

PRESS RELEASE

Embargo: 11 am Thursday 1 September

Heads of British and Irish Business Confederations meet Irish University Presidents for the first time in Belfast

The Director General of the Confederation of British Industry, Sir Digby Jones, and the Director General of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation, Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, will meet the Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of the nine Irish universities for a historic, first ever meeting in Belfast on Thursday 1 September (9-11 am).

The meeting will take place in the Business Centre in the Hilton Hotel. It has been jointly organised by Universities Ireland, the umbrella body for the nine universities on the island, and the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council.

Sir Digby and Mr O'Sullivan will be discussing business-university collaboration with the university leaders, who will include Professor Peter Gregson, Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, Professor Richard Barnett, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ulster, Professor John Hegarty, Provost of Trinity College Dublin, Dr Hugh Brady, President of University College Dublin, and Dr Iognaid Ó Muircheartaigh, President of National University of Ireland Galway. Also present will be business and civil service leaders from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, including Dr David Dobbin, Chairman of CBI Northern Ireland, and Ms Brigid McManus, Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in Dublin.

Among the topics to be discussed will be how commercial risk management might be applied to university research; the need for a skills map for the island of Ireland; how to showcase examples of upskilling and lifelong learning in individual firms; and the need for Irish schoolchildren, North and South, to learn languages like Chinese which are important for business.

N.B. There will be a photo opportunity at 11 am after the meeting.

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