



Plaid  
Cymru | Party of  
Wales



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# CYMRU'N GYNTAF WALES FIRST

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2014 EUROPEAN ELECTION MANIFESTO

## What's at stake? Everything.

150,000 Welsh jobs – more than 1 in 10 - depend on EU trade.

EU funding supports 16,000 Welsh farmers – up to 80% of farming income.

Each person in Wales gets £40 more from the EU than they put in.

Only Plaid Cymru wants the very best for Wales. Vote for the Party of Wales to:

- Cut business rates for more than 80,000 companies
- Create 50,000 new jobs by giving public contracts to local firms
- Provide a job or training guarantee to under 25 year olds
- Slash your gas and electricity bills with a not-for-profit Welsh energy company
- Upgrade public transport and road links as well as broadband and mobile coverage
- Reform the EU and cut wasteful expenditure
- Ensure Welsh has the same status as other EU languages
- Train and recruit 1,000 extra doctors to reduce waiting times
- Fight to protect job security and workers' rights
- Ensure real action on climate change and support for our communities affected by its impact.

# Making Europe work for Wales

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The forthcoming European election is Wales's referendum.

It is our opportunity as a nation to come together and reject the dangerous politics of division that has characterised the European debate in recent years; a politics of cynicism that seeks to pit communities and people against each other.

In the year that marks the centenary of the First World War, we can reflect on the fact that the Europe of today – for all of its imperfections – is a better place for its citizens than the Europe of one hundred years ago.

That the EU is often too cumbersome and slow to respond to the needs of its citizens is almost universally agreed.

Plaid Cymru knows and recognises concerns about economic inequality that can result in large movements of people from one part of the EU to another, and its impact on wages and opportunities for local people. An issue like this requires pan-European co-operation to redress economic imbalance continent-wide.

We've got to be in it to change it.

People in Wales benefit from our membership of the European family - £5 billion worth of trade is invaluable to Welsh businesses and more than 150,000 jobs are directly linked to our participation in the EU.

Only the Party of Wales can and will put Wales first at all levels of government, each and every day.

As the threat of a UK withdrawal from the European Union increases, it is more important than ever for Wales's voice to be heard loud and clear in Brussels.

Plaid Cymru will continue to put concerns such as employee rights, climate change, tax avoidance and job creation at the top of the European political agenda. We will take every opportunity to further the Welsh national interest.

At these elections, we're asking all those who care about Wales' future to put Wales first by re-electing a Party of Wales MEP.



**Leanne Wood AM**



**Leanne Wood AM  
Leader of the Party of Wales**

*“Only the Party  
of Wales can and  
will put Wales  
first at all levels of  
government, each  
and every day.”*

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# A strong team to put Wales First

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Plaid Cymru is the Party of Wales. We put the people of Wales first.

We want Wales to be a full and equal member of the European Union, playing a vital role in partnership with fellow nations in improving people's lives in Europe.

To do that means making the European Union work for the benefit of the people of Wales, including reform of the European Union to make it more democratic and answerable to the people of Wales and Europe.

We need a European Union that is fit for purpose.

Wales benefits from European Union membership, both from the decades of peaceful trade between member countries and policies to support economic development and combat climate change.

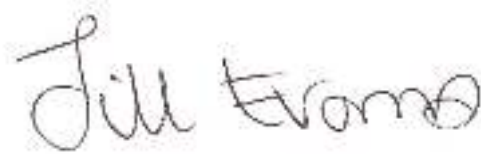
Wales gets European Union funding to improve our economy. But it isn't good enough to rely on this funding because we are considered poor. Plaid Cymru wants Wales to stand on its own two feet in Europe, exporting products and skills across the European Union and the world.

Plaid Cymru wants an outward looking and confident Wales. We want to create sustainable jobs, a better healthcare service, a better educated workforce and a high standard of living.

No other party will put Wales first in the way that Plaid Cymru does.

The people of Wales are our priority. We are answerable only to them.

If, like us, you put the people of Wales first, then vote for Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales at this European election.



**Jill Evans MEP**



Party of Wales Candidates Marc Jones | Jill Evans | Steven Cornelius | Ioan Bellin

# Economy & Jobs

## A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CREATING WELL-PAID WORK ARE PLAID CYMRU'S PRIORITIES.

The economy has been stagnant for several years but is finally beginning to grow once more. Plaid Cymru wants to ensure that Wales benefits from this recovery. We want higher quality employment, better wages and barriers to women in work removed.

As more than 150,000 Welsh jobs depend upon trade with European Union countries, with a trade value of more than £5 billion per year, European Union membership is crucial to our economic recovery.

***Plaid Cymru wants an increase in the number and value of contracts from Welsh public bodies that go to firms within Wales.***

Plaid Cymru wants to increase this trade through improving Welsh exports and is currently consulting on an Overseas Trade Initiative to make our businesses more competitive on a European and world level – adding value and more high-skilled, well-paid jobs to the Welsh economy.

This builds on Plaid Cymru's already published economic proposals.

In Plaid Cymru's 'Plan C - a plan to move the Welsh economy forward', we launched a series of ideas to improve the economy through better local procurement and upskilling our workforce.

Plaid Cymru wants an increase in the number and value of contracts from Welsh public bodies that go to firms within Wales. That figure is currently just 52%, meaning that, of the £4.3 billion spent per year by Welsh public bodies on procurement, half of it is leaking away. Each percentage increase means 2,000 extra jobs.



Plaid Cymru has worked to improve European procurement legislation and public sector practice to make it easier for Welsh firms to access these contracts. This includes small and medium businesses who support the supply chain by using more Welsh companies and employees who spend their money in their local high street.

In France and Germany around 98% of public sector contracts go to their own companies. If we can increase the value of Welsh public sector contracts going to Welsh firms to 75% then we will create almost 50,000 jobs for people living in Wales. A Plaid Cymru government will introduce a Public Procurement Bill to ensure best practice so that Welsh firms get a fair deal from our taxpayers' money.

A Plaid Cymru government will provide small business rate relief to more than 83,000 businesses in Wales, and take 70,000 out of paying business rates altogether. Businesses with a rateable value of below £10,000 will pay no rates, with rebates for businesses with a rateable value of up to £15,000.

Plaid Cymru wants Wales to be a European and world leader in green growth through ensuring that we have the skills and research and development to reduce our energy use, generate renewable energy and reduce waste and packaging.

Adaptation to climate change can give Welsh firms a lead in this field so that they develop expertise, providing jobs in Wales and earning income from other countries.

During the economic downturn Plaid Cymru argued for investment in Welsh infrastructure, including our hospitals, schools, broadband and transport networks. We still believe that these improvements are necessary – especially as continued cuts mean that few projects have started and been completed.

Plaid Cymru is concerned that these cuts mean that buildings will soon be out of date and unfit for purpose, meaning that Wales will not be prepared for the challenges of a growing economy.

Improving infrastructure means space for the economy to grow in future – whether that is in our town centres or online and with state of the art facilities in our schools and hospitals.

If the economy is to reach its potential in creating jobs and value then it must value and utilise the skills of everyone.

Underemployment is a major issue in our economy, with more than one in ten people in work either over-skilled for their current job or looking to increase their hours. This is a major drag on Wales's overall economic performance.

Plaid Cymru has fought for compulsory zero-hours contracts to be banned and pushed amendments on this for agricultural and social-care workers. With families finding it hard to make ends meet, they should be able to know in advance how much they will have from week to week. Sadly, Labour voted with the Conservatives to keep zero-hours contracts.



Currently many skilled and experienced women are prevented from entering the employment market because of barriers such as adequate and affordable childcare or caring duties.

## *Plaid Cymru would introduce a Parental Leave scheme to include both parents and remove the stigma of taking time off work to care for new-born children.*

We supported the EU Directive on Parental Leave which was blocked by the UK government

Women should play a greater role in economic decision making in Wales. Plaid Cymru supports an EU-wide quota for female directors in major companies.

With youth unemployment above 40% in some parts of the country, it is crucial that we do not have a lost generation who don't know what it is like to go to work.



As part of the Budget deal in 2012, Plaid Cymru ensured 5,000 new apprenticeship opportunities. These have been very popular. Some of these apprenticeships are to help Welsh speaking young people to find work and stay in their communities, as well as supporting small and medium businesses with training new members of staff.

Increasing the aims and ambitions of young people is vital if we are to improve the Welsh economy, through traditional qualifications and vocational opportunities to allow them to reach their potential.

Plaid Cymru will adopt the European Youth Guarantee so that under-25s who have not been in education, employment or training for four months are given real opportunities to improve

their skills and find work, improving their self-confidence and life chances.

The West Wales and the Valleys region has once again qualified for European Union convergence funding as a result of its economic performance compared with the EU as a whole. The UK has the most unequal economic performance in the EU with Inner London the highest GVA per head in the EU but more than half of areas within the UK performing below the EU average.

The UK does not have a regional development policy and successive UK governments have tried to scrap the EU regional policy too, undermining the Welsh national interest. They have failed so far, but, in future, this may not always be the case.

Westminster's failure can be seen in that Wales still suffers from an unfair funding formula. The independent Holtham Commission proved that Wales is under-funded by up to £400m per year – money which should be spent in our economy, on our health and education. Plaid Cymru would scrap the Barnett Formula and replace it with a formula based on the needs of the people of Wales.

This will be the third time that West Wales and the Valleys has qualified for this additional funding and while it is welcomed as part of the EU strategy to improve the economies of poorer performing regions, Plaid Cymru does not believe that it is acceptable for parts of Wales to continue to lag so far behind. The funding must be used to transform our economy.

A better skilled workforce will be better able to develop indigenous business and attract foreign direct investment in Wales.

In government, Plaid Cymru ensured a strategy for European funding that concentrated funding into fewer projects with a larger impact.

Plaid Cymru believes that future European funding should be invested into skills and infrastructure that will provide long-term change in the economy as a result of the economic stimulus.

That is why Plaid Cymru is consulting upon an arms-length body, involving private business, to ensure that this investment has the greatest



returns for the Welsh economy in terms of infrastructure, training and jobs.

Plaid Cymru will also ensure that advice is more easily accessible for small and medium sized businesses and employers to access European funding, and play their role in the upskilling of the Welsh workforce.

In government, we ensured that projects gained access to European Investment Bank funding for the first time, supporting tourism and creating jobs.

However, Wales still receives less per head than it should from European Investment Bank funding in the UK.

Plaid Cymru will push for greater use of this funding stream for projects that will create jobs and future work opportunities.

As part of its efforts to promote employee ownership of companies and co-operatives, the European Union is considering setting up specialist support centres in each member-state.

Plaid Cymru has called for the the UK's centre to be located in Wales. As the birthplace of the founder of the co-operatives movement, Robert Owen, and with our history of co-operatives, we are best placed to make this a success. It would be the first EU institution to be located in Wales other than the European Commission's own office. Our economy would benefit from the knowledge and experience to help employees and businesses to grow and create jobs in our local communities.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru wants taxation and funding issues addressed so that the minimum wage becomes a genuine living wage for families and households.



# Health

## THE WELSH NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE IS A VITAL PART OF EVERYBODY'S LIVES.

Plaid Cymru wants to see the Welsh NHS improve and reach its potential.

Currently the ratio of doctors to population in Wales is one of the lowest in the European Union. A Plaid Cymru government would put a programme in place to train and recruit an additional 1,000 doctors in Wales to reach the UK average, and provide qualified medical care as close to people's homes as possible.

Healthcare is international and during the next European Parliament we will prioritise the development of recognised workforce standards throughout the European Union.

Plaid Cymru wants to ensure that qualifications to practice are rigorous and recognised to ensure the free movement of health professionals throughout the EU, whilst ensuring that patients and employers can have confidence in their ability. This will include minimum language standards appropriate for each country, and ensuring all health systems have appropriate professional development built into career pathways.



We will also ensure that there are European wide systems for identifying doctors struck off for malpractice so that patients throughout Europe are protected from poor practice.

Plaid Cymru is involved in the drafting of EU legislation on eHealth and telemedicine that will improve the quality of patient care and save patients time and cost.



Plaid Cymru included telemedicine provision in our 2013 Welsh Budget deal and supports the excellent work on eHealth being done in our universities.

Plaid Cymru supports the "All Trials" campaign for the publication of all clinical trials. Current estimates suggest half of all clinical trials are never published. This means trials are sometimes duplicated unnecessarily.

***A Plaid Cymru government would put a programme in place to train and recruit an additional 1,000 doctors in Wales.***

The publication of all available trial data will mean EU regulations on the licensing of medicines are more transparent. Clinicians will be able to make decisions on treatment based on all the available evidence and patients can have confidence in the treatments they receive.

Plaid Cymru will work to ensure that Wales receives a fair share of research funding.

This will enhance the attractiveness of our health service to doctors, as well as ensuring patients can have access to the latest treatments.

# Education

## **PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES THAT ALL CHILDREN SHOULD ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.**

Plaid Cymru would ensure that all children have basic literacy and numeracy skills with a proper support system to identify and assist those struggling at any time.

In December the results of the PISA educational attainment tests showed that our school children are not reaching the levels that they should.



Wales is ranked 41st of 65 for reading, 43rd for maths and 36th for science.

We are under-performing compared to our neighbours, with Scotland being the best performing of the four nations in the UK, and Wales one of the poorest performing countries in the European Union.

As education is wholly the responsibility of the Welsh Government, there can be no excuses for this poor performance that affects the future life chances of children, preventing them from reaching their potential.

## **A Plaid Cymru government will set a target to improve our PISA rankings and seek to break the cycle of poverty and low educational achievement.**

To begin to break that link between deprivation and poor attainment, we secured extra money for the pupil deprivation grant in the 2013 Welsh budget, more than doubling it from £450 per year to £918 per year.

As part of the Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru supported the adoption of the Foundation Phase for children under seven, a system based on that in Finland, with a play-based curriculum to promote learning and discovery. However we are concerned that it has not been effectively implemented and that staff to pupil ratios are not at an appropriate level to provide the stimulus and educational support that children need.

Plaid Cymru wants a greater focus on ensuring the on-going development of core skills in schools.

Plaid Cymru will continue to learn from educational initiatives around Europe to constantly improve Welsh education standards.

Bilingualism and multilingualism is the norm in Europe. Evidence points to improved educational attainment by bilingual and multilingual children, and Plaid Cymru wants all Welsh children to share in those improved outcomes. Developing language skills is good for the individual and the wider economy and we will push for greater uptake and achievement in languages.



Those opportunities manifest themselves in the programmes for international co-operation, including Comenius for schools, Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training and Grundtvig for adult education – now all brought together in the new Erasmus+ programme.

These programmes create opportunities for educational links between individuals, regions and countries, creating diverse cultural experiences and business opportunities.

Plaid Cymru will continue to promote these programmes to internationalise young people and give them a broader world outlook.

# Migration

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## **PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES THAT WALES SHOULD PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN DEVELOPING MIGRATION POLICY.**

Free movement of people within the EU, allowing people to live and work in another country is a fundamental principle of European Union membership.

Migrants within the European Union are more likely to be in work than comparable groups in the host society and less likely to be claiming welfare benefits. Evidence shows that they make a positive contribution to the economy.

Wales has an acute skills shortage. The abolition of the post-study work visa means that educated and skilled graduates from Welsh universities must find a job immediately after graduating or leave.

This is a missed opportunity, especially considering that, during the two years when a graduate is looking for employment, they have no recourse to public funds.

***Plaid Cymru believes that a post-study work visa for Wales should be reintroduced. A skills shortage list should also be published by the Welsh Government.***

Where there are identified skills shortages we should be actively recruiting across the European Union. With a potential workforce of more than 550 million people, an economically developed country like Wales should be an attractive place for qualified individuals to come and work.

The Welsh Government should therefore target migrants with particular skills, for example, lecturing staff at our universities or doctors in our health service, as well as people willing to work with us to improve the Welsh economy. Wales needs a Welsh migration policy that meets Welsh needs.



Plaid Cymru believes that Wales should play a greater role in the development of migration policy as a whole, engaging at all levels with the Migration Advisory Committee who carry out consultations on behalf of the UK Government.

Plaid Cymru supports a migration system for the UK, similar to that in Quebec, where the Government receives a percentage of state migrants.

Integration services for refugees and other migrants must be the responsibility of the Welsh Government. The devolution of health, housing and education, as well as the unique political institutions and culture in Wales, means that an understanding of civic society in Wales is necessary.

# Food, Agriculture & Rural Affairs

**PLAID CYMRU RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD PRODUCTION TO OUR ECONOMY. WALES DEPENDS ON ITS FARMERS AS FOOD PRODUCERS AND MANAGERS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

We welcomed the continuation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which helps keep over 80% of Welsh farms in business with direct payments.

Attempts by the previous and current UK Governments to abolish these payments show how the Welsh national interest is very different from the UK interest. Of the four parties representing Wales in Europe, only Plaid Cymru voted to protect the CAP budget. Plaid Cymru is clearly on the side of Welsh farmers.

Plaid Cymru worked with colleagues in other nations to ensure that the agricultural reforms did not penalise Welsh farmers who had already adopted environmental programmes. We secured a transition period sufficient for farmers to adapt to the new payment regime. While the results of CAP reform are mixed, we avoided the disastrous consequences that would have occurred if the UK government succeeded in its aim of further changes.

***Plaid Cymru voted against cuts in the EU budget because it meant cuts to Welsh agriculture funding. The farming industry is crucial to our economy and needs a sustainable long term future.***

We also opposed the Welsh Government's decision to transfer the maximum 15% from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 of CAP, an attack on Welsh farming at a time when the industry has already seen a 44% net drop in farm incomes.

Plaid Cymru wants to introduce a moorland-specific Areas of Natural Constraint scheme to provide additional support to our upland farmers.



We have successfully worked to assist young farmers and other new entrants into farming through schemes such as the Young Entrants' Support Scheme.

Plaid Cymru has worked closely with the farming community on issues such as the dairy package, electronic identification of sheep, the Rural Development Plan and fallen stock. We will continue to promote and protect our agricultural industry.

The localisation of the food chain is essential to cut down on food miles and un-necessary transportation. That is why we support local farms and local processing facilities, abattoirs, and food markets so that people can buy food from local suppliers and sources.

The horsemeat scandal highlighted the importance of international regulation in protecting consumers on an international level. Co-operation led to agreements, an action plan and timeline to deal with 'food fraud'.

Plaid Cymru believes that the link between fresh produce and food on the plate must be restored and families should be supported by local authorities to grow their own food in allotments and gardens.

But buying good food depends on the consumer knowing exactly what it contains. We have worked to constantly improve food labelling and give consumers real information and choice. It is unacceptable to label food as healthy when it contains large amounts of sugar and salt. Similarly, when people buy Welsh meat they want to be sure that it was born, reared and slaughtered in Wales.

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That is why we will be pushing for a major extension of "country of origin" labelling, as well as looking to support Welsh abattoirs following the closure of Gaerwen.

We would also like to see comprehensive food miles and water footprint labelling so that the environmental impact of our imported food becomes clear.

We support a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) free Wales and the continuing moratorium on GM crops in the European Union. Produce from animals fed on GMOs should also be clearly labelled so that customers know what they are purchasing.

Plaid Cymru opposed the growing of biofuels on land that should be used for food production.

Plaid Cymru promotes Welsh produce at every opportunity and is keen to see more producers gaining European status to recognise and protect their products through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI).

Plaid Cymru is working to ensure that the new regulations on seeds exempt home gardeners and small businesses.



Plaid Cymru believes that sustainability in the fishing sector means securing the long-term viability of fishing stocks and fishing communities in Wales.

We support the Blue Growth strategy to strengthen the maritime and marine economy, linking with the land-based economy to produce added value through local markets and innovative products.



As it becomes ever easier to travel and transport goods around the world, the threat that invasive alien species pose to our environment and to our economy becomes ever larger. It is estimated that market costs incurred by invasive alien species amount to £125 million per year in Wales.

Plaid Cymru will work to ensure that the EU's strategy on invasive alien species includes mechanisms to alert all Member States on new threats.

***We will continue to promote and protect our agricultural industry.***

Animal welfare is a crucial issue in the European Union and Plaid Cymru is calling for a European Commissioner to take particular responsibility for animal welfare issues. This would send out a powerful message that the European Union takes this seriously.

Plaid Cymru also wants to see the speedy adoption of a comprehensive new animal welfare law proposed by the European Union to ensure that the high standards met in Wales are met on a Europe-wide basis.

# Energy & Climate Change

## ENERGY IS A MAJOR CONCERN FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS IN WALES.

Climate change cannot be tackled on a country-by-country basis. That is why Wales must work with the European Union and other international institutions to reach agreement and commit to action on reducing man made climate change and promoting decarbonisation.

Plaid Cymru wants all powers over energy generation and regulation in Wales to be transferred to the Welsh Government. Currently Wales only has powers to give planning permission for projects up to 50MW on land and up to 1MW out at sea.

Permits above this level are granted by London on land or through the Marine Management Organisation in Welsh waters up to 100 MW. Proposals made by the Commission on Devolution in Wales for the transfer of limited powers do not go far enough in our opinion.

***It is a scandal that our households have the highest average energy bills. We pay more for heating and power than either England or Scotland, despite Wales being an energy rich nation that produces more electricity than it consumes.***

Energy bills have continued to rise dramatically in recent years, squeezing family budgets and particularly those of pensioner households who are on fixed incomes.

Plaid Cymru wants a not for dividend profit Welsh energy company based on the same model as 'Glas Cymru' in the water industry.

Any profits made would be returned to consumers or spent on energy efficiency measures to reduce energy use.



In the short term, Plaid Cymru is calling for a reduction of VAT on energy bills, saving families on average seventy pounds per year.

We need a sustainable energy supply in the years ahead.

If Wales produces more of its own renewable energy then we will be able to lessen our reliance upon other forms of energy and electricity and reduce our bills.

That is why we want greater community investment and ownership of renewable energy production. Communities themselves must see the benefit of clean, green energy policy and production in their own areas.

We also want a Welsh national energy grid to secure energy transmission in Wales.

Plaid Cymru shares the widespread concerns about the use of hydraulic fracturing to force shale gas from the ground.

The environmental impacts of this process are unknown, but could include the contamination of the water table. It also means continuing our dependency on fossil fuels. Exploiting this carbon intensive form of energy will also undermine our obligations to deliver on our national and international carbon reduction targets to help tackle climate change.

Plaid Cymru voted in favour of the European Commission's proposal to extend the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive to include fracking. This decision was later overturned. We also called for pylon projects to be included in the directive.

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The Welsh Government has so far not succeeded in making Wales a greener land in terms of our energy consumption. Sustainable development must be placed centre-stage in government activities.

We will investigate European and international sources of funding to develop the substantial amount of renewable energy available from the Severn estuary. We support the building of the first tidal lagoon at Swansea Bay and hope that it will become an international model.

Plaid Cymru wants greater investment in research and development into renewable energy so that we can become world leaders and export our expertise, rather than buy in knowledge from other countries.

This means working with higher education and private business to ensure that the research and development funding and skills are available in the first place. This includes capturing the benefits of Horizon 2020 projects for Wales, learning from research and applied work already underway in other European nations in Europe. Plaid Cymru will set up a Green Skills Construction College to ensure we have the skills required for a change towards renewable and environmentally friendly energy usage.

Plaid Cymru would establish a Green Energy Centre alongside the College to co-ordinate the work done by businesses and universities and to maximise funding opportunities.

Plaid Cymru will continue to scrutinise sustainable development in Wales and beyond, ensuring that the European Union leads the world in environmental legislation as we enter a period in which the impact of climate change will become increasingly widely felt.

In Wales this has manifested itself in substantial flooding in recent years.

The industrialised nations throughout the European Union must adopt ambitious climate change reduction targets for both 2020 and 2030 to show others that these are achievable and to help prevent dangerous deterioration.

***Plaid Cymru will seek to use European Investment Bank funding for green and renewables projects that will mitigate against climate change as well as providing an economic stimulus to the Welsh economy.***

The European Union has legislated for increasing recycling and reducing waste.

Plaid Cymru MEP Jill Evans steered a new law on restricting hazardous substances in electronic and electrical equipment through parliament.

Plaid Cymru will continue to work to maintain our precious biodiversity. This includes reversing the decline in the number of bees. Bees pollinate one-third of the food we eat and contribute millions to the economy. However, Welsh beekeepers saw losses of at least 38% of the bee population over winter 2012-2013.

Plaid Cymru successfully campaigned in the European Parliament for the prohibition of neonicotinoid pesticides - one of the factors behind the loss in bee population. More must be done to tackle habitat loss and disease as we strive to stem their decline.



# Information Technology

## PLAID CYMRU WANTS TO SEE WALES FIRST: AT THE FOREFRONT OF EUROPEAN TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

When we were in government, Plaid Cymru ensured that developing superfast broadband across Wales, not just in urban areas, was a central aim.

Proposals for high speed internet through improved infrastructure were a key element of our Economic Renewal Plan, as were plans to eliminate 'not spots' across the country.

*We want a better connected Wales online so that everybody can take advantage of the opportunities.*

We want a better connected Wales online so that everybody can take advantage of the opportunities, whether that is social interaction with family and long-lost friends or getting better informed about the world. This is especially important in rural areas and for small businesses to compete internationally.

It is unfair on consumers, and on those living in rural areas in particular, that communications regulators allow mobile phone companies to provide a slower service than in more populous areas. This lack of connectivity is bad for business.

The European Union, on the other hand, has been crucial in ensuring a fair deal for mobile phone owners by slashing the exorbitant charges made for cross-border telephone calls and data.

The European Parliament recently voted to end roaming charges for phone calls and download data so that it will be the same price to make calls or download abroad as at home.

Plaid Cymru recognises the dangers of internet fraud and want to see action taken to prevent electronic fraud and the taking and distribution of illegal images.

Plaid Cymru wants initiatives to deter individuals from engaging in anti-social behaviour online such as cyber bullying or cyber stalking.



This means cross-border co-operation to ensure common standards and thresholds for action to prevent this type of behaviour.

But we also value the right to privacy and will push for a Europe wide agreement to prevent government sponsored surveillance of EU citizens that is not clearly intelligence-led.

Plaid Cymru has a strong record of supporting civic freedoms on-line and protecting individuals whose freedoms are being infringed by others.

Plaid Cymru MEP Jill Evans successfully campaigned against the ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) that threatened civil liberties, and we will continue to work to ensure that new EU data protection laws do not strip users of their privacy.

We believe that legal framework and crime enforcement responsibilities must remain up-to-date to deal with changing technology.



# Transport

## A JOINED UP AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL FOR WALES. THAT IS WHY PLAID CYMRU IS CURRENTLY CONSULTING ON A NEW NATIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN.

Plaid Cymru will set up a national not-for-dividend railway franchise. This would mean that profits are reinvested into improved railway services rather than paid to shareholders. This would ensure a service better tailored to customer needs and those of the economy. The full devolution of rail powers is essential for this.



The building of HS2 in England should mean that Wales benefits in full from our share of funding. Plaid Cymru believes that this money should be used to upgrade Welsh transport services.

We will continue to campaign for the routes from Holyhead to Chester and from Swansea to London to be designated as part of the main EU corridor of the Trans-European Network linking Ireland with the European mainland. We will work tirelessly to ensure that Wales gets maximum financial assistance as part of the secondary core network. The electrification of the Holyhead line should be fast-tracked to be carried out as part of the current railway construction period, rather than delayed until the 2020s.

Plaid Cymru supports the creation of a Metro to link communities across the valleys and coastal areas of south-east Wales. We value public transport and the economic opportunities that better public transport connections can bring. As the Metro region includes a large number of communities that receive European convergence funding we will continue to investigate opportunities for additional funding to create jobs and opportunities in these areas.

Electrification of the Valleys lines means that diesel trains will be surplus. We will investigate how these trains can be used elsewhere to create additional services, for example, on services west of Swansea to Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock, and across mid and north Wales.

We also want a feasibility study conducted on re-opening a Carmarthen to Aberystwyth railway to link major towns in the west of Wales.

Plaid Cymru will continue to call for the Severn Bridges to be the property of the Welsh Government once they are returned to public ownership. This would allow us to cut tolls to a fair price whilst continuing to re-invest that funding into infrastructure. This will include reducing traffic 'pinch-points' which cause delays on popular routes in all parts of Wales.

We supported the purchase of Cardiff Airport and investment into improvements. Plaid Cymru believes an international airport is a crucial part of our transport and economic infrastructure. Making a success of Cardiff Airport, and bringing Europe and the world to Wales, is important for our export markets and tourism. We will take advantage of all support that can be provided by the European Union to assist in this.

As a country bordering the sea on three sides, Plaid Cymru believes that Wales needs a ports strategy for both passenger and freight transport.



# Crime & Justice

**PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES THAT POWERS OVER THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD LIE IN WALES, AS THEY DO IN SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND.**

This includes policing, prisons, the court service and probation. We should co-operate with criminal justice authorities elsewhere on an international basis to prevent international crimes, particularly fraud and human trafficking.

***Plaid Cymru wants to help communities affected by anti-social behaviour, including drug-taking or abuse.***

We want to see strong action taken to cut crime. We want to see offenders successfully rehabilitated back into society through a restorative justice method.

Young offenders are better off out of prison in their community than learning about a life of crime behind bars. Victims can't be ignored as they too often feel they have been.

Plaid Cymru would introduce a Victims' Bill of Rights which would put victims at the heart of the judicial process, and ensure that reported crimes, particularly those such as abuse crimes, are taken seriously by the authorities.

We support cross-border links to fight crime where necessary and a cross-UK commitment to preventing terrorism. We want to see that same co-operation reflected internationally to prevent crime and ensure justice for victims of crime.

Plaid Cymru is particularly concerned by continued human trafficking, and welcome that the European Union has recognised this as a priority. Reports suggest that 80% of victims of human trafficking in Europe are women and girls who are overwhelmingly used for sexual exploitation, while male victims are trafficked for labour.

Plaid Cymru wants to see increased resources



allocated to investigations and the prosecution and conviction of human traffickers.

Plaid Cymru believes that governments across Europe should increase steps to prevent this crime happening in the first place, as well as pursuing breaches of the law when they are identified. However, while supporting international co-operation, Plaid Cymru is concerned about the misuse of the European Arrest Warrant. Those arrested using these powers must have the right to appropriate legal support, and suggestions that the warrant is being mis-used must be investigated.

We support the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) that underpins our justice system. Plaid Cymru would challenge any attempt by the UK government to repeal the Human Rights Act, in effect withdrawing UK citizens from the ECHR.

The UK has no codified constitution and this allows each consecutive government at a UK level to pick and choose which rights its citizens should have. Plaid Cymru does not believe that citizens' rights should be so easily repealed.

One of the many successes of devolution in Wales has been the creation of a Children's Commissioner for Wales who puts children's rights centre-stage. Plaid Cymru wants to see this successful formula replicated on a broader scale by the creation of a European Children's Champion.

The complexity of family relationships and international legal obligations can make cross-border family court issues extremely difficult. The welfare of the child can sometimes be neglected. A Children's Champion would ensure that, in these circumstances and in international agreements, treaties and policies, children's rights and wellbeing are given top priority.

# Brand Wales

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WALES, AS A NATION, IS RECOGNISED ACROSS THE WORLD.



That is crucial for attracting foreign investment and increasing our tourism footfall.

Producing quality Welsh goods for export will improve knowledge of Wales. This includes manufacturing, but also food and drink produce.

Plaid Cymru will continue to support strategic trade missions across the world to foster awareness of Wales in new territories, and take advantage of new opportunities that this provides to create jobs.

A brand with consistently positive associations is vital in generating these opportunities and a Plaid Cymru government will ensure that there are no weak links in the chain, with exemplary standards being set and met in all outward-facing industries.

This includes the up-skilling of workers so that they are able to meet international employment challenges alongside the best in the world.

A Plaid Cymru government would support the hosting of major world events, including the Commonwealth Games, international football championships and the World Exposition.

Ensuring consistency of brand and penetration of other markets will mean working with the best Welsh public relations companies to ensure that the world knows about the best of Wales.

# Tourism

TOURISM IS A CRUCIAL INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT WALES.



Our heritage and countryside, including our national parks attract tourists from across Europe and beyond. We have promoted Wales at every opportunity in the European Parliament with exhibitions and seminars.

Jill Evans MEP has facilitated the creation of a European cultural tourism network involving the smaller nations in the EU.

Plaid Cymru will launch a Celebrate Wales year to stimulate tourism across the country, similar to 'Homecoming' events held in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

Our unique bilingual culture sets us apart from other countries of the United Kingdom.

Wales's culinary expertise should also be promoted, in addition to ensuring that we have sufficient quality accommodation to meet tourists' needs.

Recognising the importance of the service industry in tourism, a Plaid Cymru government will press for improved standards.

Ensuring improved transport opportunities to Wales is a vital part of the tourist experience.

## Culture & Media

**PLAID CYMRU RECOGNISES THAT WALES IS A MODERN BILINGUAL EUROPEAN NATION, AND OUR MEDIA MUST CONTINUALLY REFLECT THAT REALITY.**

We are concerned at the democratic deficit in Wales because so much of our media is commissioned and broadcast or published in a different country and does not recognise or understand Wales.

Plaid Cymru has called for the devolution of broadcasting – a position shared to some extent by the Commission on Devolution in Wales.

Plaid Cymru supports the arts in both of our official languages, and the party is proud to have created an English national theatre for Wales when in government.

Wales has a huge amount of priceless national treasures, including our National Museum, the National Library, and countless CADW monuments, and we believe that every child ought to have the opportunity, free of charge, to visit one of the National Museums or Libraries during their school years.



We will create a single national library service under the leadership of the National Library. Plaid Cymru remains committed to the process of making digital more Welsh print and visual material as well as continuing the screen and sound archive.

We will create a Public Archive Office in Wales under the care of the National Library.

Recognising that Wales has fewer bank holidays than almost any other nation in the European Union, Plaid Cymru will make 1st March a national St David's Day bank holiday in Wales.

## Housing

**PLAID CYMRU WANTS TO SEE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF HOUSING THROUGHOUT WALES.**

Plaid Cymru has opposed the unfair bedroom tax from the beginning. We have called for the Welsh Government to adopt a 'no evictions' policy and continue to fight for it to be scrapped by Westminster.

Following a period in which private sector rents in Wales have been increasing faster than any other country in the UK, Plaid Cymru will introduce stricter rent controls to ensure that families and young people are getting value for money.



Plaid Cymru will insist on written tenancy agreements which contain set minimum standards and ensure the rights of tenants are protected. This will prevent poor standard housing being let and set up a register of rogue landlords. Plaid Cymru will regulate all letting agents and clamp down on disproportionate charges and fees.

It is important that first time buyers are able to access mortgages, something which will prevent an overheating of the rental market in Wales, and ensure that young people are not priced out of the housing market.

Plaid Cymru welcomes the return of the Housing Revenue Account funding to local authorities in Wales to spend on their social housing stock.

Plaid Cymru successfully lobbied for the right of European Union governments to cut VAT on household improvements to 5%, but the UK Government has so far failed to implement this measure. In Wales, which has an older and more traditional housing stock, cutting improvement costs would make housing refurbishment cheaper and cut families' fuel bills through insulation.

# International Policy & Security

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## PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES THAT WALES HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

A hundred years have passed since the beginning of the Great War, when Europe became a battlefield.

As we commemorate the centenary of World War One this year, it is worth remembering that the European Union has ensured six decades of peace between its members and continued to expand eastwards to cover most of the European continent.

Plaid Cymru has supported a stronger role for the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Affairs so that the European Union can play a greater role internationally in conflict prevention and resolution, including peace keeping missions, working alongside the United Nations.

Plaid Cymru has called for an EU civilian peace corps, to work in areas of potential conflict to build trust and prevent violence.

We have proposed a Wales Peace Institute to research all aspects of peace in society and to advise and inform policy makers on the consequences of their decisions.

Recent events in the middle-east, particularly in Syria and Egypt, show the importance of negotiation.

The votes of Plaid Cymru and the SNP in opposing UK intervention in Syria were crucial in preventing military action.

We oppose all nuclear weapons as immoral, ineffective and expensive. Trident nuclear submarines should be scrapped and the money spent on health, education and international aid.

Plaid Cymru wholly rejects any suggestion that Wales could be a location for nuclear weapons, as has been proposed by the First Minister of Wales.

Plaid Cymru does not support a European army, but we believe that the EU nations should co-operate together on an international level.

Plaid Cymru supports the setting of strong post-2015 goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals.

These must be ambitious and achievable on a global scale. The post-2015 goals must include national targets to reduce inequality both at home and abroad, recognition of the impacts of climate change upon poverty and be respected by international organisations, including those outside the development sector, because without agreement and support, the aims of the goals will not be achieved.

Plaid Cymru continues to support legislation to underpin the 0.7% Gross National Product that should be provided in international aid and that aid effectiveness should support countries to develop their own path from poverty. This must be stringently monitored by independent organisations.

Reducing debt repayments from third world countries, or cancelling them altogether, would substantially assist developing countries to tackle their poverty and economic difficulties. Plaid Cymru supports cancellation of debt and the prevention of lending that damages the economies of developing nations leading to a continued spiral of debt.

Plaid Cymru continues to oppose international tax havens that fail to provide transparency and skew the international tax system against legitimate taxation regimes that recognise the role of tax in providing and improving core public services such as healthcare and education.

Plaid Cymru supports a nation by nation and international Robin Hood Tax on financial transactions, with the money raised being used to reduce poverty, both at home and in developing countries.

In the European Parliament, Plaid Cymru has continued to oppose illegal occupation and oppression. We support legal international action through the International Criminal Court against governments of any country who commit human rights abuses.

# Equalities

## PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES IN EQUALITY AS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

Plaid Cymru supports the rights of those who have 'protected characteristics' and will do whatever possible to protect them from all forms of discrimination.

These protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, sexual orientation and religion or belief.



We believe that all citizens should be treated as equal citizens with equal rights.

Plaid Cymru has supported EU legislation that helps achieve equality in all areas of life.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru has led campaigns to end homophobic bullying in school and to raise awareness of LGBT acceptance when dealing with young people's issues.

At a European level, Plaid Cymru will push for action to ensure that EU member states have effective legislation that prevents hate crime according to sexual orientation and gender.

In the Houses of Parliament, Plaid Cymru MPs and members of the House of Lords all supported equal marriage – the only party in Wales to do so.

Plaid Cymru believes that we should learn lessons from France to increase conviction rate for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases.

Despite FGM being a crime for the past 28 years, there has yet to be a single conviction in the UK. By contrast, France has the largest conviction rate in Europe. There should be a Europe-wide campaign to heighten efforts, firstly to prevent the practice of

FGM, and also to ensure as many perpetrators as possible are convicted.

Plaid Cymru continues to support the excellent work undertaken by the Older People's Commissioner in Wales as an advocate for older people, particularly in shining a light upon issues affecting those less able to represent themselves. We recognise the need to tackle scams to take advantage of older people.

The success of the Older People's Commissioner and the Children's Commissioner in Wales has led to calls for a Disabled Person's Commissioner for Wales to operate in a similar manner to tackle all forms of discrimination against those with a disability, particularly indirect forms of discrimination that have a negative impact upon people's lives, and to improve accessibility.

Plaid Cymru has consistently condemned the changes made to the benefits system by the UK Government that negatively affect disabled people, adding to stress and worry in people's lives. Plaid Cymru is also concerned about benefit changes that strengthen links between disability and poverty, as well as quality of life issues and ill-health more generally, including the negative impact of the 'bedroom tax'.

The freedom for religious worship and belief, or to hold no religious belief, is important to Plaid Cymru.

Plaid Cymru will do everything within our powers, including education, law and policing, to prevent 'hate crime' of any sort, ensuring that people are not abused because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender.

# Welsh - an official language of the EU

## THE WELSH LANGUAGE BELONGS TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF WALES, WHEREVER THEY LIVE, WHICHEVER LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK.

When we were in government, Plaid Cymru legislated to give official status to Welsh, creating rights for individuals to receive services through the medium of Welsh, and the post of Language Commissioner to ensure that the interests of Welsh language speakers are proactively safeguarded and promoted.

The status of the Welsh language is important. In our National Assembly for Wales, Plaid Cymru AMs use the Welsh language more than any other political party.

As well as having official status in Wales, Plaid Cymru also wants Welsh to become an official language of the European Union.



There are currently 24 official European languages, Welsh has co-official status thanks to the work of Plaid Cymru. But we want to go further. We want equality for our languages with other European Union official languages. This is not a symbolic gesture.

In Wales, there are nearly 600,000 Welsh speakers, many of whom are young people, but their language skills are not currently recognised.

To work in the European institutions you need two official EU languages. As Welsh is not an official EU language, it doesn't count. So, although many young people are bilingual, they are at a disadvantage, and must learn another language to qualify for employment

Making Welsh an official European Union language would give us equality and provide international job opportunities for Welsh speakers, and give Wales the same economic benefits as when Irish became an official EU language in 2007.

***We are determined to revitalise Welsh as a community language and we will increase the opportunities for everyone in Wales, and our young people in particular, to use the language.***

In response to the disappointing census figures for 2011, Plaid Cymru undertook a year-long conversation with the Welsh public to develop meaningful policies for the language to flourish.

Responses showed how the Welsh language links to economic improvement and that, without a strong economy and with limited local employment opportunities, people are forced to move to find work.

Plaid Cymru wants to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace in the public, private and third sectors and will use procurement contracts and apprenticeships to promote use of Welsh.



# Wales as an Independent Member State

## PLAID CYMRU BELIEVES THAT WALES SHOULD BE A MEMBER STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

This would make us a full voting member with the right of veto where the European Treaties allow so that the Welsh Government would have a voice at the top table.

We would have full access to and participation in the European Union as a member state to allow us to work for the Welsh national interest rather than be represented by the United Kingdom government which does not act in our best interests.

If all four UK nations were to become independent members of the European Union then all would benefit from electing more Members of the European Parliament and their own European Commissioners. Wales would elect 9 European Parliament members rather than the 4 that we currently have – more than doubling our representation.

Under the current system, Wales is represented at European Union level by four Members of the European Parliament, by two members of Ecosoc, the European Economic and Social Committee, and by four members of the Committee of the Regions (2 full members, 2 alternate members).

***Welsh ministers may be allowed to attend meetings as part of the United Kingdom delegation, but are speaking on behalf of the UK Government, not Wales.***

Plaid Cymru believes that there should be automatic Welsh representation in European Council decisions when they have an impact upon Wales. The First Minister should have the right to attend all Council of Ministers meetings with Observer status with speaking rights.

We also believe that the casting of the UK vote should require agreement by the relevant ministers from all four administrations and that,

where there is no agreement, this should be reported.

The UK has one European Commissioner who is appointed by the UK Government.

Plaid Cymru has proposed a 'rotating' commissioner from the United Kingdom selected, in turn, by the different governments within the UK for the five year mandate, meaning that Wales would get to select our own commissioner when our turn comes around.



Under the present circumstances, Plaid Cymru believes that the National Assembly for Wales, along with the other devolved administrations, should participate in the selection of the UK's European Commissioner and have the power of veto for unsuitable candidates and the power to nominate candidates for the process.

The National Assembly for Wales should review Wales's overseas representation, learning from best practice. The focus should be on providing a service which promotes the Welsh national interest, providing political representation from the Welsh Government and National Assembly and a trade mission to promote Wales.



# The future for Wales in the EU

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## **PLAID CYMRU STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, BUT NOT THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CURRENT EU.**

We welcomed the increase in powers of the European Parliament, but want further democratisation.

We support the principle of subsidiarity. This means that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the people who will be affected by them. In some cases this will be at local authority and community council level in Wales, or in the National Assembly for Wales or Westminster and, where decisions are best taken collectively, at a European Union level and other international organisations.

Wales's future within the EU is of crucial importance. European Union membership is in the best interests of Wales, maintaining trade with the rest of the continent, securing more than 150,000 jobs – one in ten jobs in Wales and encouraging further investment. Wales is a net beneficiary of the EU, with £5 billion worth of trade taking place between Wales and European Union countries.

Leaving the European Union would put international investment into Wales at risk as we would no longer have automatic access to the single market of more than 550 million people. This would impact strongly upon indigenous Welsh firms who rely upon exports to that market.

***Any referendum on EU membership should follow an honest and factual public debate on what is in the Welsh national interest.***

Prior to any referendum, the UK and Welsh Governments must publish reports on the impact upon Wales of leaving the European Union, including how European Union funding will be replaced.

Referendum results for Wales should be declared separately so the will of the people is clear.

Plaid Cymru believes that the review of the balance of competences between the European Union and UK government must also include the Welsh Government and should be part of the discussion surrounding the findings of the Commission on Devolution in Wales now that their second report has been published.

Plaid Cymru also believes that, given the continued uncertainty in the Eurozone, including the failure of European banks to deal with the crisis and the difficulties in integrating European economies, sterling remains the best currency to serve Welsh interests.

Membership of the European Union is in the Welsh national interest, as part of the European single market and as part of the social union. We benefit, financially and culturally, from our membership via the Common Agricultural Policy, European Regional and Structural Funds and programmes such as Erasmus.

But reform is long overdue. Plaid Cymru has long campaigned for ending the parliament's monthly move between Brussels and Strasbourg, which costs more than £100m per year to operate and generates 19,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. Parliament itself has voted to end the Strasbourg sessions but only the heads of national governments can make the decision. We will continue to demand this is done.

Despite common perceptions, European administration accounts for only about five per cent of the total European Union budget. The biggest items of expenditure are the Common Agricultural Policy and the Regional and Structural Funds from which Wales benefits.

This shows why Wales needs its own seat at the European table so that we can represent ourselves in discussions, not be part of a UK position which is often very different from the needs of Wales.

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Plaid Cymru has opposed the austerity measures which have caused such suffering to many people across the EU. We called instead for investment to create sustainable jobs.

A general cut to the EU budget is not in Wales's interests. Plaid Cymru was the only party that voted in the Welsh national interest and against a budget cut in the recent discussions, recognising the importance of CAP and Structural Funds to Wales.

While trying to protect the EU budget, there are specific projects which we propose cutting such as the multi-million Euro 'European House of History' museum project. The EU is a remarkable achievement and should be celebrated, but when peoples' wages and pensions are being cut, we cannot afford to build museums.

Plaid Cymru supports a compulsory register of lobbyists in the EU institutions. It is voluntary at present but with over 5,000 lobbyists in Brussels, more needs to be done to ensure transparency and protect the interests of constituents.

Plaid Cymru wants to see a more social Europe, true to its aim of full employment.

In industry, employee involvement at all levels is crucial in ensuring effective decision making. Decisions must be made with workers' rights and conditions fully considered, leading to a beneficial relationship.

Plaid Cymru has long worked to strengthen the laws on consulting workers and to ensure equality for all staff – including part-time and agency staff.

We supported the cap on bankers' bonuses, and, recognising that the financial sector was to blame for the economic crisis, Plaid Cymru wants Europe-wide agreement on a full separation of retail and investment banks, in order to reduce the risk to customers and institutions.

Plaid Cymru continues to express concern about the Transatlantic Trade Investment Package that threaten core European Union rules, including the protection of public services, intellectual property, food safety, GMOs, geographical indications, health or environmental standards. Plaid Cymru will continue to oppose forms of globalisation that allow companies to profit at the expense of employees and communities, and Jill Evans MEP has opposed this and other trade agreements that protect investors but not people.

Plaid Cymru will change the role of Wales House in Brussels to promote trade and investment in Wales and allow them to lobby on Wales's behalf.

Plaid Cymru supports proposals for an adequate minimum income in each European Union member state as everybody has the right to an adequate standard of living.

No-one should be forced into poverty or to leave their home in search of work because of the lack of available opportunities in their homeland.



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