



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

16/09/2016 - 23/09/2016

September 16, 2016

Funding support for trainee doctors at Queen's

QUEEN'S University is playing a key role in the largest ever investment in academic medicine across Ireland, through an all-island partnership to support postgraduate trainee doctors.

The combined funding, approximately £10m over the next five years, is from Wellcome Trust, participating universities including Queen's, the Public Health Agency's Research and Development Division (HSC R&D) and Ireland's Health Research Board.

The funding will provide integrated clinical and research training for a total intake of eight postgraduate trainee doctors per year across Ireland, for a five-year period. The programme application, fully supported by HSC R&D and Belfast HSC Trust and the Medical and Dental Training Agency, represents a total investment from HSC R&D Division of up to £1m.

Welcoming the investment, Northern Ireland Health Minister, Michelle O'Neill said: "All-island collaboration on this scale will make a meaningful and tangible difference for health care throughout Ireland. This programme has been successful in working across boundaries, organisations and government to achieve an outcome that will benefit students and patients."

The Minister congratulated Professor Peter Maxwell from Queen's University, who is the Director of the Clinical Academic Training Programme in Northern Ireland and said: "Professor Maxwell has played a key role in securing this investment in clinical academic training for the whole island. This initiative demonstrates what can be achieved through working together across the island."

Professor Maxwell, from Queen's School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, commented: "I am delighted Queen's is part of this successful team of researchers which will receive the largest ever investment in academic medicine here, amounting to £10m over the next five years."

"With this significant investment we can create an integrated all-Ireland clinical academic training programme that will support trainee doctors to become skilled scientific investigators and leaders of future research teams, which can tackle health problems such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and mental illness. This is a long term investment in training people who will make a difference to the health of people throughout Ireland."

Applications for the programme open in autumn 2016 for intake in July 2017.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

September 22, 2016

5 years of 'fallout' for Republic in wake of referendum decision

The fallout from Brexit will hit Ireland's economy for another five years, one of the country's leading think-tanks has warned.

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) repeated its warning that the Northern Ireland economy would be worst hit by the UK's split from the European Union.

Research professor Kieran McQuinn said investment into the Republic has already slowed and businesses with an all-island basis such as farmers and food processors will be among those feeling the most pain.

He added that tourism from Britain is being damaged due to a weak sterling and unemployment would no longer fall as sharply as in recent years.

"There's no doubt there will be opportunities," he said.

"But if you factor in the overall impact of Brexit it will probably mean the Irish economy will be growing at a slightly slower rate over the next four to five years than if Britain had stayed part of the European Union."

"We think, of all the economies, Northern Ireland is going to suffer the most because of Brexit," he said.

The ESRI altered its forecasts on the Republic's economic growth because of Brexit.

It dismissed the 26 per cent economic growth that the Republic reportedly enjoyed last year and said the real figure was around 5.5 per cent.

It said Brexit would mean a slight cut in growth this year to 4.3 per cent and again next year to under 4 per cent.

"Overall we are still quite positive but our output is a little bit down than if Brexit had not occurred," Mr McQuinn said.

"Ultimately you continue to see a fall-off in unemployment in Ireland but that fall-off is probably happening at a slower pace than if Brexit had not occurred," he said.

The ESRI offered a dismal scenario for the Republic and Northern Ireland last year when it examined the possible ramifications of the UK leaving Europe.

It talked about up to EUR3 billion (£2.5 billion) in lost trade and higher energy prices every year and it is running new analysis in an attempt to advise the Irish government in time for next month's budget of the longer term impacts of Brexit.

It is estimated the Republic and the north would suffer a 20 per cent drop in trade.

On the positive side Mr McQuinn said there are significant implications from Brexit for the City of London.

"That could obviously spark opportunities for certain relocation to come and happen here in Ireland," he said.

The ESRI also examined the housing market and Central Bank rules on mortgage lending and repeated its call for the limits to take into account the state of the market.

It said it would take up to four years for the full impact of lending restrictions to play out but its projections pointed to house prices being 3.5 per cent lower and ultimately a 5 per cent fall in the number of houses built.

Source: The Irish News

September 22, 2016

Brexit fears come to pass as North exports fall

In the six-week period ending September 10, only 703 animals were exported, compared to 2,488 in the corresponding period in 2015.

The Brexit-induced decline in the value of sterling against the euro has contributed to a 70% disappearance of the trade, compared to last year.

The cattle from the south have slumped from 8% of the North's prime beef kill to only 2%.

In the Irish Examiner ICMSA farming poll, carried out between August 14 and September 4, 80% of the 526 farmers interviewed agreed that Brexit will reduce prices and farm profitability.

Only 11% said no, and 9% were don't know.

Brexit has reduced prices or profitability already, said 60%-63%.

This is certainly the experience of any southern farmers who had been benefiting from cross-border trade.

Imports of younger beef cattle from the south for further rearing on northern farms have also been notably lower in 2016.

So far this year, 1,643 male store cattle have been imported, compared to 4,734 in the same period in 2015 probably mainly due to the decline in the value of sterling against the euro making the southern cattle more expensive for northern buyers than in previous years.

Sterling fell 11%-12% against the euro after the Brexit vote.

The exchange rate fluctuation has decimated cattle trading from south to north, which had already been under pressure because many northern beef processors.

Major retail customers were only purchasing beef from animals born, reared and finished on UK farms, limiting market outlets for beef from southern cattle.

As a result the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland has advised farmers considering importing cattle from the south to first identify a market outlet for these cattle when they are finished, and to be aware of their potentially lower market value at slaughter.

A relatively steady supply of prime cattle from farms in the North this year is another factor in the 2016 cross-border trading slump.

The live trade to the North has been small compared to the 272,000 tonnes per year of Irish beef (54% of our beef exports) which goes to the UK in general.

However, beef processors have warned that Brexit threatens this trade also.

Cormac Healy of Meat Industry Ireland said: Brexit is a significantly negative event over the medium term for Ireland and its immediate impact is already being experienced in the exchange rate volatility and loss of competitiveness.

He called on the entire beef industry including farmers to focus on the real challenges and risks for the sector arising from Brexit.

We need the Government to react quickly and decisively to ensure that Ireland's food exporting sector is strongly positioned to withstand these competitive threats, he said.

The Irish Examiner ICMSA farming poll reveals that most cattle farmers are aware of the Brexit threat, with 71%-73% saying the UK's vote to leave the EU will reduce profits and prices for their cattle, and up to 55% saying this has happened already.

Nearly half of them say Brexit will affect their farming plans, but only 34% say Brexit will cause them to cancel an expansion or an investment.

Source: The Irish Examiner

September 23, 2016

Noonan: UK must list its Brexit demands

BRITAIN must put its list of Brexit demands on the table as soon as it invokes Article 50 to leave the European Union, Finance Minister Noonan has warned.

Mr Noonan spoke at the Irish Embassy in London before meeting Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond to discuss Brexit negotiations.

It came on the same day as UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said that he expected Article 50 to be invoked early next year.

Mr Noonan said: "Brexit holds out a possibility of damaging the UK economy. And if it damages the UK economy, it damages the Irish economy."

"There's (EURO)1.2bn worth of goods crossing the Irish Sea every week, with 400,000 jobs depending on it, so we have common interests and I want to meet him to get an insight into the approach that the British government and he himself will adopt, after they invoke Article 50."

"Because I think there's an alignment of interests, and acknowledging the fact that we have separate interests as well, we may be able to help each other."

Insight "Then of the course there's the whole issue of Northern Ireland, the border and the peace process and so on. So we've a lot of issues to discuss."

Mr Noonan said he had "no particular insight" into when Article 50 would be invoked and believes it is a "matter for the British government", not the Irish government.

He said: "We understand that they're not going to do it this year, but there's speculation that they may do it early next year."

"Whenever they do it, they have to be clear with our colleagues in Europe about what they want."

"If there's a long ask-list, the rest of us need to know what their priorities are, as soon as Article 50 is invoked."

The Fine Gael minister confirmed that trade tariffs and cross-border trade were points of discussion with Mr Hammond.

He said: "We think it'd be pretty ludicrous to have a hard border within 40 miles of Dublin Airport, and it would be the only land border between the UK and the EU so we want to make sure things remain pretty much as they are and people can go north and south without hindrance."

Meanwhile, Boris Johnson spoke to Sky News about the anticipated time frame for Article 50, which would trigger the process of Britain leaving the EU.

The Foreign Secretary said he expected Article 50 would be invoked in early 2017 and Britain would "take back control" with a global free trade package and a deal on financial services.

"By the early part of next year, you will see an Article 50 letter which we will invoke and in that letter I am sure we will be setting out some parameters for how we propose to take this forward," he said.

Meanwhile, in Cork, Agriculture Minister Michael Creed said Ireland will consider a special free trade zone with the UK if Brexit results in a complex UK split from the EU and the Single Market.

But he warned: "I have said repeatedly that I just don't see any upside in Brexit for Ireland."

Source: The Irish Independent