



**Ministerial Meeting of the Misuse of Drugs Sectoral Group
8 November 2004
Communiqué**

Minister Noel Ahern TD, Minister of State for the National Drugs Strategy in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, chaired a Ministerial Meeting of the British-Irish Council on the Misuse of Drugs in Edinburgh today. The meeting was hosted by Mr Hugh Henry MSP, Deputy Minister for Justice, in St Andrew's House, Edinburgh. Minister Ahern welcomed delegates and thanked Minister Henry for hosting the event. The meeting reviewed progress to date on the Group's work programme and agreed future activities. All Members reiterated their firm commitment to combating the misuse of drugs and to continuing their fruitful co-operation on this important issue of common concern.

The British-Irish Council was established under the Strand Three Provisions of the Good Friday Agreement 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 relevant member administrations. Ireland is the lead administration within the Council on the issue of misuse of drugs.

The Irish Government was represented by Minister of State Noel Ahern TD, who chaired the meeting. The British Government was represented by Ms. Angela Smith MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland. Mr Hugh Henry MSP, Deputy Minister for Justice, represented the Scottish Executive and hosted the meeting. The Welsh Assembly Government was represented by Mr. Huw Lewis AM, Deputy Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration. The Government of the Isle of Man was represented by Mr. Steve Rodan MHK, Minister for Health and Social Security. Guernsey was represented by Deputy Mike Torode,

Minister, Home Department and Jersey was represented by Deputy Celia Scott Warren, Vice-President of the Health and Social Services Committee.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

Today's meeting was the third time that Ministers with responsibility in this area have met to discuss progress since the British-Irish Council Summit held in Dublin on 30 November 2001. The Dublin Summit, which focussed on the issue of the misuse of drugs, was hosted by the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD.

In February 2003, BIC Ministers met in Dublin and agreed a programme of work. This included drug awareness programmes, emerging trends in drug misuse and treatment and the role of private business in tackling the misuse of drugs.

The meeting in Edinburgh today allowed all BIC Members to examine progress to date on the agreed work programme. Ministers were also afforded the opportunity to report on a number of relevant seminars and conferences which had taken place in their jurisdictions. These included a seminar on drug awareness campaigns hosted by the Irish Government in Dublin in June 2003, a two day conference on "Emerging Trends in Drug Misuse and Treatment" in Guernsey in September 2003 and a UK Conference on "Business support for anti-drug strategies" in Liverpool in December 2003.

Today's meeting set out a future work plan. It was agreed that Guernsey will lead discussions in the Group on interventions with young people, including formal and informal education projects. Scotland will take the lead on children of drug misusing parents, while Wales has been progressing work on undertaking confidential enquiries into drugs related deaths and has offered to lead on discussions in this area. These Members will arrange a number of meetings in the coming year to progress work on these specific issues.

Members also decided on a number of general measures to strengthen and consolidate co-operation and exchange of information within the BIC sectoral group. These include holding regular Ministerial and senior official meetings which will provide each Administration with an opportunity to report on any new projects/legislation/research in the field of drug misuse. These meetings, which will be

chaired by the Irish Government as lead administration, will provide a forum in which Members can update each other about developments in each Administration and agree on further co-operation and common action as appropriate. It will also enable BIC Members to maintain the close contact already established and allow for the continued exchange of information on a formal basis. Members also agreed to the continued circulation of relevant reports/research and to the increased use of the BIC website in order to promote the work of the BIC in this sectoral area.

It was agreed that Ministers would meet again in mid-2005 to review progress.

British-Irish Council (Misuse of Drugs Sectoral Group)

8 November 2004

List of Delegates

Irish Government

Minister of State with responsibility for the
National Drugs Strategy
Principal Officer,
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Assistant Principal,
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Administrative Officer,
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,

Mr. Noel Ahern TD

Ms Kathleen Stack

Mr. John Kelly

Ms. Sinéad Copeland

British Government

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for Health,
Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Regional Drug and Alcohol Strategy Co-ordinator
OFMDFM Northern Ireland
Director, Drugs Strategy Directorate, Home Office
Drugs Legislation and Enforcement Unit, Home Office

Ms. Angela Smith MP
Mr. Rob Phipps
Mr. Stewart Johnston
Mr. Vic Hogg
Mr Stephen Moore

Scottish Executive

Deputy Minister for Justice
Substance Misuse Division, Scotland

Mr. Hugh Henry, MSP
Mr. Drew Peden

The National Assembly for Wales

Deputy Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration
Acting Director of Community Safety Unit

Mr. Huw Lewis AM
Ms. Joanna Jordan

Guernsey

Minister, Home Department
Chief Officer, Home Department and
Chair of the Guernsey Drug Strategy Group
Guernsey Drug Strategy Co-ordinator

Deputy Mike Torode

Mr. Brian Richings
Ms. Maria Eggleston

Jersey

Vice-President, Health and Social Services Committee
Director of Nursing and Operations
Director, Alcohol and Drugs Services

Deputy Celia Scott Warren
Ms. Lynne Swiatczak
Mr. Michael Gafoor

Government of the Isle of Man

Minister for Health and Social Security
Drug and Alcohol Co-ordinator

Mr. Steve Rodan MHK
Ms. Margaret O'Reilly