



Communiqué

Summit – Isle of Man – 28th November 2014

Digital Inclusion tops the agenda at the first e-summit of the British-Irish Council

Digital inclusion – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from information technology – was the main topic under discussion at a Summit meeting of the British-Irish Council held in the Isle of Man today.

Although this was the 23rd Summit of the Council, it was its first 'e-summit', with i-pads replacing paper on delegates' desks in the Villa Marina complex, Douglas.

The event was hosted by the Chief Minister of the Isle of Man Hon Allan Bell MHK, who welcomed the heads of delegations. The Irish Government delegation was led by An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD. The UK Government delegation was led by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by the deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MLA and the Minister for Finance and Personnel, Mr Simon Hamilton MLA. The Welsh Government delegation was led by First Minister the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM. The Scottish Government delegation was led by the First Minister, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP. The Government of Jersey delegation was led by the Chief Minister, Senator Ian Gorst, and the Government of Guernsey by the Chief Minister, Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

The British-Irish Council, established under the 1998 Multi-Party Agreement, continues to play a unique and important role in furthering, promoting and developing links between its Member Administrations through positive, practical relationships and in providing a forum for consultation and exchange of information on matters of mutual interest.

The Economy

The Council discussed the improving economic situation in Member Administrations, recognising the economic interconnections and partnerships that exist between them. The Council reviewed the various initiatives in place to stimulate the economy and acknowledged the continuing value of these regular discussions in relation to the economy.

Digital Inclusion

The Council discussed the benefits and increasing importance of digital participation in everyday life and reviewed audio visual material produced by the work sector as a collaborative effort to highlight these benefits. Delegates were updated on examples of work under way in the different BIC jurisdictions to promote digital inclusion.

The Council agreed the importance of ensuring everyone in their jurisdictions has the opportunity to share in the benefits of technology and the internet and of its potential contribution towards wider government policies, for example tackling issues like social isolation. The Council agreed that officials in the BIC Digital Inclusion work sector should continue to collaborate on the common themes of 'People, Partnerships and Policies' and investigate potential opportunities for research co-operation.

Update on Work Sectors

The Council received an update on the work that had taken place across each of the twelve work sectors since the last Summit in June 2014 and noted the decisions made at the three successful BIC Ministerial meetings held in that time. Further Ministerial discussions are planned in a number of work sectors for 2015.

The Council also reviewed the latest youth employment statistics across the Administrations and welcomed the encouraging picture emerging in this important area.

BIC Secretariat

The Council noted the Secretariat's mid-year progress against its business plan.

Date and Location of the Next Summit Meeting

The Council noted that the next BIC Summit would be hosted by the Irish Government in June 2015 with a focus on the Use and Misuse of Alcohol.

BIC Secretariat
28 November 2014

List of Delegates

<u>Isle of Man Government</u>	
Chief Minister	Hon Allan Bell MHK
Minister for Policy and Reform	Hon Chris Robertshaw MHK
<u>Irish Government</u>	
An Taoiseach	Mr Enda Kenny TD
Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources	Mr Alex White TD
<u>UK Government</u>	
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General	Rt Hon Francis Maude MP
<u>Northern Ireland Executive</u>	
deputy First Minister	Mr Martin McGuinness MLA
Minister for Finance and Personnel	Mr Simon Hamilton MLA
Minister for Education	Mr John O'Dowd MLA
<u>Scottish Government</u>	
First Minister	Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs	Ms Fiona Hyslop MSP
<u>Welsh Government</u>	
First Minister	Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty	Ms Lesley Griffiths AM
<u>Government of Jersey</u>	
Chief Minister	Senator Ian Gorst
Assistant Chief Minister	Senator Paul Routier MBE
<u>Government of Guernsey</u>	
Chief Minister	Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq