



Ministerial Meeting of the Demography Group

31 March 2008

Communiqué

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing for Scotland, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP, hosted and chaired a Ministerial meeting of the British-Irish Council on Demography at Victoria Quay in Edinburgh today. The meeting focussed on the challenges presented by changes in fertility, life-expectancy and migration in the administrations. The value of migrant communities to the society on economy was also appreciated.

The meeting was part of an ongoing series of meetings within the British-Irish Council (BIC) since the Council's inaugural meeting of 17 December 1999. The BIC, established under the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations in Belfast in 1998, is a forum for its members to exchange information, discuss, consult, and use best endeavours to reach agreement on cooperation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Administrations. The Scottish Government is the lead administration within the Council on demography.

The British Government was represented by the Secretary of State for Wales, the Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy MP, and the Irish Government was represented by the Minister of State, Mr Tom Kitt TD. The Welsh Assembly Government was represented the First Minister, the Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan AM; the Northern Ireland Executive by the Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey and Mr Gerry Kelly, Junior Minister for Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister; Guernsey was represented by the Deputy Minister, Commerce & Employment Department, Ms Carla McNulty Bauer; the Isle of Man by the Minister for the Department of Trade and Industry, D.C. Cretney, MHK and Jersey by the Minister for Economic Development, Senator Philip Frances Cyril Ozouf.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

The meeting considered a series of four papers consisting of an update paper outlining current progress of the demography workstream, a paper comparing demographic trends across the administrations participating in the British-Irish Council, a paper comparing migration trends and policies across the participating administrations and a paper outlining possible future projects to be included in the workstream.

Demography Workstream Progress

The Scottish Government presented a paper providing an update of the progress made by the demography workstream, summarising the five meetings held so far, covering current policies and research in the different administrations and finally, migration reform in the UK.

The Ministers approved the progress to date made by the Demography work sector. This included sharing information on current policies and research in the different administrations and migration reform in the UK.

Comparative Demographic Trends

The Scottish Government presented a paper that compared different demographic trends and measures across the participating administrations. Specifically, the paper covered recent population growth trends, population projections over the next 25 years, the current and projected age structures of the populations, life expectancies, fertility rates and migration trends.

Ministers acknowledged recent population growth trends and population projections over the next 25 years, along with current and projected age structures of the populations, life expectancies, fertility rates and migration trends.

Ministers also discussed the policy implications of the different demographic trends and measures and agreed that the BIC Demography sectoral group should develop future work plans around migration issues.

Comparative Migration Trends

The Scottish Government presented a paper on the different trends in migration experienced by administrations, their current policies towards migration and any planned changes to existing migration policies.

Ministers discussed the successes and lessons learned from the different policies in encouraging or constraining migration. One of the key points highlighted was the need for integration of migrant communities.

Demography Workstream Future Work Plan

The Scottish Government presented the future work plans of the demography group – plans included investigating healthy independent ageing and its implications for the provision of care for the elderly, examining the effectiveness of policy interventions on demographic trends, investigating fertility trends and their implications, understanding the impacts of migration and the implications of wider student flows amongst the BIC administrations.

The Ministers also recognised the need for more reliable information to cover current trends as well as future trends, and expressed a common aim of flexible migration policy to match job shortages. They proposed that work be progressed on the impact of opening of EU labour markets on flows of migrants to the BIC Member Administrations.

The Ministers supported the plans laid out in the paper in principle and proposed the following work plans: understanding migration and its impact; healthy independent ageing; investigating policy interventions, fertility, and student flows.

The Ministers suggested comparisons with other countries could be investigated.

BRITISH IRISH COUNCIL (DEMOGRAPHY SECTORAL GROUP)

List of Delegates

Monday 31st March 2008

British Government	
Minister of State and Minister for the W. Midlands	Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne, MP
Irish Government	
Minister of State	Mr Tom Kitt, TD
Director, Census of Population	Mr Aidan Punch
Private Secretary to Minister Kitt	Mr Garry McDonagh
Northern Ireland Executive	
Minister for Employment & Learning	Sir Reg Empey
Special Advisor	Dr Esmond Birnie
Minister's Private Secretary	Mr Mark McConville
Head of Migrant Workers Branch	Mr Jim Walker
Head of Research and Evaluation Branch	Mr Dave Rogers
Welsh Assembly Government	
First Minister	Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan, AM
Chief Economist	Mr Jonathan Price
Statistician – Population, Census, Heritage & Equalities	Ms Luned Jones
Scottish Government	
Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing	Ms Nicola Sturgeon, MSP
Registrar General for Scotland	Mr Duncan MacNiven
Head of Demography	Mrs Kirsty MacLachlan
Head of Population and Migration Statistics	Ms Cecilia MacIntyre
Government of the Isle of Man	
Minister for the Department of Trade and Industry	Hon. D.C. Cretney, MHK
Economic Advisor	Mr Steve Carse
Jersey	
Chief Minister	Sen. Frank Harrison Walker
Director, Population Office	Mr Paul Bradbury
Guernsey	
Deputy Minister, Commerce & Employment Department	Deputy Carla McNulty Bauer
Head of Policy and Research, Policy Council	Mr Paul Veron

BIC Secretariat
March 2008