

Press release

Tánaiste Micheál Martin welcomes Council of Europe decision on Northern Ireland Legacy issues

From [Department of Foreign Affairs \(/en/organisation/department-of-foreign-affairs/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-foreign-affairs/).

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The Tánaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin, has welcomed an Interim Resolution adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg, which, once again, expressed serious concern about the UK's Legacy Bill currently before the House of Lords.

The Interim Resolution "strongly reiterated" its calls upon the authorities to reconsider the conditional immunity scheme in light of concerns expressed around its compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Committee also underlined "the importance for the success of any new investigative body, particularly if aimed at achieving truth and reconciliation, of gaining the confidence of victims, families of victims and potential witnesses".

In the Tánaiste's interactions with his UK counterparts he has consistently maintained that any way forward on legacy must be based on agreed human rights standards, with victims at its centre.

The Tánaiste said:

"Prior to this Resolution, the Council of Europe have, on four separate occasions, expressed its serious concerns about the Bill, and its compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights.

"Recent celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement have reminded us how a partnership approach between the two governments, and the support of Northern Ireland's political parties, has always been central to the Agreement's success.

"It is a matter of regret to my government that the Legacy Bill continues its legislative progress without the support of political parties in Northern Ireland, and without support from families, victims' groups or civil society.

"I believe that, by providing for amnesties for crimes amounting to gross human rights violations, the Bill, if enacted, would undermine rather than assist reconciliation."

The Committee's decision also referred to the delays in relation to the Finucane case, stating that 'In light of the significant delay there has been from the time of Mr Finucane's death and from the time of the Court's judgment and the Supreme Court declaration, the authorities should again be exhorted to provide a full and clear response including a decision on the measures they intend to take as soon as possible.'

Notes

An Interim Resolution, as adopted today, is a mechanism by which the Committee of Ministers can express particular concern regarding the progress of the execution of a decision. [Result details \(coe.int\) \(https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680ab8348\)](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680ab8348).

The Committee noted with serious concern the absence of tangible progress to sufficiently allay the concerns about the Bill's compatibility with the European Convention, the conditional immunity scheme or the proposal to terminate pending inquests that have not reached substantive hearings by 1 May 2023; while noting also the authorities' position that delayed legislative passage has prevented.

The Committee strongly reiterated its calls upon the authorities to sufficiently amend the Bill to allay the concerns about compatibility with the European Convention.

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