

Minutes – CPG on France, 13th March 2014

Attendees : Christian Allard MSP, Richard Baker MSP, Alex Johnstone MSP, Cameron Buchanan MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, Vincent Guérin, Christine Jones, John Rieley, Consul General Pierre-Alain Coffinier, Adèle Mortier, Niall MacDonald.

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting was opened by Christian Allard MSP, Convener of the CPG on France, who welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Presentation by Vincent Guérin, Director of the Institut français d'Ecosse (IFE) and co-founder of the Budding Chefs programme

A presentation to show the Auld Alliance is still alive and **the IFE is not a French club operating for the French community but a place which is open to everyone in Edinburgh and in Scotland.**

- Delegation from Aquitaine region

Vincent Guérin reported the meeting between Angela Constance, Cabinet Secretary for Training, Youth and Women's Employment and a delegation of 7 people from France (region Aquitaine) on a trainee programme, especially regarding the food and drink industry. The main goal of the project is to send youngsters abroad (trainees but also unemployed people, students, etc...) to experience something different.

- Festival

The IFE is back as a venue for 3 years, during the Fringe festival.

The Fringe is a fantastic platform to showcase French art and French talents on an international scale and to meet an international audience.

Being able to host big events and bring talents (artists, production) to a part of the world to another part of the world is a wonderful opportunity.

The IFE hosts 8 shows a day during the Fringe, showing French performers and performances in English. It is a great opportunity for French talents. Last year was an amazing year, shows performed at the IFE got shortlisted for a couple of awards.

There is no cost for the IFE.

- Budding chefs

The Budding Chefs project is the main project of the IFE to foster the link between France and Scotland regarding the food and drink industry.

There is a real interest in Scotland and in France for food and drink. That's why Vincent Guérin decided to create a small project in 2010, with only £3,000 of funding. He set up with Chef Fred Berkmler the Budding Chefs programme which offers 16 young French chefs and waiters the opportunity to visit Scotland, experience the Scottish larder, meet Scottish producers and get the experience of running the kitchen of a pop-up restaurant.

In 2014, 4 years later, the budget was £25,000. The project was funded by sponsors giving money, products, time and talents.

A special award has been created by The List magazine just for the Budding chefs programme and there is also a cultural aspect as the Pop-up Restaurant has received the label "Le repas gastronomique des Français (the gastronomic meal of the French) / UNESCO World Intangible Heritage". Defined as "a festive meal bringing people together for an occasion to enjoy the art of good eating and drinking" the gastronomic meal of the French was added to UNESCO World Intangible Heritage list in 2010.

The IFE has also set up an apprenticeship programme 2 years ago and welcomed 15 youngsters (sellers, bartenders, etc.) last year and 80 youngsters this year. This programme is funded by European funding on behalf of French stakeholders and the IFE hopes it will benefit to Scottish food and drink industry. Last week, one of the trainees became an employee of the Scottish Malt Whisky Society. That shows the success of the programme.

So French Institute operates on a daily basis: classes, wine tastings, conferences, screenings, it welcomes 500 students a week on average. But it also operates on other projects such as those Vincent Guérin has just reported.

Now, the IFE would like to send Scottish young talents in France too! The reciprocity is the base of an exchange programme.

Christian Allard MSP commented it would be good idea to explore IFE projects and activities and to see how the CPG can work on this, work on reciprocity between the two countries, to help each other.

Cameron Buchanan MSP mentioned his son works for Catering in Scotland magazine and can maybe help with contacts.

Christine Jones is impressed how the funding has increased in just a few years.

Maureen Watt MSP insisted about the notion of reciprocity, how great and interesting it would be if 80 young people could go from Scotland to France as French young people came across France to Scotland, with the help of funding from the European Union?

Vincent Guérin explained he really wants to work on reciprocity as a main objective now. He works with colleges in Scotland, etc.

How cross party could help: create a gastronomy event, Scottish events in France? There is indeed a lot to show on gastronomy and food and drink.

Vincent reported there is already an existing link between Tours and Queen Margaret University regarding an event. Tours has been recently nominated city for gastronomy (like Dijon, Lyon and Rungis) and Tours will be specialised in international events. The city would be the one to work with.

According to Christian Allard, Convenor, this is something to follow up for the CPG.

Maureen Watt MSP mentioned the Taste of Grampian Festival, wondering if something could also be organised with them. It is a big food and drink festival held in the North East of Scotland every year in June. There may be a possibility to link this with the IFE food and drinks programme or the CPG on France.

The members of the CPG declared there are happy to concentrate on the Food and Drink subject and projects. Food and drink is a challenge; there are obvious links between the Scottish and French industry and there is a lot to do.

Presentation by Pierre-Alain Coffinier.

The Consul general of France presented the three major agreements signed between France & Scotland in 2013:

Education:

- October 3, 2013:

Renewal of an agreement (2004) signed by the First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond and the Ambassador of France to the United Kingdom Bernard Emié. This agreement focuses on exchange of experience with two levels of cooperation:

- . National: exchange of experts/expertise in teaching mathematics and science
- . Local: cooperation between French “rectorats”, which are local education authorities, (Grenoble, Amiens, etc.) and Scottish Local Authorities (exchange of teachers and administrators).

Marine energies:

November 19, 2012: Meeting between the Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy with the Scottish First Minister in Paris;

A French delegation visited Scotland (especially EMEC in the Orkney Islands) in February 2013 to explore the possibility of an agreement.

- 29 to 30 October 2013:

A Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in marine energy is signed between the Basse-Normandie region and Scottish Development International: Scotland is very advanced research and experimentation, it has extremely favorable natural conditions (25 % of EU resources for marine energy) but France has the big companies that invest in tools and material (Alstom, DCNS, Total, GDF Suez) and has plans to create the first large turbines offshore farms. (Raz Blanchard and Fromveur)

The diplomatic councilor of the Minister for the Environment and Energy, representing Mr. Martin at the conference of the European Marine Energy Organisation in Edinburgh, spoke with the First Minister Alex Salmond and the Scottish Minister for Energy and Sustainable Development Fergus Ewing and declared France wishes to cooperate with its Scottish counterpart on research in marine energy, to canvass all the European institutions to create an enabling environment for marine energy in the EU and to promote cooperation between French regions and Scotland in the matter.

Culture:

- 16 December 2013: A Declaration of Intent on culture is signed in Paris between the Scottish Minister for Culture and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop et the French Minister for Culture Aurélie Filipetti: the Declaration emphasizes the exchange of expertise and collaboration between artists, professionals and institutions. The text mentions the possibility of choosing a year when the French and Scottish cultures will

be highlighted in the partner country. It should encourage the invitation of artists, writers and filmmakers in major festivals in France and in Scotland, and first at the Edinburgh Festival. The French Institute will benefit from this institutional framework to strengthen its influence regarding the French language and culture in Scotland.

4 and 5 April 2014: the Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop went to the European Cultural Forum in Paris (Theatre de Chaillot) organised by the French Minister for Culture and Communication, Mrs A. Filippetti. She briefly met with the President Hollande.

There are also partnerships between French and Scottish festivals: not part of the culture agreement France signed because there were existing before.

- Between St Malo book festival Etonnants voyageurs and Edinburgh Book Festival. Design programme around specific international guests. 3 years ago. Ian Rankin was in St Malo. Specific programme this year for the WWI 100th anniversary and commemorations. 2 principal designers of the programme are Nick Barley from the EIBF in Edinburgh and Michel Lebris from St Malo.
- In Avignon. International festival (In) and a fringe (off) as in Edinburgh. A month earlier (July). Scottish delegation going to Avignon 2 years ago for the Fringe. This year again. The idea is to share good practices, to share programmes. Some companies are doing a show in Avignon in French and in Edinburgh in English in August. no formal agreement/professional meetings leading to sharing of programmes and good practices so it's very interesting.

The Consul general of France announced he will stay for an extra year until September 2015 and Vincent Guérin will stay longer as well.

3. Exploration of possible funding partners

Funding would be to help for the secretariat and for food and drinks. No funding partners for now. Members will think about it.

4. Any other business

What to do for other meetings:

- 1. Cameron Buchanan MSP suggested inviting someone to speak about French politics. A journalist would be a good idea, Adele and Stuart will look for a speaker.**
- 2. How to hold a Burns supper in Paris as French Senator Joelle Garriaud Maylam suggested it last January when she came to attend the Burns supper at the Scottish Parliament and to write a report on the referendum debate.**
- 3. Christine Jones suggested letting French business people know about the CPG. A picture is taken to advertise the CPG.**

5. Networking