World first as UK Parliament establishes cross-party group dedicated to Greenland

The UK Parliament has become the first in the world, outside the Kingdom of Denmark, to create a special group specifically focussing on Greenland.

Last Friday (13th November), Parliamentarians from across the UK political spectrum including the three largest political groups at Westminster - the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party - joined forces to form the first All-Party Parliamentary Group for Greenland (APPG Greenland).

The aim of APPG for Greenland is to strengthen the UK-Greenland relationship on matters political, economic, social, cultural and scientific. It aims to raise greater awareness about Greenland within the UK and promote closer cooperation with the Greenlandic parliament (*Inatsisartut*), which was established in 1979 after Greenland obtained Home Rule from Denmark. Greenland's current status is as an autonomous constituent realm within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Following the launch of the APPG, the group's Chair SNP MP Brendan O'Hara said:
"I am absolutely delighted that we have been able to establish the APPG and that it has attracted such interest from across the House of Commons.
For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by Greenland; not just its history and its people but also how such a strategically important country viewed their future relationship with the rest of the world. As Chair of the APPG, I want to engage with The Inatsisartut and others to build closer ties and gain a better understanding of Greenland, its people and its politics. Whether it's trade, climate change, Arctic science, the future of Greenland's vast mineral wealth, the legacy of colonialism and the rights of indigenous people or the constitutional future for this vast, beautiful country, as members of the APPG, I believe we have so much to discover about Greenland.
And while the geopolitical importance of Greenland cannot be underestimated, I also want to learn what the people of Greenland want for their country as opposed to what other people want Greenland to become."

The new APPG also unanimously supported the appointment of the London-based Arctic-focused think-tank *Polar Research and Policy Initiative (PRPI)* to provide the group's secretariat.

Speaking about the creation of APPG Greenland, Dr Dwayne Ryan Menezes, Director of Polar Research and Policy Initiative (PRPI), explained:
"Given the intertwined past, present and future of Greenland and the UK, two outward-looking countries located at the edge of Europe and incidentally the first to leave the EU, there has never been a better time to establish a cross-party Parliamentary group dedicated to Greenland. Greenland is vital to the UK's regional economies; food, water, energy and mineral resource security; climate and energy policy; fisheries; and defence and security. It is my hope that the creation of APPG Greenland shall serve as a key milestone in the development of a new special relationship between Global Britain and Greenland in our Northern neighbourhood."

This key development testifies to the geostrategic importance of Greenland on the world stage and the growing interest among UK Parliamentarians in its Northern neighbour. The UK shares a long and rich history of trade and cultural exchange with Greenland, evident as early as the tenth century in the North Atlantic network of Norse settlements, and more so since the late-sixteenth century in the waves of Arctic exploration and, later, scientific research. Today, the two countries enjoy a vibrant trade and investment relationship, and vital scientific and civil society cooperation.

In 2019, Greenland's fish exports to the UK accounted for more than 10% of Greenland's total exports, with fish originating in Greenland making its way to the UK's processing, retail and foodservice industries, including fish and chips shops, pubs, restaurants and supermarkets. Greenland is the UK's largest import source of cold-water prawns, and a significant source for other North Atlantic species, such as cod, haddock, halibut and crab. The UK also has a significant investment presence across various emerging sectors in Greenland and research community engaged with projects in Greenland. Cooperation with Greenland is strategically important to the UK's regional economies, climate policy, food security, fisheries, and defence and security.

When it comes to realms within the Kingdom of Denmark, there are already APPGs in the UK Parliament dedicated to Denmark and the Faroe Islands, so the creation of a group dedicated to the UK's bilateral relationship with Greenland addresses a critical gap. The APPG shall provide an avenue within Parliament to host and meet visiting Greenlandic ministers and officials; build closer ties with MPs in the Parliaments of Greenland and Denmark; and serve as a nexus for the gamut of UK stakeholders – from officials, researchers and explorers to businesses, civil society organisations and journalists – interested in Greenland.

Mininnguaq Kleist, Head of the Greenland Representation to the EU, had this to say: "We are absolutely delighted by the news of an APPG on Greenland being established in the UK Houses of Parliament. Greenland is very interested in developing the bilateral relationship with the UK in different areas such as trade, fisheries, science, etc., and it is very positive, that there seems to be interest in the UK Parliament for that, as well."

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Note to editors:
The Chair of the new group is **Brendan O'Hara, the SNP MP for Argyll and Bute**. He has a longstanding interest in arctic affairs and visited Greenland in 2019.
The group's vice-Chairs include;
Andrew Rosindell, Conservative MP for Romford;
Cat Smith, Labour MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood;
Drew Hendry, SNP MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey;
Carol Monaghan SNP MP for Glasgow North West and
David Linden SNP MP for Glasgow East.
Alex Sobel, Labour MP for Leeds North West, was voted in as Secretary, while
Gavin Newlands, SNP MP for Paisley and Renfrewshire North was elected Treasurer.

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