



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Institute of Directors report highlights 'extreme concern' over Brexit in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland will be the "litmus test" for Brexit and businesses here say they remain "extremely concerned" about what sort of agreement will be secured.

Almost half of members of the Institute of Directors (IoD) in Northern Ireland say leaving the European Union will have a negative impact on investment, with just 12% believing things will improve.

Trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic is around £2.2bn each year, according to a major IoD report on Brexit.

Members are worried about "potential increases in regulatory burdens as a result of the UK's decision to leave the EU".

And the report highlights opportunities for businesses in the Republic to poach jobs from Northern Ireland companies.

One major concern is what potential border delays could have on trade.

"The UK leaving the European Union implies significant changes for these businesses and both countries' economies," the report says.

"In that sense, Northern Ireland will be the litmus test for Brexit.

"If the UK and Ireland can manage to overcome the many intricate and complicated difficulties Northern Ireland presents for Brexit, then the UK Government will have gone a long way to ensuring the best possible outcome of Brexit for the whole UK."

It raises concerns over the free movement of people and the potential loss of EU subsidies.

Ian Sheppard, IoD NI chairman, said: "Northern Ireland is unique as the only region of the UK having a land border with the EU. IoD members in NI are extremely concerned on what the impact of Brexit will mean for the free movement of people and goods across this border.

"It is vitally important the UK Government takes on board our concerns during the negotiating process and seeks to ensure that free movement is retained."

The report says some sectors here are "very heavily interdependent on these two islands". That includes agri-food and hospitality, which are likely to be hit hardest by border restrictions.

And on whether jobs from Northern Ireland could be lost to the Republic, the report says: "There are considerable opportunities for the Republic to lure some of these relocating jobs from the UK and, because of proximity, particularly those jobs currently located in Northern Ireland."

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

December 15, 2016

Irish TD rejects Hamilton's poor border control claims

An Irish government minister has dismissed claims from the PSNI Chief Constable that weak immigration checks in the Republic give foreign criminals an easy route into the UK.

Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Charlie Flanagan TD said George Hamilton's comments were not well-founded.

On Tuesday, Mr Hamilton told a Westminster watchdog that controls in the Republic of Ireland did not have the same "resource or focus" as those operating here.

The Chief Constable made the comments while being questioned by members of the Commons' Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on the future of the Irish border post-Brexit.

When asked how international criminals were entering the UK and the Republic of Ireland, Mr Hamilton said: "Access into the Republic of Ireland may not have the resource assigned to it or the immigration checks we would have in Northern Ireland, or indeed more broadly into the United Kingdom."

The Chief Constable highlighted that 775 people had been detained at Northern Ireland ports in the past year. He also stressed: "I think it would be fair to say that immigration controls into the Republic of Ireland may not have the same resource or focus that we would be seeing in Northern Ireland."

Asked about the PSNI commander's comments on a visit to Belfast yesterday, Mr Flanagan said: "The remarks of the Chief Constable have got to be placed in the broader context of relations between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána being at the most positive and closest ever in terms of sharing of information and working together. Issues in terms of immigration are Dublin/London issues. I don't believe his remarks are well-founded."

Mr Flanagan highlighted that the Irish government had committed additional resources to the Garda to bolster co-operation in tackling cross-border crime.

With regards to the situation post-Brexit, minister Flanagan added: "A priority on the part of Irish government will be to ensure the maintenance of the current invisible border across a range of issues, not only in respect of security and immigration, but also in terms of business and commerce.

"This will be a priority of the Irish government in the context of the negotiations."

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

December 16, 2016

Early Brexit talks should focus on fate of overseas citizens - UK

The UK wants the future of its citizens living abroad - and European citizens living in Britain - to be clarified early on in Brexit talks.

British Prime Minister Theresa May told EU leaders at a summit in Brussels yesterday that the issue was a priority for her.

"She would like to have the question of UK citizens living in Europe and European citizens living in the UK dealt with in the early part of discussions that will take place," said Taoiseach Enda Kenny after the meeting.

EU leaders have pledged not to enter talks with the UK until it officially notifies the EU of its intention to leave, which Ms May has indicated she will do by end-March 2017.

That will kick-start two years of talks on a divorce settlement, including the UK's pension and other financial obligations to the EU and how to extricate itself from a plethora of EU laws.

"We will be leaving the EU; we want that to be as smooth and orderly a process as possible," Ms May said. "It's not only in our interest, it's in the interests of the rest of Europe as well."

But Mr Kenny said Brexit would take longer than the two-year timescale because of the complexity of EU legislation.

"Fifty years of legislation, directives and so on will probably be very difficult to deal with inside a two-year period," he said.

Following the summit, EU leaders met minus the UK to discuss procedural matters.

"There wasn't any discussion about trading relationships, about extensions of time or transition periods - two or 10 years or anything like that," Mr Kenny said.

"Until it becomes clear as to what sort of relationship the United Kingdom actually wants to have with the future European Union, it's then that you can make decisions and negotiate on those decisions."

It's the second time the 27 prime ministers and presidents have met alone since the UK voted to leave the EU in June.

Source: The Irish Independent