

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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Status

Question Article 1 is ambiguous/imprecise about the status of Northern Ireland, says less than the Chequers communique etc. What does it mean?

Answer Of course the two Governments approach this aspect of the matter from differing historical perceptions and from within differing constitutional frameworks. The Agreement does not change that. The position is clear. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom.

NP

[What Article 1 does is to look to the future and set out - for the first time in a binding international agreement - what is common ground between us: that there will be no change in the present status of Northern Ireland without the freely given consent of the majority of its inhabitants; and that both Governments recognise that such consent does not at present exist.

[The foregoing could be used either as an answer to a question or as part of a freestanding statement about the Agreement and its significance.]

Possible  
Question Taoiseach - do you agree?

Taoiseach As the Prime Minister has said the two Governments approach this matter from differing historical perceptions and differing constitutional frameworks and the Agreement does not change that.

[It is of course a fact that Ireland is not united politically (and the British Government is responsible for the Government of Northern Ireland.)]

What is important is what we have agreed about the future.