

Minutes

Cross Party Group on Poland

22nd January 2015, Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 4

Apologies & Present

Present: Jean Urquhart MSP, Anne McTaggart MSP, Karin Friedrich, John Bates, Simon Daley, Tom Galbraith, Pat Glacken, Michael Borland, Antony Kozłowski, Robert Merecz, Andrew Roach, George Rubiński, Anna Ruszel, Paulina Trevena, Anna Czekąła, Tomasz Rembisz, Zosia Wierzbowicz-Fraser, Joanna Zawadzka, Dobrawa Jezior.

Apologies: David Worthington, Martin Stepek, Grażyna Fremi, Katarzyna Jajszczok, Richard Simpson, Lucyna Bednarek-Elliort, Kiro Źabińska, Violeta Ilendo, Krystyna Szumelukowa, Simon Thompson, Paweł Bładocha, Karol Gruszczyński, Monika Ciska, Maciej Dokurno, Colm Wilson.

Welcome

Jean welcomed members and thanked everyone for coming. Apologies were made as noted above.

3. Professor Karin Friedrich from the University of Aberdeen presented the Scottish Universities Insight Institute project Linking Northern Communities - a series of roundtable events centred around the theme of East European immigration and integration of local and migrant communities in Scotland.

4. Subcommittees reports (as applicable)

- Education sub group

News of a recent development on 1+2 Languages. Highland Council have appointed a 1+2 Language Development Officer. There is a budget for implementation over the next two years or so.

In Highland it is proposed to introduce a second language from P1 to P3, and a third language from P5 which may be Polish (P5s are 8/9 years old). 2 Primary schools have been proposed, as they have a large intake of Polish children.

Additionally, the Education subcommittee is now supported in the 1+2 Language Development by the Consulate-General in Edinburgh, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland, and the University of Silesia who will prepare the materials for L3 (Primary 5) pupils.

No further news yet from Minister Alastair Allan, Jean to write to Minister Allan in a due course.

Additional information: Between 30 and 40 centres in Scotland have now applied to run GCSE and A level Polish.

- Culture sub group

Michael Borland informed the group about the Annual Dinner Dance organised by the Scottish Polish Cultural Association on 14th February 2015 at the Roxburghe Hotel in Edinburgh.

Antony Kozłowski updated the group about the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Sikorski Club in Glasgow and the events to be held at the Club in the near future.

Joanna updated the group about the plans of the Wojtek memorial Trust, as per email from Simon Thompson. The Trust raised approximately £220,000 in cash/in-kind donations of the £300,000. This includes a generous donation of £20,000 from the Scottish Government. If the remaining amount will be raised over the next few months, the memorial will be build this autumn. Thanks to Lothian Buses, there is now a “Wojtek Bus” travelling around Edinburgh, promoting Wojtek and the Trust

Joanna updated the group about the work of the Fife Migrants Forum and their projects, including language support services and outreach programmes.

Joanna also informed the group about the Community Voices event and Migration Matters event organised by COSLA and emphasised the importance of the CPG’s members participation in this kinds of events.

Anna Czekala presented the plans for a multicultural centre aiming at integration of Inverness migrant communities.

- Business sub group.

Robert Merez shared the information about the Pole Position – Investing in Polish Regions

Conference on 26th February. The event is dedicated to investing and partnering with companies in Poland and will present benefits offered to investors by the Polish national and local governments as well as the new EU Horizon 2020.

5. AOB

Dobrawa informed the group about the event dedicated to General Maczek to be held at the Scottish Parliament on 26th February.

Tomasz Rembisz presented the second edition of the Outstanding Pole contest organised by Pangea Network.

Jean suggested that next meetings to be dedicated to issues of deeper integration, outreach and engagement on the side of the Polish community in Scotland.

Simon Daley updated the group about the actions of Police Scotland in relation to the Polish community. He visited the National Police HQ in Warsaw with Chief Superintendent Grant Manders in November. They met with the head of International Co-operation to discuss the possibility of seconding two officers from Polish National Police assist Police Scotland to better serve the Polish Community and wider community in Scotland. This is still at an early stage of development.

Simon is bringing together officers from across Scotland who have a remit for engaging with the Polish (and Eastern European) communities. Together they will form a network and can share good practice, information and experience among colleagues.

Joanna announced her resignation as the CPG’s secretary and thanked everyone for their work and contribution. Joanna suggested Dobrawa Jezior to take over highlighting her experience and

involvement in the work for the group so far. The nomination was approved and welcomed by the group.

Zosia suggested an open day for children from Polish Saturday schools to be held at the Scottish Parliament.

Date of the next meeting & AGM: 24th March 2015 at 6.00 pm.