Cross-Border Cooperation, Peace and Reconciliation
Presentation to Causeway Group
8 June 2017
A Conflicted Border
British soldier patrols the border 1998
No return to a ‘hard’ border
Three major types of cross-border co-operation:

- Co-operation along the Border Corridor;
- Co-operation North/South within the island of Ireland; and
- Co-operation East/West between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, Europe and internationally.
Many core problems of the Irish border region – whether directly attributable or exacerbated by the conflict, or simply those that are related to geography or economic underdevelopment, do not respect jurisdictional boundaries.

Many problems associated with the border or issues of a cross-border nature cannot be effectively addressed within one or both jurisdictions separately.
Cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding

- The border has been a core issue in the conflict and has a central role in any sustainable peace process
- Cross-border cooperation adds value to peacebuilding and reconciliation
- Cross-border cooperation addresses a number of core conflict issues
Cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding

- Cross-border cooperation tackles a range of problems that are a direct legacy of the conflict, including:
  - the breakdown in cross-border relationships
  - isolation of border communities and
  - overall social and economic decline

- Cross-border cooperation gives added value to peacebuilding and reconciliation by addressing core conflict issues.
Imperatives for Cross-border cooperation

- 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement
- EU Cohesion Policy
The 1998 Agreement

Cross-border cooperation is a central element of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Strand Two: North/South Bodies
- to formalise cooperation between the government of the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as between civil servants in certain key areas

Strand Three: regular meetings between the two governments
- and between representatives from the governments and Executives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands
“Cohesion policy is the EU’s main instrument for pursuing harmonious development across the Union. It is based on a broad vision, which encompasses not just the economic development of lagging regions and support for vulnerable social groups, but also environmental sustainability and respect for territorial and cultural features of different parts of the EU. This breadth of vision is reflected in the variety of programmes, projects and partners that are supported under the policy.”

Investing in Europe’s Future: Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, November 2010
EU and cross-border cooperation

EU Territorial Cohesion Policy:

- to diminish the gap between different regions, more precisely between less-favoured regions and affluent ones
- to reduce inequalities and improve the potentiality of the territory by engaging more actors -- involving civil society
- 3 pillars of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.
Cross-border cooperation in Ireland

Cross-border cooperation

- predates the EU funds
- took place even at the height of the conflict

- Irish Council of Churches (1923)
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions/NIC ICTU (1945)
- IBEC / CBI
- Local Authorities (EBR – 1976)
- Cooperation Ireland (1979)
- International Fund for Ireland (1986)

- SCoTENS (2003)
- Universities Ireland (2003)
Border areas in Europe: often peripheral, underdeveloped or marginalised areas – sometimes “historical scars”

Cross-border cooperation helps “to reduce the effect of borders as administrative, legal and physical barriers, tackle common problems and exploit untapped potential”

EU cross-border funding programmes permitted the strategic upscaling of piecemeal cross-border activities to a level offering the potential for wider regional development.
“Common membership of the EU has been a force for reconciliation and a framework for cooperation on this island. Even in the context of the positive state of North-South and East-West relations a British exit from the EU would have extremely serious consequences irrespective of mitigation strategies.”

Paschal Donohoe, Irish Minister of State for EU Affairs, June 2014
EU Territorial Cooperation Programmes

- INTERREG
  - “To address problems that arise from the existence of borders”

- PEACE
  - “to reinforce a peaceful and stable society”
    - Unique to Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland
EU cross-border programmes (PEACE and INTERREG) mirror the objectives of the NSMC in the 1998 Agreement:

- “to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland – including on an all-island and cross-border basis – on matters of mutual interest”.

- funded projects contribute to the further embedding of Strand II
## EU Community Funding: PEACE and INTERREG Programmes
### Ireland/Northern Ireland 1994-2020

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<th>PEACE PROGRAMME</th>
<th>INTERREG programme</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>PEACE PROGRAMME</td>
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<td>INTERREG V</td>
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**ETCs 1994-2020: €2.759bn**
Community-based Peacebuilding

- **PEACE Programmes** were designed to catalyse middle and grass root activities in order to reinforce the climate for top-level negotiations, compensate for the costs of the conflict, and speed up the pace of overall development.

- activate ordinary citizens in a diverse range of projects, all of which obliged them to think about peace-building.
CBC: Lessons to share

- Cross-Border Cooperation Requires Multi-Level Governance

  - The EU-level anticipates impacts of future EU-initiatives on the cross-border territories
  - National-level support required to allow for coordination between neighboring states in relevant policy fields
  - Local and regional actors develop shared cross-border services and transfer real competencies to joint cross-border bodies
Benefits of Cross-Border Cooperation

- Improved or additional impacts

An Integrated Approach:

Three pillars of Sustainable Development

Social  Economic  Environmental  Cooperation

experiences should produce real interaction which promotes the achievement of shared objectives and lead to a final result that differs qualitatively from the sum of the several activities undertaken at the level of the two jurisdictions.

Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation
Centre for Cross Border Studies and Euro-Institute, 2011
Benefits of Cross-Border Cooperation

- **New ways of thinking** about local problems – perhaps because they are now being considered in the wider territorial context. Cross-border cooperation could contribute to **greater creativity and innovation**.

- **New ways of working** or more intensive collaboration than would otherwise be the case -- **Improved practice** -- ‘joined up’ solutions and innovative service development

- **Improved evidence bases and quality of information** -- **Improved policy** – Joint plans co-ordination, harmonisation or integration of policies, the formulation of joint recommendations, more systematic use of project results.

- People or organisations have **relationships** with each other that would not have developed otherwise

- Greater **cross-border mobility** of people for a wide variety of social, cultural or economic reasons
Administrative and legal barriers might prevent or constrain the effectiveness of the intervention

- **Administrative, legislative or regulatory changes** on one or both sides of the border may be needed;
- **New structures** may be required -- these might be temporary or permanent; formal or informal.

Few cross-border policy mechanisms
- projects may struggle to influence public policy and practice in both jurisdictions.

Projects have limited resources -- **Benefits of cross-border cooperation should reflect the expected investment of time, material and human resources**
(Lack of) POLITICAL WILL

(Lack of) LEADERSHIP

(Lack of) POLICY

(Weak) INSTITUTIONALISATION  
(Inadequate) RESOURCES
Cross-Border Cooperation ‘post-Brexit’

- Cross-border cooperation ‘post-Brexit’ should be a priority

- The **centrality of the border to the conflict** -- increased dangers arising from uncertainties about the nature of the border

- Increased tensions re **Migration and citizenship issues**

- **Social and economic cohesion** in the border region and other disadvantaged areas at risk