



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Blair urges 'creative way' around Border

Sinn Fein is opposed to Brexit but still wants a British exit from the north, party leader Tony Blair has said the British government should search for a "creative way" to maintain the Common Travel Area between the Republic and the UK. Shortly after the final result of the referendum, Mr Blair said in London it was important to protect the peace process.

"I think if it is at all possible we need to find a way to keep the Common Travel Area because the Common Travel Area between **North and South** has been an important part of acknowledging the nationalist and republican sentiment in the North," he told *The Irish Times*.

"So I think we have to see how we can do that, although speaking now I can't see what that is because once the Republic of Ireland becomes the border with the European Union, then it's quite hard to see how the free movement of people is maintained.

"However, there may be a creative way around it and we should certainly search for it . . ."

Source: The Irish Times

Villiers dismisses Sinn Fein demands to hold a border poll

SINN Fein's demands for a border poll on Irish unity in the wake of the EU referendum have been firmly rejected by the Secretary of State.

Theresa Villiers, who campaigned for a Brexit ahead of the vote, said the criteria for a such a move had not been met.

But Sinn Fein said it intended to "intensify" its demands for a unity referendum. Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness argued: "The British Government has no democratic mandate to represent the views of the North in any future negotiations with the European Union. "I think that there is now a democratic imperative for a border poll. The fact that we have seen a situation where 56% of the people of the North, who are unionists and nationalists and republicans, voted together to stay in Europe further strengthens the case for a border poll." Former SF national chairman Declan Kearney

added: "We have a situation where the North is going to be dragged out on the tails of a vote in England.

"That is a huge democratic deficit for our society, building on the existing democratic deficit of partition."

But Mrs Villiers insisted: "The Good Friday Agreement is very clear that the circumstances where the Secretary of State is required to have a border poll is where there is reason to believe there would be a majority support for a united Ireland. "There is nothing to indicate that in any of the opinion surveys that have taken place. "Again and again, the polls demonstrate that a significant majority of people in Northern Ireland are content with the political settlement established under the Belfast Agreement, and with Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom."

DUP First Minister Arlene Foster said Sinn Fein's demands were "as predictable as the flowers in May" and that she was "absolutely certain" that Northern Ireland's constitutional position had not been undermined.

UUP leader Mike Nesbitt said he was disappointed but not surprised that Mr McGuinness's first reaction had been to "introduce further uncertainty" by calling for a unity referendum.

SDLP leader Colum Eastwood, meanwhile, indicated that he was planning to open discussions with the Dublin administration "on how we can defend the interests of the people of Ireland, **North and South**".

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

Brexit: No need to panic, says Arlene Foster after landmark UK vote to quit the EU

People should not panic over the United Kingdom's decision to quit the European Union, First Minister Arlene Foster has insisted.

Despite calls for a second Scottish independence referendum - potentially leading to the break-up of the UK - the DUP leader said she was convinced the vote provides the opportunity to build an even stronger Union.

And she rejected claims that the victory for Brexit injects uncertainty into a raft of areas - the economy and agriculture among them - for an indefinite period ahead. Nonetheless Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon signalled a second referendum could take place in Scotland in the next two-and-a-half years - the likely period for negotiations over the UK's exit.

Ms Sturgeon argued it was "democratically unacceptable" for Scotland to be taken out of the EU against its will and pointed out that Northern Ireland had also voted to remain. "The UK-wide vote to leave the EU is one that I deeply regret," she said.

Mrs Foster, however, sought to provide reassurance after a majority of people here voted to stay part of the EU, stressing she was absolutely certain the constitutional position of Northern Ireland had not been undermined and called for a "period of calmness".

"The democratic decision of the people of the United Kingdom marks a new and fresh beginning for our country and I believe offers us the opportunity to build a new, hopeful, and more democratic nation," she said.

Like most MLAs the First Minister usually spends most Fridays in her constituency, but the overnight events across the country brought her to Stormont Castle. And her Press conference was delayed by 40 minutes as she fielded a phone call from [David Cameron](#), ▼ who only three hours earlier had announced he would stand down as Prime Minister in a few months.

Praising Mr Cameron, even though he was on the opposite side of the referendum campaign, she welcomed assurances that all the devolved regions will have a role in the forthcoming negotiations to de-couple the UK from the European structures.

Revealing she had also spoken to Secretary of State Theresa Villiers, the First Minister added: "Regardless of how we all have voted it is now important that we work together to build on the potential that this historic opportunity provides."

Her response was in sharp contrast to Sinn Fein, the other main party in the Executive. Its president, Gerry Adams, said: "There are real worries this will have an adverse impact on the two economies on this island. "We could well see the reintroduction of border security controls between the **north and south** as well as the reintroduction of customs controls.

"The referendum will also adversely impact on equality issues, including equal pay, workers' rights laws and anti-discrimination legislation. It will also reinforce the existing two-tier Europe."

Other parties voiced fears over yesterday's outcome. Ulster Unionist leader Mike Nesbitt said: "There is no evidence that the Executive has been planning for this outcome.

"They need to move very quickly to reassure the public that there is a plan, because the full implications for Northern Ireland may not be clear for up to two years."

SDLP leader Colum Eastwood said: "Yesterday Northern Ireland voted to remain as part of the European Union. Ireland's rightful place is at the heart of Europe. That was true yesterday, it remains true today."

Green Party leader Steven Agnew said Mr Cameron had to resign because "he can't represent a country that voted to leave" and asked: "Can Arlene represent Northern Ireland when it voted Remain?"

But TUV leader Jim Allister commented: "The people, the ordinary people, of this great nation took back control, breaking the destructive shackles of the EU and setting our nation on the path to liberty and prosperity."

DUP Enterprise Minister Simon Hamilton said there was a need for a "period of calmness".

And Agriculture and Environment Minister Michelle McIlveen of the DUP said there had been risks associated with staying in the EU and it was now up to the Executive to defend the interests of farmers and fishermen and others.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

June 29, 2016

UK and Irish governments to hold Brexit talks in Belfast

The UK and Irish governments are set to discuss the fallout from the Brexit vote for the first time on Wednesday.

Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan and Northern Ireland Secretary Theresa Villiers will talk about the impact of the referendum on **cross-border** relations when they meet in Belfast.

Meetings will also take place with the First and Deputy First Ministers and there will be separate discussions on the divisive issue with SDLP leader Colum Eastwood, who has vowed to block any attempts to drag Northern Ireland out of the European Union against its will, and David Ford MLA, leader of the Alliance Party - another advocate of the Remain campaign.

In Northern Ireland, 56% of people voted for Remain.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Mr Flanagan said: "It is also my first visit since last Thursday's referendum and I want again to reassure people that the Irish Government in its contacts with EU partners continues to emphasise that the Northern Ireland and **all-island** dimensions will be an area for priority attention in all post-referendum negotiations processes, including in relation to the status of the border."

The implementation of the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements as well as the ongoing work on the legacy of the past and the Irish Government's commitments to **north-south** infrastructural development will also be on the agenda.

Mr Flanagan added: "My meetings are a welcome opportunity to demonstrate the continuing priority the Government attaches to the ongoing work to support stability, reconciliation and prosperity in Northern Ireland, through the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements."

Ahead of the discussions, Ms Villiers said: "It is important that the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government continue to work together on the challenges we share.

"We will review the significant progress since our last meeting, including the response to tackling paramilitary activity and new legislation passed in Westminster to implement the Fresh Start Agreement. I am also determined that we consider together how best to make early progress in implementing the legacy institutions in the Stormont House Agreement.

"This is also an important opportunity to discuss last week's United Kingdom vote to leave the EU and to see how we can ensure that the interests of Northern Ireland are fully protected and advanced."

Source: The Belfast Telegraph