

Policy paper

Joint statement of 8 May 2019 between the UK Government and Government of Ireland on the Common Travel Area

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Joint Statement on the Common Travel Area

Recognising the deep and enduring relationship between our two countries, the governments of Ireland and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have today entered into a Memorandum of Understanding reaffirming our joint commitment to the Common Travel Area (CTA), and to maintaining the associated rights and privileges of Irish and British citizens under this longstanding reciprocal arrangement.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed for Ireland by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney T.D. and for the United Kingdom by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, the Right Honourable David Lidington CBE MP.

The CTA involving Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man facilitates the ability of Irish and British citizens to move freely within the CTA. Flowing from this right to move freely are associated reciprocal rights and privileges that are enjoyed daily by British citizens in Ireland, and Irish citizens in the UK. These include access to employment, healthcare, all levels of education, and social benefits on the same basis as citizens of the other State, as well as the right to vote in local and national parliamentary elections.

In entering into this Memorandum of Understanding, the two governments today reaffirm the standing of Irish and British citizens in each other's countries by virtue of the CTA. For generations, Irish and British people have moved seamlessly between our countries, and developed deep and lasting ties. Although predating it, the CTA has also underpinned the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement. The CTA has and will continue to enhance and nurture bilateral relations between our countries.

Both the Government of Ireland and the UK Government are committed to maintaining the CTA in all circumstances, recognising it pre-dates Irish and UK membership of the European Union and is not dependent on it. Neither Irish citizens in the UK nor British citizens in Ireland are required to take any action to protect their status and rights associated with the CTA. Both governments are committed to undertake all the work necessary, including through legislative provision, to ensure that the agreed CTA rights and privileges are protected.

In entering into this Memorandum of Understanding, the governments of Ireland and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm the immensely important and enduring nature of the relationship between our two countries and the unique ties between our citizens.