



NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL THIRTEENTH INSTITUTIONAL MEETING

DUBLIN CASTLE

13 SEPTEMBER 2024

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirteenth Institutional meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was held in Dublin Castle on 13 September 2024.
2. The Government of Ireland was represented by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin TD who chaired the meeting. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by the First Minister, Michelle O'Neill MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Emma Little-Pengelly MLA.

JOINT SECRETARIES' UPDATE

3. The Council received an update from the Joint Secretaries and noted that meetings had been held in all twelve of the NSMC sectors since April 2024 and planning is underway for an NSMC Plenary meeting. Ministers welcomed that the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss had been discussed at meetings and looked forward to a further update at the Plenary meeting.
4. The NSMC welcomed that outstanding corporate governance decisions for the North South Bodies are being taken at NSMC meetings and noted that work is underway to finalise 2025 Business Plans and Budgets.
5. Ministers noted plans to mark the 25th year since the establishment of the NSMC and the North South Implementation Bodies later in the year.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

6. The NSMC received a presentation from Professor Caroline McMullan of DCU on public safety messaging in border communities.
7. Ministers noted the Civil Contingency and Resilience arrangements in place; including in regard to cross-border health emergency planning and response and welcomed the regular and ongoing collaboration between officials in both jurisdictions on civil contingencies resilience and preparedness.
8. Ministers also welcomed the All-Island Disaster Risk Reduction Conference series and noted that it has provided an opportunity to encourage networking, promote dialogue, commission research and deepen cooperation on strategic emergency management matters.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WIDER POLICY ENVIRONMENT

9. The NSMC reaffirmed its support for the PEACE PLUS Programme and welcomed the contribution of the Programme to promoting peace, reconciliation and prosperity. The United Kingdom's association to the Horizon Europe research programme which presents an opportunity to advance research investment and collaboration across the two jurisdictions was also welcomed.
10. Ministers acknowledged that student mobility is mutually beneficial to both jurisdictions and invited stakeholders to continue to explore options for students, including through the Common Travel Area (CTA). The ongoing Government of Ireland funding that enables Northern Ireland students to avail of the Erasmus+ study abroad programme was welcomed.
11. The Council noted that a general election in the UK and elections to the European Parliament took place in 2024 and that cooperation on a North South basis will continue in the context of the evolving nature of EU-UK relations. The position will be monitored in both jurisdictions and the NSMC will be apprised of relevant developments.

NORTH SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES MATTERS

12. The Council discussed a number of matters relating to the North South Bodies. It was noted that Finance Departments have developed a framework that will allow flexibility to fund new and additional activity in particular, while preserving the use of the funding ratios as the primary funding mechanism for the North South Bodies.
13. The NSMC noted that the CEO posts of the North South Bodies were last reviewed in 2004 and that the Joint Secretaries will explore with Finance Departments whether a further review is necessary.

14. Ministers noted that two amendments to the North South Pension Scheme are being developed by the North South Pension Scheme Committee and will be brought to the NSMC for approval when the necessary processes have been satisfied.

BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

15. The NSMC appointed board members to the board of Foras na Gaeilge and agreed that appointments will be made to fill the remaining vacancies on this Board and on the Boards of other North South Implementation Bodies at future meetings of the NSMC.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16. The Council agreed to meet again in Institutional format in early 2025.

Joint Secretariat
13 September 2024

website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org