



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Ireland-Wales Forum meeting: 20 October 2023

Joint communiqué of the meeting of the Ireland-Wales Forum  
on 20 October 2023.

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In line with commitments under the Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-2025, the Welsh Government welcomed a visit to North Wales from the Irish Government represented by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin TD, and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, for the third annual Ireland-Wales Forum.

The Welsh Government was represented by the First Minister of Wales Rt Hon Mark Drakeford, and Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd Lesley Griffiths MS, and Minister for Economy Vaughan Gething MS and Minister for Climate Change Julie James MS.

The Forum reiterated the 2 administrations' joint commitment to bringing Wales and Ireland closer together, deepening our cooperation and strengthening connections for our mutual benefit. It reflected on progress over the past year under the areas of cooperation set out in the Shared Statement and Action Plan. This year, the Forum focussed on renewable energy, skills development and language, in addition to a broader focus on trade and economic cooperation. Delegations completed a programme of visits in North Wales to look at approaches for addressing common challenges and opportunities in these areas.

The First Minister and Tánaiste visited the port of Holyhead where they discussed trade flows and planned port developments. They emphasised the importance of Ireland-Wales trade connectivity and agreed to continue to work closely together on the implementation of future border controls.

They then visited the Morlais Marine Energy Project, which generates tidal stream energy and where they were given a presentation on hydrogen projects and Wales-Ireland opportunities.

The First Minister and Tánaiste also visited Ysgol Morswyn which has an established connection with Gaelscoil Thaobh na Coille in Dún Laoghaire, Co.

Dublin. In addition to meeting pupils, they had the opportunity to learn about late language immersion centres. They also met SaySomethingin who have developed a language learning digital tool focused on speaking skills.

Minister Griffiths and Minister Harris visited M-SParc where they met with businesses and gained insights into apprenticeships and highly skilled work opportunities to facilitate local employment. They also visited Ty Gwyrddfai where they saw how training (including upskilling) facilities for decarbonisation and retro-fitting can be located within rural communities. They discussed the importance of skills programmes to feed into future sector needs.

The 2 ministers then participated in a roundtable and discussed how Ireland and Wales can work together to build skills in the renewable energy sector.

## Future meetings

Overall, the third Ireland Wales Forum reflected on the continued success of collaboration and learning under the Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan. It emphasized the great value that both sides place on ongoing engagement and cooperation. The focus will be to continue to build on that engagement, including in the areas addressed during the 2023 Forum.

It was agreed that the next Ireland-Wales Forum will be in Ireland in late 2024, and that it would look at how to deepen cooperation into the future.

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