

## MEDIA WATCH

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#### June 18, 2016

## EU Referendum - Sinn Fein still wants 'Brexit from Ireland'

Sinn Fein is opposed to Brexit but still wants a British exit from the north, party leader Gerry Adams has told The Irish News.

Speaking at his office in Dundalk, the Dail deputy for Louth, said: "It's not in Ireland's interest, whatever we think about the European Union, to have one part in and one part out.

"I would like to think, as the debate heads towards referendum day, that republicans would be motivated by that concern."

Pointing to the level of trade between **north and south** and across the Irish Sea and the number of jobs at stake, he said that to have "a hard border as opposed to what's currently a soft border" would be undesirable.

He stressed that his party still wanted to see the border removed entirely: "If you talk about a Brexit, Sinn Fein still wants a Brexit from Ireland."

He dismissed the assertion by Secretary of State Theresa Villiers that border checks between the Republic and Northern Ireland would not be restored if the Brexit side won.

"Quite frankly, I don't believe that," he said.

He believed the British state would not leave the border open: "The frontier of the EU would be a few miles up the road from here."

Asked if he believed border customs posts might reappear, he said: "All of those things are possible."

Ahead of Thursday's vote, he was reluctant to comment on the "hypothetical" possibility that these might become targets for dissidents.

In the event of a Brexit victory, Sinn Fein is calling for a border poll in both parts of the island.

"We want to see a border poll anyway," Mr Adams said.

"If there's a Brexit, then there's a democratic imperative to have a border poll."

Prior to the southern general election Sinn Fein signed up, with others, to the Right2Change manifesto.

Fianna Fail says this means Mr Adams and his party are committed to a referendum on leaving the EU if the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) isn't put to a vote of the Irish people.

"There should be a referendum on TTIP," the SF president said.

But if this doesn't take place, would Sinn Fein be calling for a referendum on Ireland's EU membership?

"To tell you the truth, we haven't discussed that," he said.

He took part in a public meeting on Brexit organised recently by his party at a hotel close to the border, where the potential loss of EU funding for farming communities was highlighted.

But he said that, given the number of people from south Armagh, south Down and north Louth at the meeting, the key issue was the border.

"That's the major reason for the position Sinn Fein have taken, because if you have one part of the island exiting from the European Union at the behest of a decision taken on another island, then that's not in Ireland's interest."

In the plethora of referendums on European issues in the south, Sinn Fein consistently took the No side, but Mr Adams does not see any contradiction in that.

"I'm hugely critical about the democratic deficit, with the powers that the (European) Commission have, the lack of accountability. I don't want to be living in a province of some EU superstate: we want to see a social European Union," he said.

Source: The Irish News

### Whatever the EU referendum result, close security cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic must continue

Next week, the people of Northern Ireland are being asked to make a momentous decision when they vote in the referendum on UK membership of the European Union.

The Irish Government recognises that this is a matter to be decided solely by the electorate in the UK. Given the shared history of these islands, we have a uniquely shared interest in the outcome of the referendum.

The position of the Irish government cannot be clearer. We very much want Northern Ireland and Great Britain as a part of the EU, so that we can continue to work together as close friends and partners.

It is clear to me that continued joint membership of the EU will help both parts of this island progress to reach its full economic and social potential.

I believe that common membership of the EU played an important role in the Irish and UK governments working together to secure peace on this island. The EU has been a key enabler in the peace process. PEACE programmes have supported many community initiatives for reconciliation across Northern Ireland over the years.

The new PEACE IV Programme, with funding of (EURO)180m, can continue that essential 'grassroots' investment in peace across communities in Northern Ireland.

As Tanaiste and Justice Minister, I am particularly aware of the potential impact of a UK departure from the EU on criminal justice issues.

One of my biggest concerns relates to the future of the Common Travel Area, which we have shared since 1922, reflecting the ties of history and families, as well as labour market and business needs.

The protection of the Common Travel Area and Ireland's membership of the EU are key goals of the Irish government and we see them as essential for the prosperity and development of both jurisdictions.

I know, too, that the British Government shares our views on the protection of the Common Travel Area - whatever the result of the referendum.

The reality is, though, in the event of a Leave vote, no one knows if the Common Travel Area can remain in place as it is. We just don't know what sort of new relationship will be negotiated between the EU and the United Kingdom in areas such as migration and customs.

The land border between **north and south** will become an external border of the European Union, so it is not credible that the nature of the border is not at issue.

We will do everything in our power to ensure the Common Travel Area remains in place, but this will be a difficult fight. A decision to leave is inevitably a leap into the unknown.

The Good Friday Agreement was an historic benchmark that presented an opportunity to develop a better future for the island of Ireland - one based on partnership and mutual respect.

Despite the great advances that have been made since 1998, with the support of the EU, there are still challenges to be faced on this island from terrorism and serious crime. While we will continue to face those challenges, working in partnership and co-operation, whatever the outcome of this referendum, we simply cannot ignore that the EU framework of police and justice co-operation directly supports and enhances those efforts.

I am particularly conscious of EU measures such as the European Arrest Warrant. It was only as far back as the Eighties when the issue of extradition was such a deeply divisive issue. In the last 10 years, more than 500 criminals - wanted for the most serious of crimes - were surrendered between Ireland and the UK under the EU arrangements with little fuss, or controversy. No one wants to see a situation where criminals could potentially use the border as a means of evading justice.

In this context, it is hard not to see the UK leaving the European Arrest Warrant system as a hugely retrograde step.

Last week at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg, my fellow ministers and I discussed an extensive range of matters designed to improve everyday life for people. The issues ranged from the Digital Single Market, to victims' rights in crossborder crimes, to the sharing of criminal records and, of course, the migration crisis and the fight against terrorism.

We discussed recent organised crime developments and how we can best co-operate to tackle the serious threat posed by criminal gangs in our countries and across Europe.

We need to continue to work together to address such issues and that the security of all is enhanced by our continued joint membership of the EU. Particularly in the field of

justice and police co-operation, the UK has led the way over many years and it is in all our interests that the UK should remain as an active partner at the European table.

We all want a peaceful, secure and prosperous Northern Ireland and I believe this can best be achieved with continued membership of the EU. We have worked so closely together in recent years in transforming relations through successive agreements aimed at securing peace in Northern Ireland.

No matter what happens on June 23, we must ensure that the friendship and partnership continues.

## Frances Fitzgerald TD is the Republic's Tanaiste (deputy Prime Minister) and Justice Minister

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

#### June 19, 2016

# Irish border residents fearful in run-up to referendum, say business leaders

People living along Ireland's border are gripped by trepidation and fear in the countdown to the referendum, business chiefs have said.

The 310-mile frontier that separates Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is the only land border between the UK and the rest of the EU.

Although heavily militarised with checkpoints and road closures during the Troubles, the peace process has opened up a seamless crossing between both jurisdictions.

Hundreds of thousands pass over the border every day on their way to work, for shopping or on day trips.

The Remain camp in the in/out referendum, including chancellor George Osborne, have warned a hardening of border controls would be inevitable in the event of the UK voting to leave the EU.

But those backing a Leave - including Northern Ireland Secretary Theresa Villiers - claim there would be no need for a return to checkpoints.

Sinead McLaughlin, chief executive of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, which represents traders in the UK's most westerly city, says everyday life could be plunged into disarray with the outcome of Thursday's vote.

"We are the largest city on the periphery of the UK, in three directions in this city we have an EU border, so we are watching with interest, trepidation and fear this referendum," she said.

Nestled against Co Donegal in the Republic, Derry is a de facto **cross-border** capital for much of three counties in the north-west of Ireland.

"The impact of a Brexit will have a devastating economic impact on this region, which is already experiencing stark indices in relation to economic development and well-being," said Ms McLaughlin, who is campaigning for a Remain vote.

"We are a frontier city, and our prospects depend on that union between the regions working effectively together.

"Instead of any barriers we need closer alliances with our neighbours."

Businesses are "extremely frightened" at the prospect of new obstacles to trade and free movement being put in force while foreign investors - much needed in the historically economically deprived region - are also spooked.

"No one has been able to tell us what will happen after June 23 if the UK votes to leave," said Ms McLaughlin.

"That has real negative impact, particularly with foreign investors."

But Robert Moore, whose beef and tillage farm just outside the city is a stone's throw from the border with Co Donegal, said there is a lot of scaremongering about the impact of a Brexit.

"I'm not overly concerned," he said.

"My family have lived here for 200 years and since the border was created, so we have managed to cope with the border long before the Troubles.

"I remember as a child having to jump in and out of the car to get a card stamped when crossing.

"If that were to happen again it would be replaced by technology, cameras, etc. I think there is a lot of nonsense being talked about the border."

Mr Moore describes himself as a reluctant member of the Leave camp.

"I just feel I've been pushed that way because of European policy," he said.

"A lot in the Remain campaign are saying it depends upon reform within Europe, that we stay in and fight from within.

"The problem I see with that is that David Cameron has already negotiated his reforms.

"Britain has been the biggest thorn in the side of the EU for many years now. If we vote to stay in and then demand even more reform, they will tell Mr Cameron where to go."

Mr Moore said people on both sides of the Irish border would not accept a hardening of frontier controls and believes "a deal will be done" between the British and Irish governments to ensure continued free movement.

However, Toni Forrester, chief executive of Letterkenny Chamber across the border in Co Donegal, is not convinced.

"Well, how will they control immigration which is the big thing that everyone is talking about?" she questioned.

"How will they control this land border we have with the UK? We believe there would have to be some type of control."

Ms Forrester says traders in the Republic are frustrated that they have no vote in a decision that could have a major impact on their livelihoods.

"It might seem easy if you are in the middle of the UK where there aren't any borders, but here it is a land border and we haven't had to bring our papers out for many, many years," she said.

"It's a bad feeling that we might go back to that."

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph

June 22, 2016

### Agri-food's growth outpaces all other industries

While many farmers are facing difficult market challenges in recent years, one in five agri-food firms have taken on new staff during the first quarter of 2016.

InterTradeIreland surveyed 119 agri-food firms across the island, and unearthed very positive findings for their January to March activities.

InterTradeIreland strategy and policy director, Aidan Gough, said: The results show that agri-food firms are more innovative than most with 77% of business implementing innovative new processes, new product development and new branding or design in the past three years.

Many agri-food businesses seem to be in a positive place but they are not ignoring the future.

Almost two thirds (62%) are scanning the horizon to see what areas of opportunity might be out there; from developing new premium products to taking advantage of the health and wellness agenda, he said.

For those agri-food firms with ambitions to grow outside their local market, the main obstacles appear to be concerns about the cost of going into a new market or the impact this might have in terms of management time and resources.

Those already exporting find different challenges in new markets with one in six agrifood firms (16%) saying that setting the right competitive price is a major challenge, while 13% cite compliance with regulations, and 11% of survey respondents say that they are challenged by financial resources.

The agri-food sector which is the island s largest indigenous industry is now outperforming other sectors, including sales, employment, exporting and innovative activities.

More than half (53%) of agri-food companies grew in the last quarter versus 39% of all other firms.

In addition, 18% of agri-food companies surveyed have reported an increase in staff numbers this quarter with a further 27% planning to create job opportunities in the coming year.

While primary producers have been challenged by low prices being paid for dairy, beef, sheepmeat and other commodities, agri-food industry leaders are pointing to better times ahead.

It is encouraging to see that despite challenges and volatility in global markets, Irish agri food as a whole is going from strength to strength, stated Aaron Forde, Chief Executive of Aurivo, a globally-focused agri business headquartered in the north west of Ireland.

As a leading agri-food business, we are delighted to contribute to the success of this strategically important sector for the island of Ireland. It is worth noting the importance of **cross-border** trade to the continuing success of this industry.

"Furthermore, the increase in innovation over recent years will continue to benefit the industry in the years ahead.

Aidan Gough, Strategy and Policy Director at InterTradeIreland, added: The growth in agri-food firms is most likely related to their strong tendency to be innovative and/or actively exporting.

"The majority of agri-SMEs are selling across the border or exporting outside the island, which is twice the number of firms across the full spectrum of sectors.

Hearteningly, for InterTradeIreland, 27% found the experience of **cross-border** trade influenced them to a large extent to go into other new markets.

Many companies have told us that the export pathway towards markets in Great Britain and much further afield in the EU, Middle East and North America, can begin right here on our doorstep by trading across the island.

**Source:** Irish Examiner