

Press release: Joint Communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 25 July 2018

A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place at the Cabinet Office in London on 25 July 2018.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was represented by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon David Lidington MP, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP. The Government of Ireland was represented by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Simon Coveney TD, and the Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr Charles Flanagan TD.

The Conference was established under Strand Three of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement “to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Governments”.

The Conference discussed the following:

Legacy

The Conference reviewed the overall progress towards implementation of the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework.

Both the Irish and UK Governments re-asserted their commitment to the legacy bodies set out in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement as the best means of addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland’s past. The UK Government updated the Conference on the consultation currently being held on the Stormont House institutions which runs to 10 September. The Irish Government updated the Conference on the legislative measures being brought forward within its jurisdiction to implement and support the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework and raised other legacy issues.

Security co-operation

The Conference reviewed the current security situation, and discussed the continuing threat posed by Northern Ireland Related Terrorism in the United Kingdom and in Ireland.

The Conference expressed its rejection of all paramilitary violence and all other forms of paramilitary activity. The Conference reiterated its strong support for the efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána, along with other agencies, in keeping people safe and secure across both jurisdictions.

Both the UK and Irish Governments recalled commitments in the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement to ending paramilitarism and looked forward to the first

report of the Independent Reporting Commission established under that Agreement.

East-West matters

The Conference considered the strength of the bilateral relationship between the United Kingdom and Ireland and welcomed the high levels of bilateral cooperation across a range of important policy areas.

The Conference agreed that this level of bilateral co-operation needed to be maintained and, where possible, strengthened following the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

Officials were asked to take forward work in this area with a view to coming forward with proposals for future East-West cooperation, including at Cabinet and Ministerial level, for consideration by the Irish and UK Governments at a future meeting of the Conference.

Political stability

Both the UK and Irish Governments reiterated their strong support for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements which have underpinned the progress made in Northern Ireland over the past two decades and which provide the framework for the political process in Northern Ireland.

The Irish and UK Governments re-affirmed their shared commitment to all of the political institutions established by the Agreement and to securing the effective operation of power-sharing, devolved government in Northern Ireland and the consequent resumption of the North/South Ministerial Council and Northern Ireland participation in the British Irish Council at the earliest opportunity.

Both the UK and Irish Governments agreed to continue working closely together in accordance with the three-stranded approach as set out in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Future meetings

It was agreed that the Conference would meet again in the autumn.