

From: Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs

First Minister

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My visit to Denmark and Sweden, 8-9 December

1. I visited Copenhagen and the University of Lund on 8 and 9 December to pursue our interests in developing a Nordic/Baltic Strategy. At the University of Lund I delivered a speech on Scotland's place in the EU to highlight our interests and cooperation with like-minded countries and Scotland's future.

2. My main objectives in Copenhagen were to develop our cooperation in the context of the Nordic/Baltic Strategy with Danish partners in the fields of architecture and culture. Architecture was of particular interest since the Danes are world leaders in promoting liveable cities. I visited the offices of Jan Gehl a world leader in urban design and placemaking whose work has been influential in reshaping Copenhagen as well as other cities around the world such as in New York and Melbourne. David Sim, a Linlithgow Architect who has been in Denmark since the 1980s is one of the Directors in Jan Gehl's practice and Jan Gehl also has a keen interest in Scotland. His practice sponsors a network of Nordic cities focussing on improving liveability and we agreed it would be good to see how we can associate our own cities alliance in this work. I also discussed joint working with Tina Saaby, the Copenhagen City Architect who had visited Scotland the previous week in connection with our Nordic Policy Network, and visited the Danish Architecture Centre. I also visited the new House of Cancer in Copenhagen, a fine modern building developed by the City which was inspired by our own Maggie's Centre initiative. In discussion with the Danish Culture Ministry I learnt that they are preparing their own architectural strategy to be published early next year, which meshed well with our own policy document on architecture and place published in June this year which quotes Jan Gehl as an inspiration. As a result of these good connections we have real opportunity to develop follow up in preparation for our year of innovation, architecture and design in 2016, when we hope to have strong Danish participation. The Scottish Government's Chief Architect will continue to liaise with contacts in Denmark and Copenhagen in order to develop these opportunities.

3. As well as discussing architecture with the Danish Culture Ministry they also showed a keen interest in our own National Youth Arts Strategy ("Time to Shine"), since this meshes very well with our own interests in developing direct engagement

by youth in cultural activities. I invited the Danish Minister to attend the Culture Summit next August. Given the common interests in architecture, youth and also our own interests in linking more closely with the Danes on digital and film, I suggested a delegation of Danish officials might visit in the Spring to look at areas we can work together on. Given the presence of the Danish Culture Institute in Edinburgh I think this is a real strong area for further work.

4. Following my meetings in Copenhagen I travelled to Lund, which has Scandinavia's strongest research university, just across the Oresund Bridge near Malmo in Sweden. I delivered a lecture on "Scotland's Place in the World" (now available on the SG website - <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/Speeches-Briefings/Scotland-s-place-in-Europe-724.aspx>.) to European Studies students and academics, who showed significant interest in our views on Nordic cooperation, Scotland's place in the EU and in particular in our plans on the role of independent Scotland would play in the world. The overall reaction was of positive interest, serious questions were asked, and I think it will be worth us pursuing such work both in Scotland and externally with foreign stakeholders over the coming months.

Fiona Hyslop