

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

01/07/2016 - 08/07/2016



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Summary: There is no Assembly Business scheduled for this week.



Tuesday 5 July 2016

Department of the Taoiseach

United Kingdom Referendum on European Union Membership:

Summary: Micheal Martin asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the status of his Department's assessment of the impact Brexit will have on PEACE funds to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Paschal Donohoe: I propose to take Questions Nos. 372, 373, 375 and 376 together.

Following the outcome of the UK Referendum on EU membership, the Irish Government has been clear that it remains committed to the successful implementation of the EU funded PEACE and INTERREG programmes. The programmes are not only an important source of funding, but provide a visible demonstration of the European Union's continuing support for the process of peace building and reconciliation. They have seen investment of more than €3 billion in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland over the last quarter of a century and have made a vital contribution to promoting greater economic and social cohesion. Together they will see investment of more than half a billion euro in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland over the period 2014-2020, with 85% of that being contributed by the European Regional Development Fund.

Immediately following the referendum result , and in line with my Department's contingency arrangements, my officials made contact with the European Commission to underscore our commitment to the programmes and to discuss how they would continue to benefit from ERDF funding. They have also spoken to colleagues in the Scottish and Welsh Governments, which are partners in our two INTERREG Programmes. The issue was discussed with the Commission and with a range of stakeholders at an INTERREG Programme Monitoring Committee meeting in Glasgow last Wednesday (29 June 2016) and at the Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in Dublin on Monday (4 July 2016), and I will be meeting Northern Ireland Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir at the SEUPB Sectoral meeting of the NSMC tomorrow (7 July 2016), when we will be able to consider the matter in detail.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-07-05a.976&s=cross-border#g979.q>

Tuesday 5 July

UK Referendum on EU Membership

Summary: Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will provide a report on the meetings he had with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Ms Theresa Villiers, and with the Northern Ireland Executive, on 29 June 2016; if he is concerned that the democratic wishes of persons in Northern Ireland as outlined in the recent European Union membership referendum are not being respected; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Charles Flanagan: Last Wednesday, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I convened a quarterly review meeting of the Fresh Start and Stormont House agreements. The First and Deputy First Minister represented the Executive, as did the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice. As well as the review meeting, I held separate bilateral meetings with the Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, the SDLP leader, Colum Eastwood, the leader of the Alliance Party, David Ford, and Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness. Naturally, the outcome of the UK referendum on the EU was a key element of each of these meetings. I took the opportunity to assure all those I met of the priority the Government attaches to the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland in the aftermath of the referendum. I emphasised the necessity and importance of working together in the best interests of the people on this island. I reiterated the Government's commitment to work in support of stability, reconciliation and prosperity in Northern Ireland. In this regard, the Government will use its influence with our EU partners to seek to persuade them of the need for specific arrangements which protect the key gains of the peace process on this island, a process to which the EU has already made a key contribution.

In addition, I outlined that the common travel area and cross-Border EU funding are key priorities for the Government in the period ahead.

I am very conscious of the deep concerns and anxiety that have arisen for many people across the community in Northern Ireland about the outcome of the referendum. The fact that the majority within Northern Ireland who voted to remain now face their preference being set aside as a result of the overall result across the United Kingdom raises profound and important issues.

In this regard, in my meeting with the Secretary of State, we agreed that the Good Friday Agreement would remain the foundation for the two Governments' approach to Northern Ireland. The EU referendum result does not by any manner or means alter or diminish the centrality of the Good Friday Agreement or the requirement on both the British and Irish Governments to uphold it. As a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and succeeding agreements, the Irish Government remains determined that its institutions, values and principles, including the right to be British or Irish or both, will be fully protected.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2016-07-05a.302&s=cross-border#g305.r>