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NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SECTORAL FORMAT

CUSTOM HOUSE, DUBLIN

5 MARCH 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The tenth meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in Environment sectoral format was held in Dublin on Friday, 5 March 2010.
2. The meeting was attended by John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of the Environment and Margaret Ritchie MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister Gormley chaired the meeting.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

3. Ministers had a meaningful discussion on the targets for the transposition of the Waste Framework Directive, which is due to be transposed into national law by year end, and on waste policy developments in each jurisdiction. The Directive requires a significant increase in re-use and recycling rates for a wide range of waste streams, most notably household waste, and construction and demolition waste. Ministers noted the challenges posed for both administrations in the transposition of the Directive.

4. Ministers welcomed a presentation by the Chairperson of the North South Market Development Group and proposals for a joint work programme to be implemented in the short to medium term. This will help to create synergies between the market development programmes in both jurisdictions and exploit economies of scale in the market for recycled materials. Ministers noted that the Group are initially focusing on the markets for bulky waste such as furniture and electrical goods, quality protocols for dealing with various types of waste and case studies on recycling best practice.

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS OF WASTE

5. The Council received a report on progress on the repatriation of illegally dumped cross-border waste. Ministers noted the steps taken to date to ensure the removal of waste from the first two sites at Slattinagh, Co Fermanagh and near Trillick, Co Tyrone in line with the Framework Agreement. They also noted that work on the site is expected to start by end September or early October 2010.
6. Ministers welcomed the continuing joint concerted enforcement actions to target shipments of waste and noted that future action is planned.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING AND RESEARCH

7. The Council received a progress report on work being taken forward by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) on developing a common set of environmental indicators and on research. A paper on environmental research outlining future joint action focussing on agreed key thematic areas and strategic cooperation will be presented to Ministers at their next meeting.
8. Ministers also noted that the EPA and NIEA are working together to facilitate contacts and formal linkages between environmental researchers in each jurisdiction to encourage access to EU funding with particular focus on the Interreg and Seventh Framework (FP7) programmes. This work is being taken forward in association with Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland who support FP7 participation in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

9. The Council noted that the River Basin Management Plans in Northern Ireland were published in December 2009 and that in Ireland the Plans are currently being adopted by Local Authorities.

10. Ministers welcomed a presentation by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the River Basin Management Plans, the programme of measures for their co-ordinated implementation including the wider environmental issues that will need to be addressed.

NEXT MEETING

11. The Council agreed to meet again in Environment sectoral format in October 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
5 March 2010**