



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies

## MEDIA WATCH

---

08/04/2016 - 15/04/2016

**09 April 2016**

### Hospitals in border deal over heart attack care

PEOPLE from Co Donegal who suffer a heart attack will now be treated at Altnagelvin Hospital in Londonderry as part of a new **cross-border** service agreement.

The initiative agreed between the Western Trust and Saolta University Health Care Group in Letterkenny, which is the first of its kind, will give between 50 and 60 suitable patients in Donegal 24-hour access to the Derry hospital's treatment centre.

The service will become operational next month and is the result of a review of cardiology services in the North West which made a number of recommendations.

Heart attack patients from Donegal living within 90 minutes road time, who previously would have been transported to University Hospital Galway by road or air, will now be transported the shorter distance to Altnagelvin Hospital for emergency treatment.

A consultant interventional cardiologist employed by the Saolta Group has also been appointed to Letterkenny University Hospital and will contribute to the delivery of the PPCI service from Altnagelvin, as part of the on-call rota.

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph

**11 April 2016**

### Brexit would be a blow to recovery says Irish business group

A UK withdrawal from Europe would be a major setback for Irish economic recovery, according to a new report.

Ibec, which represents Irish business, has warned that a Brexit could have far-reaching consequences for the UK's nearest neighbour.

Pat Ivory, Ibec director of EU and international affairs said: "A UK departure would be a blow to the Irish recovery and result in a protracted period of uncertainty for business."

Launching its report which focuses on five major impacts, Ibec said it was important that Irish concerns were heard and understood in the debate.

Topping the list of concerns is the potential undermining of the **all-island** economy.

The report states: "A UK departure from the EU would remove a shared economic, political and legal backdrop and could set back positive political and economic developments of recent years."

There are also warnings that trade flows between Ireland and the UK could fall by up to 20 per cent with the food sector exports likely to be hit hardest and that weakened exchange rates could hamper competition.

The new report also highlights fears about the "damaging economic effect" of investment uncertainty and the potential impact on energy supplies.

Mr Ivory added: "It would undermine Europe's ability to act collectively and decisively in the world and could push the EU back into a dangerous period of crisis management. The UK and Ireland have been close allies in Europe across a wide range of areas.

"An EU without the UK would be a lesser union."

Meanwhile, Ibec has also stressed the growing need for a stable domestic political backdrop and has called for a "speedy, comprehensive agreement to be reached between the main political parties".

"A vote to leave would demand an immediate, considered and sophisticated response to minimise instability and ensure Irish interests are safeguarded in any subsequent negotiation and settlement," an Ibec statement said.

**Source:** The Irish News

## NI firms outperform rest of UK thanks to uncertainty over EU

NORTHERN Ireland business is making the most of uncertainty around the EU referendum with output at an 18-month high, according to a major survey today. The Ulster Bank purchasing managers' index (PMI) said the province enjoyed the fastest growing rate of business activity of any UK region during March.

The services sector - everything from law firms to restaurants - was especially buoyant, the survey said.

However, manufacturers reported only marginal growth during the month and was the only sector shedding jobs.

But overall, companies had closed the first quarter of the year "on a high", with employment and new orders growing. And far from slowing business activity, Ulster Bank chief economist Richard Ramsey (below) said uncertainty around June 23's EU referendum - and the fall in sterling's value it had prompted - was in fact presenting opportunities for Northern Ireland firms.

"The marked depreciation in sterling over the last four months, linked to uncertainty with the outcome from the forthcoming EU referendum, has provided a significant and unexpected tailwind for local exporters and retailers sensitive to **cross-border** footfall.

"Given Northern Ireland's reliance on the Republic of Ireland economy, the combination of strong growth in the Irish Republic coupled with a competitive sterling/euro exchange rate have presented many firms with very favourable conditions.

"It is noted that local firms also increased their staffing levels in March for the 14th month in a row."

And Northern Ireland's economy was no longer the poor relation to other UK nations, Mr Ramsey said.

In fact, output and employment growth here outperformed the rest of the UK throughout the whole quarter - but Mr Ramsey added: "It is worth remembering that the local economy is playing catch-up with its UK counterparts following a sustained period of under-performance."

He said the services and retail sectors were "star performers" with both reporting a revving-up in output, orders and jobs during March. New orders were increasing in the services sector at the fastest rate in nearly two years - while retail could claim the steepest jobs growth.

But shops were engaged in close competition, with prices being reduced at their fastest rate in seven years.

Mr Ramsey added: "Outside of services and retail, construction firms remain in expansion mode.

"However, the rate of growth in output, orders and employment has eased."

But the struggles continued for manufacturing. Last year Michelin announced it was withdrawing completely from Northern Ireland, due to high energy prices and cheap Chinese tyre imports. And there was no improvement in March.

"Output was flat ... although there was a modest pick-up in manufacturing orders. However, manufacturing continues to report job losses, the only sector to do so, with March representing the seventh successive month of employment declines," he added.

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph

**15 April 2016**

## Villiers: Leave vote won't see return of Irish border checks

A VOTE to quit the EU would not mean the end of free travel across the Irish border, Secretary of State Theresa Villiers has insisted.

Ms Villiers (below), a strong advocate for Britain quitting the EU, also denounced the suggestion that leaving the EU could undermine the peace process as "scaremongering".

Ms Villiers said Ireland's Ambassador in London, Dan Mulhall, had refused to endorse the idea that a Brexit could hurt the peace process in evidence he gave to Westminster's Northern Ireland affairs committee. In her first major speech on the June 23 EU referendum, Ms Villiers said the Common Travel Area between the UK and Irish Republic would out-last the EU. The unique status of Irish citizens in Britain would also continue, she added.

Earlier this week, Lord Lawson suggested that checkpoints would be needed on the border if the UK pulled out. The Conservative former chancellor said a Brexit would result in the introduction of controls along the 310-mile frontier.

But Ms Villiers replied: "If we vote Leave, we would be entitled to remove people who have entered the UK through our common border with Ireland if they are not entitled to be here. We had a Common Travel Area with Ireland before we joined the EU and we will have one after we vote to leave. There would be no need to erect border controls."

Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan said he knew Ms Villiers opposed Britain's EU membership. But he added that the Irish government wanted Britain to stay in the EU, which continues to support peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland with generous funds.

**"North-south** co-operation is far easier when both jurisdictions are within the EU," Mr Flanagan said.

At the same time the British Ambassador in Dublin, Dominick Chilcott, urged the 130,000 British people living in Ireland to register for a vote in the referendum.

And Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary appealed to Irish people living in Britain to mobilise in favour of EU membership. He said he believed most British people favoured EU membership but the referendum could be a midterm backlash against David Cameron.

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph