one of the Welsh Government's international priority relationships.

US election

Following the re-election of President Donald Trump, the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, congratulated him and said:

Congratulations President-elect Donald Trump.

Llongyfarchiadau ar gael eich ethol yn Arlywydd Unol Daleithiau America.

Wales and the USA have a strong relationship which we highly value. We look forward to continuing that partnership for the benefit of all our people.

On 14 November, she appeared on Radio Five Live and responded to a question on whether she believed Trump was racist. Her response, as transcribed from the broadcast, was as follows:

I shouldn't think he is, to be honest. There were a hell of a lot of black people and Latinos who voted for him in the election and you've got to respect the vote of the American people. That is what happened. It makes sense and we need a strong relationship with the United States, irrespective of who leads the country. It's our biggest area in terms of inward investment. We've got a lot of American companies invested in Wales. We're keen to make sure our exporters can export and we are worried about the potential of additional tariffs on them cos it will hit our economy so we've got to try and keep as good a

relationship with the United States as we can, irrespective of who is the President.

Prior to the US election result, she addressed the implications for environmental issues during First Minister's Questions on 5 November.

We'll all be watching with bated breath the outcome of that election, which will have a profound effect on Wales and the world. There will be an impact on climate change, depending on who wins, and it will impact on all of us. So, the importance of our protecting nature in Wales is well understood. I do hope that the people of the United States understand their responsibilities as well in that space.

Trade with the US

The Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs (ETRA) Committee held a general scrutiny session with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS. She was asked whether the Welsh Government could "redirect business to Europe if the pathways to the United States become very difficult". She responded:

It is early days and we have yet to see what the Trump administration's actions will be. But I know it's very firmly on our minds in terms of being able to provide the right information, advice and support to our businesses, because America is a really important market for us as well.

Alabama delegation

A delegation from Birmingham, Alabama visited Wales in September, as part of the International Friendship Pact which was signed in 2023. The Pact seeks to:

promote economic trade and cooperation across shared interests including arts and culture, life sciences, healthcare and education.

The group consisted of economic and cultural delegates.

International Strategy

This section outlines developments and discussions around the Welsh Government's International Strategy and corresponding action plans.

International Delivery Plan

First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, hosted a reception for UK-based ambassadors and high commissioners in London. In a press release which followed the event, the First Minister said:

Early next year the Welsh Government will be publishing our International Delivery Plan, which will set out the international activities to support the delivery of my four priorities.

The priorities and the timescale for the Delivery Plan are not set out clearly in the press release.

Overseas offices

During First Minister's Questions on 22 October, Darren Millar MS, asked whether the Welsh Government would:

consider having a look at your international relations strategy so that there can be better collaboration and a saving to the taxpayer by closing the mini-embassy network, which is unnecessary, and by working instead with the British embassies around the world to embed Welsh Government officials in a more strategic way than is currently the case?

In response, the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, said:

I'm really pleased that you see how important it is that we fly the flag internationally; I was really pleased to do that in Ireland last week, where I was able to meet the Tánaiste and President Higgins. Part of the reason we were able to do that and that we've got such a strong relationship with Ireland is because we have representatives in Ireland who indeed are embedded with the UK Government, which is what happens across the world.

International Strategy refresh

During the same First Minister's Questions session, Delyth Jewell MS, asked:

my committee at the Senedd is responsible for scrutinising the international work that the Welsh Government does, and we have a current consultation on priorities following 2025, when the strategy

comes to an end [...] Could you set out the current timescales that you have in mind for this important work, including when you will be consulting stakeholders and with the committee?

The First Minister responded:

As I've said, what's of interest to me now is delivery on the policies and strategies that we have, and I'm eager that people continue to focus on that until we get to a point when we turn our attention to the next phase. When we do start to prepare what comes next in terms of priorities, I'm sure that things such as the fact that we've had an investment summit that was extremely successful across the UK [...] There are lots of things that we could do when it comes to prioritisation for the future, but what I'm interested in now is delivery on what is contained within the current strategy. But there will be an opportunity, of course, for people to join in with that consultation.

Welsh Government response on international relations budget

In August, the Welsh Government responded to a Freedom of Information request which asked for a breakdown of the following individual budget lines:

- international engagement;
- overseas network; and
- overseas operations.

The response stated that the “budget, which includes spend across our overseas network, has returned 9664 individual transactions”. In October, the Welsh Government responded to a follow-up request, which asked if the Welsh Government would “publish the details you have on hand with regard to all of these 9664 transactions”. The Welsh Government’s response said it considered the:

latest request as a repeat request under the provisions of s14(2) of the FoIA. Section 14(2) states that a refusal can be issued when a request is asking for information already provided in response to an earlier request [...] we have provided the total expenditure against the IR budget for 2023-24, broken down by the three budget lines, and we are unable to break this down any further.

However, a complaint was filed against this response, which led the Welsh Government to conduct an internal review. It subsequently agreed to release the requested information.

The published information contains the 9664 individual transactions, although two columns are redacted due to the inclusion of personal or commercially sensitive information.

Wales in India 2024

The year of Wales in India involves a year-long programme of events, designed to develop and celebrate Wales-India relations. This section outlines events which form part of the conclusion of the Wales in India year. The next Wales In Year will focus on Japan.

Hornbill Festival

The Welsh Government hosted the Chief Minister of Nagaland as part of the Wales in India year. This was, in part, to discuss Wales' participation as host for the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland. The festival will also mark the end of the Wales in India year.

The Hornbill Festival is a 10-day event, held in December, and "is India's largest celebration of tribal heritage with visitors immersed in the rich traditions, music, and folklore of the region".

Cardiff Airport investment

In August, the Committee wrote to the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, and the former Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS, asking how the announced £206m investment would help to deliver the International Strategy's core aims, the role of the overseas offices in the investment decision and the budgetary implications.

Links to the International Strategy

In October, the Committee received a response to the above letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS. It states that:

in developing the proposed approach to supporting the Airport in the long term, my officials have worked closely with their colleagues from across the Welsh Government, including those in International Relations and Trade. The intentions around air route development are to improve connectivity to regions of economic importance to Wales, reflecting the regions of the world referenced in the International Strategy. This includes the Middle East & Asia, Europe, and North America/Canada.

Competition and Markets Authority

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, also issued a written statement on 2 October. This was ahead of the Competition and Markets Authority assessment on the Welsh Government's proposed investment package. She said that she would:

update the Senedd in due course once we have decided on the best way forward. Until then, the Welsh Government will not be commenting further on the proposed subsidy package.

Middle East

Since the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023, Israel and Gaza have been regularly discussed at the Senedd. On 12 June, Senedd Research launched [a timeline](#) of what's happened at the Senedd so far which was last updated on 15 November.

During [First Minister's Questions](#) on the 19 November, Peredur Owen Griffiths MS asked:

Last Friday I took part in a panel event at the Norwegian church organised by Oxfam. During the event we heard from Bushra Khalidi, policy lead at Oxfam for the occupied Palestine territories, who gave a harrowing account of life in the West Bank. We know these things are much, much worse in Gaza, where most of the territory has been levelled, with untold fatalities still left in the rubble. This has been ongoing now for over a year, First Minister, and there's no sign of a let-up, or, if anything, it's getting worse. For the sake of the people of Palestine, and Welsh citizens with families still affected, have you done everything in your power to bring pressure to bear to end this conflict and deliver peace? For example, are you satisfied that your Government is complying with international standards on businesses and human rights? Have you examined whether your Government or your affiliates have provided support or funding to arms manufacturers? And are you confident that companies who have contracts with the Government are conducting rigorous human rights due diligence?

First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, responded:

Well, we've all seen the unimaginable suffering and sorrow that's been happening in Gaza and, you're quite right, we don't hear much about the West Bank, and it's important that people recognise that there is a lot of suffering going on there, and that's why, as a Government, we have made a contribution to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal. We made a contribution, and I know that people from Wales have added significantly to that, and I'd encourage you all to make a contribution, as I have done in the past week, just to make sure that we recognise that support is needed in

that part of the world. I'm afraid it doesn't look like there's much progress in terms of settling the issue in the middle east. I know that there'll be a lot of interest, when a new Government takes over in the United States, to see if and whether that makes any difference at all, and how that will affect it, but I think it is important that we stand with the sorrow and the suffering of the people in Gaza.

Ukraine

This section outlines Senedd discussions which relate to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Senedd Research [published an article](#) which highlights the latest statistics on Ukrainian refugees in Wales and the war's impact on trade. It follows previous articles on the [initial response](#), [Ukrainian arrivals](#) and the war's [early impacts](#).

Senedd support

On 16 October, Alun Davies [asked the Senedd Commission](#) what action it is taking to “demonstrate the Senedd's support for the people of Ukraine?”. Responding on behalf of the Commission, the Llywydd Elin Jones MS, said:

The Commission's services have supported Members in demonstrating their support for Ukraine. The Ukrainian flag has flown on the Senedd estate since 24 February 2022 as a mark of Wales's continued solidarity with Ukraine and its people. We've also supported many Member-sponsored events to highlight the continued impact of the crisis in Ukraine.

Holodomor

The [Holodomor refers to](#) a famine that took place in Ukraine between 1932 and 1933, which followed the “implementation of agricultural collectivisation policies introduced under Joseph Stalin's Soviet regime”. In November, the Senedd [agreed a motion](#), which stated:

To propose that the Senedd:

- 1. Believes that the Holodomor was a predetermined crime committed and led by Stalin and the Soviet Government against the people of Ukraine.*
- 2. Regards the Holodomor as an act of genocide.*
- 3. Notes the crucial role of Welsh journalist Gareth Jones in bringing the cruelty of the Holodomor to the attention of the world.*

4. Continues to stand with the people of the Ukraine as they face Putin's illegal war.

The motion was tabled by Alun Davies MS, and co-submitted by Darren Millar MS and Heledd Fychan MS.

Wales and Africa

This section focuses on developments which relate to the Welsh Government's Wales and Africa action plan.

Hub Cymru Africa

Hub Cymru Africa is an international development and global solidarity organisation. It is a partnership of four organisations (Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel, Fair Trade Wales, Global Health Partnerships Cymru), whose work is overseen by the partnership board.

It announced the appointment of Tom Baker as the new Chair of the Partnership Board. Mr Baker has previously worked with Christian Aid, the Make Poverty History campaign, Bond and Save the Children UK.

Investment summit

The First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, announced that an investment summit will be held in Wales. She said it:

will showcase Wales to global industry leaders and potential investors, highlighting the many opportunities and our strengths in key industries here in Wales.

Although the Welsh Government states that the summit will be held in 2025, it did not give a specific date.

Diaspora

GlobalWelsh, an organisation which engages the international Welsh diaspora, published findings of their study on mobilising the Welsh diaspora to support economic change. They said the study:

has revealed an unprecedented opportunity to transform decades of "brain drain" from Wales into significant economic advantage and an

extraordinarily strong cultural connection that could amplify Wales's global soft power.

They surveyed over 1,700 members of the Welsh diaspora across 45 countries. Key findings include:

- “Nearly 500 Welsh-led businesses were identified globally among respondents, with 25% of diaspora entrepreneurs ready to invest in Wales within 12 months”;
- “54% of recent emigrants would consider returning to Wales, representing a significant “brain gain” opportunity”; and
- “62% willing to engage in knowledge transfer and personal mentoring back to Wales”.

Wampís Nation

Representatives from the Wampís Nation in the Peruvian Amazon visited the Senedd during November and met with Members of the Committee.

The Welsh Government [issued a press release](#) following the visit, in which it highlighted previous funding to support the construction of a ten-seater solar powered boat, as part of the Wampís Nation’s goal to move to 100% renewable energy . The press release also announced an additional £50,000 had been provided to the Wampís Nation to help fund smaller boats.

United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The UK Government [published its response](#) to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ (UNESCR) list of issues relating to the UK.

UNESCR monitors implementation of the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#). The Convention was agreed in 1966 and protects some of the most basic human rights, such as the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights. Convention rights also include the rights to participate in cultural life, non-discrimination in cultural rights and the right to the enjoyment of the benefits of cultural freedom.

As part of its monitoring, the UK sent its [original submission to UNESCR in 2022](#) outlining steps taken to implement the Convention. In response, the UNESCR produces a list of issues to which states, including the UK, must respond.

Both the UK Government’s 2022 and 2024 submissions contain limited information on Wales compared to other UK nations and Crown Dependencies.

The [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#) confirms that the UN visit to examine implementation in the UK will take place on 13-14 February 2025 and that stakeholders have until 13 January 2025 to also respond to its list of issues.

3. Europe

This section summarises the latest news relating to Europe, and lists important updates.

UK-EU reset

This section outlines developments in relation to the UK Government's relationship reset with the European Union.

New UK post to lead on EU relations

In November, the UK Government advertised for a Second Permanent Secretary post in the Cabinet Office who will be "leading the Government's relationship with the European Union". Among the responsibilities of the role are:

- To be principal adviser to the Prime Minister and the Minister for European Union relations on matters relating to relations with the EU and delivering the "EU reset" and on international economic issues;
- Act as the EU 'sherpa', representing the Prime Minister and the Minister in engagements and negotiations with the EU on resetting the relationship;
- Oversee the economic and global issues team, which includes 'sherpa' functions for G7 and G20, and ensure alignment between EU engagement and international economic issues;
- Oversee and lead policy development on key questions of UK-EU trade, collaboration and engagement, in particular the Windsor Framework, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the Entry and Exit Scheme; and
- Prepare and lead negotiations with the EU on key UK interests, including the proposed security cooperation agreement.

The advertisement also states that the post holder will be "working closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, EU counterparts, and the devolved administrations".

Meeting of EU foreign ministers

In October, the BBC reported that Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, David Lammy MP, had attended a regular meeting of

EU foreign ministers. The meeting discussed the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. The BBC report also stated that his attendance would form part of:

more regular engagement, with plans for closer working on international affairs.

Mr Lammy described the meeting as a “historic moment that marks our EU reset”.

UK-EU engagement

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the Prime Minister of the UK, Keir Starmer MP, met on 2 October to discuss strengthening the relationship between the UK and the EU. They agreed to progress the “agenda of strengthened cooperation at pace over the coming months”, and will meet again this autumn. They also agreed:

on the importance of holding regular EU-UK Summits at leader-level to oversee the development of the relationship. They agreed that a first Summit should take place ideally in early 2025.

European Political Community

A meeting of the European Political Community was held on 7 November in Budapest. The Guardian reported that European leaders discussed the implications of President-elect Trump’s re-election on European security and defence. UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer MP, also met with Polish Prime Minister and former President of the European Council, Donald Tusk. They discussed:

their desire to deepen their existing partnership across defence and security, particularly in the face of Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

Donald Tusk said Warsaw will:

very intensively coordinate cooperation with countries that have a very similar view on the geopolitical and transatlantic situation and situation in Ukraine.

Wales-EU trade

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, responded to questions from the ETRA Committee on the following comments she made during a meeting of the Trade Policy Advisory Group:

The Cabinet Secretary went to on to say that her attention is also increasingly focused on the trading relationship with the EU and the Welsh Government will need to work with UK government to understand where improvements in this trading relationship could be sought.

The Cabinet Secretary was asked for an explanation of these comments due to concerns voiced by Luke Fletcher MS that they sound as if:

the Welsh Government hadn't been focusing enough on that relationship with the EU, when, of course, the EU is the biggest trading partner we have in Wales.

She responded with assurances that the Welsh Government had a “laser-like focus on trade with the EU”, offering the following explanation of the comments:

So, over the summer, the work relating to the EU and trade co-operation agreement [EU TCA] was moved to sit within the international relations and trade directorate—they also run the trade policy group that I referred to—and, given its membership, the remit of the trade policy advisory group is now extending to focus on the EU TCA as well as other trade policy matters. So, it is more of a way in which we're pivoting operations within the Welsh Government and the advice that we get from experts outside towards the EU TCA.

Wales-Germany trade

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, undertook a visit to Düsseldorf in November to attend MEDICA, an annual medical trade fair. She met Nick Russell, British Consul-General in Düsseldorf, and discussed:

the current political and economic context in North Rhine-Westphalia, the region with the highest number of German companies operating in Wales.

She also visited WEPA in Arnsberg-Müschede, a supplier of household paper, which has a facility in Wales.

Wales-Ireland relations

This section provides updates relating to developments in the Wales-Ireland relationship, following the Committee's [inquiry on Wales-Ireland relations](#).

Ireland – Wales Forum

The fourth annual [Ireland – Wales Forum](#) took place in Cork on 18 October, attended by the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, and the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin. Its focus was on “fostering academic and research links”. They also discussed “shared ambitions” for the Wales-Ireland relationship, which included proposals for an Ireland – Wales Shared Statement post-2025. The next Ireland – Wales Forum will take place in Wales in 2025.

Wales-Ireland trade

The trading relationship with Ireland was also raised during the [ETRA Committee's general scrutiny session](#) with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS. The ETRA Committee questioned why trade flows had seen a sharp reduction since 2022. Rebecca Evans recognised the “important nature of our relationship with Ireland” and explained the reduction in trade:

relates in large part to the fall of value of petroleum and petroleum products and related materials.

A government official in attendance, added:

there's a fair chunk in there about petroleum products, and so that is dependent on both the value of petroleum and the price of petroleum in the market, but also the volume. So, if we see a change in that in any given year, then it does impact on the overall figures.

However, he went onto to say:

but what we track is very much the work that we do with Welsh businesses exporting to Ireland, and the goods exports in general, where we're seeing very strong interest in Ireland. We've had a new exporter programme visit to Ireland during the cohorts, we've also had significant interest from businesses in terms of trading with Ireland, so we're seeing a lot of activity with Ireland, to very much build to the point within the shared statement and the joint action plan.

Planning and places

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, attended the British-Irish Council Planning and Places Ministerial meeting in Derry/Londonderry on 8 November. Hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Council agreed its forward work programme should focus on:

- the climate change and the biodiversity emergency; and
- skills and capacity for the public sector planning profession.

Rebecca Evans MS also held bilateral meetings with:

- Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government;
- Ivan McKee MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Public Finance; and
- John O'Dowd MLA, Northern Ireland Executive Minister for Infrastructure.

She said these meetings:

focussed on improving delivery and prosperity through the planning system, and offered a useful opportunity to exchange information on our respective priorities.

Wales-Ireland technology sectors

Following a Interceltic Business Forum, a conference that “fosters economic cooperation and collaboration among Celtic nations”, a Welsh delegation visited Ireland “to forge deeper partnerships across the tech sectors”. The visit was backed by the Welsh Government’s trade and investment team. A press release stated that:

The trip concluded with several potential partnerships now on the horizon, including collaborations between shipshape.vc, Platform94, Future Mobility Centre Ireland, Dogpatch Labs, Enterprise Ireland, Allied Irish Bank, and Bank of Ireland. These partnerships are set to support early-stage technology companies in Ireland by linking them with global investors and national service providers.

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

On 6 November, the Senedd debated the Equality and Social Justice (ESJ) Committee's annual report on the EUSS. The ESJ Committee's annual report describes the scheme as :

the UK Government's programme to which European citizens must apply in order to stay in the UK after Brexit.

It was launched in October 2019 for EU citizens to apply to stay. The application deadline was 30 June 2021 but it remains open for late applications.

During the debate, the ESJ Committee chair, Jenny Rathbone MS, outlined the current issues with the scheme, saying:

late applications are now being subject to narrow criteria and a higher evidence threshold is required. The whole scheme is becoming disproportionately complicated.

Senedd Research published an article, which highlighted how these issues were prompting concerns that the EUSS could lead to a second Windrush.

Also speaking as part of the debate, the chair of the CCWLSIR Committee, Delyth Jewell MS, made the following remarks regarding the Committee's work around culture and the new relationship with the EU:

our committee published a report on the impacts of Brexit on our culture sector. This looks primarily at the effects of the trade and co-operation agreement between the UK and the EU, but there is a common thread in our work and the subject of this debate, namely the effects of Brexit on people. We all know that Brexit brought about an end to freedom of movement. In our report, we talk about how this

didn't just slow the movement of people, it also slowed the free movement of creativity, ideas and potential.

Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA)

In August, four committees launched a call for evidence on how the TCA is working in Wales and to ensure a Welsh perspective is reflected as part of the implementation review. The consultation closed on 8 November and the evidence has been published.

The Committees involved with the inquiry are:

- Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee;
- Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee;
- Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee; and
- Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

4. Written questions

This section provides a list of relevant written questions and Welsh Government responses during September - December.

International relations

Q. Delyth Jewell MS (tabled on 24/07/2024): What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the economic impact on Wales from being removed from the European single market and customs union?

A. Former Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Transport and North Wales – Ken Skates MS (answered on 05/08/2024): I will write to you with a substantive response and a copy of the letter will be published on the internet. *(There has been no further letter published to date)*

Q. Sam Rowlands (tabled on 22/10/2024): What overseas official visits does the First Minister have planned for the next 12 months?

A. First Minister – Eluned Morgan MS (answered on 05/11/2024): I will write to you with a substantive response and a copy of the letter will be published on the internet.

Q. Samuel Kurtz (tabled on 08/10/2024): Has any cost benefit analysis of the Welsh Government's activities in New York been undertaken for the period of April 2022 to April 2023?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning – Rebecca Evans MS (answered on 14/10/2024): Events in New York during this period enhanced Wales' economic and diplomatic partnerships with the USA, coinciding with the unprecedented opportunity provided by Wales' qualification for the World Cup for the first time since 1958, and being drawn to play USA. They have also contributed to a thriving sports diplomacy programme, community outreach and educational initiatives.

Specific outcomes include business collaborations and export sales. Most notably in this period, a US company expanded its operations in Wales and created 30 jobs as a result of the good business relationship that developed between the US headquarters and our New York team at events.

Q. Andrew RT Davies MS (tabled on 26/09/2024): Will the Commission provide a full inventory of all flags held by the Senedd and a full breakdown of the costs associated in as much detail as possible in relation to spending on flags since the first flag was purchased?

A. Senedd Commission (answered 07/10/2024): Since 2006, £12,677.74 has been spent on flags. Below is a breakdown of those costs, where possible, and an inventory of current flags stored by Security and the Llywydd's Private Office, including legacy and inherited flags.

Q. Laura Anne Jones MS (tabled on 25/09/2024): Will the First Minister publish a table showing the number of flights taken by Senedd Ministers in the last financial year, including the destination and the airport of departure?

A. First Minister – Eluned Morgan MS (answered on 08/10/2024): A substantive letter was published.

Q. Andrew RT Davies MS (tabled on 24/09/2024): Will the Cabinet Secretary provide a full breakdown of all costs incurred as a result of his trip to the USA for Climate Week, including the costs incurred as a result of his accompaniment by others in attendance at any New York events?

A. Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs – Huw Irranca-Davies MS (answered on 02/10/2024): In accordance with the Ministerial Code Ministerial code | GOV.WALES - cost of international travel is published annually. The full costs associated with this visit to New York Climate Week, will be published in due course.

Q. Sam Rowlands MS (tabled on 24/09/2024): Will the Cabinet Secretary publish the full costs associated with his trip to New York Climate Week?

Q. Sam Rowlands MS (tabled on 24/09/2024): Will the Cabinet Secretary outline the events and engagements conducted by him and Welsh Government officials on his New York Climate Week visit?

Q. Sam Rowlands MS (tabled on 24/09/2024): Will the Cabinet Secretary provide a list of Welsh Government representatives who attended New York Climate Week?

All above questions received the following response:

A. Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs – Huw Irranca-Davies MS (answered on 02/10/2024): In accordance with the Ministerial Code Ministerial code | GOV.WALES - cost of international travel is published annually. The full costs associated with this visit to New York Climate Week, will be published in due course.

Q. Andrew RT Davies MS (tabled on 23/09/2024): Will the Cabinet Secretary provide a full and tabulated breakdown of the cost to the Welsh Government of hosting school leaders from Pakistan to learn about Welsh education policy, including travel, board, visit arrangements and any other expenses?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Education – Lynne Neagle MS (answered on 27/09/2024): The recent visit to Wales by a delegation of education leaders from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan was arranged by the British Council at zero cost to the Welsh Government, including travel, board, visit arrangements and any other expenses. I am grateful to the British Council for continuing their good work in facilitating positive engagement and mutual learning between education systems across the world.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Q. Andrew RT Davies (tabled on 14/10/2024): Further to WQ93398, will the Cabinet Secretary provide a full breakdown of all expenditure allocations associated with the Welsh Government's Wales Sanctuary Service, including brief descriptors of the reasoning behind each expenditure line?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip – Jane Hutt MS (answered on 22/10/2024): The Wales Sanctuary Service has been awarded £1,939,145.50 for the period 2022 – 2025. The Wales Sanctuary Service aims to provide a national

support service for people seeking sanctuary on a pan-Wales basis. The key requirements include ensuring access to expert advice and advocacy support for forced migrants, providing free, independent, and high-quality advice.

Q. Andrew RT Davies(*tabled on 14/10/2024*): Further to WQ93398, will the Cabinet Secretary provide a full breakdown of all expenditure allocations associated with the Welsh Government's Asylum Right Programme, including brief descriptors of the reasoning behind each expenditure line?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip – Jane Hutt MS (*answered on 22/10/2024*): The Asylum Rights Programme was awarded £1,207,000 for the period 2019 – 2022. The key deliverables of the Asylum Rights Programme were to establish regional drop-in centres in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, and Wrexham to provide practical advice and support for asylum seekers and refugees, tailoring advice and support based on needs in areas such as housing, health, social services, education, employment, finance, and language, and providing specialist advice and support for asylum seekers and refugees of all ages.

Q. Laura Anne Jones MS (*tabled on 01/10/2024*): How many asylum seekers have been located in Wales over the last three years?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip – Jane Hutt MS (*answered on 09/10/2024*): The Welsh Government does not hold this data. The UK Government publishes quarterly data on the number of asylum seekers in Wales at snapshot intervals. The latest data from June 2024 can be found here: [Immigration system statistics data tables](#).

Q. Sioned Williams MS (*tabled on 19/09/2024*): Further to WQ93966, will the Cabinet Secretary clarify what work has been and will be done by the Welsh Government to encourage the UK Government to make the change to the current 28-day move on period for newly granted refugees?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip – Jane Hutt MS (*answered on 01/10/2024*): The Welsh Government has made the case to the UK Government for an extension of the 28 day newly-granted refugee move-on period. We have raised the need for a 56 day period at Ministerial and official levels, aligning with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. My officials are continuing to advocate for this change with Home Office counterparts. I am due to meet the new Minister for Border Security and Asylum, Angela Eagle MP later this month.

United Nations

Q. Delyth Jewell MS (*tabled on 03/10/2024*): What representations has the Cabinet Secretary made to the UK Government regarding the signing of the United Nations Global Ocean Treaty and the impact it will have on the protection of our oceans globally and seas around Wales?

A. Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs – Huw Irranca Davies MS (*answered on 14/10/2024*): The “high seas” treaty was agreed to in 2023 and covers Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), under the UN Convention. The UK Government is already a signatory on behalf of the Devolved Governments.

Q. Rhys ab Owen MS (tabled on 26/09/2024): Further to WQ94024, when will the Welsh Government incorporate the United Nations Conventions on the rights of disabled people and the elimination of discrimination against women into Welsh law?

A. Counsel General and Minister for Delivery – Julie James MS (answered on 03/10/2024): Our Legislative Options Working Group (a sub-group of the Human Rights Advisory Group) is currently analysing the articles contained within both treaties on a right by right basis to inform its final recommendations on incorporation. Once that work is completed, we will assess our next steps.

Cardiff Airport

Q. Samuel Kurtz MS (tabled on 20/09/2024): How is the Welsh Government supporting Cardiff Airport to improve connections with Dublin Airport?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales – Ken Skates MS (answered on 30/09/2024): Ryanair currently operate daily flights from Cardiff Airport to Dublin. The services and routes offered at Cardiff Airport are a matter for the Airport board and airline operators. Any decision to change, remove or introduce new routes is made at the commercial discretion of operators. Ministers do not intervene with the airport's day-to-day commercial operating matters.

Climate

Q. Andrew RT Davies (tabled on 18/10/2024): Further to WQ94187, will the First Minister provide a full breakdown of all funding provided over the last 15 years by the partner organisations, Size of Wales, the Mount Elgon Tree Growing Enterprise, and the four other local NGOs, for the tree planting initiative?

A. First Minister – Eluned Morgan MS (answered on 23/10/2024): Over the last 15 years, the Welsh Government has provided an average of £253,000 per year in grant funding to the Welsh organisation, Size of Wales, to deliver the Mbale Tree Planting Project. This funding is provided to Size of Wales to deliver agreed targets, and it is for them to decide, in agreement with their partners in Mbale, how the funding should be broken down and spent to ensure targets are met.

Trade

Q. Samuel Kurtz (tabled 24/10/2024): How is the Welsh Government supporting ports in Wales?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning – Rebecca Evans MS (answered on 04/11/2024): We have provided direct funding in South Wales to support port infrastructure development plans. We continue to work closely with those ports on how best to support the development of their port infrastructure for the manufacture and assembly of Floating Offshore Wind (including securing part of the £160m funding available from UK Government) and to take full advantage of the growth of Fixed Offshore Wind.

We are also supporting Welsh Ports through the establishment of two freeports in Wales; the Celtic Freeport covering Milford Haven and Port Talbot, and Anglesey Freeport in North Wales. Both freeports will benefit from devolved tax reliefs from the Welsh

Government, aim to attract billions of investment, and have the potential to create a substantial number of new jobs by 2034. Freeports in Wales are designed to enhance Welsh Government policies for stronger, fairer, greener local economies.

We have introduced the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill, which will establish a new process for consenting major infrastructure projects in Wales. The Bill will streamline and unify the decision-making process, helping to support port investment and development to ensure they are ready to support these offshore wind projects.

Q. Mabon ap Gwynfor (tabled on 22/10/2024): What modelling has the Government done on the effect of land transaction tax relief in freeport areas, and what financial effect will this relief have on the Welsh Treasury?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language – Mark Drakeford MS (answered on 30/10/2024): This information is contained in a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) laid in the Senedd on 22 October 2024 to accompany the Land Transaction Tax (Relief for Special Tax Sites) (Wales) Regulations 2024. A link to the Explanatory Memorandum, which includes the RIA, [is provided here](#):

Q. Luke Fletcher MS (tabled on 27/09/2024): How is the Welsh Government assessing the comparative advantage of Welsh exports?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning – Rebecca Evans MS (answered on 03/10/2024): The Welsh Government published an analysis of Wales' comparative advantage in exporting goods in February 2021 which is available at: [Analysis of Wales' comparative advantage in exporting goods: 2015 to 2017 average](#)

Tourism

Q. Andrew RT Davies MS (tabled on 01/10/2024): What steps is the Cabinet Secretary taking to promote Wales to international visitors?

A. Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning – Rebecca Evans MS (answered on 08/10/2024): Visit Wales' work in international markets prioritises promotion of our outstanding landscapes, culture and adventure offer. With a focus on growing international tourism back to pre-pandemic levels, that activity includes working with VisitBritain, PR and media engagement, media buying with key titles, and working with tour operators and travel agents. This work programme includes taking advantage of opportunities such as those afforded by the increased international awareness of Wales generated by 'Welcome to Wrexham'.

Visit Wales started 2024 with a high-profile presence at the Britain and Ireland Marketplace, a major international business-to-business event in London. This area of work has continued with multiple events over recent months and a forthcoming presence (with stakeholder partners) at World Travel Market in November. We work with VisitBritain to maximise promotion of Wales in the international market.

Visit Wales and the Cymru Wales brand team also work closely with Welsh Government international offices to complement and enhance our activity.

Sport

Q. Laura Anne Jones MS (tabled on 26/09/2024): What financial support was given to support Welsh participation in the World Martial Arts Committee World Games in Prague?

A. Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership – Jack Sargeant MS (answered on 08/10/2024): Welsh Government funding for sport is directed through Sport Wales, who in turn provide financial support to recognised National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of individual sports. The World Martial Arts Committee is not recognised as an NGB by any of the UK Sports Councils; therefore no support was provided for any participation at the event in Prague.

5. Welsh Government ministerial outward/inward visits: September - October

This section outlines visits undertaken by Welsh Government ministers and incoming official visitors to Wales. The Committee is provided with monthly lists of these engagements from Welsh Government, in addition to its own monitoring.

Minister/Guest	Location	Purpose of Visit	Date
German Ambassador to the UK	Wales	The German Ambassador visited Wales to celebrate German Unity Day. Whilst in Wales the Ambassador met with the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS. During their meetings they discussed climate issues, low carbon energy and marine renewables, expertise in Wales across life sciences, creative industries and cyber, the take up of German languages at GCSE and A-Level in Wales, the economic relationship and increasing tourism into Wales from Germany.	Sept
Delegation from Birmingham, AL (Sister Cities)	Wales	Wales hosted a delegation from Birmingham, Alabama between 25-28 September as part of the Friendship Pact and Birmingham Sister Cities programme. The visit programme included a welcome reception with the First Minister, a Wales Window connections event, attendance at the Monumental Welsh Women lecture on Betty Campbell and separate economic and cultural strands.	Sept

Chief Minister of Nagaland	Wales	The Chief Minister of Nagaland, and his accompanying delegation, visited Wales to meet with the Deputy First Minister and cultural bodies in Wales to discuss closer relations and Wales' participation as a partner country for this year's Hornbill Festival in Nagaland.	Sept
Deputy First Minister attendance at Climate Week	New York	The Deputy First Minister (DFM), Huw Irranca-Davies <u>attended New York Climate Week</u> for a range of meetings including a trilateral with Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy, Gillian Martin and Irish Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir. Meetings were also held with the Future Generations Commissioner and the CEO of Earthshot. The DFM spoke at numerous engagements showcasing Wales's success stories in combatting climate change and a number of receptions, including one organised by Welsh Government. For his final morning, the DFM joined a round table discussion on mobilizing funding for waste methane reduction at scale.	Sept
Meeting with EU Ambassador	Liverpool	The First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, met with the EU Ambassador at the Labour Party Conference. During their meeting they discussed Taith/Freedom of Movement, Erasmus and the opportunity for FM to address the EU Head of Mission in London. The FM invited the Ambassador to visit Wales with fellow Member State Head of Missions in the Spring 2025.	Sept

Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership visit to France	France	The Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, Jack Sargeant MS, <u>travelled to Toulouse</u> for a two-day visit, joining a number of Welsh companies at ADS Toulouse.	Oct
First Minister visit to Dublin	Ireland	The First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, travelled to Dublin for meetings with President Higgins and Minister Ryan TD. The day also included a roundtable meeting with the British Irish Chamber of Commerce and Irish investors.	Oct
Wales/Ireland Ministerial Forum	Ireland	The First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, travelled to Cork for the 4 th <u>Ireland-Wales Ministerial Forum</u> . The visit included a bilateral with the Tánaiste, a visit to Cyber Ireland Campus at Munster Technological University, discussions on Ireland-Wales academic research projects. The day concluded with the Forum meeting to discuss the shared statement.	Oct
Deputy First Minister visit to Den Bosch, Netherlands	Netherlands	The Deputy First Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies <u>travelled to the Netherlands</u> to take part in the commemorations marking the 80 th anniversary of the liberation of den Bosch and the role of the 53rd Welsh Regiment in liberating the city during World War II.	Oct
First Minister visit to Other Voices Festival	Wales	The First Minister travelled to Cardigan for the Other Voices international festival to promote Wales. The First Minister opened the festival, took part in a Clebran session with Philip King, held a bilateral with the Irish Ambassador to the UK and hosted a reception.	Oct