

PM call with Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin: 24 November 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this afternoon.



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The Taoiseach began by congratulating the Prime Minister on the success of the COP26 Summit. The Prime Minister thanked Ireland for its support and the leaders agreed that the Summit marked a step change in tackling climate change around the world. The leaders also discussed their countries' respective fights against coronavirus.

The Prime Minister raised his ongoing concern about the substantial distance between the UK and EU positions when it comes to resolving the issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol. The Protocol was rightly keeping North-South trade open but its implementation was damaging the much larger East-West dimension. We could not allow a situation to develop in which the Government was unable to provide economic support to Northern Ireland in the same way it could in the rest of the UK. Ultimately Northern Ireland's place in the UK internal market was crucial to its long-term prosperity and could not be damaged.

The implementation of the Protocol was now colliding with economic and political realities and significant change was necessary. The Court of Justice (CJEU) was part of this fundamental imbalance because disputes were decided in the court of one party.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that a negotiated outcome was the preferred outcome and to work hard to achieve it. The Prime Minister was clear, however, that if talks were not able to deliver a rebalanced and sustainable outcome soon, the Government would be left with no choice but to use the safeguard measures under Article 16. This was a perfectly legitimate provision in the Protocol that had been agreed by all parties.

The two leaders agreed on the vital importance of the UK-Ireland relationship in finding solutions and in providing long-term stability in Northern Ireland. They agreed to keep in close contact.

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