



FIGHTING HARD FOR WALES

A MANIFESTO FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2004



OUR VISION

Wales' role in Europe is a crucial element in Plaid Cymru's vision of our rightful place in the world. 2004 is a momentous year for Europe with enlargement becoming a reality. We seek to place Wales at the heart of government in Europe in this period of transformation and birth of the new Europe.

In welcoming our new European citizens, Plaid Cymru wishes Wales to be a positive role model as a nation of proactive and influential Europeans. In Europe, Plaid Cymru is earning Wales the respect at an international level that we have long maintained is our right. This is why Europe is important and this is why Plaid Cymru – your only Welsh voice in Europe – is vital.

With our two Plaid Cymru MEPs, Jill Evans and Eurig Wyn, Wales has achieved a prominent place in Brussels. As a result significant steps have been taken towards improving the conditions and rights of people in Wales, across Europe and further afield.

Our MEPs were at the heart of new legislation on workers' rights, food safety and standards, CAP reform, keeping Wales GM free, better food labelling, the promotion of Welsh produce as a quality product, and bolstering Europe's stance on the position of minority languages.

Plaid Cymru is the only political party in Wales that has consistently represented the values and interests of Wales on national and international issues. Plaid Cymru is a unique choice for the European election because we are a party that **only** represents Wales.

Plaid Cymru represents the distinctive interests of Welsh farmers – not large ranchers in South East England. Welsh farmers' interests are what drive our policy interventions in agriculture.

We do not follow the British government's line on the war in Iraq or other foreign affairs issues. Instead, we tell the world what Wales thinks on such highly important matters.

We do not bow to the interests of the London stock exchange at the expense of Welsh manufacturing jobs. Plaid Cymru is free to truly represent Wales in Europe.

In this manifesto, we outline our priorities for five key areas in which the European Parliament plays a major role: international affairs; the economy; food and farming; waste and the environment, and the rights of our people.

Plaid Cymru is your voice for Wales in Europe. We continually fight to make that voice even stronger.

**MAKE THE UK AND THE WORLD PAY ATTENTION TO WALES
- VOTE FOR PLAID CYMRU THE PARTY OF WALES!**

Constitutional and Foreign Policy

OUR VISION **AN INDEPENDENT WALES PLAYING A PROGRESSIVE AND RADICAL ROLE IN THE EU**

Plaid Cymru sees Europe as an increasingly important player that can truly represent our interests globally. Thus we promote the strengthening of the EU's role in international negotiations. We believe Europe's political status should be reflected in international fora.

Within Europe, Plaid Cymru is a member of the European Free Alliance (EFA). This is an alliance of pro-European political parties representing the nations and regions of Europe which are committed to self-government, social justice, sustainable development and peaceful democracy. In the European Parliament, EFA has formed a powerful political group with the Greens giving Plaid Cymru a significant platform and decision making role in Europe.

While Plaid Cymru welcomes enlargement, it must be noted that Wales is losing one MEP under the new arrangements. Half of the new member states have smaller populations than Wales but will have full member status, which means they will have more seats.

An independent Wales would be on an equal footing with other small countries - with more seats in the European Parliament, full voting rights in the Council of Ministers and representation in the Commission. Independence would overcome the difficulty of the member states' reluctance to devolve power to the regions. All Welsh MEPs would then represent Wales. At the moment only 2 out of 5 of Wales' MEPs can give priority to Wales and Welsh interests; the rest represent UK parties and UK interests. Plaid Cymru does not think that is good enough – Wales deserves better.

The recent debacle over the proposed new constitution for an enlarged European Union shows clearly why Wales needs to be represented directly in Europe. Plaid Cymru will test any proposals for constitutional changes on the basis of how they further the interests of Wales and democratic accountability.

THE RECORD

- Plaid Cymru has fought for Wales' right to democratic representation on the European Convention and to keep our five seats. All the major parties in Westminster opposed Wales' right to these basic demands
- Plaid Cymru has consistently and uncompromisingly represented Wales' interests in the European Parliament - unlike Labour MEPs who have consistently voted for Labour Party priorities, often to the detriment of Wales' best interests
- Plaid Cymru works for peace and opposed the war in Iraq

- Plaid Cymru recognises the difficulties the Welsh economy faces by being outside the Euro and supports its timely introduction under conditions of democratic control and the guarantee of protection for the smaller economies of Europe

We will

1. ***Continue to fight for full representation for Wales in Europe***
2. ***Continue to represent Wales in the European Parliament like no other party can***
3. ***Push to increase the democratisation of European institutions at all levels by promoting the subsidiarity principle***
4. ***Continue to campaign for a European Parliament office to be established in Wales, as there is in Scotland***
5. ***Continue to support a Tobin Tax, the tackling of debt in the developing world, the attaining of UN targets of foreign aid (0.7% of GDP)***
6. ***Promote international fair trade and work to cancel developing countries' debts.***

The Economy and Objective One

OUR VISION

**A PROSPEROUS AND ECONOMICALLY JUST
WALES, TAKING ITS PLACE ALONGSIDE OUR
PARTNERS IN EUROPE**

Wales' prospects for the future depend on action **now** to transform the economy from one with high levels of under-employment and ill health to a sustainable economy affording equality and opportunity to all.

Plaid Cymru is confident that Wales can become an innovative, proud and world-leading economy. This self-belief and the effective use of resources, including European funding, have the potential to transform Welsh life.

However, our efforts have been dogged by Labour Party inactivity and lack of faith in Wales. This is harming the Welsh economy and runs the risk of squandering the opportunities we have. Structural funding and Objective One monies will make a lasting impact on Wales only if we spend the money on infrastructure and sustainable enterprise. Labour in Wales and Westminster is failing to do this.

The UK is one of the most centralised countries in the European Union. The Labour administration has repeatedly attempted to drown out Wales' distinctive voice in Europe. **Labour now wants to take Wales' European money and give it to Westminster to spend. We won't let them do this.**

Plaid Cymru has always acted for the good of the people of Wales. Firstly, we campaigned for Objective 1 funds for Wales. Secondly, we won the fight for extra money from the Treasury to make up for the lack of match funding from the London Labour government. Thirdly, **Plaid Cymru-run councils are the best in Wales for winning and spending European funding on behalf of their populations.**

We are now over half way through the Objective 1 funding programme, yet the Labour administration has failed to spend Wales' available money. Only 15% of the £125m available had been spent by January 2004. It has been left to Plaid Cymru-led councils to show what can be done.

- Gwynedd council leads in job creation under Objective 1, with over 3,000 new jobs, more than twice the jobs any Labour council has managed to create
- Caerphilly comes in second in the Objective 1 job creation league
- Rhondda Cynon Taff tops the league for projects approved, with an impressive total of 94 projects.

Without immediate pressure, Wales risks losing money through European decommitment.

An EC proposal would give West Wales and the Valleys 85% of the value of Objective One in the next round; but Labour's UK government says it should

only be 50%. **Wales needs a strong Plaid Cymru representation to ensure we get full advantage from European funding.**

THE RECORD

- Under Labour, the West Wales and Valleys economy has fallen from 73% of European wealth in the mid 1990s to 69% according to recent data
- Labour in Wales did not secure match funding and as a result had to cut other budgets in Wales to make up for the shortfall
- Labour and Independent Councils have failed to capitalise on available Objective One money
- **Plaid Cymru Councils have led the way in achieving maximum use of European funding and creating sustainable local jobs**

We will

- 1. Work to regenerate Wales and make it possible and attractive for young people to remain in their communities***
- 2. Work for reform of the eligibility criteria so that Objective One decisions take into account social deprivation and geographical and environmental circumstances***
- 3. Fight to strengthen European regional policy and ensure member states respect their responsibility to the regions and nations within their borders***

Food and Farming

OUR VISION A SUSTAINABLE WALES, WITH HIGH QUALITY WELSH PRODUCE

Food dominates much of our daily lives therefore it is right that it should be dominant in politics too. Changes to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) herald a new era for farmers. At the same time, growing insecurity about what is in the food we eat, in the context of a world food market, makes political action imperative. The consumer must be enabled to choose through labelling, traceability and monitored standards and practices of production. Plaid Cymru seeks to support our farmers to meet this ever more sophisticated demand.

The promotion of Wales as a producer of world class, quality and pure produce is our aspiration for the Welsh food industry. Wales' clean and green image can and must be used to the full to meet the challenges facing farming.

The European Parliament is one of the most powerful fora available to achieve this. The other main parties have shown they can't or won't stand up for Welsh farming and consumer interests against Tony Blair's agenda for big business in the UK. Only Plaid Cymru can guarantee this Wales focus.

Europe holds powers that allow it to exert pressure on the UK government to act in Wales' best interests. Europe can make laws governing food standards, food labelling and traceability and processing standards. It is also the biggest single financial supporter of the farming community in Wales. **Plaid Cymru has been working hard at all levels for the benefit of Welsh farmers and consumers, to put in place the optimum conditions for prosperity and sustainability in our country.**

THE RECORD

- Plaid Cymru supported the move to decouple subsidies from production levels, and supported single farm payments on a historic basis for the purpose of the mid term review
- Plaid Cymru supported the linking of CAP 2006 reforms to a respect for animal welfare
- Our MEPs were instrumental in gaining protected status for Welsh beef and lamb
- Plaid Cymru fought for Wales to stay GM free
- Plaid Cymru played a prominent role in the European Parliament's Committee on Foot and Mouth Disease

We will

1. ***Work to shift the food trade towards local producers by facilitating local procurement, and oppose the growing corporate control of the food system by tackling supermarket monopolies***
2. ***Press for a long-term system of farm support payments that recognises food production under good environmental management, the maintenance of sustainable rural communities, and high standards of animal welfare and quality control***
3. ***Continue to protect small farming in Wales, whose interests differ markedly from those of the powerful UK ranching sector and which needs a Wales-tailored approach to avert the rural catastrophe Labour's agriculture policy will inevitably cause***
4. ***Continue to campaign hard to keep Wales a GM free zone, as no study has yet demonstrated GM crops are safe, economically beneficial or advantageous to farming or consumers***
5. ***Work with the emerging network of GM free European regions to ensure that nations and regions may declare themselves GM free on the basis of consumer choice and environmental impact***
6. ***Work to ensure the EU works for fair trade and for a mutually beneficial outcome for developing countries and the EU, including an end to dumping of EU produce on developing country markets under CAP reform***

Waste and the Environment

OUR VISION **A GREEN WALES, WHERE RECYCLING IS THE NORM AND WASTE CREATES WEALTH**

Plaid Cymru believes strongly that waste recycling must be seen as a financial and job creation opportunity. The UK government has failed to seize the opportunity presented by waste management or to meet the targets it has agreed. The Labour government has consistently starved local authorities of the resources and powers to put in place sustainable strategies – this is why the UK has such a poor recycling record.

Although Wales has more than doubled household waste recycling since 2001, from 6% to 12%, much more effort needs to be exerted to reach the 25% target for domestic waste recycling by 2005. Plaid Cymru-run councils have shown a commitment to those targets and have led the way in putting in place the infrastructure to make recycling an economically viable reality.

Norway managed to increase recycling of steel packaging from 0% to 54% in just one year. Plaid Cymru councils demonstrated how much can be achieved from a low starting point in a short space of time. As the Labour and Conservative parties are reluctant to give this issue the prominence it demands, we feel strongly that Europe is a real way to improve not only Wales' but the UK's poor record.

With increasing amounts of chemicals being found in human bodies and the environment, Plaid Cymru has been pushing for a better EU chemical policy.

THE RECORD

- Plaid Cymru in Europe has consistently voted for more stringent targets on waste production and higher levels of recycling
- Plaid Cymru Local Authorities have doubled recycling in the past year
- Jill Evans led action to close the Labour Party's Nantygwyddon Landfill site in the Rhondda
- Plaid Cymru believes in the 'polluter pays' principle to ensure that the tax payer does not pick up the clean-up bill for environmental damage
- A Friends of the Earth survey placed the two Plaid Cymru MEPs equal first out of 685, with a 100% record of support for the environment in the European parliament

We will

1. ***Continue to oppose the use of incinerators as their construction ensures that no efforts are made towards improving recycling***
2. ***Continually work to encourage a can-do mindset in both legislators and the public so that we achieve zero waste by the year 2020***
3. ***Support a higher landfill tax to act as a disincentive, increase revenue and help make alternative methods of waste management viable and competitive***
4. ***Work to change public procurement legislation in the European Parliament and in GATS negotiations, so that authorities can favour materials from recycled and local sources and thus safeguard the market and jobs created in this sector***
5. ***Continue to fight for the highest standards of protection for our environment***

Our Rights

OUR VISION

**A JUST WALES, WHERE ALL CITIZENS ARE
EQUAL AND WALES' UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN EUROPE IS
PROMOTED**

All aspects of our lives are dependant on other people respecting our rights. The state promises to guarantee those rights. Whoever you are, whether you are a worker whose pension has been wiped out, a pregnant worker, an asylum seeker, a male nurse, a disabled mother or a gay public servant you need those rights recognised and protected. Europe and the European Charter on Fundamental Rights is your ultimate guarantee of your rights no matter who you are. **Plaid Cymru MEPs have worked hard to try to ensure Welsh citizens enjoy the fullest of rights under European legislation.**

Workers' rights

Plaid Cymru deplores the disparity that exists between the rights other European workers enjoy and those afforded to Welsh workers. As a result of this unjust gap, it is generally easier and cheaper to close a factory in Wales than in the rest of Europe. Had Corus, Friction Dynamex and ASW been covered by European legislation the sackings, redundancies and loss of pensions could have been prevented.

The Labour government has blocked the introduction to Britain of EU legislation to protect workers' rights that Plaid Cymru has fought so hard for in the European Parliament.

Plaid Cymru MPs and MEPs have been instrumental in bringing the struggle of ASW pensioners to public attention, both at home at EU level.

THE RECORD

- The Blair government 'won' the UK a 5 year transitional delay before implementing important legislation which would place a duty on employers to share information and consult with employees
- All three UK parties have colluded in delaying the introduction of this employment legislation
- Plaid Cymru are resisting Labour's lobbying attempts in Europe to delay and weaken legislation protecting temporary employees
- The main unions in the UK, the GMB, UNISON and the TUC, have all supported our stance on workers' rights

We will

1. ***Oppose Peter Hain's call in the European Convention for the banning of the traditional trade union rights of association and to take industrial action***
2. ***Continue to fight for the full and immediate implementation of full European workers' rights legislation enjoyed by the rest of Europe but blocked by Tony Blair for UK workers***
3. ***Continue to support the directive on temporary workers' rights***
4. ***Support legislation to protect workers in takeover situations despite Labour's resistance***

Language Rights

The strength of the European Union lies in the rich diversity it embodies. Although there are now 20 official EU working languages, over 100 other European languages are in daily use and new language communities are forming constantly. Over 40 million Europeans speak minority languages. On these islands alone there are 6 surviving indigenous languages and an estimated 20 more languages spoken regularly here in Wales. The Welsh language is a unique cultural expression in a Europe of many cultures.

At the core of Plaid Cymru's philosophy is a concern for the survival and enrichment of the Welsh language and its communities. This care for the Welsh language has imbued the Party of Wales with a deep empathy and commitment to minority rights. This is reflected in our strong record on issues of integration and immigration. Our endeavours on Human Rights and language rights are at the forefront of our MEPs' concerns.

Welsh is not recognised as an official working language of the European Union but, since the beginning of the 1990s, projects to support Welsh and other European minority languages have been funded by the Union. Since 2001, however, the lack of a legal basis has hampered this funding.

Plaid Cymru believes that the 40 million people speaking minority languages are entitled to a tangible legal framework, making funding an entitlement. This would turn empty platitudes into true respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

THE RECORD

- Plaid Cymru has repeatedly voiced concern for the rights of speakers of regional and minority languages
- We supported the move to create a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning and the setting up of a multi-annual Programme for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning which includes regional and minority languages
- The European Free Alliance succeeded in including a reference to respecting the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the Union in the text of the draft European Constitution

We will

1. ***Continue to fight for the rights of minority language speakers in the European Union***
2. ***Continue working to ensure a legal basis to support minority languages in Europe in order to facilitate European funding***
3. ***Continue fighting to mainstream minority language matters in European programmes***
4. ***Continue raising the profile of the Welsh language in Europe***
5. ***Continue building alliances with other European stateless nations and minority communities to advance the cause of minority language rights***