



Charter of European Rural Communities

Cashel Presentation to Bienvenida, Spain; 31st March – 3rd April 2011

Report



By Dr. Niall Gregory

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Photographs by Niall Gregory



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Representative from Cashel

Dr. Niall Gregory (Communications Officer)

Executive Summary





- 1.1 The President of the Friends of Europe (complimentary organisation of the Charter of European Rural Communities), Mayor of Bienvenida and its Communications Officer requested Niall Gregory to attend Bienvenida's Small Meeting, in Niall Gregory as Communications Officer was requested to give a presentation on Ireland and Cashel's hosting of the Charter's Main Meeting. The presentation occurred on 2nd April.
- 1.2 Five other countries were represented with six delegates from each country. These were; Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. The presentation was delivered during one of Bienvenida's Small Meeting Workshop on Demographic Development.
- 1.3 Niall Gregory met the Mayor of Bienvenida in the Town Council, on 31st March, in which both had an opportunity to discuss Bienvenida's Small Meeting and Cashel's hosting of the Charter Main Meeting.
- 1.4 Niall Gregory, while in attendance on behalf of Ireland and at the invitation of Bienvenida in the capacity of Communications Officer, was not part of the five invited countries to the Small Meeting. His participation was thus peripheral at the conferences, but was able to engage with the delegates at the workshops.
- 1.5 Time had been allocated within the programme to give a presentation on Cashel, Ireland and Cashel's hosting of the Charter. Due to the changes in the multi-annual funding from Brussels, Cashel will be the first town which is subject to the changes in how Main Meetings are structured and enacted. This has its own new set of regulations, to which both the host town and visiting delegates must subscribe. The final part of the presentation detailed these expectations for delegates to Cashel.
- 1.6 Amongst the activities were tours of archaeological and historic sites and cultural centres.



Bienvenida (Spain), 31st March – 3rd April

2.1	<p><i>30th March.</i> Niall Gregory arrived to Bienvenida, the evening before participating Delegates arrived. Arrival to Bienvenida was from collection by car at Fuente de Cantos. Fuente de Cantos was reached by public bus from Seville. He spent the evening sitting in on the Bienvenida Charter Steering Group meeting as a guest.</p>	
2.2	<p><i>31st March.</i> Niall received a reception by the Mayor of Bienvenida (Antonio and tour of the Town Hall. He was brought by Jose Manuel Cortes (Bienvenida Pres. Friends of Europe) to adult English Classes run by the Town Council and the final year classes in the local Primary School (students commence English lesson from 4 years of age). All visits entailed talking to the students through English, in which they asked questions about Ireland, Cashel and Niall's impression of Bienvenida and Spain.</p> <p>The afternoon and evening was spent greeting the visiting Delegates. Six delegates each from five countries (Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands). It provided the opportunity to talk about Irish and Spanish cultures, family life and daily activities. A meal was prepared and eaten in a marquee in the Town Square.</p>	 



2.3	<p>1st April. Visit to Tentudia (Cashel's equivalent of Clonmel). A workshop took place following a presentation by Spain on 'Demographic Development in Rural Areas. Ageing and Decrease of the Population and the Effects of Liveability in the Villages'. The workshop entailed each country discussing amongst themselves, the issues faced by their Town within the above theme and using the initial presentation as a guide. A representative from each country then presented the issues. Common issues were that of services (transport, schools, community resources and adequate housing).</p> <p>After lunch guided tours were given of the recently restored Monastery of Tentudia and the mountain top Convent of Calera de Leon.</p> <p>Following this, a guided tour was given of Bienvenida, including the Church of Santa Maria de los Angeles (16th/17th century), Hermitage of Neustra Senora de los Milagros (19th century).</p> <p>The evening entailed a Culinary Evening, with United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain and Portugal providing food and drink. This was followed by traditional music. The Cultural Centre commenced with speeches by the Mayor and President of Friends of Europe. It was followed by Flamenco dancing and singing, performed by both children and adults.</p>	   
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2.4 *2nd April.* Delegates departed for Merida, a city with a significant quantity of surviving Roman Architecture. Merida is also the Regional Capital of Extramudras, in which Bienvenida is situated. The Roman Theatre and Temple were toured. This was followed by a presentation on Demographic Development, in which one of the Regional Politicians cited Volunteer Organisations in Ireland as a standard to attain.

After a picnic lunch by the river, the next workshop took place in Bienvenida.

It commenced with Niall giving a presentation on Cashel's hosting of the Charter. Similar to the one given in Esch (Netherlands) it placed Cashel in the contexts of Ireland, Munster, the south-East, South Tipperary. It showcased our resources (cultural, historic, tourism economy, sports and recreational. Cashel's services, educational and other resources, including demographics and economy were cited. Then the Cashel Charter hosting Programme was presented, including requirements of Youth/ Adult numbers and distinction between the two programmes.

The workshop continued on the previous theme, this time with the different countries' delegates mixed with other countries. Each group then submitted a presentation.

Upon completion, delegates viewed and purchase locally produced foods in the marquee, before the local brass band performed. Free time was given to either spend with host families or amongst the citizens and/or visiting delegates. After dinner with the Bienvenida Steering Group members and the exchange of Mayor's gifts, live music performed in the marquee for the remainder of the evening.



2.5	<i>3rd April.</i> The final day consisted of the closing conference and reception in the Town Hall. Delegates departed from 1pm. However, Niall's flight from Madrid entailed a 7am departure.	
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Links

<http://www.europeancharter.eu>

<http://www.cashelcharter.com>

