

Minutes

Cross Party Group on Poland

AGM and Meeting

24th March 2015, Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 4

Attendees: Jean Urquhart MSP, Anne McTaggart MSP, Hanzala Malik MSP, Raymond Raszkowski-Ross, David Worthington, Donald Blair, Robert L. Hodgart, John Bates, Anna Martowicz, Simon Daley, Tom Galbraith, Pat Glacken, Michael Borland, Antony Kozłowski, Robert Merez, Andrew Roach, George Rubiński, Katie Fraser, Archie Mackay, Anna Ruszel, Justyna Migrotte, Marzena Farana, Joanna Eceiza, Barbara Wesołowska, Agnieszka Karasiewicz, Zosia Wierzbowicz-Fraser, Magda Czarnecka, Joanna Zawadzka, Dobrawa Jezior.

Apologies received from: Elaine Simth MSP, Lucyna Bednarek Elliot, Prof. Karin Friedrich, Agnieszka Uflewski-Watson, Joanna Kieran, Paulina Trevena.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was opened by Jean Urquhart MSP, Convener of the CPG on Poland, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Election of Office-bearers

Nomination for Convener – Anne McTaggart MSP nominated Jean Urquhart MSP

2nd by all. Vote unanimous, Convener: Jean Urquhart MSP

Nominations for Vice Convener – Jean Urquhart MSP nominated Anne McTaggart MSP

2nd by all. Vote unanimous, Vice Convener: Anne McTaggart MSP

CPG Meeting

1. Apologies noted above.

2. Subcommittees reports (as applicable)

- Education sub group

Zosia Wierzbowicz-Fraser presented an annual report of the Education sub-committee (attached in this email). The main points of the report:

- Over the last year the Education sub-committee worked towards addressing the gap in provision for the Polish students through working with the SQA and GTCS.
- The group held a series of meetings and discussions with SQA representatives and GTCS executive members to address the lack of qualifications available for Polish students in the Polish language within the SQA exam system, as well as the fact that many highly-qualified Polish teachers now living in Scotland were unable to gain registration with the GTCS.
- The Education sub-committee also prepared a report analysing the situation of Polish students in Scotland: “Polish Language Learning in Scotland –Key facts and opportunities”, written by Anna Martowicz and Andrew Roach.

- In November 2014 the group met with Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Sciences and Scotland's languages, Qualifications Manager NQ Languages Jim McDonald, GTCS and Education Scotland and SCILT representatives. The group is still awaiting further developments.
- The new 1+2 Language development programme is currently being prepared for implementation in a number of local authorities. In areas where there is a large number of Polish children it is proposed to designate schools and give primary 5 children a series of short courses in Polish. Methodology and delivery is still under discussion.

Jean updated the group that she spoke to Minister Allan before the CPG Meeting and was informed that SQA was still working on a formal reply to the Education sub-committee.

- Business sub group

Robert Merez from the Polish Business Chamber in Scotland shared information about the Pole Position – Investing in Polish Regions - the first conference in Scotland devoted to investing in Poland, which took place on 26 February 2015 in Edinburgh. The Conference was opened by Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, Witold Sobków, the Polish Ambassador to the UK, and Robin Barnett, the British Ambassador to Poland. The afternoon part of the event was opened by Mr Fergus Ewing, the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism. The Conference was a great success with one hundred people attending the event. It showed that there is a significant interest in Poland and in investing in the country.

Polish Business Chamber in Scotland is planning to organise another conference, which will be dedicated to investing in Poland's renewable sector. The event is planned for June 2015.

- Culture sub group

Joanna informed the group that over the last year both the Polish Festival Cultural Association and the Scottish Polish Cultural Association organised many successful cultural events. 2014 also saw reactivation of a Polish Dance Ensemble 'Ojczyzna' which promotes Polish dance in Scotland and beyond.

Joanna also updated the group on upcoming cultural events: Leith Festival (June 2015), J. Karski exhibition, Klinika Lalek (at Fringe Festival).

David Worthington from the University of Highlands and Islands spoke about the schools workshop on Polish-Scottish ties that was planned for 28 March in Inverness with Jenny Robertson, author of a book about Wojtek (*Wojtek Hero Bear*). David also informed the group about a further meeting in Inverness (University of the Highlands Executive Office) on 31 March to discuss a possible conference focusing on stigma and discrimination relating to central European migrants in the Highlands. It will involve numerous research-active scholars at UHI, practitioners and service users in the field of mental health here in the region.

Antony Kozlowski informed the group members about the recent activities of the Sikorski Club in Glasgow: the Internet radio station (Sikorski), presentation of a film on M. Stepek and Gaelic language lessons.

- Support sub group

Magda Czarnecka from Feniks informed the group about their new project 'Look Around – See Me'. The project is funded by the national campaign See Me which aims at ending Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination in Scotland. Feniks recently employed a part-time Communications Officer - Barbara Wesolowska - who is in charge of educational workshops about the knowledge and prevention of mental ill health within the 'See Me' initiative. The Communications Officer also trains Community Champions who will be active amongst the Polish community and trained to identify, support and signpost people in need, towards the relevant institutions.

The potential Community Champions gathered on 5th March 2015. They will next take part in four 3 hour workshops which will cover topics including: mental health discrimination; how to listen and talk to people who need support; how the healthcare system operates in Scotland; suicide prevention.

3. Immigration and tow new campaigns

Jean talked about her campaign Not My Xenophobia - a campaign aiming to challenge the press and media about their way of portraying migrants and to acknowledge the value of migration. Not My Xenophobia names and shames the media organisations and political figures responsible for promoting these attitudes, by drawing attention to xenophobic comments, headlines, articles and TV programmes. The campaign is also interested in positive reports on migration and foreigners.

Joanna presented Bloody Foreigners campaign – launched on 13 April, it's a UK-wide movement aimed at raising awareness of blood donation; promoting a positive image of migrant and ethnic minority groups and demonstrating that they are fully capable of integrating and giving back. Joanna asked the group members willing to support the campaign to take part in a photoshoot at the end of the meeting.

4. General Stanislaw Maczek Trust campaign

Archie Mackay from the General Stanislaw Maczek Trust informed the group about the successful launch of their campaign at the Scottish Parliament in February 2015. The Trust is currently working on their website, more information to follow. It is planned that the memorial displaying General Maczek sitting on a bench should be placed in the Edinburgh Meadows. Clarification: there will be no charity status of the Trust as the campaign to erect a memorial to General Maczek is a single project.

5. AOB

Jean suggested that in the year ahead the group should focus on matters such as fighting the negative image of immigrants, as well as improving and encouraging further integration. Needs of Polish people need to be understood better. Importance of socialization to be emphasised.

Simon Daley: suggested that a database of Polish contacts in case of crisis could be created. Dobrawa to contact the Support sub-committee about it.

Date of the next meeting: 2nd June 2015 5.30 for 6.00 pm.