



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Ireland-Wales Forum meeting: 22 October 2021

An inaugural meeting of the Ireland-Wales Forum took place in Cardiff on 22 October 2021.

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The Government of Ireland was represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney T.D., Minister for Environment, Climate and Communication and Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D., who joined the event virtually, and Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation, Robert Troy T.D.

The First Minister of Wales hosted the inaugural Ireland Wales Forum in Cardiff, joined by Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething M.S., Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths M.S., and Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters M.S.

An undertaking to convene an annual Ireland-Wales Forum was announced in the Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-25 which was launched on 1 March of this year, to engage political, economic and broader

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stakeholders to develop relationships, exchange policy perspectives, share learning and build cooperation in areas for which the Welsh Government has devolved responsibility, to strengthen the broader Ireland-Wales bilateral relationship.

The forum discussed the following:

Recent political developments and bilateral relations

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and First Minister discussed latest political developments across Ireland and Wales, and more broadly, including Covid-19, EU-UK developments, Ireland's tenure on the Security Council and the upcoming 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). They also discussed their shared ambitions for the Ireland Wales bilateral relationship, in the context of implementation of the Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-25, launched earlier in the year, as well as the official opening of the Consulate General of Ireland in Cardiff. They noted positive progress to date, including the upcoming secondment of a Welsh Government official to the Department of Foreign Affairs focussed on engagement with diaspora, the welcome breadth of cultural projects in train, and the ongoing cooperation between the National Museums of Ireland and Wales on biodiversity and inclusion.

Trade cooperation and economic development

Minister Gething and Minister Troy discussed recent economic developments in Wales and Ireland, as well as current opportunities and challenges for economic cooperation. They were joined by Minister Griffiths to discuss further opportunities in relation to the Ireland-North Wales trade corridor, and links between North Wales and the Northern Powerhouse. Both sides indicated that as an outcome they would like to see a framework put in place to facilitate

ongoing dialogue between the key actors in this area and to support collaborative networks.

Climate change and energy policy

Minister Waters and Minister Ryan discussed Welsh and Irish priorities in the area of climate change and energy policy, including in relation to offshore wind, renewable community projects and interconnection. Both sides highlighted on the importance of renewable energy and the value of exploratory discussions on potential opportunities for cooperation. Ministers were also joined by representatives of Wind Energy Ireland and the Celtic Sea Developers Alliance.

Future meetings

It was agreed that the next iteration of the Ireland Wales Forum would take place in Ireland in late 2022.

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