

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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13/01/2017 - 20/01/2017



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Tuesday 17 January 2017

## Transport Operator Licensing

Ms Bradshaw asked the Minister for Infrastructure, in light of the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, what action he is taking to ensure passenger transport operator licensing for Northern Ireland transport companies that operate outside the United Kingdom will not be negatively impacted by a break from European Union regulation 1071/2009 and regulation 1073/2009.

**Mr Hazzard:** The issue of international passenger transport is being considered as part of a detailed assessment of the potential impact of a withdrawal from the EU. All of these considerations will feed into negotiations going forward. However, it is essential to make sure that British Government Ministers keep at the forefront of their thinking the unique set of circumstances that apply on the island of Ireland when it comes to passenger transport. There are many journeys across the border every day, with passengers travelling for work, education and leisure purposes. It is very important that people in the North and South continue to have a choice of transport services at their disposal and can enjoy free movement on this island when and where they wish.

That said, it is too early to make an informed assessment of any impact on the North's international passenger transport arising from a withdrawal from the EU. This will largely depend on the terms of the relationship that is eventually agreed with the EU. My officials are engaged with officials in the Department for Transport (DFT) EU exit coordination unit to ensure that they include in their thinking the specific issues that impact on the island of Ireland.

**Ms Bradshaw:** Thank you, Minister, for your answer. You mentioned an informed assessment, but what plans do you have to change the current passenger transport operating legislation to align more with the Republic of Ireland and the rest of Europe — as you outlined, those transport links are very important — or are you minded to continue with the current UK derogations?

**Mr Hazzard:** It is fair to say that this is a fluid situation. Just today, the British Prime Minister has made a statement that will be deeply worrying to public and passenger transport providers on the island of Ireland. One thing that has come out of her statement today is that a hard border looks

inevitable at the minute, and that will be deeply concerning. It is a very fluid situation, but, rest assured, it is one that my officials certainly have on their agenda to discuss with officials in Dublin and London.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-17-01-2017.pdf>



**Thursday 19 January 2017**

**Brexit Issues**

Niall Collins asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the bilateral meetings he had with his European counterparts outside of EU Council meetings since the UK referendum to leave the EU took place in which the issue of Brexit and the unique challenges faced by the island of Ireland were discussed, including the name of each European government ministerial counterpart, the meeting location and the date of each meeting, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

**Paschal Donohoe:** The Taoiseach and Ministers continue to meet and engage with our EU counterparts to emphasise Ireland's concerns and to ensure that they are fully understood once negotiations commence. This activity is reinforced by extensive engagement at official and diplomatic level.

As Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform I have responsibility for a number of areas of EU policy, most notably EU Cohesion policy, which accounts for around one third of the EU Budget, and the EU-funded programmes between Ireland and the UK.

In that context I have been in regular contact with my Northern Ireland counterpart, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, most recently on 16 December 2016 when we both visited Derry to see some of the projects funded under the PEACE and INTERREG Programmes and to meet programme beneficiaries.

In addition, on 21 October 2016 I met the Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government, Mark Drakeford, to discuss the Ireland Wales INTERREG Programme.

The Irish Government is firmly committed to the successful implementation of the current EU-funded cross-border programmes and to successor programmes post-2020.

Of course, there have been and will be no negotiations with the UK until Article 50 has been triggered.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-01-19a.494&s=cross-border#g496.r>