

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TRAN 1 (13) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRANSPORT MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

17 APRIL 2013

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. A North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 17 April 2013. The meeting was attended by Minister Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment, Minister Kennedy, MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Minister Varadkar, TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Minister Attwood chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers previously met at an EU Conference held in Dublin Castle on 28 March 2013 to facilitate approval of an amendment to the rules of the North/South Pension Scheme. There were no other items discussed at the March meeting.

OPENING REMARKS

3. Ministers discussed the importance of the Narrow Water Bridge and noted the timeline for drawdown of European Funding. Ministers further noted that the project had obtained planning permission and Marine Licence and looked forward to its assessment process being completed as soon as practicable.

4. Ministers discussed the negative impact of illegal fuel on the transport industry, revenue to the exchequers and the environment.

MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS

A5

5. The Council noted that a Court Order had been sought by the Alternative A5 Alliance to quash the Minister for Regional Development's decision to proceed with the A5 scheme. On 12 March 2013 the High Court rejected the overwhelming majority of the applicants' grounds of challenge; however one of the applicants' grounds relating to the Habitats Directive was upheld. At a further meeting on 8 April 2013 the Judge confirmed he would quash the Orders relating to the A5 scheme. The Minister for Regional Development has decided not to appeal.

A8

6. Ministers noted that the construction work on the A8 project is progressing well and is expected to be completed by early 2015.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

7. Ministers noted that the steering and working groups are continuing to take forward the work on the mutual recognition of penalty points and a further update will be provided to the next NSMC Transport meeting.
8. They also noted that a public consultation on the proposals was launched in Northern Ireland on 12 March 2013 and closes on 14 May 2013.
9. The Council noted the commitment from both sides to have the necessary primary and secondary legislation in place by 31 December 2014.

ROAD USER SAFETY

10. The Council welcomed the continued sharing of knowledge and experience between officials from both jurisdictions in the delivery of road safety strategies and measures to further reduce road casualties.
11. Ministers had attended the EU Presidency Road Transport Safety Conference on Serious Injuries in Dublin Castle on 28 March 2013 and noted that Ireland's fourth Government Road Safety Strategy was launched at that event.
12. Ministers welcomed progress on drafting Northern Ireland's Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill that will include provisions to tackle drink driving; reform the learner and restricted driver regime with the introduction of graduated driver licensing; and make mandatory the wearing of helmets when riding a quad bike on public roads. The Bill will be introduced to the Assembly shortly.

13. They also welcomed progress on Ireland's Road Traffic Bill 2013 that will include provisions further to reform the driver licensing regime in Ireland, adjust the penalty points regime and make a number of amendments to legislation regarding Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Testing.
14. The Council welcomed the new road safety campaigns including:
 - A new 60 second TV campaign launched by RSA in March 2013 to educate drivers on sharing the roads safely with cyclists;
 - 'Vision Zero' to be launched by DOE on 24 April 2013;
 - Seatbelt wearing campaign planned for launch by DOE in autumn 2013.

VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT

15. Ministers welcomed the continuing proactive co-operation to target a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries including:
 - an increasingly targeted approach towards enforcement;
 - continuing liaison on cross border enforcement operations in both jurisdictions.
16. Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Ireland and the UK on mutual recognition of vehicle type approval .
17. The Council also noted the continued excellent co-operation on enforcement of EU tachograph and drivers hours rules and proposed training exchange for enforcement officers that will take place in 2013.

EU MATTERS

18. Ministers welcomed the ongoing positive cooperation between relevant departments on EU related Transport Issues. They also noted the current position and opportunities for further cooperative engagement on key EU Dossiers of mutual interest including:
 - Transport European Transport Network Regulation (TEN-T);
 - Connecting Europe Facility Regulation (CEF);
 - 4th Rail Package;
 - Better Airports Package;
 - Road Worthiness Package; and
 - Clean Power for Transport.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

19. The Council noted the continued co-operation between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Regional Development in promoting walking, cycling and a shift in behaviour to more sustainable forms of transport throughout the island.

20. They also heard about the planning underway for the Walk to School Week 2013 cross-border schools' challenge event scheduled for week commencing 8th May 2013 and the partnership arrangements being put in place for all-island Bike Week 2013 including the cross border Workplace Cycle Challenge.
21. Ministers also noted the on-going co-operation between ecar in Northern Ireland and ESB ecars on the installation of a common electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Transport meeting on 28 November 2013.

Joint Secretariat
17 April 2013

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org