



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings 10 April 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Peter Martin MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Present by Video:

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

Apologies:

Declan Kearney MLA

In Attendance: Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Christopher Dickison (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Jessica Jacques (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Sinead Kelly (Assistant Clerk)
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)
Suzanne Walsh (Clerical Supervisor)
Damien Brown (Clerical Officer)

In Attendance by Video:

Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 10.03am in closed session.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that Leigh Gibson, Senior Specialist in the House of Commons, had finished her secondment to the Committee secretariat team.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chairperson would write to Leigh Gibson to thank her for her valuable contributions.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Members' Interests

None.

3. COM/2024/561 Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2014/32/EU as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters – Legal Advice

Julie Byers, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.06am.

Members considered the following proposed EU act:

COM/2024/561 Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2014/32/EU as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on whether it appears likely that the proposed EU act differs significantly (in whole or in part) from the content or scope of the EU act it is amending/replacing.

A question and answer session followed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the proposed replacement EU act in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.16am.

Agreed: Members agreed to move to public session at 10.16am.

The meeting commenced at 10.17am in public session.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. COM/2024/561 Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2014/32/EU as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters – Departmental Oral Evidence

The Committee considered the following proposed EU act:

COM/2024/561 Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2014/32/EU as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.18am:

Damien Doherty Chief Inspector, Trading Standards Service, Department
for the Economy

Michael Bradley Head of Gas Team, Department for the Economy.

The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Eóin Tennyson joined the meeting at 10.34am.

The officials left the meeting at 10.36am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a revised departmental assessment of impact if any changes are proposed by the Council of the European Union or the European Parliament, which would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that RalSe monitors the progress of the proposed EU act, including negotiations in the European Parliament and Council, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

Agreed: Members noted that the officials were unable to answer a number of questions that had been supplied to them for answer during the evidence session, and advised that the UK Government would be better placed to respond. Therefore, the Committee agreed to send the questions to the UK Government for response.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would write to the Minister for the Economy to seek confirmation on whether she remains committed to the arrangements agreed by the previous Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy MLA, in relation to assisting the Committee in carrying out its scrutiny functions.

7. Committee Procedures: Meeting Schedule

The Chairperson proposed that notifications from Cabinet Office of any relevant replacement EU acts that have been proposed by the European Commission, and any relevant replacement EU acts that have been published by the European Union, are paused on 17 April 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that notifications be paused on 17 April 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed not to meet on 24 April 2025.

Members noted that Cabinet Office would be advised accordingly.

- 8. COM/2023/192 Proposal for a Directive on the Union code relating to medicinal products for human use, and repealing Directive 2001/83/EC and Directive 2009/35/EC**
- 9. COM/2023/193 Proposal for a Regulation laying down Union procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency, amending Regulation (EC) No 1394/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 536/2014 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 726/2004, Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 and Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006**
- 10. COM/2023/217 Proposal for a Regulation on detergents and surfactants, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004**
- 11. COM/2023/258 Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Union Customs Code and the European Union Customs Authority, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 952/2013**
- 12. COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625**
- 13. COM/2023/451 Proposal for a Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repealing Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC**
- 14. COM/2023/770 Proposal for a Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005**

15. COM/2023/462 Proposal for a Regulation on the safety of toys and repealing Directive 2009/48/EC

The Chairperson proposed that agenda items 8 to 15 be considered together.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider agenda items 8 to 15 together.

Jonathan Buckley joined the meeting at 10.45am.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee had agreed on 20 February 2025, to request departmental assessments of impact on a number of proposed EU acts that had started their legislative passage before the Committee was established.

The Committee considered departmental assessments of impact on the following proposed EU acts:

- a) COM/2023/217 - Detergents and surfactants;
- b) COM/2023/192 - Medicinal products for human use;
- c) COM/2023/193 - Authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use;
- d) COM/2023/411 - New genomic techniques;
- e) COM/2023/258 – EU customs code reform;
- f) COM/2023/451 – End of life vehicles; and
- g) COM/2023/770 – Live transport of animals.

The Committee considered a written submission from SOLACE NI, on behalf of each of the councils in Northern Ireland, in relation to the following proposed EU act: COM/2023/462 - Safety of toys.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite a representative from SOLACE NI to attend the Committee meeting on 1 May 2025 to give oral evidence on COM/2023/462 - Safety of toys.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission written and oral legal advice on the following proposed EU acts. Provisional dates for the oral advice sessions were agreed, subject to change depending on Committee business:

- a) COM(2023) 217 - Detergents and surfactants – 1 May 2025;
- b) COM(2023) 462 - Safety of toys – 1 May 2025;

- c) COM(2023) 192 - Medicinal products for human use – 15 May 2025;
- d) COM(2023) 193 - Authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use – 15 May 2025;
- e) COM(2023) 411 - New genomic techniques – 8 May 2025;
- f) COM(2023) 258 – EU customs code reform – 15 May 2025;
- g) COM(2023) 451 – End of life vehicles – 22 May 2025; and
- h) COM(2023) 770 – Live transport of animals – 22 May 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule departmental oral evidence sessions on the following proposed EU acts. Provisional dates were agreed, subject to change depending on Committee business:

- a) COM(2023) 217 - Detergents and surfactants – 1 May 2025;
- b) COM(2023) 192 - Medicinal products for human use – 15 May 2025;
- c) COM(2023) 193 - Authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use – 15 May 2025;
- d) COM(2023) 411 - New genomic techniques – 8 May 2025;
- e) COM(2023) 258 – EU customs code reform – 15 May 2025;
- f) COM(2023) 451 – End of life vehicles – 22 May 2025; and
- g) COM(2023) 770 – Live transport of animals – 22 May 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the departmental assessments of impact and relevant submissions on its webpage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would write to the First and deputy First Minister to request that, for EU acts which deal with matters that are reserved, excepted, or the responsibility of councils, a structured solution is found to identify the most relevant department with whom the Committee could engage.

16.COM/2024/577 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain

The Committee considered the following proposed replacement EU act:
COM/2024/577 Proposal for a regulation as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

Members noted that on 20 February 2025, the Committee agreed to monitor the proposed replacement EU act and requested that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs provide:

- a) a revised assessment of impact (if any changes are proposed by the Council of the European Union or the European Parliament which would have a significant impact specific to everyday life in Northern Ireland); and
- b) a summary of responses from relevant stakeholders to the European Commission's consultation on the proposed EU act.

The Committee noted an updated assessment of impact from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, in relation to the proposed replacement EU act, which incorporated a summary of consultation responses from relevant stakeholders.

17. Correspondence

17.1 The Committee noted a UK Government Explanatory Memorandum on the European Commission's 2025 Work Programme.

17.2 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government to the Committee's request for updates on the following EU acts:

- a) Regulation (EU) 2023/956 - Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism;
- b) Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 - Deforestation Regulation; and
- c) Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 - Artificial Intelligence Act.

17.3 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding its recent oral evidence session on the operation of the Windsor Framework.

17.4 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to the Independent Reviewer of the Windsor Framework regarding its inquiry into the operation of the Windsor Framework.

18. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted a written summary of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 March 2025 between some Committee Members and the Independent Reviewer of the Windsor Framework.

19. Any Other Business

None.

20. Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 1 May 2025 at 10:00am in Room 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.01am.

Ciara Ferguson, MLA, Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee