

**Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer MP**

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**Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD**

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**Subject: Shared business priorities for the UK-Ireland Summit 2026**

Dear Prime Minister and Taoiseach,

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec), the leading business voices in the UK and Ireland, welcome your continued leadership and commitment to a strengthened UK-Ireland relationship as co-guarantors of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. In an increasingly uncertain geopolitical and economic environment, close cooperation between our two countries is critical to deliver both growth and resilience, ensuring our economies are capable of withstanding future shocks.

There are three key areas we would currently like to highlight where strengthened UK-Ireland resilience is essential to deliver sustainable growth and shared prosperity: supply chains and labour markets, energy and critical infrastructure, and wider security and defence.

**Supply chains, free trade, and labour market**

Safeguarding the resilience of our deeply integrated economies, including across transport, digital networks, energy, labour, and supply chains, is essential for security of supply and business confidence. We should progress the Economic Security Exchange committed to at last year's Summit to share best practice and common understanding, strengthening our essential ties while safeguarding our North-South and East-West supply chains.

Our sustained growth depends on our ability to remain agile, open, and attractive places to invest. We must remain committed to our shared values of free and fair trade and a rules-based order, working together through multilateral institutions to strengthen our economic resilience and shared prosperity.

Delivering on these ambitions cannot be achieved without the involvement of business and talent. Despite persistent gaps, businesses see opportunities to address challenges by tackling barriers to labour mobility, especially North-South. CBI and Ibec members support a UK and Ireland agreement to simplify cross-border work on the island of Ireland, with this Summit providing a timely opportunity to signal this shared ambition. The two governments should also consider the case for an All-Island work visa, as well as the Youth Experience Scheme currently in negotiation at EU level, to allow labour gaps to be addressed through the wider EU labour market.

## **Energy and critical infrastructure**

Our security will also depend on our sustained and affordable access to energy, which will mobilise private investment and ensure the green transition delivers sustainable growth. We welcome your governments' commitment to deepen collaboration on energy and infrastructure, particularly in our shared maritime space. Delivering on this commitment should mean safeguarding and strengthening the Single Electricity Market, accelerating grid and storage capacity, and ensuring the timely delivery of joint infrastructure projects, including the North-South Interconnector and offshore wind projects.

We must work through the agreed Framework for Co-Operation to support critical infrastructure delivery, including through fast-tracking key infrastructure projects, reducing planning times, and progressing the use of technology for project approval and delivery.

## **Security and defence**

Our interconnectedness means businesses face the shared risk of threats against critical infrastructure, including our undersea cables, energy pipelines, and digital networks. Businesses therefore welcome continued UK-Ireland collaboration to ensure our security and defence capabilities in these areas.

Strengthened cooperation on cyber security, including seizing the potential of our data, security, and investing in R&D and innovation, will be essential to safeguarding business and critical systems. Business welcomes continued collaboration within the current Horizon European Research and Innovation Framework Programme to seize this opportunity.

The CBI and Ibec are committed to supporting you and your Ministers in progressing this programme of cooperation and would welcome strong business engagement in this year's Summit. Through this engagement we can work together to translate shared priorities into tangible outcomes for our economies and society.

Yours sincerely,



Danny McCoy, CEO, Ibec.



Rain Newton-Smith, CEO, CBI.