

News story

Joint Communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference January 2023

A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place at Farmleigh House, Dublin, on Thursday 19 January 2023.

From: [Northern Ireland Office \(/government/organisations/northern-ireland-office\)](#), [The Rt Hon Steve Baker \(/government/people/steve-baker\)](#)
and [The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris \(/government/people/chris-heaton-harris\)](#)

Published 19 January 2023

This was published under the 2022 to 2024 Sunak Conservative government



A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place at Farmleigh House, on 19 January 2023.

The Government of Ireland was represented by the Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin TD, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD, and the Minister for Justice, Simon Harris 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 Chris Heaton-Harris MP, the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Steve Baker MP, the Minister of State for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure, Julia Lopez MP and the Minister of State for Energy and Climate, Graham Stuart 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:

Political Stability

The UK and Irish Governments agreed on the critical importance of restoring to full operation all of the political institutions established by the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement. The Conference discussed developments in this context and the serious and deepening consequences for people in Northern Ireland arising from the ongoing absence of a fully functioning Northern Ireland Assembly, Executive and North South Ministerial Council.

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

British-Irish Co-operation

The Irish and UK Governments discussed bilateral cooperation in a range of areas with a particular focus on cyber security and energy.

With regard to cyber security, Ministers agreed to:

- Intensify engagement on cyber resilience issues;
- Explore opportunities to cooperate in supporting growth and innovation;
- Convene bilateral cyber security policy dialogues to address issues of mutual interest and concern

With regard to energy, Ministers agreed to:

- Explore increased cooperation on offshore renewable energy and security of supply, including in relation to offshore grids, electricity interconnection, and development of hybrid/multipurpose projects combining offshore wind generation with interconnection.
- Continue the policy dialogue between relevant Departments and agencies in the context of the forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation on gas security of supply.
- Jointly examine the scope for further cross-border cooperation and coordination in the area of low carbon hydrogen.

Progress made in relation to these two areas would be reviewed at future meetings of the BIIGC.

Security Co-operation

The Irish and UK Governments discussed the current security situation in both jurisdictions. They welcomed the excellent ongoing cooperation between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána in tackling terrorism, paramilitarism and associated criminality.

The Conference considered the fifth report of the

Independent Reporting Commission, including their recommendations on possible mechanisms to progress the transition and disbandment of all remaining paramilitary groups.

Rights and Citizenship Matters

The Conference welcomed the centenary year of the Common Travel Area arrangements and reaffirmed a clear commitment to the reciprocal rights and privileges it provides for British and Irish citizens.

The Conference discussed UK proposals for the implementation of an electronic travel authorisation scheme, which will not apply to British and Irish citizens, and potential implications for other residents of Ireland and international visitors.

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

Legacy

The UK and Irish Governments discussed the UK Government's proposed legislation on dealing with the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the Irish Government's concerns in relation to it. The UK Government raised the amendments it has proposed to the Bill.

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

25th Anniversary of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement

The Conference looked ahead to the range of events and activities planned for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement's 25th anniversary year and the Irish and UK Governments reiterated their

commitment to appropriately and collectively marking, reflecting on, and celebrating this foundational achievement for present and future generations.

The Conference underlined the continuing fundamental importance of the Agreement today in the constitutional principles it enshrines, the institutions that it establishes and the rights that it guarantees for the people of Northern Ireland.

Future Meetings

It was agreed that the Conference would meet again in Spring 2023.

Published 19 January 2023

OGI

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



[© Crown copyright](#)