
PUBLICATION OF JMC ANNUAL REPORT
PAPER FROM THE JOINT SECRETARIAT

Background

1. The Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) was established by the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Kingdom Government and the Devolved Administrations which was agreed in 1999 and last revised in March 2010. At the Plenary meeting of the JMC in June 2010, Ministers agreed that an annual report should be prepared on the key activities of the JMC.

2 Regular formal and informal contact between all four administrations is essential to the effective governance of the UK as a whole and to securing and deepening the mutual respect and trust on which successful relations are based. In addition to meetings of the JMC in Plenary, Domestic and European formats, therefore, a range of other bilateral and quadrilateral meetings have taken place to consider relevant issues throughout the year in view but these are not recorded for the purposes of this Annual Report.

Conclusion

3 The Joint Ministerial Committee is invited to agree the immediate publication of the JMC Annual Report (at Annex A) on the web-sites of the Cabinet Office and each of the Devolved Administrations.

JMC Annual Report 2010-2011

Introduction

The Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) comprises the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive and is the apex of formal relations between these administrations. The JMC meets in Plenary, Domestic and European formats. Procedures for the operation of the Joint Ministerial Committee are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, which can be found at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/devolution.

This document outlines the activities of the JMC since the last meeting of JMC in plenary and European format in June 2010 and will be published on the websites of the four administrations.

JMC Plenary

The Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) met in plenary format on 8 June 2010, and discussed the new UK Government's Programme for Government as set out in *The Coalition: our Programme for Government*. The economy and public finances were considered along with inter-administration relations and opportunities for positive collaboration. The JMC agreed to publish an Annual Report covering the work of the previous year.

Domestic policy discussions

The JMC (Domestic) met on two occasions during the year.

On 22 November 2010 it discussed:

- The UK Government's proposals for reforming public bodies across the UK; and
- The further development of the dispute avoidance and resolution protocol in the Memorandum of Understanding.

On 2 February 2011 it discussed:

- The UK Government's Welfare Reform Programme and its implications for the devolved administrations (DAs);
- Actions to support economic growth; and
- Further provisions in the dispute avoidance and resolution protocol in the Memorandum of Understanding which would be considered at the next JMC Plenary meeting.

Preparation for European Councils

The JMC (Europe) met on four occasions since June 2010 to discuss current European Union (EU) business in which the Devolved Administrations have an interest and to facilitate devolved input to the UK Government's negotiating stance prior to European Councils.

On 8 June 2010 it discussed:

- Priorities for the June European Council; inc
- Europe 2020 and economic governance
- Climate change
- UK/ DA Co-ordination and Horizon Scan;
- Attendance of DAs at EU Councils

On 18 October 2010 it discussed:

- Priorities for the October European Council; inc
- Climate change
- UK/ DA Co-ordination and Horizon Scan; inc
- Direct action by DAs before the European Court of Justice;
- Update on the EU Bill; and
- EU Budget Review.

On 6 December 2010 it discussed:

- Priorities for the December European Council; inc
- Economic governance
- UK/ DA Co-ordination and Horizon Scan; inc
- Whitehall guidance on working with the DAs
- Update on the EU Bill
- EU Budget;
- EU Energy Strategy; and
- Hungarian Presidency.

On 14 March 2011 it discussed:

- Priorities for the March European Council;
- UK/ DA Co-ordination and Horizon Scan; inc
- Consultation with DAs in the elaboration of UK policy positions
- EU Budget;
- Economic Governance; and
- UK National Reform Programme.

Resolution of Issues

During the course of the year, four inter-governmental disagreements/disputes were considered under the dispute avoidance and resolution protocol. Issues relating to the allocation of North Sea whiting quotas (Scottish Government/ UK Government) and Barnett consequential payments arising from certain aspects of the UK Government's *Building Britain's Future* policy (Welsh Government/UK Government) were resolved. Discussions about a disagreement on the £18 billion capital commitment to Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive/UK Government) and on a dispute concerning Barnett consequential payments arising from the 2012 Olympics (UK Government/Northern Ireland Executive/Scottish Government/Welsh Government) are continuing.

Discussions on the economy and public finances

The key forum for consideration of financial and economic matters is the Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral which met twice during the period.

On 15 July 2010 it discussed:

- A general economic overview;
- 2010 Spending Review;
- Access to End of Year Flexibility (EYF);
- Statement of Funding Policy;
- Pensions Reform; and
- Banking / Access to Finance.

On 15 September 2010 it discussed:

- A general economic overview;
- 2010 Spending Review;
- Access to EYF;
- Statement of Funding policy;
- Efficiency Programme; and
- Welfare reform.