



CCBS marks 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement

10 April 2023

The Centre for Cross Border Studies is pleased to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Formed the year after the Agreement was signed, the Centre's work is framed by the commitment to cross-border cooperation which is an integral part of what was agreed.

This anniversary prompts us to look to the past; to the dark conflict over many years and the journey out of it which led to the agreement. Our collaboration with Brian Rowan for our '25 Pieces' project has been a moving exploration of all that happened to make the agreement possible, especially the leadership, courage and generosity of all those involved. These important pieces speak of a process where the Good Friday Agreement became a stepping stone to a more hopeful future.

As a stepping stone to 'a new beginning', the Good Friday Agreement is not a relic of the past. We, as the Centre for Cross Border Studies, live it, rely on it, every day. The Centre for Cross Border Studies is a child of the agreement. We were born to support the building of stronger relations and cooperation between the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, as well as between this island, Great Britain, and further afield. In essence, from our home in Armagh, we enact the spirit of Strands 2 and 3 of the Agreement.

However, we are just one part of this place, and this anniversary should remind each of us that the agreement is for all of us. We all have a stake in playing our part to ensure the cooperation that is made possible through the Agreement happens to ensure the mutual benefit of all.

We call especially on our political leaders across these islands, who have such an integral role, to fulfil the pledge made in the Declaration of Support that 'we will, in good faith, work to ensure the success of each and every one of the arrangements to be established under this agreement'. They need to show the same leadership, courage and generosity of those who negotiated the agreement.

The agreement was a remarkable achievement but this anniversary ought not be just a celebration of what was done then but a chance to focus our minds on what needs to happen in the future and the ongoing journey of peace and prosperity. A fresh commitment to the agreement and the institutions created by it will help us bring about that better future.