

Irish News

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Memorandum helps strengthen Northern Ireland's cyber security links in US



Pictured at the signing are (from left) Maryland Department of Labor secretary Tiffany Robinson, Dr Andrew McCormick from the NI Executive Office and Maryland commerce secretary Kelly M. Schulz

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AN agreement has been formalised between the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Departments of Commerce and Labor in the US state of Maryland which aims to capitalise on the opportunities cyber security offers both economies.

Under the terms of the memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed at the Columbus Centre in Baltimore, the two regions will exchange best practices to continue building a strong cyber workforce.

From a zero base a decade ago, the cyber security sector in Northern Ireland currently provides employment for nearly 1,700 people and is on course to generate more than £70m in salaries this year.

The government has also set a target of by 2030 having 5,000 cyber security professionals in Northern Ireland, which is the number one international location for US cyber security development projects.

Signing the document on behalf of DfE was Dr Andrew McCormick from the Executive Office, who said: “The UK and US are both at the very forefront of online security, and it’s important we work together not only for the mutual benefit of our economies, but also to protect ourselves against cyber-attacks and ensure the public’s data is stored, managed and communicated in a safe and acceptable manner.”

The Department’s permanent secretary Noel Lavery said: “This memorandum furthers our relationship with the government of Maryland, helping us to promote economic cooperation and investment and to address the importance of a global skills shortage in the sector.

“Half of all our cyber security companies in Northern Ireland are now home-grown and making strides in the international market. Partnerships such as these help to sustain growth both within the sector and promote development of next generation technologies.”

The signing of the memorandum took place alongside the visit of two UK cyber trade missions – one led by Invest NI and the other by the London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement.

Maryland commerce secretary Kelly M. Schulz said: “Maryland and Northern Ireland are both recognised as world leading cyber security hubs, and this collaboration will further expand the global reach of our respective companies, and enable us both to share best practices and boost trade and investment.”

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