

Joint Communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

The Government of Ireland was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Simon Coveney TD. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was represented by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP, and the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Conor Burns MP.

The Conference was established under Strand Three of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement to “promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of the UK and Irish Governments”.

The Conference discussed the following:

British- Irish Cooperation

The Irish and UK Governments discussed how the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference can contribute to the development of the broader British-Irish relationship over the coming years. There was agreement on the need for close collaboration between our two countries, as we address current and future challenges, as was discussed at the recent meeting between An Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The Conference discussed potential synergies between the UK Levelling Up initiatives in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ireland’s National Development Plan 2021-2030. The Conference also discussed the ongoing economic cooperation which is taking place at national and regional levels.

Political Stability

The Conference noted, with regret, the developments at Stormont since it last met in December. The UK and Irish Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the full functioning of all of the political institutions established by the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement, including the North South Ministerial Council, and the importance of respecting the Agreement in all of its strands.

The Conference noted the importance of addressing the outstanding issues in the context of the Northern Ireland Protocol which is currently subject to continuing engagement between the EU and the UK.

The Irish Government and the UK Government provided an update on their respective commitments under the New Decade, New Approach agreement, which restored the institutions in January 2020.

The Conference agreed to continue close co-operation in accordance with the three-stranded approach established in the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement.

Security Co-operation

The Conference examined the current security situation in both jurisdictions. Both the UK Government and the Irish Government noted the importance of the ongoing high level of co-operation in tackling terrorism, paramilitarism and associated criminality. They considered the fourth report of the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) and its recommendations. The Irish Government and UK Government confirmed the intention to renominate Mitchell Reiss and Tim O'Connor to the Commission for a further period of appointment, and noted the NI Executive's renomination of John McBurney and Monica McWilliams.

Legacy

The Conference discussed the legacy of Northern Ireland's past, reflecting on views provided during the engagement process and next steps.

The UK and Irish Governments also discussed issues of concern in respect to a number of individual legacy cases.

Rights and Citizenship Matters

The Conference discussed the vital importance of the Common Travel Area arrangements and the need for the Irish Government and the UK Government to continue to work together on CTA immigration matters and to uphold the reciprocal rights and privileges British and Irish citizens have long enjoyed.

The Conference also discussed recent developments and legislation relevant to the implementation of the rights and citizenship provisions of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement.

Future Meetings

It was agreed that the Conference should meet again in the coming months.