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Press Release

Use of Welsh in Brussels: interpreters all set

The Welsh language and the translation industry in Wales have received a major boost following the success of nine interpreters in the European Union interpretation test.

Twelve Welsh interpreters were in Brussels in mid September to take the European Union interpretation test. They were all praised for their skill.

Geraint Wyn Parry, Chief Executive of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru, the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters, commented:

“The pass rate of 75% is fantastic when you consider that only about 40% of candidates usually succeed in these tests.

“What is also very heartening is that the assessment panel, which included representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament, were most impressed with the standard of the interpretation from Welsh that they heard.”

Meri Huws, Chair of the Welsh Language Board, said:

“The new status of the Welsh language within the European Union is another important landmark for the language and I’m looking forward to hearing Ministers from the Welsh Assembly Government addressing the Council of Ministers in Welsh.

I would like to congratulate the interpreters, and wish them well when they undertake this exciting work in Brussels. This result is proof of the high standard of Welsh/English interpreting.”

Heritage Minister, Alun Ffred Jones AM, added:

“I’m delighted that nine of our excellent interpreters have succeeded in the EU interpretation tests. They have demonstrated linguistic ability and skill and will play their part in the history and evolution of the Welsh language.

“Ministers can now use the language at meetings in Brussels. This is very progressive and symbolic for the status of the language and I am pleased by the success of those who have just passed the test.”

Notes for editors . . ./

- An undertaking to ensure agreement on the use of the Welsh language in specific areas of business in the European Union was made in the One Wales agreement. The Council of Ministers has already decided that Ministers representing the UK at its meetings can speak in Welsh. The language is likely to be heard being spoken with official blessing for the first time before the end of the year.
- Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru, the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters, in conjunction with the Welsh Language Board and the translation services of the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government, have been working for the last year to make sure that there would be qualified interpreters available to do this work in the institutions of the European Union when Welsh receives co-official status. Like all interpreters working there, Welsh language interpreters had to pass the EU interpretation test which included both interpretation and consecutive translation. The University of Westminster, London, ran a consecutive translation course specifically for Welsh interpreters as part of the preparations.
- **For further information, contact Geraint Wyn Parry, Chief Executive of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru – 01248 371839**