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North/South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaisidh/Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ENV 1 (09) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SECTORAL FORMAT

FARMLEIGH HOUSE, DUBLIN

20 MARCH 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighth meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in Environment sectoral format was held in Farmleigh House, Dublin on Friday 20 March 2009.
2. The Irish Government was represented by John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister of the Environment and Margaret Ritchie MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister Gormley chaired the meeting.

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS OF WASTE

3. The Council received a report on the progress made to date and the ongoing discussions between the Department of the Environment (DOE) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) and the relevant competent authorities aimed at effecting the repatriation of illegally dumped cross-border waste.
4. Ministers noted that Dublin City Council (DCC) became the sole Irish Competent Authority designated for Transfrontier Shipments (TFS) of

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Waste in July 2007 and are committed to letting a contract for the removal of waste at Slattinagh and Trillick and its disposal in a suitable facility in Ireland. They also noted that a draft framework agreement has been developed which, it is hoped, will be agreed in the near future covering key issues surrounding the scope of the work, the methodology to be employed and the apportionment of costs.

5. The Council welcomed the joint concerted enforcement actions that are continuing to target shipments of waste and noted that future action is planned.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

6. The Council received a presentation from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on current work and the potential for co-operation on environmental research and on state of environment reporting aimed at providing positive outcomes both for the environment and the economy.
7. Ministers noted that the EPA and the NIEA will bring forward proposals at the next NSMC meeting in Environment sectoral format for continued co-operation in this area. These will involve the development and publication of a common set of environmental indicators, enhanced co-operation and further work in relation to environmental research and on environmental technologies as well as co-operation to ensure that, building on the experience with the jointly developed North South Website of Environmental Research (aNSwer), information on environmental projects across the island of Ireland is made available.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

8. The Council welcomed the continuing progress on implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive for shared waters and in particular the achievement of another important deadline with the publication of the Draft River Basin Management Plans for the three cross-border international river basin districts – the North Western, the Neagh Bann and the Shannon.
9. The Council noted that publication of the Draft Plans for a 6 month public consultation period is a significant step towards the development and publication by December 2009 of the final River Basin Management Plans, which will help to protect and improve the water environment in the cross-border international river basin districts and throughout both jurisdictions. Ministers welcomed the opportunity for the public in both jurisdictions to contribute to the river basin planning process through responding to the consultation on the Draft River Basin Management Plans.

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10. The Council also noted the carrying out of a jointly funded Strategic Environment Assessment in parallel with the management plans to evaluate the environmental consequences of the plans and programme of measures and to consult with the public in this regard.

DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETS FOR RECYCLED MATERIALS

11. The Council noted the importance of the development of markets for recycled materials and in particular the strategic documents the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 'Towards Resource Management 2006 – 2020' and in Ireland the 'Market Development for Waste Resources 2007-2011'.
12. Ministers welcomed the reconstituted North South Market Development Steering Group (NSMDSG), which includes representatives from the business and the non-governmental sectors, established to drive forward a market development programme for recyclable material. The Terms of Reference of the Group, which will be reviewed on an annual basis, presently includes the following priority waste streams: organics, food waste, domestic waste plastics, construction and demolition waste.
13. The Council also noted the NSMDSG's intention to consider developments in the proposal for an all-island paper mill and Ministers agreed to consider this issue at the next NSMC meeting in Environment sectoral format.

NEXT MEETING

14. The Council agreed to meet again in this sector in September/October 2009.

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