



**SIXTH MEETING OF
THE BRITISH- IRISH COUNCIL
(ENVIRONMENT SECTORAL GROUP)**

The British-Irish Council Environment Sectoral Group held its sixth Ministerial meeting in Dublin today. The meeting was part of an ongoing series of meetings within the British-Irish Council since the first Summit of 17 December 1999, which identified the environment as one of the issues for discussion.

The British-Irish Council was established under the Strand Three Provisions of the Agreement reached in Belfast on Good Friday 1998 as a forum for its members to exchange information, discuss, consult, and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Administrations.

The British Government was represented by Elliot Morley MP, Minister for the Environment and Agri-Environment, who chaired the meeting. The Irish Government was represented by Dick Roche T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, who also hosted the meeting. The Isle of Man was represented by John Rimington MHK, Minister of Local Government and the Environment. Scotland was represented by Ross Finnie MSP, Minister for Environment and Rural Development. Jersey by Senator Philip Ozouf and the States of Guernsey by Environment Department Minister Bernard Flouquet.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

The meeting received an information note from Ireland on a Bi-lateral Agreement on Early Notification of a nuclear accident or incident signed by the UK and Ireland in December 2004 and also on the Package of improved Co-operation Measures on Nuclear Issues announced at that time. After a brief outline of developments it was agreed by the Group that these measures showed positive progress in improving co-operation between Ireland and the UK on issues relating to nuclear energy. The meeting also received an updated joint Discussion Paper on Sellafield and Radioactive Waste submitted by Ireland and the Isle of Man. Although consideration of this paper was deferred, the meeting agreed that the issue of Sellafield and Radioactive Waste was an area of concern to a number of Members, and it should remain on the agenda for future meetings.

The Welsh Assembly Government gave a presentation on the work of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Working Group. This first report from the Working Group updated Ministers on the progress of developing Integrated Coastal Zone Management national strategies. The presentation and accompanying update paper covered recent developments in the field and in particular the EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The Working Group identified a number of key issues as

potential areas for common focus when developing national strategies such as the integration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management into policies and programmes; the need for improved public awareness and involvement; and the development of common indicators to assess progress. Ministers agreed that co-operation in these areas would be particularly useful. It was agreed that the Working Group should continue its joint work and produce a further progress report for the 7th British-Irish Council Environment Sectoral meeting.

The meeting received a paper on the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas, known as ASCOBANS, tabled by the UK. The Group believe that this agreement is a strong and effective means of addressing cross-boundary issues relating to small cetaceans and found the information exchange on this issue very interesting and useful. This was especially so as the agreement was recently extended to cover waters adjacent to Ireland and the Isle of Man and now covers the entire British-Irish Council region.

The meeting received an update from the Scottish Executive on the main activities being undertaken in each of the Member Administrations on waste issues. Ireland gave a brief presentation on their recently introduced 'pay by use' waste disposal scheme. This was followed by a UK update on their proposed new Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme and Demonstrator Programmes. The Group agreed the discussion had been very informative and that the 'virtual' network of contacts developed through the work of the Waste Management Group should continue to be used to exchange information in this important area.

The meeting received a paper on 'Climate change impacts and adaptation: progress in the British-Irish Council region' as produced by the UK. The Group acknowledged that the British-Irish Council Environment Sector climate change scenarios are increasingly being used in new studies to help understand the impacts of climate change in the British-Irish Council regions and in considering possible options. Ministers agreed that the current informal liaison between Administrations on climate change should continue and that any future noteworthy areas of mutual interest would be brought to the attention of the British-Irish Council Environment Group for discussion.

The Group looked forward to the fact that the 8th Ministerial meeting of the Environment Sector will take place in Northern Ireland.

It was agreed that among the main items for discussion at the next meeting of the Group would be Sellafield and Radioactive Waste; Integrated Coastal Zone Management; and preparations for a potential British-Irish Council Summit on the Environment.

British-Irish Council
7 April 2005

BRITISH IRISH COUNCIL (ENVIRONMENT SECTORAL GROUP)

List of Delegates

Thursday 7 April 2005

United Kingdom

Elliot Morley MP, Minister of State for the Environment and Agri-Environment

Neil Thornton, Director of Environment Quality and Waste , Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Judena Goldring, Director, Sustainable Development Division, Department of the Environment

Ireland

Dick Roche T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

Tom O Mahony, Assistant Secretary, Environment Division, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

Joe Mooney, Assistant Principal Officer, Nuclear Safety Section, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

Wales

Dr June Milligan, Head of Environment: Protection and Quality, Welsh Assembly Government

Gerry Quarrell, Environment: Conservation and Management, Welsh Assembly Government

Scotland

Ross Finnie MSP, Minister for the Environment and Rural Development

Andrew MacKie, Environment International Team, Scottish Executive

Isle of Man

John Rimington MHK, Minister of Local Government and Environment

Martin Hall, Director, Environment, Safety and Health

Jersey

Senator Philip Ozouf, President Environment and Public Services Committee

Chris Newton, Director of Environment

Guernsey

Deputy Bernard Flouquet, Minister Environment Department

Steve Smith, Chief Officer, Environment Department