



Frank and Open Exchange of views with Commissioner Dimas – Gormley

Mr John Gormley TD Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government today (13 July 07) reported on his discussions with the European Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas.

The Minister was meeting with the Commissioner to discuss a number of environmental issues. In particular he was in Brussels to discuss infringement proceedings, by the Commission against Ireland on the transposition into legislation and implementation of European directives, under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. There was also a discussion on water quality directives.

“I was pleased to meet Commissioner Dimas today and we had a long and frank exchange of views on a number of areas and we covered a lot of ground. I have assured Commissioner Dimas of my intention to solve our difficulties as we move forward. I explained to him my concern and willingness to resolve our problems particularly under the Habitats & Birds Directive. I have asked for a road-map on how we can best avoid and deal with infringement proceedings going forward,” said Minister Gormley.

The Minister & the Commissioner also discussed the additional Reasoned Opinion which has been recently received from the EU Commission in relation to the transposition and implementation of the EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment. Among a range of issues and examples, the Reasoned Opinion queries the exclusion of demolition works from Ireland’s transposition of the Directive. As an example of this, it cites the Ministerial Directions of 12 June, 2007, in relation to the Lismullin national monument. “The issues associated with Ireland’s implementation of the EIA Directive are complex and have been ongoing for a number of years, and Lismullin has recently been cited in the additional opinion. This matter requires full and detailed consideration and we will be responding to the Commission as quickly as possible,” added Minister Gormley.

Minister Gormley took the opportunity to discuss the international climate change agenda with Commissioner Dimas; “we both share the hope that a major step forward will be taken at the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in December. “It is essential, the Minister explained “that we end informal exploratory discussions and commence a round of formal negotiations that will lead to a new treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. Time is getting very tight, in that the new treaty must be finalised in 2009 if we are to avoid a gap at the end of the Kyoto Protocol commitment period in 2012”. He added, “I assured the Commissioner of Ireland’s full support for an ambitious international agenda for the period to 2020 and beyond – an agenda that will put the world on a definite path to a lower and more sustainable carbon existence.”

“My meeting today with Commissioner Dimas was very useful and productive and I look forward to working with him into the future,” concluded Minister Gormley.

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