



An Bille um an gConradh Antartach (Aontachas agus Cur i nGníomh), 2026
Antarctic Treaty (Accension and Implementation) Bill 2026

Mar a tionscnaíodh

As initiated



**AN BILLE UM AN gCONRADH ANTARTACH (AONTACHAS AGUS CUR I
nGNÍOMH), 2026
ANTARCTIC TREATY (ACCENSION AND IMPLEMENTATION) BILL 2026**

*Mar a tionscnaíodh
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CONTENTS

PART 1

PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL

Section

1. Short title and commencement
2. Interpretation

PART 2

ACCESSION AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTER

3. Power to accede
4. Responsible Minister and functions
5. Declarations on measures and guidelines

PART 3

PERMITS, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ACTIVITIES

6. Permits for activities
7. Environmental impact assessment
8. Conditions of permits
9. Specially protected and managed areas
10. Waste management - prohibition on mineral resource activities
11. Emergency preparedness

PART 4

COMPLIANCE, ENFORCEMENT AND JURISDICTION

12. Inspectors
13. Offences
14. Civil enforcement

- 15. Jurisdiction
- 16. Cooperation

PART 5

MISCELLANEOUS

- 17. Regulations
- 18. Recognition of foreign permits
- 19. Annual report
- 20. Scientific freedom and peaceful purposes



AN BILLE UM AN gCONRADH ANTARTACH (AONTACHAS AGUS CUR I
nGNÍOMH), 2026
ANTARCTIC TREATY (ACCENSION AND IMPLEMENTATION) BILL 2026

Bill

entitled

5

An Act to enable the State to accede to the Antarctic Treaty done at Washington on 1 December 1959 and to certain related instruments, including the protocol on environmental protection to the Antarctic Treaty done at Madrid on 4 October 1991; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows:

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PART 1

PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL

Short title and commencement

1. (1) This Act may be cited as the Antarctic Treaty (Accession and Implementation) Act 2026.
- (2) This Act shall come into operation on such day or days as the Minister for Foreign Affairs may appoint by order, and different days may be appointed for different purposes.
- (3) An order under this section may contain transitional or saving provisions.

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Interpretation

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2. In this Act—

“Antarctic Treaty” means the Treaty done at Washington on 1 December 1959;

“Antarctic Treaty area” means the area south of 60 degrees south latitude;

“ATCM” means the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting;

“CEP” means the Committee for Environmental Protection;

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“Minister” means the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade;

“operator” means a person or body organising or undertaking an activity in the Antarctic Treaty area;

“Protocol” means the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991), including its Annexes;

“Treaty System instruments” means the Antarctic Treaty, the Protocol, and related measures, decisions and resolutions.

PART 2

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ACCESSION AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTER

Power to accede

3. The Government may accede to such parts of the Antarctic Treaty system, including the Protocol, as it considers appropriate, and may take steps necessary to give effect to such accession. The Minister is the competent authority for the deposit of instruments of accession. 10

Responsible Minister and functions

4. (1) The Minister is designated as the responsible Minister for the purposes of the Antarctic Treaty system.
- (2) The Minister shall represent the State at ATCM and CEP, coordinate national implementation, operate a permitting system, prepare required reports, and make such regulations as are necessary. 15

Declarations on measures and guidelines

5. The Minister may by order declare any measure, decision, guideline or resolution adopted under the Antarctic Treaty system to have effect in the State. 20

PART 3

PERMITS, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ACTIVITIES

Permits for activities

6. An Irish citizen or Irish body corporate shall not undertake a prescribed activity in the Antarctic Treaty area except under a permit granted by the Minister. Permit-requiring activities may include scientific expeditions, tourism, work in protected areas, introduction of organisms, waste management, construction, and activities likely to have environmental impacts. 25

Environmental impact assessment

7. An applicant for a permit shall submit an environmental impact assessment proportionate to the proposed activity. The Minister shall determine the required level of assessment, including where a Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) is required. 30

Conditions of permits

8. A permit may include conditions relating to monitoring, reporting, waste management, safety, insurance, environmental protection, and emergency response. Permits may be varied, suspended or revoked.

Specially protected and managed areas

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9. The Minister may by order designate Antarctic Specially Protected Areas and Antarctic Specially Managed Areas. Management plans and entry conditions shall be published.

Waste management - prohibition on mineral resource activities

10. Operators must meet waste management obligations under the Protocol. Prospecting, exploration or exploitation of mineral resources is prohibited except for scientific research. 10

Emergency preparedness

11. Operators shall maintain contingency plans for environmental emergencies.

PART 4

COMPLIANCE, ENFORCEMENT AND JURISDICTION

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Inspectors

12. The Minister may appoint inspectors. Inspectors may require information, access vessels or premises, and copy documents.

Offences

13. (1) Offences include undertaking activities without a permit, breaching permit conditions, harmful interference with native flora and fauna, introducing non-native species, failing to comply with inspectors, or providing false information. 20
- (2) The Minister shall, within six months of the enactment of this Act, introduce regulations providing for penalties to include fines and imprisonment.

Civil enforcement

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14. The Minister may apply to the High Court for an injunction restraining conduct contrary to the Act.

Jurisdiction

15. The Act applies to Irish citizens, Irish bodies corporate, Irish-registered vessels, and Irish-registered aircraft in the Antarctic Treaty area. 30

Cooperation

16. The Minister may cooperate and exchange information with other Treaty Parties.

PART 5

MISCELLANEOUS

Regulations

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17. The Minister may make regulations for the purposes of this Act.

Recognition of foreign permits

18. The Minister may recognise permits issued by other Treaty Parties, subject to conditions.

Annual report

19. The Minister shall lay an annual report before each House of the Oireachtas.

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Scientific freedom and peaceful purposes

20. Nothing in this Act limits the freedom of scientific investigation or peaceful uses of the Antarctic.

An Bille um an gConradh Antartach
(Aontachas agus Cur i nGníomh), 2026

BILLE

(mar a tionscnaíodh)

dá ngairtear

Acht dá chumasú don stát aontú don Chonradh Antartach, arna dhéanamh in Washington an 1 Nollaig 1959, agus d'ionstraimí gaolmhara áirithe, lena n-áirítear an prótacal um chosaint comhshaoil a ghabhann leis an gConradh Antartach arna dhéanamh i Maidrid an 4 Deireadh Fómhair 1991; agus do dhéanamh socrú i dtaobh nithe gaolmhara.

An Teachta Maolcholm Ó Broin a thug isteach,
18 Márta, 2026

Antarctic Treaty (Accension and
Implementation) Bill 2026

BILL

(as initiated)

entitled

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Introduced by Deputy Malcolm Byrne,
18th March, 2026

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