

PM call with Taoiseach Varadkar of Ireland: 19 August 2019

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar spoke by phone for almost an hour this evening.

They shared perspectives on the Withdrawal Agreement. The Prime Minister indicated that the Withdrawal Agreement in its current form will not get through the House of Commons, that the backstop would need to be removed, and that an alternative solution is required. The Taoiseach reiterated the EU27 position that the Withdrawal Agreement cannot be reopened, and emphasised the importance of the legally operable guarantee to ensure no hard border and continued free trade on the island of Ireland.

The Prime Minister made clear that the Common Travel Area, which long predates the UK and Ireland joining the EU, would not be affected by the ending of freedom of movement after Brexit.

The two leaders reiterated their desire to see the Northern Ireland political institutions reinstated urgently, and agreed to work closely to this end. They condemned this morning's bombing in Fermanagh and urged anyone with relevant information to contact the PSNI.

They agreed that their teams would maintain close contact over the coming weeks, while recognising that negotiations take place between the UK and the EU27 Task Force. They also agreed to meet in Dublin in early September.