

Jill Evans MEP, Plaid Cymru Lead Candidate for the European Parliament, sets out how Plaid Cymru will get a good deal from Europe for small businesses in Wales

The economy of Wales is largely based around small-medium sized enterprises, often family firms or small businesses in a close-knit community. These companies will face turbulent times in the coming months: Plaid Cymru is committed to working with Convergence Funding areas to increase GDP, provide additional support for small-medium sized companies and give incentives to open new businesses in these areas.

The Plaid-driven Welsh government is taking decisive action to support individuals and businesses through the recession with a huge investment in skills, training and apprenticeship programmes, and an EU-supported £1 million scheme to help businesses develop. The £48 million secured for the ProAct scheme to help businesses retain staff faced with redundancy and the £35 million invested in the ReAct scheme helping those made redundant with re-training and re-employment are a lifeline to many small businesses. Also Plaid leader Ieuan Wyn Jones ensured that Finance Wales is providing commercial funding to growing Small and Medium Enterprises throughout Wales and working with the European Investment Bank to create a new £150 million investment fund for small businesses.

We will continue to work with the Plaid-driven Welsh Assembly Government to make sure that Wales gets the best possible deal out of Europe.

We will campaign for European funding to go towards building a modern public transport system for Wales, with cheaper and faster rail links between the south and the north, mid and west. Connecting a twenty first century Wales to the European continent must be a priority in the coming months and years, especially in the provision of improved, modern high speed and electric train services across all of Wales.

Small businesses need the proper infrastructure in place to maximize their potential.

We support the recommendations to make broadband access a universal service obligation and we want to see every community in Wales able to access high broadband speeds of at least 8Mbps. Connecting Wales to the world in this way will encourage productivity, innovation and job creation, and will revitalise our rural communities by giving people a real choice in where and how they work.

It is through connecting Wales, as a nation, and with Europe that small businesses will have the opportunity to thrive.