

OFFICIAL

By July 2018, the FCO, working as necessary with the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, should produce an analysis of the UK-Ireland bilateral relationship, containing recommendations to improve it and options to revitalize existing, or create new, bilateral institutions.

Geography, history, the intertwined nature of our societies and economies, and our shared interest in the stability and prosperity of Northern Ireland makes the UK-Ireland relationship special and unique. UK-Ireland relations have become particularly strong in recent years, having been transformed by the reciprocal State Visits by Her Majesty The Queen in 2011 and President Michael. D Higgins in 2014. As part of this transformation, TRHs The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall have visited Ireland in each of the last four years - their very successful recent visit to Cork and Kerry was another example of the importance of visits by members of the Royal Family in deepening the bilateral relationship. TRHs The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have just visited Dublin; a significant event as it was their first overseas visit as a married couple. This visit showcased a bilateral relationship of vibrancy and energy and one that will endure. In March 2012, the then Prime Minister David Cameron and former Taoiseach Enda Kenny released a Joint Statement, marking the start of a decade of intensified cooperation across areas of mutual interest. Today this cooperation covers defence and security, foreign policy, prosperity and trade, science and innovation, commemorations and international development. The Joint Statement also laid the foundations for a structured dialogue between the UK and Irish Governments. This dialogue forms the basis of the bilateral relationship and complements the east-west engagement that already existed through the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly.

We acknowledge that our EU exit negotiations, and the political situation in Northern Ireland, currently pose challenges to the bilateral relationship. However, we have seen how the strength of the bilateral relationship we have built in recent years has allowed us to maintain an open dialogue with the Irish government on both these vital issues. The former Foreign Secretary visited Dublin in November 2017 and the Tánaiste Simon Coveney has come to London several times this year. During his visits the Tánaiste has met the former Foreign Secretary, the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Foreign Secretary is committed to engaging with the Irish early in his tenure, to help sustain the step change we have seen in bilateral cooperation in recent years and the dialogue we have on more challenging issues. Since the referendum, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has posted an additional seven UK-based staff to the British Embassy in Dublin and there has been increased programme expenditure focussed on a broad range of issues, including reconciliation, developing economic and prosperity links, engagement with border communities, promoting law enforcement contacts and support for arts and culture. We are committed to ensuring that the UK/Ireland relationship is preserved during our EU exit negotiations, and that fresh and

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

imaginative ways are developed to sustain and enhance the habit of cooperation between our two countries when the UK has left the EU. The Irish government have reassured us that they share this goal. We will work in partnership with them to build on the achievements since 2012, continue to engage openly on our exit from the EU, and encourage the return of devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

Overview of the UK-Ireland bilateral relationship

Borders, security and defence: The UK and Ireland are both members of the Common Travel Area (CTA). This special travel zone facilitates the principle of free movement for British and Irish citizens; with no individuals travelling to the UK from within the CTA subject to routine immigration control. These arrangements are underpinned by close and active cooperation between members' border and immigration authorities, in particular to secure the CTA's external borders whilst facilitating legitimate travel. In 2011 a Joint Statement between the Home Office and the Irish Department of Justice was published regarding co-operation on a series of joint measures. These included: investment in border procedures; increased data sharing to inform immigration and border security decisions; and harmonised visa policy and processes. We welcome December's Joint Report which confirmed that the CTA will be protected and that the UK and Ireland can continue to work together on its operation.

The UK and Ireland have long cooperated closely in tackling the threat posed by terror groups and organised crime groups operating across the UK and Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland and UK security services are in regular contact with their colleagues in An Garda Síochána. Information sharing, operational partnership and mutual capacity building continue to strengthen with joint efforts and resources being applied to reduce the risk of terrorism and other criminal activity. The presence at the British Embassy of representatives of NCA, HMRC and the Metropolitan Police, and of a representative of the FCO Counter Terrorism and Extremism Network, underpins and enhances these efforts.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Ireland on General Defence Cooperation, signed in 2015, has led to a significant increase in engagement between the UK's Armed Forces and the Irish Defence Forces. A three-year defence action plan was drawn up in 2016 to complement the Memorandum of Understanding and to provide a programme of joint activity between the UK and Ireland from the strategic level down. Annual bilateral army staff talks, to further enhance army to army cooperation, commenced in 2017. The Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces visited the UK this year. The UK Chief of the Air Staff will visit Ireland shortly. British and Irish soldiers have now been serving together for over five years in the first ever joint UK/Ireland deployment as part of the EU Training Mission in Mali. UK armed forces have leveraged Irish expertise to inform our preparation for UN deployments. This level of intensified cooperation demonstrates the maturing nature of our defence relationship. Ireland will remain an important

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

strategic partner for the UK after we leave the EU and we expect that bilateral cooperation will continue to flourish.

Foreign policy

As like-minded partners, the UK and Ireland will continue to work closely on international issues of mutual interest including in a variety of international institutions. Political Directors from our respective foreign ministries have met annually in recent years to discuss shared policy interests on the global agenda. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCO and his Irish counterpart have made joint visits to Sierra Leone and Uganda in recent years. We will look for further opportunities for similar joint engagement in Africa. We will also consider with Irish counterparts whether there are ways in which we can jointly promote our shared values, including in the area of freedom of expression and the importance of female education.

Corporate and consular: A Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2012 between the UK and Ireland provides the framework for renewed consular and crisis cooperation. This is supported by regular UK-Ireland Consular Dialogues between senior officials from both Governments, most recently in May 2018. Current cooperation includes: sharing information, best practice and expertise on consular assistance and crisis planning, observing crisis exercises and temporary collocation of consular services in the Irish Embassy in Mexico City for which the FCO is most grateful.

Prosperity and trade: Significant trade and investment ties exist between the UK and Ireland. Ireland is the UK's fifth largest export market of goods and services and eleventh largest FDI investor, while the UK is Ireland's second largest export market and third largest FDI investor after the US and Germany. Movement of workers, skills and expertise complements the two-way flow of trade and investment. There are currently over 50,000 Irish directors of UK companies, more than of any other nationality, and Irish companies employ in the region of 100,000 people in the UK. Under the previous Joint Economic Study 2014, there was formal collaboration between the then UKTI (now Department for International Trade), Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland to identify and deliver joint trade missions and industry leadership training initiatives. The UK Government is exploring mechanisms for re-engaging with the relevant Irish Government bodies to revisit this work and consider future sectors for cooperation on trade and investment such as construction, engineering, life sciences and ICT.

The British Embassy is actively involved on an outreach programme across Ireland working with local authorities, Chambers, business incubators and other organisations in building connectivity with the UK. This has included working with Donegal, Galway, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick and the Shannon region engaging with businesses, community leaders and civic enterprises. Business seminars and clinics promoting trade opportunities in the UK for Irish companies have been held in Donegal, Galway and Dublin covering tech, especially fintech and cyber security. These will continue throughout the country. An Honorary Prosperity Consul for Cork has been established which will aid further outreach work across the sub regions and

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

help connect businesses with new opportunities for increased trade between the UK and Ireland. New research is underway to identify how the south west of Ireland, including Cork, can become better connected to similar areas in the UK, such as the Northern Powerhouse region.

The UK Government is also supporting Ireland with its rebalancing economic agenda: this includes helping connect local areas with their counterparts in the UK to promote trade and investment opportunities as well as sharing best practice in regeneration and infrastructure development. A major seminar on connecting the supply chains within both the UK and Irish construction sectors was held in Manchester in March 2018. Similarly, Ireland's Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, launched Enterprise Ireland's Northern Powerhouse report in February 2018 which highlights the business opportunities that exist for Irish companies in the UK's Northern Powerhouse region particularly in construction, life sciences, digital technology and cleantech.

Science and innovation: The rights and privileges associated with the CTA facilitate students and researchers from Ireland and the UK to be able to access the specialist expertise of each other's universities and research councils, collaborating on research that provides mutually beneficial findings. A number of co-funded UK-Ireland scientific research partnerships exist, namely between Science Foundation Ireland and UK research councils. There is also strong scientific collaboration between Northern Ireland and Ireland with a particular focus on projects that deliver societal and economic progress. Northern Ireland's Department for the Economy and public agencies provide funding in the following partnerships: US-Ireland Research and Development and Science Foundation Ireland/Department for the Economy Investigators Programme. On nuclear safety and security, UK and Irish Government officials and nuclear regulators share information on domestic and multilateral efforts to raise nuclear safety standards.

History: The UK and Ireland have a long and complex shared history: today we share the strongest of family ties and well-established British and Irish communities that are fully integrated into each other's societies. We welcome December's Joint Report which confirmed that the existing rights and privileges of British and Irish citizens in the other state will be maintained as we leave the EU. The unique history between the two countries is currently being celebrated through the GB18 programme, supported by Culture Ireland, which showcases Irish artistic activity in Britain.

Commemorations: The UK and Ireland are just over halfway through the decade of centenary commemorations which, as set out in the 2012 Joint Statement, they agreed to mark together 'in a spirit of historical accuracy, mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation'. This decade of commemorations allows both countries to reflect on past events and is an opportunity to build on the existing bilateral relationship. The joint visit to British and Irish World War One memorials in Flanders in 2013 by the former Prime Minister David Cameron and the former Taoiseach Enda Kenny was a significant and symbolic moment. There has been significant Royal involvement in the commemorations. During their visit to Ireland in

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OFFICIAL

May 2017, TRHs the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited Glasnevin Cemetery, where they commemorated both the Irish dead of World War One and all the casualties of the Easter Rising. In June 2017, HRH the Duke of Cambridge joined the then Taoiseach Enda Kenny to commemorate the Battle of Messines. Upcoming centenaries include the War of Independence and the creation of Northern Ireland (1919-1921) and the Civil War (1922-1923).

International development

The UK and Ireland are like-minded partners on a number of key development issues including climate change, gender equality and humanitarian aid. As part of the Nordic Plus Group, the UK and Ireland meet three times a year at Director, Director-General and State Secretary level in order to foster political dialogue and advance shared priorities. This enables collective influence over outcomes in global fora as well as more effective coordination of overseas aid between the different members. The last Nordic Plus State Secretaries meeting was chaired by Ireland in February 2018. Through this group, as well as on a bilateral level, the UK and Irish Governments are in regular discussion on how overseas aid can be targeted in a more strategic way.

Overview of formal UK-Ireland bilateral engagement

The UK-Ireland bilateral relationship is supported by structured engagement between the two Governments. The 2012 Joint Statement set the structure of regular meetings at Secretary General/Permanent Secretary level, working with the relevant Government Departments and followed up by joint work programmes led by UK and Irish officials. UK Permanent Secretaries and Irish Secretary Generals last met in London in October 2016. The Joint Statement also confirmed the PM and Taoiseach's commitment to meet together at Annual Summits, with the last one taking place in Dublin in January 2017. Both the Secretary General/Permanent Secretary meetings and the PM/Taoiseach Annual Summits provide a structure for the UK and Ireland to strengthen their bilateral relationship and increase collaboration on those areas of mutual interest that go beyond the more immediate issues.

Under Strand Three of the Belfast Agreement two institutions, the British-Irish Council (BIC) and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC), were set up to strengthen relations across the UK and Ireland and to promote cooperation on areas of mutual interest. The BIC involves representatives from the UK and Irish Governments, from the Devolved Institutions and from the Crown Dependencies. It meets several times a year at Head of Government/Administration, Ministerial and official levels, promoting discussion and collaboration on shared priorities across a range of social, economic and environmental issues. Since the inaugural Summit in London in 1999, there have been on average two Summits a year attended by Heads of Government/Administrations or Senior Ministers. The last one took place in Guernsey in June 2018. The BIIGC provides an opportunity for the UK and Irish

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Governments to discuss non-devolved issues relating to Northern Ireland. It was last convened on a regular basis between 2002 and 2007 during the suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive. It will meet again in July 2018.

Parliamentary Links: The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) brings together politicians from across the UK and Ireland to debate topical issues in its biannual plenary sessions, while its four committees examine and make recommendations on the following areas: sovereign matters, European affairs, economic, and environmental and social. The UK Government attaches significant importance to this Assembly. UK Ministers regularly attend plenary sessions in the UK and the British Ambassador aims to attend all plenary sessions both in the UK and Ireland. The UK Government is committed to facilitating contacts between elected representatives from Westminster, The Oireachtas and the devolved Governments and assemblies.

British-Irish Association: The British-Irish Association (BIA) is a small yet influential charity that brings together a wide range of prominent figures both from Government and civil society at a conference every September, providing a forum for debate and discussion. The British Embassy and the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides financial support to the annual conference and have excellent contacts with the BIA, who have sought input on the makeup of the conference.

Objectives to improve the UK-Ireland bilateral relationship

1. **Borders, security and defence:**

Work with Ireland to identify fresh ways of working together at a bilateral level and through multilateral fora on those areas where the UK and Ireland are like-minded partners.

Ensure cooperation reflects new, evolving threats to domestic and international security. This should include Air and Maritime Security, modern Peacekeeping, Counter-Terrorism and Cyber Security. Explore opportunities for joint Peacekeeping pre-training.

2. **Foreign Policy and International Development**

Maintain close cooperation with Ireland on shared development and international priorities, both at a bilateral level as well as through groupings and multilateral fora.

Pursue opportunities for shared engagement in Africa and for the promotion of shared values.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Promote joint corporate activity such as secondments and training.

3. **Corporate and consular:**

Ensure continued close cooperation on consular services and crisis preparedness with Ireland after the UK leaves the EU.

4. **Prosperity and trade:**

Consult and engage with the Irish Government and key business organisations to ensure that the UK-Ireland trading relationship is supported during and after the UK leaves the EU.

Hold outreach events in Galway, Waterford and other Irish cities.

Explore new business and partnership opportunities focussing in particular on those sectors where the UK and Ireland can draw on each other's expertise, such as digital, fintech and the creative economy.

5. **Science and innovation:**

Deepen collaboration between the UK and Ireland including through the work of a newly appointed Science and Innovation Officer at the British Embassy.

Explore, with the Irish Government and relevant UK and Irish stakeholders, how to maintain and build on the partnerships that already exist between UK and Irish universities and research councils after the UK leaves the EU.

Continue to work with Ireland to provide access to student support for UK and Irish citizens on a reciprocal basis.

Support activity that promotes youth engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

6. **Culture:**

Work in partnership with the British Council to strengthen people-to-people links including in the arts, culture and education through an imaginative new programme of activity.

Establish the closest possible links with the British community in Ireland, and work with the Irish Embassy in London to enhance and celebrate our unique people-to-people links.

Pursue opportunities to strengthen city, town and regional links between the UK and Ireland.

OFFICIAL

7. Commemorations:

As appropriate, continue to participate in and contribute to upcoming centenaries, in line with the agreed principles for commemoration.

Use occasions such as Royal Visits to promote reconciliation, mutual respect and understanding.

8. Youth:

Encourage a youth dimension to all Embassy supported activity in Ireland.

Explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration between young people and youth organisations in the UK and Ireland, facilitating the exchange of ideas and experience, joint participation in volunteering programmes and partnership working.

9. Formal engagement structures:

Ensure that the formal structures of bilateral dialogue that the UK has with Ireland are maintained and adapted once we have left the EU. The Irish Government has publicly proposed the idea of some form of regular joint Inter-Governmental meeting, which we support, and shares the UK Government's view of the importance of the future bilateral relationship. The UK Government will seek to identify other mechanisms for expanded governmental contacts and for exploring new areas of cooperation.

10. Parliamentary Links:

Expand parliamentary links by facilitating more direct contacts between parliamentary committees.

Maintain the tradition of UK Ministerial attendance at the UK BIPA plenaries, including at the session to be held in London in November.

11. British-Irish Association:

Increase UK Ministerial/official attendance at the BIA conference in September and facilitate contacts between key influencers from different sectors at the conference.

Shape the agenda so that it continues to support a wide range of shared interests and priorities.