



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

11/11/2016 - 18/11/2016

November 15, 2016

Arlene Foster hails 'strong, mature' relationship with Enda Kenny

Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster has denied frosty relations with Taoiseach Enda Kenny over Brexit - and has agreed to ramp up top-level talks over the coming months.

In Mr Kenny's office for the first time, Ms Foster said the pair had a "good strong, mature relationship" which would develop more in the future.

While she did not retreat from her strong pro-Brexit stance, she said the pair spoke about the "special history and geography" of Northern Ireland and that both hoped the European Union would continue to recognise that.

Ms Foster will continue to snub an all-island Brexit forum arranged by Mr Kenny, and which first met earlier this month, but she suggested a compromise had been reached with increased cross-border ministerial meetings.

"As the Taoiseach said, if we need to have more regular meetings of the North South Ministerial Council, then we will have more regular meetings," she said afterwards in Dublin's Government Buildings.

The meeting lasted for around an hour and 20 minutes.

The North South Ministerial Council was set up under the Good Friday Agreement peace deal and generally meets in plenary session just twice year.

It will meet next on Friday in Armagh.

Ms Foster dismissed suggestions of cold relations between her and Mr Kenny, adding that while there would not always be agreement between them, there was common ground to work on.

Asked if they talked about seeking a special EU status for Northern Ireland after Brexit, she said: "We discussed the history and geography of Northern Ireland and the fact that the EU have assisted us in the past in relation to that history and geography and we will be talking about it over the coming months, as to how we can build on that past relationship and what that means for the future."

"But the UK as a whole voted to leave the EU, we will leave the EU as a whole but that doesn't take away from the fact that we have a special history and geography here."

On plans for Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to address the Irish parliament next week, Ms Foster said she would "definitely consider" doing the same if asked.

Mr Kenny said the pair found a lot of common ground and agreed to open continued lines of communication.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

November 16, 2016

Foster and Kenny plan to ramp up top-level Brexit talks

First Minister Arlene Foster has denied frosty relations with Taoiseach Enda Kenny over Brexit and has agreed to ramp up top-level talks.

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Source: The Irish News

November 17, 2016

Brexit revives territorial dispute over Lough Foyle between UK and Ireland

Brexit has sparked its first territorial dispute - reigniting an ancient row over the ownership of Lough Foyle.

Claims over the vast estuary between Co Derry in Northern Ireland and Co Donegal in the Republic of Ireland have been made since the island was partitioned almost a century ago. After the Good Friday Agreement peace deal, a cross-border body called the Loughs Agency was handed responsibility for the waters, a key strategic naval base during the Second World War.

But in the wake of the UK's vote to leave the European Union, Northern Ireland Secretary of State James Brokenshire has reasserted London's claim over the entire lough.

In response, Dublin has issued a fresh declaration saying it does not accept the claim and does not see Lough Foyle's disputed ownership being put on the table as part of the Brexit negotiations.

Mr Brokenshire was asked in a parliamentary question how fishing rights will be decided in both Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough - which also straddles both jurisdictions - after the UK leaves the EU.

The Conservative minister said London is committed to withdrawing from the EU Common Fisheries Policy and putting a new fisheries regime in place.

But no actual decisions have yet been taken, he said, adding that the UK was bound by international law.

Asked specifically about Lough Foyle he added: "The Government's position remains that the whole of Lough Foyle is within the UK."

Dublin's Department of Foreign Affairs swiftly rejected the claim. "Ireland has never accepted the UK's claim to the whole of Lough Foyle," it said in a statement.

Dublin said both governments agreed to try and resolve the ongoing row over both Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough during talks in 2011 between the then minister for foreign affairs and the British foreign secretary.

"Since that time a series of meetings have taken place at official level between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade," the statement added.

"The issues involved are complex and involve a range of different actors, including the Crown Estates.

"This is not something we currently envisage as forming part of the negotiations around the UK's departure from the EU."

Sinn Fein Senator Pádraig Mac Lochlainn has branded Mr Brokenshire's remarks as "arrogant and provocative".

"The Loughs Agency tasked with responsibility for managing Lough Foyle by both governments has been repeatedly calling for a resolution so that the real tourism and fisheries potential of the Lough can be fully realised," he added.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

November 17, 2016

Nearly half of Britons back border passport checks

ABOUT 45pc of voters in Britain would support having passport checks in place between the UK and Ireland following a 'hard Brexit', a new survey suggests.

Just 29pc are opposed to the idea while 71pc back reintroducing customs checks on people and goods coming into the UK from the EU.

The survey of what voters want from the Brexit vote, published yesterday, also found that nine in 10 people favour the UK remaining part of the single market.

But seven in 10 want to place limits on the number of people from the EU who come to the UK to live and work, according to the study by London-based NatCen Social Research.

Professor John Curtice, senior research fellow at NatCen, said voters felt that the UK's exit from the EU shouldn't necessarily be a choice between a 'hard' or a 'soft' withdrawal. "Rather, many back options on both menus," he added.

It came as the head of the Eurogroup of Eurozone finance ministers predicted that Brexit negotiations would take a lot longer than two years.

Theresa May's cabinet also held a special meeting yesterday to discuss Brexit strategy ahead of the North South Ministerial Council tomorrow.

It was agreed to proceed with a series of 'sectoral' meetings linked to the All Island Civic Dialogue that took place earlier this month, focusing on agrifood, education and research, child protection and rights, SME issues, tourism and hospitality, energy, welfare rights and mobility and transport.

A second plenary of the All-Island Civic Dialogue is scheduled to take place in the New Year.

Source: The Irish Independent