



PAPER NSMC P1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

DUBLIN CASTLE

4 JULY 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-second Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was held in Dublin Castle on 4 July 2016.
2. The Irish Government was led by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, who chaired the meeting. The Northern Ireland Executive was led by the First Minister Arlene Foster MLA and the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA. A full list of the members of both delegations is attached as an Annex.
3. The meeting provided the new Irish Government and the new Northern Ireland Executive with the opportunity to meet formally for the first time and exchange views on a wide range of issues of mutual interest and concern, especially in light of the recent UK referendum decision to leave the EU.

OPENING REMARKS

4. In their opening discussion, Ministers welcomed this early opportunity for the new Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss the implications of the recent referendum decision for Northern Ireland and for relations between both jurisdictions.

5. The Council agreed that as the mechanism of a UK exit from the EU becomes clearer, the implications of the referendum decision on North South cooperation should be explored in detail under all sectors.
6. Ministers welcomed the development of the Irish Government's new Programme for a Partnership Government and the Northern Ireland Executive's new Draft Programme for Government Framework and noted that building and maintaining relationships between each jurisdiction features in both of these documents.
7. Ministers of Health announced that they were jointly opening the cardiac catheterisation lab in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin and announced the way forward for the all island Congenital Heart Disease Network. The Ministers look forward to working together to build on the good progress made by their Departments and committed to further scope opportunities for all Island co-operation in health and social care.

FINANCIAL AND EU MATTERS

[Implications of UK Referendum]

8. The Council had a detailed discussion on the potential impact of the UK referendum result to leave the EU. In order to optimise joint planning and engagement on key issues arising following the UK referendum result, the NSMC:
 - Agreed to work together to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge as regards the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union;
 - Noted that there are a number of priority areas where implications arise, but particularly including:
 - The Economy and trade
 - Northern Ireland and British Irish Relations
 - The Common Travel Area
 - The EU.
 - Agreed that a full audit will be undertaken in all sectors to identify the possible impacts, risks, opportunities and contingencies arising in the phases preceding and following the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
 - Agreed that this work will in turn be submitted to ministerial sectoral meetings for consideration as to the strategic and cross-cutting issues arising and that final priorities will be agreed by the next NSMC Plenary for both pre-negotiation and negotiation phases;
 - Agreed that a further discussion on the implications of the referendum result will take place at the next NSMC Plenary;

- Agreed that the NSMC can provide a useful forum for ongoing discussion on relevant matters;
- Re-iterated the joint commitment of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to the successful implementation of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes, and agreed that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Northern Ireland Finance Minister will consider the issue of securing the ERDF funding for PEACE and INTERREG, including through engagement with the European Commission;
- Agreed that the frequency of the briefings on relevant EU matters provided by the Irish Government for senior Northern Ireland officials should increase and include consideration of issues arising from the referendum decision;
- Agreed that the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels and the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels will continue and intensify their close working relationship; and
- Noted and welcomed Prime Minister Cameron's clear commitment to engagement of the Northern Ireland Executive in the United Kingdom's negotiating process with the European Union.

9. Ministers also provided updates on economic conditions North and South.

FRESH START SECTION E COMMITMENTS

10. The Council noted the continued commitment of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive in the Fresh Start Agreement to investing in infrastructure which will support cooperation and unlock the full potential of the economies of both jurisdictions.
11. Ministers noted the progress report by Senior Officials from relevant Departments in both jurisdictions addressing the Fresh Start commitments, including work on the A5 Western Transport Corridor- noting that the A5 is on schedule to start in late 2017 - and the review of options for the Ulster Canal and the Narrow Water Bridge.
12. Ministers noted that the group of Senior Officials will continue to meet regularly to maintain a strategic overview of the projects and commitments set out in Fresh Start and to explore funding opportunities for economic and infrastructural investment.
13. The Council agreed that a further update on the Fresh Start Section E Commitments will be brought to the next NSMC Plenary meeting.

NORTH WEST GATEWAY INITIATIVE

14. Ministers noted the continued engagement between officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Executive Office (TEO) with regional stakeholders regarding the direction and priorities for the North West region.
15. Ministers agreed that senior officials from relevant departments in both jurisdictions should meet with the two Councils as part of the Framework and noted the continuing commitment to a meeting of Ministers from both jurisdictions to take place in the North West.
16. Ministers noted the additional Fresh Start commitment to support the North West Gateway Initiative through the establishment of a North West Development Fund and welcomed the contribution by the Irish Government of €2.5 million and the commitment of match funding from the Northern Ireland Executive.

DATE OF NEXT PLENARY MEETING

17. Ministers agreed that the next Plenary meeting would be held in Armagh in November.

**Joint Secretariat
4 July 2016**

ANNEX A

MEETING OF THE NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DUBLIN CASTLE – 4 JULY 2016

Northern Ireland Executive	Irish Government
Arlene Foster MLA First Minister	Enda Kenny TD Taoiseach and Minister of Defence
Martin McGuinness MLA deputy First Minister	Frances Fitzgerald TD Tánaiste & Minister for Justice & Equality
Paul Givan MLA Minister for Communities	Michael Noonan TD Minister for Finance
Simon Hamilton MLA Minister for the Economy	Richard Bruton TD Minister for Education
Chris Hazzard MLA Minister for Infrastructure	Leo Varadkar TD Minister for Social Protection
Michelle McIlveen MLA Minister for Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs	Charles Flanagan TD Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade
Mairtín Ó Muilleoir MLA Minister for Finance	Paschal Donohoe TD Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform
Michelle O'Neill MLA Minister for Health	Heather Humphreys TD Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts & the Gaeltacht
Claire Sugden MLA Minister for Justice	Simon Harris TD Minister for Health
Peter Weir MLA Minister for Education	Michael Creed TD Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine and Defence
Megan Fearon MLA Junior Minister, The Executive Office	Denis Naughten TD Minister for Communications, Climate Change & Natural Resources
Alastair Ross MLA Junior Minister, The Executive Office	Shane Ross TD Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport
	Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation
	Katherine Zappone TD Minister for Children & Youth Affairs
	Damien English TD Minister of State for Housing & Urban Renewal