



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies

## MEDIA WATCH

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July 17, 2016

Savvy shoppers flock north to save 50pc by cashing in on weak sterling;  
Everyday household items like Fairy Liquid are going for half the price in Northern Ireland, writes Mark O'Regan

SOUTH of the border shoppers who travel north can save up to 50pc on selected items in their weekly groceries bill.

As the Brexit debate continues, the gap between the pound and the euro has widened significantly in recent weeks. Yesterday, the euro was trading at 83p against sterling.

But retailers in Northern Ireland said the latest trek north is "more a trickle than a flow" and there has been no major exodus from major population centres like Dublin.

However, increased numbers of those living relatively close to the border are travelling to towns like Newry and Banbridge, for routine purchases such as food and alcohol.

A comparison between Tesco prices in Dublin and Banbridge show a range of items cheaper in the north.

Retailers in the north are hoping the new currency gap will entice consumers from further afield, to make more big-ticket purchases such as electronics and furniture.

A number of outlets in Newry and Banbridge currently have posters in their shop windows stating the exchange rate they have on offer for the Euro against sterling.

Roisin Rooney, who works for The Flower Barrow outlet in The Quays shopping centre in Newry, confirmed increased interest from the South in recent days.

"Shoppers can definitely get better value. Their money goes much further. Let's hope it continues," she said.

Meanwhile, Sinead McKernan, manager in the Chapelle jewellery store in The Outlet, Banbridge, also reported a modest growth in footfall brought about by **cross-border** shoppers.

"It's definitely worth their while for people to travel north because everything works out cheaper.

"There has definitely been an increase in numbers over the past couple of weeks, but it's still not like it used to be," she told the Sunday Independent.

She said competitive pricing for items like diamonds and jewellery would always be a particular draw.

Gordon Thomson, manager of Savoy Tailors Guild, said the gap in the two currencies is definitely attracting more customers from the Republic.

And Jimmy Nevin from the Naul, County Dublin, who made the journey northwards, commented: "To make this whole thing worthwhile you really need to buy in bulk." Traditionally grocery prices in the North have been significantly cheaper than those in the Republic.

A comparison of some Tesco prices this week confirmed the continuing gap between **North and South**.

For example, Kellogg's Special K in the North costs (EURO)3.58, and in the South costs (EURO)6.49.

Ritz crackers in the North were priced at (EURO)1.19 compared with (EURO)2 in the Republic.

Kettle Chips would set you back (EURO)2.37 in Northern Ireland compared with (EURO)2.49 in the South.

Fairy Liquid costs (EURO)1.19 up North, compared to (EURO)2.19 in the Republic.

Back in 2009 shoppers from the Republic flocked to Northern Ireland when at one stage the euro neared parity with sterling. That outflow of business caused major problems for retailers in border towns such as Dundalk.

A recent survey from Irish Revenue and Customs chiefs indicates the cost of alcohol and tobacco has climbed in the South over the past year, while the price of identical products in Northern Ireland has fallen.

However, the cost of petrol, diesel, and home heating fuel had declined significantly on both sides of the border, following a drop in international oil prices.

Over the past year the price of a bottle of vodka in Dublin was unchanged at an average of (EURO)20, while in Newry it fell from £13.48 to £13.03. The only change in excise or duty over the past year was a 50c increase on a pack of 20 cigarettes in the Republic.

But despite the fallout from Brexit, so far there has been no major consumer hit to border towns such as Dundalk.

Paddy Malone of Dundalk Chamber of Commerce says business in the town hasn't been massively impacted by the Brexit vote last month: "It's not like 2010 and 2011 when it was absolutely catastrophic for us. It's nothing as bad as that."

**Source:** Sunday Independent

**July 17, 2016**

## Fianna Fail's Micheal Martin hoping Brexit will bring reunification closer

The leader of Ireland's chief Opposition party said he hopes Brexit will move Ireland closer to reunification.

Micheal Martin said a "reunification referendum" should be called if it becomes clear a majority want to see an end to Irish partition over the UK decision to pull out of the EU. The Fianna Fail leader added that Northern Ireland's 56% majority vote to remain within the bloc could be a defining moment for the region.

He made his remarks delivering the annual John Hume lecture at the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal.

"It may very well be that the decision of Northern Ireland to oppose the English-driven anti-EU UK majority is a defining moment in Northern politics," he said.

"The Remain vote may show people the need to rethink current arrangements.

"I hope it moves us towards majority support for unification, and if it does we should trigger a reunification referendum."

But Mr Martin added: "However at this moment the only evidence we have is that the majority of people in Northern Ireland want to maintain open borders and a single market with this jurisdiction, and beyond that with the rest of Europe."

The 310-mile frontier that separates the island 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.

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

Concerns about its status after the Brexit result - and whether free movement of people, goods and services will be impacted - have dominated political debate since the poll.

During the referendum campaign, Theresa May indicated some form of border control would be required in Ireland if the UK voted to leave the EU.

But just last week, Northern Ireland's new Secretary of State James Brokenshire insisted he does not want to see a hardening of the border.

Mr Martin, a former foreign affairs minister whose party is leading opinion polls and whose backing is needed by the minority Fine Gael government, said any "new barriers between both parts of this island would potentially set us back decades".

"The most urgent thing which is required is an immediate end to the hands-off detachment of recent years," he said.

"It is a sad reality that our government and our media have tended to ignore Northern Ireland except when there is a crisis.

"Meeting the challenge of Brexit is a moment to end this and also to begin rebuilding public faith in politics."

Mr Martin called for an **all-island** response to Brexit that reaches out "to excluded groups, to show that a broader range of interests than those articulated by the dominant political parties can be heard".

He added: "I have in particular stressed our belief that civil society must be included together with business, unions and professional organisations."

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph

**July 18, 2016**

## DUP support is not essential in post-Brexit dialogue – Martin

Niall O'Connor Political Correspondent FIANNA Fáil leader Micheál Martin has said the DUP's backing is not essential for the establishment of a 'post-Brexit' national dialogue.

Mr Martin has said in light of the decision by Britain to leave the EU, the Oireachtas should convene a "national dialogue" or "civil dialogue" involving workers, business organisations, non-governmental organisations and community groupings.

He said the body would be different from the so-called 'all-island' forum, which was shot down by the North's First Minister Arlene Foster.

"That was a mistake, that was wrong," he said.

Significantly, Mr Martin said the body could go ahead without the support of the DUP and should go right around the island of Ireland. He made the claims to reporters as he arrived at the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal.

Delivering the John Hume lecture, Mr Martin described the allocation of speaking rights in the Dáil as "absurd", arguing that it unduly favoured "ad hoc groupings of a few deputies".

He said: "The situation at the moment is still unsettled," while insisting that the minority Government could still work. Mr Martin was also critical of the slow pace at which legislation is being passed.

During the week, Labour Party leader Brendan Howlin said that no legislation had been passed in six months.

Mr Martin expressed concern that the largest parties in the Dáil did not have proportionate speaking time.

He explained: "As part of this, there is no doubt that the amount of time for government legislation needs to be increased we are to properly review the more important measures that will start to appear on the order paper from October onwards.

"In addition, the principle that all deputies should have opportunity to contribute the work of the Dáil has not been achieved.

"In large part, this is because have the absurd situation where the greater the mandate your party holds, the less opportunity you have to speak." The Fianna Fáil leader also used his speech to address the concerns stemming from the attack in Nice and Brexit.

The French ambassador, Jean-Pierre Thébault, had pulled out of the event following the Nice massacre. Mr Martin told the audience: "We are in what can best be termed a new age of uncertainty. There is no question where people of our country stand - we stand in solidarity with France and we stand in solidarity with the great principles of liberty, equality and fraternity which July 14 celebrates.

"This is a tense time...There is natural urge to find refuge in broad definitions of the enemy.

must take robust action - we cannot fail to adopt reasonable measures to fight new threats. But equally, we must never forget what we are defending."

On Brexit, Mr Martin said barriers on the Border could set the country back decades.

"The Brexit vote has added a new risk. It threatens to set back a model of shared development, which, in spite of many problems, has achieved a lot and could achieve much more. The introduction of new barriers between both parts of this island would potentially set us back decades," he said.

Mr Martin hit out at the media for predicting Fianna Fáil's demise. "This year's general election demonstrated a profound detachment between elite and public discourse in this country. The most dramatic proof of this was the shock of so many at the massive losses by the government parties and the fact that Fianna Fáil gained..."proposed talks.

**Source:** Irish Independent

## There's no chance NI and Scotland will remain a part of the EU, insists Foster

FIRST Minister Arlene Foster has said there is no chance of Northern Ireland and Scotland remaining part of the European Union.

Mrs Foster said "the whole of the UK" would be leaving in the wake of last month's Brexit vote.

Despite an overall victory for the Leave campaign, the majority of voters in both Northern Ireland and Scotland opted for Remain.

It led to suggestions from Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon that her country could stay in the UK and the EU, while the rest of the UK leaves the bloc.

But Mrs Foster rejected this, saying: "The very basic fundamental is that we are leaving the European Union."

She told the BBC's Sunday Politics programme: "The reality is that we are part of the United Kingdom as a member state. That (EU) member state has decided by a referendum of all of its people to leave the EU.

"It doesn't mean that we are leaving Europe, it means that we're leaving the institutions of the European Union.

"My job, along with (Deputy First Minister) Martin McGuinness is now to get the best deal possible for all of the people of Northern Ireland, that's what I'm determined to do."

Mr McGuinness said the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland, where 56% voted to stay in the EU, "must be respected" by the Government.

He said Prime Minister Theresa May's comments after meeting the Scottish First Minister were "significant".

"Theresa May, in the aftermath of her meeting with Nicola Sturgeon in Scotland, indicated that she wouldn't trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty unless all parts of what she would describe as the United Kingdom are satisfied. Well, we are not satisfied," he told the BBC.

"And if that effectively hands a veto to Scotland and to us in the North, then we will use it and I think I can deliver a vote in the Assembly which rejects any attempt to drag us, against our will, out of Europe."

Meanwhile, the leader of the Republic's chief Opposition party said he hoped Brexit will move Ireland closer to reunification.

Micheal Martin said a "reunification referendum" should be called if it becomes clear a majority want to see an end to Irish partition over the UK decision to pull out of the EU.

"The Remain vote may show people the need to rethink current arrangements," he said. "I hope it moves us towards majority support for unification, and if it does we should trigger a reunification referendum."

The Fianna Fáil leader also said the DUP's backing is not essential for the establishment of 'post-Brexit' dialogue in Ireland.

He made his remarks delivering the annual John Hume lecture at the MacGill Summer School in Glenties, Co Donegal.

Mr Martin said in light of Brexit, the Irish parliament should convene a "national dialogue" or "civil dialogue" involving workers, business organisations, non-governmental organisations and community groupings. He said the body would be different from the so-called '**All Island**' forum, which was shot down by the Mrs Foster.

"That was a mistake, that was wrong," he said.

Significantly, Mr Martin said the body could go ahead without the support of the DUP.

**Source:** The Belfast Telegraph