

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ENV 3 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

31 OCTOBER 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The sixteenth North South Ministerial Council Environment meeting was held in NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 31 October 2012. The meeting was attended by Phil Hogan T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alex Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment, and OFMDFM Junior Minister, Jonathan Bell. Minister Hogan chaired the meeting.

EU MATTERS

2. Ministers discussed the environment sector priorities for Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in 2013 and looked forward to the informal meeting of the Council of EU Environment Ministers in Dublin on the 22/23 April 2013.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

3. Ministers noted the publication by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government of a new waste management policy for Ireland: *A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland*.

4. The Council welcomed the presentation by rx3 and WRAP on the All Island Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice Management Feasibility Study which is due for publication in November 2012.
5. Ministers noted that a final report on an all-island tyre survey, led by Department of the Environment (DOE), is expected to be completed by the end of November 2012.
6. Ministers noted that consultants appointed by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) to conduct a Review of the Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) Model in Ireland, will examine the structural and environmental outcomes of the current system for dealing with used tyres and also examine areas for enhanced co-operation with DOE.
7. Ministers welcomed the new chairperson, David Surplus of the North South Market Development Steering Group (NSMDSG) and noted that a further meeting of the group will be arranged to consider strategic priorities as identified in the work programme. The new Chairperson will be invited to provide Ministers with an update on progress at a future NSMC Environment meeting.

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS OF WASTE

8. The Council noted that two sites in Clogher County Tyrone, Seskinore and Eskra, have been agreed for the 2012-2013 repatriation programme. Work has been completed at the Seskinore site and preliminary works have commenced at Eskra. Dublin City Council has established a Framework Agreement for the Disposal of Repatriated Waste, and has commenced the preparation of tender documents in advance of a public procurement process for the haulage of excavated waste to authorised disposal facilities from 2013 onwards.
9. The Council noted that joint enforcement action to deal with illegal operators is a priority for both Environment Ministers and Departments continue to target resources on this.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

10. Ministers noted that officials have researched and considered further opportunities for mutually beneficial joint working to facilitate effective and efficient policy approaches in the context of EU Directives on Air Quality, Industrial Emissions and Noise.
11. Ministers agreed that officials should commission further research to examine the issue of airborne pollution from residential smoky coal combustion and provide an update to Ministers at the next NSMC to be held in 2013. The Council welcomed further engagement by officials to discuss the potential for mutually beneficial approaches when considering the 3rd round noise maps due in 2017.

12. The Council noted that nothing of immediate cross border interest was identified within the Industrial Emissions Directive but this will be kept under review.

WATER QUALITY

13. Ministers noted that discussions are underway, within the North South Working Group on Water Quality (NSWGWQ), on coordinating the timetable for preparations of the second-cycle river basin management plans under the EU Water Framework Directive.
14. The Council welcomed the workshop involving representatives of both jurisdictions on 17 October 2012 under the auspices of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, to explore practical measures that could be pursued as part of joint implementation of the River Basin Management Plans.
15. Ministers welcomed the continued co-ordination in relation to the Blue Flag and Green Coast Schemes and in particular the role played by both jurisdictions to standardise and expand the running of the Green Coast scheme.
16. Ministers noted that the NSWGWQ will receive regular updates, as appropriate, on EU policy developments in the area of water quality which may arise during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in the first six months of 2013.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING AND RESEARCH

17. Ministers noted the successful launch and publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) state of the environment report "Ireland's Environment 2012" on 25 June 2012.
18. The Council noted the successful international symposium on domestic waste water treatment systems organised by the EPA and Trinity College, Dublin, which involved presentations from a number of leading researchers and included regulators from both EPA and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).
19. Ministers noted that following preliminary research into the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in May 2012, a more comprehensive research study is planned before the end of 2012. An initial meeting of the research steering group was held on 5 July 2012.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20. The Council agreed to hold the next Environment meeting in Dublin in April 2013.

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31 October 2012**