

**Country/entity** Ireland  
United Kingdom  
Northern Ireland

**Region** Europe and Eurasia

**Agreement name** Agreement Reached on Departments and Cross-border Bodies

**Date** 18 Dec 1998

**Agreement status** Multiparty signed/agreed

**Interim arrangement** Yes

**Agreement/conflict level** Intrastate/intrastate conflict

### Northern Ireland Conflict (1968 - 1998)

Commonly referred to as 'the Troubles', the most recent conflict over the territory of Northern Ireland can be framed as beginning in 1968 and ending with the Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement) in 1998. While the genesis of the conflict was closely related to pressures for the state to reform with relation to discrimination against the (minority) Catholic population, the core issue of the conflict as it proceeded was the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, which was contested between the unionist/loyalist (mostly Protestant) majority, who wanted the territory to remain as part of the United Kingdom, and the nationalist/republican (mostly Catholic) minority, whose goal was to unite the six provincial counties with the Republic of Ireland. The thirty years prior to the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement were marked by inter-communal violence, active paramilitary groups, and the deployment of the British army in the province. Mediation by international actors, and dialogue between the British and Irish governments, and between the IRA and its representatives and the British Government eventually resulted in a ceasefire respected by the majority of combatants. Talks led to the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement which established a power-sharing system of governance between nationalist and unionist communities.

Close

Northern Ireland Conflict (1968 - 1998)

**Stage** Implementation/renegotiation

**Conflict nature** Government/territory

**Peace process** Northern Ireland peace process

**Parties** First Minister, Mr David Trimble, and the Deputy First Minister, Mr Seamus Mallon

**Third parties** -

**Description** The parties reached an agreement on a list of ten departments for the future government of Northern Ireland, and six cross-border implementation bodies comprising ministers from North and South of the border for the first time.

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<b>Agreement document</b>	<a href="#">UK_NI_981218_Agreement Reached on Departments and Cross-border Bodies.pdf (opens in new tab)</a>   <a href="#">Download PDF</a>
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## Groups

<b>Children/youth</b>	<p>Groups→Children/youth→Substantive Page 5-6, Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation</p> <p>In accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 (l) of Strand Two of the agreement, at least six matters are to be identified and agreed for cooperation through the mechanism of existing bodies in each separate jurisdiction.</p> <p>The matters below have been identified as suitable for initial consideration by the NSMC in this regard. It would be open to the NSMC, by agreement between the two sides, to consider other matters.</p> <p>...</p> <p>(iii) Education Education for Children with Special Needs (e.g. autism, hearing impairment); Educational Underachievement; Teacher Qualifications; School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges.</p>
<b>Disabled persons</b>	<p>Groups→Disabled persons→Substantive Page 5-6, Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation</p> <p>In accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 (l) of Strand Two of the agreement, at least six matters are to be identified and agreed for cooperation through the mechanism of existing bodies in each separate jurisdiction.</p> <p>The matters below have been identified as suitable for initial consideration by the NSMC in this regard. It would be open to the NSMC, by agreement between the two sides, to consider other matters.</p> <p>...</p> <p>(iii) Education Education for Children with Special Needs (e.g. autism, hearing impairment).</p>
<b>Elderly/age</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Migrant workers</b>	No specific mention.

<b>Racial/ethnic/ national group</b>	<p>Groups→Racial/ethnic/national group→Substantive Page 5-6, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Language Irish Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promotion of the Irish language;</li> <li>- facilitating and encouraging its use in speech and writing in public and private life in the South and, in the context of Part 111 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language, in Northern Ireland, where there is appropriate demand;</li> <li>- advising both administrations, public bodies and other groups in the private and voluntary sectors;</li> <li>- undertaking supportive projects, and grant aiding bodies and groups as considered necessary;</li> <li>- undertaking research, promotional campaigns, and public and media relations;</li> <li>- developing terminology and dictionaries;</li> <li>- supporting Irish medium education and the teaching of Irish.</li> </ul> <p>Ulster Scots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and of Ulster Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island.</li> </ul>
<b>Religious groups</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Indigenous people</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Other groups</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Refugees/displaced persons</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Social class</b>	No specific mention.

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## Gender

<b>Women, girls and gender</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Men and boys</b>	No specific mention.
<b>LGBTI</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Family</b>	No specific mention.

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**State definition**

**Nature of state (general)** No specific mention.

**State configuration** No specific mention.

**Self determination** No specific mention.

**Referendum** No specific mention.

**State symbols** No specific mention.

**Independence/secession** No specific mention.

**Accession/unification** No specific mention.

**Border delimitation** No specific mention.

**Cross-border provision**

Page 1-2, 6.

The agreement required a "work programme" on at least 12 matters, six being new implementation bodies, and six being matters for cooperation. The six implementation bodies (Annex 2) are:

- \* Inland Waterways;
- \* Food Safety;
- \* Trade and Business Development;
- \* Special EU Programmes;
- \* Language (Irish and Ulster Scots);
- \* Aquaculture and Marine Matters.

Page 2, 7.

7. The six areas for cooperation (Annex 3) include some aspects of:

- \* Transport;
- \* Agriculture;
- \* Education;
- \* Health;
- \* Environment
- \* Tourism

[Summary: Annex 2 lists the functions of the implementation bodies, for full provisions see categories 'business', 'water', and 'cultural heritage'].

Page 5-6, Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation

In accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 (l) of Strand Two of the agreement, at least six matters are to be identified and agreed for cooperation through the mechanism of existing bodies in each separate jurisdiction. The matters below have been identified as suitable for initial consideration by the NSMC in this regard. It would be open to the NSMC, by agreement between the two sides, to consider other matters.

(i) Transport Strategic planning and development of cross-Border cooperation in transport: while cooperation would primarily arise in respect of road and rail planning, it would take account of issues arising in the port and airport sectors; road and rail safety.

(ii) Agriculture Discussion of CAP issues; Animal and Plant Health Policy and Research; Rural Development.

(iii) Education Education for Children with Special Needs (e.g. autism, hearing impairment); Educational Underachievement; Teacher Qualifications; School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges.

(iv) Health Accident and emergency planning; cooperation on high technology equipment; cancer research; health promotion.

(v) Environment Research into environmental protection; water quality management and waste management in cross-Border context.

(vi) Tourism Establishment of publicly owned limited company as set out below...

[Summary: Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation details services of the co-operation body on tourism matters].

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## Governance

<b>Political institutions (new or reformed)</b>	<p>Governance→Political institutions (new or reformed)→New political institutions (indefinite)</p> <p>Page 1, 5.</p> <p>As regards departments (Annex 1), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will have an Economic Policy Unit and special responsibility for equality. There will be 10 departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Agriculture and Rural Development;</li><li>* Environment;</li><li>* Regional Development;</li><li>* Social Development;</li><li>* Education;</li><li>* Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment;</li><li>* Enterprise, Trade and Investment;</li><li>* Culture, Arts and Leisure;</li><li>* Health, Social Services and Public Safety;</li><li>* Finance and Personnel.</li></ul> <p>[Summary: Annex 1 lists categories for the central functions of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister Economic Policy Unit; Equality.]</p>
<b>Elections</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Electoral commission</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Political parties reform</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Civil society</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Traditional/religious leaders</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Public administration</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Constitution</b>	No specific mention.

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## Power sharing

<b>Political power sharing</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Territorial power sharing</b>	No specific mention.

**Economic power sharing** No specific mention.

**Military power sharing** No specific mention.

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## **Human rights and equality**

**Human rights/RoL general** No specific mention.

**Bill of rights/similar** No specific mention.

**Treaty incorporation** Page 5-6, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Language  
Irish Language:  
...- facilitating and encouraging its use in speech and writing in public and private life in the South and, in the context of Part 111 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language, in Northern Ireland, where there is appropriate demand;...

**Civil and political rights** No specific mention.

**Socio-economic rights** No specific mention.

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## **Rights related issues**

**Citizenship** No specific mention.

**Democracy** No specific mention.

**Detention procedures** No specific mention.

**Media and communication** No specific mention.

**Mobility/access** No specific mention.

**Protection measures** No specific mention.

**Other** No specific mention.

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## **Rights institutions**

**NHRI** No specific mention.

**Regional or international human rights institutions** No specific mention.

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## **Justice sector reform**

**Criminal justice and emergency law** No specific mention.

**State of emergency provisions** No specific mention.

**Judiciary and courts** No specific mention.

**Prisons and detention** No specific mention.

**Traditional Laws** No specific mention.

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## **Socio-economic reconstruction**

**Development or socio-economic reconstruction** Socio-economic reconstruction→Development or socio-economic reconstruction→Socio-economic development  
Page 1, 5.  
As regards departments (Annex 1), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will have an Economic Policy Unit and special responsibility for equality. There will be 10 departments: \* Agriculture and Rural Development;... \* Regional Development; \* Social Development; \* Education; \* Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment;... \* Health, Social Services and Public Safety;...  
  
Page 6, Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation  
...(iii) Education Education for Children with Special Needs (e.g. autism, hearing impairment); Educational Underachievement; Teacher Qualifications; School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges...

**National economic plan** No specific mention.

**Natural resources** No specific mention.

**International funds** No specific mention.

**Business**

Page 1, 5.

As regards departments (Annex 1), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will have an Economic Policy Unit and special responsibility for equality. There will be 10 departments:... \* Enterprise, Trade and Investment;...

Page 1-2, 6.

The agreement required a "work programme" on at least 12 matters, six being new implementation bodies, and six being matters for cooperation. The six implementation bodies (Annex 2) are:... \* Trade and Business Development;...

Page 4-6, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Trade and Business Development

A body to exchange information and coordinate work on trade, business development and related matters, in areas where the two administrations specifically agree it would be in their mutual interest. The specific areas of implementation would include:

- cooperation on business development opportunities, North and South;
  - devising new approaches to business development in a cross-Border context, in such areas as research, training, marketing and quality improvement;
  - supporting business by making recommendations to increase enterprise competitiveness in a north-south context in areas such as skills availability, telecoms, IT and electronic commerce;
  - promotion of north-south
  - trade and supply chains, including through business linkages and partnerships; promoting cross-Border trade events and marketing initiatives;
  - identifying new areas of trade between North and South;
  - promoting market awareness and trade development in a north-south context;
  - undertaking specific projects and events in relation to trade promotion, when tasked jointly on a project by project basis;
  - providing advice on specific aspects of trade promotion when tasked jointly to do so.
- Existing economic agencies North and South would continue to be funded by and operate under the direction of their respective administrations.

**Taxation**

No specific mention.

**Banks**

No specific mention.

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**Land, property and environment**

**Land reform/rights** No specific mention.

**Pastoralist/  
nomadism rights** No specific mention.

## **Cultural heritage**

Land, property and environment→Cultural heritage→Promotion

Page 1-2, 6.

The agreement required a "work programme" on at least 12 matters, six being new implementation bodies, and six being matters for cooperation. The six implementation bodies (Annex 2) are:...\* Language (Irish and Ulster Scots);...

Page 5-6, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Language

Irish Language:

- promotion of the Irish language;
- facilitating and encouraging its use in speech and writing in public and private life in the South and, in the context of Part 111 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language, in Northern Ireland, where there is appropriate demand;
- advising both administrations, public bodies and other groups in the private and voluntary sectors;
- undertaking supportive projects, and grant aiding bodies and groups as considered necessary;
- undertaking research, promotional campaigns, and public and media relations;
- developing terminology and dictionaries;
- supporting Irish medium education and the teaching of Irish.

Ulster Scots:

- promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and of Ulster Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island.

## **Environment**

Page 1, 5.

As regards departments (Annex 1), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will have an Economic Policy Unit and special responsibility for equality. There will be 10 departments:...\* Environment;...

Page 2, 7.

7. The six areas for cooperation (Annex 3) include some aspects of:...\* Environment...

Page 6, Annex 3, Matters for Co-operation

...(v) Environment Research into environmental protection; water quality management and waste management in cross-Border context.

**Water or riparian rights or access**

Page 1-2, 6.

The agreement required a "work programme" on at least 12 matters, six being new implementation bodies, and six being matters for cooperation. The six implementation bodies (Annex 2) are: \* Inland Waterways;...\* Aquaculture and Marine Matters.

Page 3, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Inland Waterways

A body with the following functions:

- Management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes:
- immediately in respect of the Shannon-Erne waterway and of the possible restoration and development of the Ulster Canal;
- progressively thereafter, in respect of the wider Shannon-Erne system and the island's other waterways (principally the Royal Canal, Grand Canal, Barrow and Lagan).

The body would take on the functions, together with the appropriate support functions, exercised in that regard by the Waterways Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Rivers Agency of the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland, and would also take over the functions of Shannon-Erne Waterway Promotions Ltd.

Page 3, Annex 2, Implementation Bodies, Aquaculture and Marine Matters

A body with the following functions:

Lough Foyle and Carlingford

- Lough Promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough, for commercial and recreational purposes;
- Existing functions of Foyle Fisheries Commission in regard to inland fisheries conservation, protection, management and development and equivalent functions in respect of Carlingford Lough;
- Development and licensing of aquaculture;
- Development of marine tourism;...

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**Security sector**

**Security Guarantees**

No specific mention.

**Ceasefire**

No specific mention.

**Police**

No specific mention.

**Armed forces**

No specific mention.

**DDR**

No specific mention.

**Intelligence services**

No specific mention.

<b>Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Withdrawal of foreign forces</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Corruption</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Crime/organised crime</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Drugs</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Terrorism</b>	No specific mention.
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## **Transitional justice**

<b>Transitional justice general</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Amnesty/pardon</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Courts</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Mechanism</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Prisoner release</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Vetting</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Victims</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Missing persons</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Reparations</b>	No specific mention.
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<b>Reconciliation</b>	No specific mention.
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## **Implementation**

**UN signatory** No specific mention.

**Other international signatory** No specific mention.

**Referendum for agreement** No specific mention.

**International mission/force/similar** No specific mention.

**Enforcement mechanism** No specific mention.

**Related cases** No specific mention.

**Source** CAIN Web Service  
<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/tm181298.htm>

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