

“Wales – Ireland links more important than ever” – Lord Elis-Thomas

He will meet with Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin TD and celebrate the connections between the two countries during a St David's Day reception. The Deputy Minister said:

“We're as keen as ever to promote and foster Welsh links with Ireland; we have many similarities in terms of our traditions, culture and economies. Wales – Ireland links are more important than ever, which is also evident by Irish Government's announcement that the Irish Consulate will re-open in Cardiff later this year.”

Lord Elis-Thomas will also meet with the Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland, Niall Gibbons, ahead of a Welsh Government St David's Day Reception at National Museum Ireland where a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between National Museum of Ireland and National Museum Wales regarding a new partnership between the two cultural organisations.

Guests at the reception will also have a preview of the Visit Wales' Year of Discovery marketing campaign which will go-live in Ireland on March 4 on TV and radio on demand and across digital platforms. Visit Wales have also embarked on partnerships with Stena Line and Irish Ferries – which will encourage more Irish visitors to discover Wales.

This year for the first time, Visit Wales have introduced elements of the Irish language into the Year of Discovery marketing campaign, signifying our long and special relationship as nations.

The evening will also celebrate the Welsh language – one of the first cornerstones to connect and bind Wales with Ireland as a Celtic Nation. As part of the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages, The Deputy Minister will also announce a new cultural initiative – Tylwyth (The Clan).

Tylwyth is a project by the National Eisteddfod of Wales, working in partnership with Bangor University's Pontio, and the Irish, Dublin-based circus performance company, Fidget Feet. Written by Gwyneth Glyn, Twm Morys and Myrddin ap Dafydd, it is an original contemporary musical circus which brings to life the story of some of the legends of Wales and will be performed at the National Eisteddfod in Llanrwst this August.

Lord Elis-Thomas said:

“When the UK leaves the EU this form of co-operation will become even more important and we look forward to working on long term, innovative partnerships. It is vital that we continue to focus our activities in Ireland, and we will continue to collaborate and work

in partnership to ensure that we grow and prosper with the wealth of opportunities that the Wales Ireland relationship has to offer.”