

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
ESTABLISHING THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON
DECOMMISSIONING**

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the
Government of the Republic of Ireland:

Recalling their decision on the 28th day of November 1995 to establish an
International Body to provide an independent assessment of the decommissioning
issue;

Noting that the Report of the International Body presented to the two Governments on
the 22nd day of January 1996 recommended that the decommissioning process
should take place to the satisfaction of an independent commission;

Noting that the Decommissioning Act, 1997 in the Republic of Ireland and the
Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997 in the United Kingdom make
reference to a Commission to be established by agreement between the two
Governments;

Recalling the Joint Communiqué issued on the 29th day of July, 1997, following the
meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland, in which they announced their decision to complete preparations for
the establishment of an Independent Commission in order that the mechanisms on
decommissioning would be capable of being launched simultaneously with
substantive political negotiations;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") is hereby established by the two Governments in accordance with this Agreement.

Article 2

- (1) The Commission shall be independent in the performance of its functions.
- (2) The Commission shall have the legal capacity of a body corporate in accordance with the Decommissioning Act, 1997 and any Order made by the Secretary of State under the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997.

Article 3

The objective of the Commission is to facilitate the decommissioning of firearms, ammunition, explosives and explosive substances (hereinafter referred to as "arms") in accordance with the Report of the International Body, any regulations or arrangements made under the Decommissioning Act, 1997 and any decommissioning schemes within the meaning of section 1 of the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997.

Article 4

In fulfilment of the objective set out in Article 3, the Commission shall have the following functions:

- (a) to consult with the participants in political negotiations in Northern Ireland, including both Governments, and others whom it deems relevant on the type of scheme or schemes for decommissioning including the role it might play in respect of each scheme;
- (b) to present to the two Governments proposals for schemes for decommissioning having due regard to the views expressed by those it has consulted;
- (c) to undertake, in accordance with any regulations or arrangements made under the Decommissioning Act, 1997 and any decommissioning schemes within the meaning of section 1, and in accordance with section 3, of the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997, such tasks that may be required of it to facilitate the decommissioning of arms, including observing, monitoring and verifying decommissioning and receiving and auditing arms; and
- (d) to report periodically to both Governments and, through whatever mechanism they may establish for that purpose, the other participants in political negotiations in Northern Ireland.

Article 5

The Commission shall consist of not less than two members. The members shall be appointed jointly by the two Governments who may also appoint additional members from time to time. The two Governments may jointly appoint one of the members as

Chairperson. The members of the Commission shall serve on terms and conditions decided by the two Governments.

Article 6

The Commission, its property and premises, and the persons referred to in section 3(4)(b) of the Decommissioning Act, 1997 and in section 7(2)(c) of the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997 shall have such privileges, immunities and inviolabilities as may be conferred or provided for in accordance with orders made by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Secretary of State under those Acts.

Article 7

Such moneys, premises, facilities and services as may be necessary for the proper functioning of the Commission shall be provided by the two Governments on a basis to be determined by them.

Article 8

Members of the Commission, members of the staff of the Commission, persons carrying out work for or giving advice to the Commission and agents of the Commission shall be bound not to disclose any information obtained in the course of the performance of their functions as such members or persons unless such disclosure is authorised by or on behalf of the Commission.

Article 9

The Commission shall keep proper accounts and proper records of all moneys received or expended by it and shall, at the joint request of the two Governments, appoint auditors who shall audit the accounts of the Commission. The reports of the auditors shall be submitted to both Governments.

Article 10

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Secretary of State may make further provision in relation to the Commission and the decommissioning of arms in accordance with the Decommissioning Act, 1997 and any decommissioning schemes within the meaning of section 1 of the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997.

Article 11

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date on which the two Governments exchange notifications of their acceptance of it.

Article 12

This Agreement shall continue in force until terminated by mutual agreement and thereafter shall cease to have effect save in so far as and to the extent necessary for meeting any liabilities or disposing in an orderly manner of any remaining assets of the Commission in accordance with the spirit of the Agreement.