

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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03/06/2016 - 10/06/2016



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Monday 6 June 2016

Health: Waiting Times

**Summary:** Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Health about cooperation between the two Departments on the island, if the Minister could assure him that cooperation between her and Minister Harris, which is aimed at addressing a whole range of issues, including waiting times, will be a priority for her in the time ahead? Is there perhaps an early opportunity for the North/South Ministerial Council to meet in health sectoral format?

**Mrs O'Neill:** I thank the Member for his question. I absolutely agree: there are areas in which we can build on the cooperation that already exists. The recent announcement on children's cardiac services shows that we have been able to work with Belfast and Dublin on delivery. There is a lot more scope and potential for us to be able to look at new areas in which to work together, and I have requested a meeting with Minister Harris to see how we can chart our way forward with that. When you look at some of the cooperation, working together and work that has already been taken forward in the health service, you can clearly see the benefits. We are a small island with two healthcare systems, so it is important that we get economies of scale, work together and provide better services for all on this island.

**Source:** <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-06-06-2016.pdf>



Wednesday 8 June 2016

Cross-Border Health Services Provision

**Summary:** Peadar Tóibín asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the State bodies under her remit which have developed memorandums of understanding with her counterpart in Northern Ireland with regard to the efficient delivery of services on the island of Ireland; if she has carried out a cost-benefit analysis of the development of further memorandums of understanding; the details of the cost-benefit analysis; and the new memorandums of understanding she will be creating between State bodies under their remits through the lifetime of this Government.

**Katherine Zappone:** The ongoing North South work of my Department takes place under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council. The North South Ministerial Council meets in Sectorial Format to oversee co-operation in agreed areas/sectors. At these Sectorial meetings the Irish Government is represented by the Minister or the Minister of State responsible for that Sector, and the Northern Ireland Executive is represented by two Ministers nominated by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on a cross-community basis.

I am responsible for the following Agencies - the Adoption Authority of Ireland, Children Detention Schools and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. I have certain responsibilities with regard to the Ombudsman for Children's Office and Gaisce (The President's Award). There are no Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between the Oberstown Children Detention Campus and its counterpart in Northern Ireland, the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. However, there is extensive contact between both centres on matters of common interest and the sharing of best practice in relation to the detention of children. This co-operation is on an on-going basis and also includes exchange visits by staff of both centres at periodic intervals.

With regard to the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, there are no MOU's in place between these bodies and their counterparts in Northern Ireland. Tusla's National Manager for Information, Data Protection and Research, is a member of the North South Ministerial Council Officials Group.

I have requested the Ombudsman for Children's Office to respond to you directly as it is an independent statutory body established under the Ombudsman for Children's Act, 2002. The Act provides that the Ombudsman for Children is independent in the performance of his functions under the Act and is directly accountable to the Oireachtas in relation to the exercise of his functions. Gaisce (The President's Award) will also respond to you directly.

**Source:** <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-06-08a.1800&s=cross-border>

#### **Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation: Cross-Border Enterprise Initiatives**

**Summary:** Peadar Tóibín ask the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to develop with the corresponding Department in Northern Ireland a Bordereconomic development zone, as detailed in the recent all-party report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on the all-island economy; if her Department carried out a cost-benefit analysis of such a zone for the economic development of the Border-midland region; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

**Mary Mitchell O'Connor:** The Government is currently focussed on best utilising the mechanisms already in place for strengthening economic cooperation between both sides of the border. The

work of InterTrade Ireland (ITI) is especially important in this context. ITI, which is jointly funded and overseen by my Department and the Department for the Economy in Belfast, provides a range of enterprise development initiatives and programmes to support commerce both in and between North and South. Our two administrations also work together in other ways, including through ongoing cooperation between Enterprise Ireland and its Northern Ireland counterpart agency Invest Northern Ireland on areas of mutual interest.

Over recent years, a range of projects under the enterprise development strand of the INTERREG IVA Programme (2009-2015) have had a particularly positive impact on developing small businesses in the region. My Department co-funded this strand, under which a total of 28 individual projects have been initiated. I now look forward to the roll out of the successor Programme for the period up to 2020, which will support research and innovation initiatives and hopefully help to foster further growth and economic development in the cross-border areas.

My Department has not carried out a cost benefit analysis to which the Deputy refers. Developing new economic structures such as this would represent a significant policy development and requires careful consideration. We should also bear in mind that any new structures would need the full agreement of the authorities both here and in Northern Ireland. The need to avoid duplication with the work of other existing bodies and mechanisms is also important.

I would also mention that the North East/ North West Action Plan for Jobs, launched on 30 November last, aims to deliver 28,000 extra jobs in the counties of Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, Louth, Monaghan, and Cavan by 2020. Key targets in service of this overall goal are to achieve an increase of at least 25% in the number of start-ups in the region; a 25% improvement in the survival rate of new businesses; an increase in the number of IDA investments in the region by 30-40% up to 2019; and an increase of 300 to 500 in the numbers of Údarás na Gaeltachta supported jobs in the North West. Sectors targeted as part of the plan include traditionally strong sectors for the region like agri-food, manufacturing/engineering and tourism, as well as areas targeted for future growth like digital payments, cleantech and creative services.

Since the Plan was launched on 30 November last, focus has moved to putting in place a comprehensive implementation structure. A Regional Implementation Committee has been established, composed of key stakeholders in the region who will work in concert with Enterprise Champions - nominated senior private sector representatives - to oversee and monitor progress. This team will meet twice each year to review progress on the delivery of the Plan's actions. The first Progress Report on the implementation of the North East/ North West Action Plan for Jobs will be completed in Q3 2016.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-06-08a.1753&s=cross-border>

#### UK Referendum on EU Membership

Summary: Willie Penrose asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he has assessed the effects of a British exit from the European Union on the food and agriculture industry, his progress in developing potential trade arrangements and minimising the disruption and negative impact on Irish producers and consumers; and the options for agriculture and the agrifood sector, given the extensive trade links between the two economies and the role of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy.

**Michael Creed:** The UK is by far our largest single trading partner. According to CSO figures, in 2015 we exported almost €5.1 billion worth of agricultural products and imports from the UK were worth €3.8 billion. The prospect of a UK vote to leave the EU therefore has serious implications for the agrifood sector. That is borne out in the reports that have been produced in recent months on the potential impact of Brexit on Ireland. An ESRI report last year estimated that the potential reduction in bilateral trade flows could be as high as 20%, with an even higher impact on agriculture, food and beverages. Teagasc, at the request of my Department, carried out a deeper analysis on the Irish agrifood sector. It found that, depending on the assumptions made, the minimum impact could be a reduction of 1.4% or €150 million per annum in the value of Irish agrifood exports, with a possible worst-case scenario involving a reduction of more than 7%, or €800 million, per annum. However, it is important to note that there would be no dramatic change straight away and that the actual impact of Brexit would depend on the post-exit relationship that will have to be negotiated between the EU and the UK, should the UK decide to leave. The Treaty on European Union provides for a period of two years of negotiations, with extensions possible where agreement is not reached in the initial period.

My Department has been considering the likely arrangements to be made in the event of an exit vote. There are four main areas from an agrifood perspective, namely, tariffs and trade arrangements, the EU budget, standards and customs controls. Potential differences in tariffs after a UK exit could restrict trade in both directions and affect traditional supply practices, particularly for raw materials. Once the exit negotiations have been completed, the UK would be free to negotiate free trade agreements with other third countries. That is particularly relevant in relation to meat imports from South America.

The UK is a net contributor to the budget and a UK exit could result in a loss of the UK contribution of between 5% and 10%. Given that the Common Agricultural Policy, CAP, accounts for some 37% of the EU budget, we could expect additional pressure for further contraction in CAP funding in the years ahead. Currently, the EU operates a common regulatory regime and the rules of the Single Market allow free movement of goods between member states. While the EU and the UK may wish to keep such arrangements in place for as long as possible, deviations between UK and EU standards could give rise to trading difficulties and additional costs.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2016-06-08a.28&s=cross-border#g35>