

UK UPDATE

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The UK Update provides up-to-date information on UK-EU, and UK-Ireland relations, bringing together relevant statements and policy positions from key players in Ireland, the UK and the EU.

The Update is part of a wider communications programme covering the work of the IIEA's UK Project Group – including commentaries, speeches, texts and event reports – which are highlighted on the Institute's website. (www.iea.com)

Introduction

The fact that Mark Carruthers could devote most of an edition of *The View* to a detailed discussion of the state of roads in Northern Ireland was notable and welcome evidence that Stormont was back to normal business.

Then, as a shocking example of “events, dear boy,” came the arrest of Jeffrey Donaldson and his resignation which at once led to uncertainty about the stability of the Stormont situation. However, within two days, First Minister Michelle O’Neill had confirmed that she had spoken with the other party leaders in the Stormont Executive, including the interim DUP leader Gavin Robinson, and that they agreed there was no threat to the devolved Government. She insisted that her priority is “stability and cohesion,” which the Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton Harris welcomed as pledges by the Stormont leaders to ensure the stability of the power-sharing institutions. The Dublin Government equally welcomed the leaders’ approach, indicating on-going cooperation with the Northern Ireland Executive.

Section One: State of Play

The first meeting of the new East-West Council 26 March 2024

The East-West Council, established under the terms of the DUP deal allowing restoration of the Stormont institutions, met in London for the first time on 26 March 2024.

A detailed statement was issued by the Council, describing the focus of the group as: “trade promotion, connectivity, and culture and skills.” The Council was established as part of the *Safeguarding the Union* Command Paper published by the UK Government in January this year ahead of the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland. The

Council meeting took place in Dover House, London and was chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, Michael Gove. In attendance at the meeting were: the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton-Harris; Minister of State for Northern Ireland and the Cabinet Office, Steve Baker; the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Jacob Young; Northern Ireland's First Minister, Michelle O'Neill; Deputy First Minister, Emma Little-Pengelly; the Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy; and Communities Minister, Gordon Lyons.

The report of the Council's meeting referred to the following measures endorsed by the Council:

- The publication of the prospectus for the new Enhanced Investment Zone in Northern Ireland.
- The EIZ will make available £150m for Northern Ireland to capitalise on its unique opportunities, and the funding could be able to be used flexibly across spending and tax levers.
- The UK Government will work collaboratively with the NI Executive and its departments to co-develop proposal.
- An award of £5.9 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to improve adult numeracy in Northern Ireland.
- The Department for the Economy will work in partnership with councils, colleges, and universities to deliver the funding.
- An award of £11.2 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to invest in Northern Ireland to increase the number of innovation active businesses, accelerate the diffusion and take up of new technologies and innovations, and support businesses in important sectors such as manufacturing, health and life sciences, and agri-food to develop and grow.

The report stated the purpose of the Council:

The purpose of the Council is to strengthen cooperation between Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK by advising on shared challenges and opportunities with an East-West dimension. The East-West Council will bring together key representatives from government, business, education, trade, transport, and culture sectors, encouraging collaboration between ministers and industry experts. The membership of the Council will have a strong East-West dimension and attendance will reflect the issues being addressed.

Ministers appeared happy with the Council meeting and made the following statements regarding its progress.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton-Harris:

Today's inaugural East-West Council has enabled the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive to agree this new body's direction and our shared priorities. I am confident that this new forum will provide an effective mechanism for our continuing work with Northern Ireland Executive colleagues to progress prosperity and cultural initiatives. In addition, the publication of plans for the £150m Enhanced Investment Zone and announcement of more than £17m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund reflect the UK Government's continuing commitment to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland. As the Command Paper made clear, economic, and cultural opportunities are a strength of the Union. We want to support and reinvigorate social and cultural networks across the United Kingdom, creating links between communities to enable sharing of skills, experience, and cultural ties.

First Minister of Northern Ireland Michelle O'Neill:

Today's meeting was a useful engagement where a range of matters were discussed between Executive Ministers and the British Government, including funding streams. It's important that any funding aligns with our priorities to support workers, families and communities. We also discussed the legacy impact for grassroots communities which the legacy of the Euros must leave, and that will remain a continuing conversation.

Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland Emma Little-Pengelly:

I welcome the progress made at today's inaugural meeting of the East-West Council. I am particularly pleased with the publication of the prospectus for the £150m Enhanced Investment Zone and the announcement of awards totalling £17m through the Shared Prosperity Fund. The council will play a vital role, enhancing the links between the NI Executive and the UK Government and providing a forum for us to work together on a wide range of issues across trade, transport, education, and culture to deliver real benefits for everyone in Northern Ireland.

The Sinn Féin First Minister of Northern Ireland Michelle O'Neill and DUP Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly insisted that this new body, aimed at strengthening links across the UK, does not undermine the existing political structures of the Good Friday Agreement.

The Safeguarding the Union Command Paper stated that the objectives of the Council are:

To provide regular, sustained engagement between UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive representatives, businesses, and university representatives in areas such as trade, transport, education, and culture. To establish Intertrade UK to promote trade within the UK. To take forward the Council's missions below, addressing risks and opportunities, to find solutions to shared challenges. To raise the profile of the opportunities Northern Ireland offers by supporting connectivity between business, skills, trade, and innovation within the UK, and connections across other parts of the UK to Northern Ireland. To drive UK-wide engagement on the development and sharing of existing clusters of excellence. To ensure the profile of Northern Ireland is appropriately considered in business and government decision-making.

First motion on extension of EU law to Northern Ireland defeated at Assembly

RTÉ reported on the EU trade regulation proposal that was defeated at Stormont. The vote divided Stormont Parties, with Unionist voting against, Sinn Féin, Alliance and the SDLP voted for the proposal. The regulation would establish a scheme to offer geographical indicator status to craft and industrial goods, like the existing one for food products, such as Parma ham and Comber spuds. It limits their production to certain areas and to a defined standard and is considered a useful marketing tool which can add value.

While 49 of the 81 MLAs who voted, backed adoption of the regulation, the motion failed to receive any support from unionists. As the vote required cross community backing it was deemed to have been defeated. It will now fall to the UK government to decide whether to approve the regulation for Northern Ireland. A UK minister can only do so if they can argue there are exceptional circumstances, or the new regulation will not have a significant impact on internal trade.

Eighty-one MLAs voted in the Stormont debate of whom 49 voted in favour. Thirty-three nationalists including all Sinn Féin and SDLP MLAs and several independents backed it. Sixteen other MLAs - including the Alliance grouping, also voted in support. Thirty-two unionists voted with none of them supporting the motion.

For the DUP, Jonathan Buckley MLA argued that the proposed regulation would add “56 pages of EU law to the Windsor Framework” and create a new regulatory border that would impact internal UK trade. According to RTÉ the DUP were seen to be using the debate and vote to demonstrate that its decision to return to Stormont has given the Assembly an important say over the application of EU law in Northern Ireland.

The SDLP said the DUP position was little more than a “stunt” which could negatively impact businesses who wanted to avail of the scheme. Matthew O’Toole MLA accused the DUP of “being in a rush to prove their anti-EU machismo and argued that the DUP’s approach in blocking Northern Ireland participation in new protections for craft manufacturing could have real-world consequences for our amazing craft producers.” He further commented that this was a missed opportunity for family-owned businesses in the sector:

With the North being full of amazing family-owned producers in crafts, including textiles, ceramics and woodwork losing participation in this scheme would be a real loss to a part of our economy that is critical to our broader tourist offer and international reputation, especially if the rest of the island is participating.

DUP leader (at the time), Sir Jeffrey Donaldson dismissed the SDLP comments and insisted that his party would assess each new EU law on its own merit.

There is a democratic scrutiny committee that has now been established at Stormont, thanks to the negotiations that were undertaken by the DUP. And it is the role of that committee to assess the potential impact that any such law will have. So, we will take it on a case-by-case basis...

You can read the RTÉ article [here](#).

The BBC also covered the use of vote with cross-community consent, explaining the use of the process in applying some EU laws in Northern Ireland:

The debate at Stormont involved using one of the democratic consent processes in the Windsor Framework. The framework is the special Brexit deal which applies to Northern Ireland and means it continues to follow some EU laws relating to goods. It provides ways for Stormont to show if it consents to new or amended EU laws applying in Northern Ireland. Under this mechanism - known as an applicability motion - the UK said it would not agree to new EU laws being applied in NI unless the assembly passes it in a vote with cross-community consent.

You can read the BBC article [here](#).

Varadkar Resignation 20 March 2024

On 20 March 2024 the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, announced his intention to resign as Leader of Fine Gael and as Taoiseach.

Mr Varadkar explained that decision was both personal and political and believes that Fine Gael will be able to part of the next elected government.

When I became Party Leader and Taoiseach back in June 2017, I knew that one part of leadership is knowing when the time has come to pass on the baton to someone else. And then having the courage to do it. That time is now.

My reasons for stepping down now are personal and political, but mainly political. I believe this government can be re-elected. I believe my Party, Fine Gael, can gain seats in the next Dáil. Most of all, I believe that would be the right thing for the future of our country, continuing to take us forward. Protecting what we achieved and building on it. After careful consideration and some soul-searching, I believe a new Taoiseach will be better-placed than me to achieve that - to renew and strengthen the top team, to refocus our message and policies, and to drive implementation. After seven years in office, I am no longer the best person for that job.

This is a short extract from Mr Varadkar's statement at government buildings. The full statement can be read [here](#).

The British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak commended Leo Varadkar for his "dedicated service over the years" and made reference to their collaboration on the recent restoration of institutions in Northern Ireland.:

In Belfast, the DUP leader (at the time) Jeffrey Donaldson wished Mr Varadkar well:

Leo Varadkar and I were very often on different ends of the political spectrum. We differed on the Republic of Ireland's approach to legacy, and sharply differed on his approach and attitude on the Protocol and the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. Where we differed, we did so respectfully. There were other areas where we were able to work together on matters of mutual benefit for both our countries. I wish Mr Varadkar well as he steps down from leadership.

Simon Harris Election 24 March 2024

The Minister for Higher and Further Education, Simon Harris TD was elected, unopposed, as Leader of Fine Gael on 24 March with the prospect of succeeding Leo Varadkar as Taoiseach on 9 April.

Speaking shortly after his election, Simon Harris commented on the importance of the relationship between Ireland and the UK which, he argued, has improved over the past year. Mr Harris said he looked forward to engaging with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as well as the recently restored power sharing Executive in Northern Ireland.

We have seen real progress around the Windsor Framework, we have seen real progress in relation to the Northern Ireland institutions back up and running. That is really important. I am determined to work with the Northern Ireland Executive. I look forward to the first North-South Ministerial Council taking place.

I welcome, should I be given the honour of serving in the office of Taoiseach, an opportunity to engage early with the British prime minister. This country remains strongly pro-European, our home in the European Union is crucial to who we are, to our identity and to our economic success but good strong economic, social, personal and interpersonal relations with our nearest neighbour in the United Kingdom is always going to be a major, major part of Ireland's diplomatic policy.

Mr Harris spoke of hosting a reception in London where he met with a number of MPs.

And I did say to them I do think Irish-British relations are in a much better place this March than they were last March. There are challenges in the relationship, like there are in any relationship. We are all aware of the Legacy Bill and the recent court rulings in Northern Ireland. Those matters need to be worked through. I am proud of the position adopted by the Irish Government. One that wasn't done lightly at all, but that we will stand by victims and survivors and make sure they have an opportunity for truth and justice.

DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, commented:

I congratulate Simon Harris on becoming Fine Gael Leader. The Republic of Ireland is our nearest neighbour. It is sensible that we work together on matters of mutual benefit. As with his predecessors, we trust he will respect the Three Stranded approach to our respective relationships. I will also be encouraging him at an early stage in his leadership to think again on the Republic's refusal to hold a public inquiry into the 1998 Omagh Bomb.

You can read the full article by Jonathan Mccambridge [here](#).

Northern Ireland in Washington DC - St Patricks Day 2024

The First and Deputy First Ministers, Michelle O'Neill and Emma Little-Pengelly, travelled to the United States to take part in a series of trade and leadership events and to attend the annual St Patrick's ceremony at the White House. This was the first joint visit by Northern Ireland Executive leaders since Arlene Foster and Martin McGuinness met US President Barack Obama in 2016. The programme in Washington DC will include the traditional Northern Ireland Bureau breakfast.

In the White House, President Joe Biden and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar spoke at the traditional St. Patrick's Day Dinner:

President Biden:

Look, we also have friends here today from Northern Ireland: The First Minister and Deputy First Minister - Michelle, Emma. Where are you? It's great to have you here. And I was very happy to see Northern Ireland's Executive Assembly reinstated last month. Now, Northern Ireland has a fully functioning government again.

Leo Varadkar:

Mr. President, as you know, today we're joined here in the White House by Michelle O'Neill as First Minister and Emma Little-Pengelly as Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland - joint office in which they are co-equal - two courageous women, demonstrating every day what's possible by putting aside old animosities and working together. I think they have got off to a great start. The Irish Government is working with them and the Executive in Belfast to build on the peace and prosperity that has been achieved in the last 26 years and to make sure it is shared by all. The Good Friday Agreement is working again. And thank you all so much for making that possible.

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Chris Heaton-Harris, also visited Washington and New York for the celebrations. While there, he held meetings with US figures, updating them on the current political situation now that the Assembly and Executive are fully functioning. In a statement, Mr Heaton-Harris said:

I am absolutely thrilled to represent the UK Government in the United States this week as we begin the celebrations for St. Patrick's Day. The UK and US do more together than any other two countries in the world. The special relationship is highly valued by this Government, and we continue to appreciate the strong relationships we've formed from leader level down. I look forward to meeting with US representatives and business organisations to update them on the monumental achievement of the return of power sharing in Northern Ireland and to highlight the fantastic investment opportunities waiting to be seized.

North South Ministerial Council

The first meeting of the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in more than 2½ years will be held in Armagh on 8 April 2024 and will be Leo Varadkar's last official engagement as Taoiseach. The Council's large-scale meetings between Irish ministers and their counterparts in Northern Ireland did not take place while power sharing was on hold.

With the Northern Ireland Executive restored and fully operative, First Minister Michelle O'Neill and Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly will host ministers from the Republic at the Council offices in Armagh on 8 April, the day before new Fine Gael leader Simon Harris is elected Taoiseach. Ministers from both sides of the Border are to hear details of a progress report on economic matters and North-South cooperation and will plan for a series of ministerial-level sectoral meetings. The Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Tánaiste Micheál Martin have briefed colleagues on the Council event during the Taoiseach's final Cabinet meeting.

UK Opinion Poll predicts Tory defeat

The ruling Conservative Party is on course to suffer a heavy defeat in the coming general election, winning fewer than 100 seats according to a new poll, the *Sunday Times* has reported. The detailed analysis gives the Tories 98 seats compared with Labour's 468, giving Sir Keir Starmer a massive 286-seat majority.

The 15,000-person poll, conducted by agency *Survation* on behalf of *Best for Britain*, gives Labour a 45% vote share with a 19-point lead over the Conservatives. The analysis forecasts that Reform UK will come second in seven seats and achieve an overall vote share of 8.5%, just behind the Liberal Democrats on 10.4%. The poll also suggests the Scottish National Party would pick up 41 seats, the Liberal Democrats 22 and Plaid Cymru 2. It further implies that the Prime Minister himself is at risk of losing his own constituency, the new Richmond & Northallerton seat in North Yorkshire, to Labour with his lead less than 2.5 percentage points.

At the 2019 election the Conservatives, led by Boris Johnson, won 365 seats, Labour 203, the SNP 48, the Lib Dems 11 and Plaid Cymru 4.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith, former leader of the Conservative Party, has commented on the poll findings, saying that the public feels a "real anger" towards the Government and said voters had good reasons to be "angry, annoyed and fed up" with his party over legal and illegal immigration, and a record post-war tax burden.

You can read *The Guardian* article on the poll findings [here](#).

Section Two: The Evolving Debate

Diversity in UK politics

The election of Vaughan Gething as First Minister of Wales is remarkable as evidence of the increasing diversity of the UK population. Gething, of Zambian parentage, is the first Black politician to achieve the top position in a devolved administration.

The Prime Minister of the UK, Rishi Sunak, is the son of Indian parents while the First Minister of Scotland, Humza Yousaf, is the son of Pakistani immigrants. In Northern Ireland, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neill, and Emma Little-Pengelly, are from the Catholic and Protestant communities. Additionally, in Dublin, Leo Varadkar of Indian parentage held the position of Taoiseach until recent days.

UK and Varadkar

An Irish Times review has looked at some British attitudes to the departing Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, arguing that the Conservatives were unprepared for a politician to pursue Ireland's national interest at Britain's cost. The thinking behind the "commanding heights" of the Conservative establishment was, in short, "Who on earth does Varadkar think he is?" According to the author, Finn McRedmond, "In a narrow stereotype of the Irish, Varadkar appeared an interloper: gay, half-Indian, young."

Some years later the new reality has emerged that "Ireland was no vassal, but instead a fully formed nation with soft power and a national interest distinct from that its neighbours." Mr Varadkar was clearly responsible for reminding London that Ireland is not too small to be anything but a useful fool when it comes to the big questions of the world.

Ms McRedmond ends on a reflective note, remarking that Mr Varadkar was not just a passive symbol of a new Ireland:

His realpolitik, refusal to conform to expedient stereotype and his ability to command begrudging respect heralded it. The Conservative Party was slow to psychologically accept all of this. That they ever did in the first place is in no small part thanks to Ireland's trickiest Taoiseach.

You can read the *Irish Times* contribution [here](#).

The Guardian commented on Varadkar's departure, reflecting on his work with the UK Government to maintain east-west relations:

Yet Mr Varadkar stood up both to the unionists and to London when it mattered. It is in no small way down to him that there is now no hard border between north and south. It is his genuine legacy that the revised Northern Ireland protocol remains the basis of UK-Irish trade relations to this day, in spite of perfidious efforts in Belfast and London to overturn it. He stood firm for the good relations with Ireland that are in Britain's interests too - and he deserves our gratitude for it.

You can read more of *The Guardian* article [here](#).

Good Friday Reform Debate

The *Irish Times* addressed the ongoing debate on reform of the Good Friday Agreement, arguing that, despite much positive commentary, the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement is showing signs of age.

For years, there have been calls for reform. A quick Google search offers up 23,000 such references. However, the changes most easily made are the ones least likely to bring about improvement, while the ones that might do so seem impossible to bring about.

The article suggests steps going forward:

First, the Assembly's rules to elect a speaker must be changed so an election cannot be blocked by either Sinn Féin or the Democratic Unionist Party ever again. If done, it would enable the Assembly to sit, committees to operate and oversight to take place. Most importantly, the election of a speaker and the operation of Stormont would make it less likely that either of the two main parties would again abandon their posts since their exit would not bring down the entire edifice.

Currently, such matters require a cross-community vote made up of a majority of MLAs, including a majority of those designated as unionists, or nationalists, or a 60 per cent majority including 40 per cent of both designations.

A research study in the politics department at Queen's University Belfast, argues that the increasingly large third category in Northern Ireland, those who refuse to describe themselves as green or orange but are marked as "neither," must gain a greater voice.

Research Fellow Lisa Claire Whitten stated: "We are now in a position where the 'two-community assumption' on which the 1998 agreement was based is no longer reflective of our demographics or, more recently, our electoral make-up here."

The House of Commons' Northern Ireland Affairs Committee released a report last year which, in a similar manner, called for the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement to be reviewed alongside a citizen's assembly on the matter. The Committee also proposed that the First and Deputy First Ministers titles be changed to "Joint First Ministers," who would be elected by a weighted majority to prevent a veto by either main party, along with ensuring the election of a speaker.

The DUP opposed the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report, with its committee members publishing a minority paper. In addition to this, Sinn Féin declined to give evidence to the committee hearings, but later it said that the institutions should be reviewed by Stormont's Assembly and Executive Review Committee.

You can read the full *Irish Times* article [here](#).

Unionist Realignment

The *Belfast Newsletter* Editor Ben Lowry has contributed a brief but provocative piece to his paper on the situation arising from the dramatic departure of the DUP leader. Mr Lowry commented on the need for a unionist realignment, one which opposes "the nationalist direction of travel."

It has never been clearer to me that there needs to be a unionist realignment. The current division into three parties is not feasible but nor is a single unionist movement. There is barely any difference between a DUP leadership so moderate that it sounds at times like Alliance, and the moderate Ulster Unionist leadership, so why do they not merge?

At the same time, unionism is being assailed from so many angles, often oblique, and in so many ways, often subtle, that it needs a movement that firmly resists the nationalist direction of travel.

Mr Lowry went on to say that the departure of Sir Jeffrey may be the turning point for such a realignment, but that it would not be a smooth road to such a change.

It might be that the sudden collapse of Sir Jeffrey somehow kickstarts this realignment. But still there are huge obstacles to it, ranging from Doug Beattie's distrust of the DUP, which if anything has been heightened since the deal, which he thinks was badly oversold, to the ongoing refusal of the DUP sceptics to take any meaningful action against the Irish Sea border they so despise, let alone join Jim Allister.

You can read the full contribution [here](#).

UK Labour and the European Union

With a general election certain within a year and with all opinion polling pointing to a decisive Labour Party victory, much attention has been devoted to the party's likely policy stance on key issues, not least its approach to the UK's relationship with the European Union. A Guardian survey addressed this key point:

Keir Starmer swept to the Labour leadership as the man who put rejoining the EU on the party's agenda in the bleak years after the Brexit vote. But as he prepares for power, the chance of a Starmer government negotiating re-entry was summed up by the Labour peer Lord Mandelson this week: "you've got to be joking!"

The author Heather Stewart commented that Brexit barely features among voters' concerns, as inflation and the economy are the key factors that voters would like to see the government address. However, it is noted that Labour has started to mention Brexit more often in their statements, as we approach the next general election.

Since Rishi Sunak dialled down some of the tensions with the EU in recent months, Labour's top team have shifted from barely mentioning Brexit to promising to make the relationship work better – starting with security, an area where Russia's invasion of Ukraine has highlighted common interests.

It is recognised that some Labour insiders see regular engagement on the security agenda could lead to a broader consideration of issues such as energy, supply chains and migration. This could allow key questions to be addressed

and progress made prior to the scheduled review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves' has adopted the phrase "securonomics" to describe her approach to economic policy underlining the fact that Labour sees "security" as encompassing much more than defence and policing.

The author references the "red wall," that Labour would like to gain seats in, as a main reason why word of rejoining the EU will be kept to a minimum in the lead up to the General Election. However, Labour will not go without pressure from within the Party, with some MPs advocating for closer relations with the EU.

It is recognised that senior Labour figures are not prepared to consider any move back to membership of the EU single market or customs union, or a return of free movement. The party's policy strategists are clear that voters – particularly in the "red wall" seats Labour want to win back – would punish Labour for any suggestion of a deal with the EU that meant ceding control over who could come to the UK.

However, Labour in government is likely to face strong pressure from its own MPs to embrace closer EU ties. The Labour Movement for Europe, chaired by the backbencher Stella Creasy, is signing up candidates. "We have a choice: we can go quicker or slower in fixing the mess. The quicker we go, the better the benefits for the British public. People will start to join the dots: our relationship with Europe is at the heart of the frustrations they face, whether rising food prices and food shortages, travel backlogs, lost business, or lost influence about the world around us. That is only going to grow stronger."

The Guardian concludes, "Starmer's determination to take the heat out of Brexit for his party has helped propel Labour to the brink of power. But once he gets there, not everyone will consider the issue settled."

You can read *The Guardian* article [here](#).

Section Three: Background Material and Further Reading

Background Material

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Department of the Taoiseach. Speech by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at White House St. Patrick’s Day Shamrock Ceremony and Reception, 17 March 2024. <https://www.gov.ie/en/speech/14ff7-speech-by-taoiseach-leo-varadkar-td-white-house-st-patricks-day-shamrock-ceremony-and-reception/>

Further Reading

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