

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

NINTH INSTITUTIONAL MEETING

DUBLIN

10 JANUARY 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The ninth North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Institutional meeting was held in Iveagh House, Dublin on 10 January 2014.
2. The Irish Government was represented by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA and the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA. The Tánaiste chaired the meeting.
3. Ministers discussed a range of issues including the economic prospects and challenges for 2014 and the strategies being pursued in each jurisdiction particularly in relation to tackling unemployment. The success of events such as The Gathering 2013 and Derry ~ Londonderry UK City of Culture celebrations was acknowledged and the importance of maintaining the positive momentum with regard to tourism figures in 2013 was recognised. In this regard Ministers welcomed the fact that the Giro d'Italia cycling event in 2014 would have a cross border element. Ministers also endorsed the importance of attracting other high profile sporting events to the island of Ireland.

EU MATTERS

4. The Council reviewed progress on the PEACE III and INTERREG IV Programmes and looked forward to the completion of the consultation process on the new Programmes. Ministers also emphasised the importance of using every opportunity to maximise the drawdown of EU funding in both jurisdictions.

NORTH WEST GATEWAY INITIATIVE

5. Ministers noted that the engagement by officials with key stakeholders on the future direction of the North West Gateway Initiative was continuing and agreed that a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

NORTH SOUTH BODIES ISSUES

6. The Council discussed a range of matters relating to the North South Bodies. Ministers noted the progress in respect of their Corporate and Business Plans and the implementation of cumulative efficiency savings within the Bodies.
7. Ministers also discussed governance issues including changes to the terms and conditions of staff in the North South Bodies aligned to those of the Irish Public Service, the review of the Financial Memoranda and forthcoming changes to the North South Pension Scheme.
8. The Council also noted changes to the Boards of the North South Bodies and that a process is underway to recruit a permanent Chief Executive to the Loughs Agency.

CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

9. Ministers welcomed the appointment of Ruth Taillon as Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies and congratulated her on her appointment. The contribution of the previous Director Andy Pollak was acknowledged.
10. Ministers were informed that INTERREG IVA funding has been obtained for phase 3 of the Border People Project. Training of Information Advisors and service personnel in the area of cross border mobility is ongoing and a needs analysis and sustainability plan is also being prepared.

ST ANDREWS AGREEMENT REVIEW

11. Ministers discussed the St Andrews Agreement Review and noted that work is underway to implement the decision taken at the November 8 Plenary meeting that Ministers should consider their priorities in their respective sectoral areas. Ministers will consider a report on the outcome of this Ministerial consideration when they meet again in Institutional format.

APPOINTMENT OF A BOARD MEMBER TO THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY

12. Ministers approved the appointment of Mr Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire to the Board of the North South Language Body (Foras na Gaeilge).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. Ministers agreed to meet again later in 2014.

**Joint Secretariat
10 January 2014**