



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Ireland delivers cross-border pitch for 2023 Rugby World Cup

Ireland has formally submitted its bid to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup, having secured a commitment from the governments in Belfast and Dublin to pay the £120million tournament fee.

The Irish bid, detailed in a 990-page candidature file, is up against strong opposition from France and South Africa, with World Rugby voting to decide a winner on November 15 in London.

Dublin's Croke Park, the home of the Gaelic Athletic Association, would be the centrepiece of an Irish Rugby World Cup and is considered to be one of the bid's strongest cards, as it is Europe's third biggest stadium.

There are 11 other venues on the bid's long list, including three in Northern Ireland.

In a statement, Ireland's Taoiseach Enda Kenny said: "This bid has the total support of the Irish government. We can guarantee that Ireland has the capacity to deliver a wonderful Rugby World Cup in 2023 which will have the backing of people throughout the island.

"We will welcome the world to our shores and encourage interest in the game of rugby like never before."

Sir Malcolm McKibbin, head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, said hosting the event would give the island "an unprecedented opportunity to showcase our sporting talent and world-class tourism on a global stage".

The bid book itself was delivered to World Rugby's headquarters in Dublin by a delegation which included 120 children carrying flags to represent every rugby-playing nation. Also in the delegation were Irish RFU president Stephen Hilditch, Ireland coach Joe Schmidt and former captain Brian O'Driscoll.

The bid's organisers claim the tournament would attract more than 450,000 extra visitors to the island and be worth £1.3billion to the economy.

Hilditch said: "Ireland has never hosted a Rugby World Cup and we believe choosing Ireland as a first-time host would be a forward-looking step and a signal that rugby is a truly global game for all."

England staged the last Rugby World Cup in 2015 and Japan is hosting the next edition in 2019.

South Africa hosted the 1995 tournament and unsuccessfully bid in 2011, 2015 and 2019, while France staged the 2007 Rugby World Cup.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

8 June 2017

Hard Border 'would bring back smuggling'; Seanad committee on Brexit told 'racketeers' will benefit from process

"Racketeers and criminals" will benefit if a hard Border is put in place after Brexit, the Seanad has heard. The chairman of Monaghan County Council, PJ O'Hanlon, said a lot of work had gone into stamping out smuggling in recent years.

"If we go back to the hard Border situation there is absolutely no doubt that this will be the problem, the racketeers and the criminals that lived and flourished on the Border. That is the last thing that we want to see," he said.

"Will that smuggling take off again? Definitely, no doubt about it. Once there's a hard Border be assured that business and that practice will be back, because unfortunately there are people that are interested in making money."

He was responding to a question from Fine Gael Senator Michelle Mulherin at a day-long session of Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, held in the Seanad chamber.

Mr O'Hanlon was joined by other local authority representatives from the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Cllr Stephen McCann, chairman of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, said local authorities on the Border would welcome the chance to brief the incoming Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar on the issues.

Earlier the former president of the European Parliament Pat Cox said Brexit had given Ireland severe flu but an Irish exit from the European Union would result in terminal pneumonia.

Mr Cox warned that the cost of not creating a more effective EU "could be fatal and very damaging", with Brexit just a hint of what could come. He said Britain had chosen to leave and Ireland had to live with the consequences.

Ireland was caught in circumstances that it did not find desirable and from which it could not escape, but, he said, it would be unwise for the State to contemplate following Britain out of Europe. "Terminal pneumonia is not a cure for severe flu," he said.

Freight Transport Association Ireland's general manager, Aidan Flynn, said his organisation wanted to see a dedicated Brexit minister appointed. He said there had been very little engagement with Minister for Transport Shane Ross.

The outgoing chief executive of the airport operator DAA, Kevin Toland, said challenges were beginning to emerge for Ireland's British tourism market. Between February and April this year, trips by residents of Britain to the Republic decreased by 10.7 per cent.

"We're in freefall in tourism from the UK," he said.

Ireland's most important competitor for tourists was the UK. Mr Toland said Brexit was negative on the whole but some opportunities existed, including the probable reintroduction of duty-free shopping at UK ports and airports.

Horse-racing industry Horse Racing Ireland's chief executive, Brian Kavanagh, told the committee his industry would be unable to locate an alternative market to Britain. "When it comes to exporting our racehorses, especially those destined for the jumps market, there is no replacement market for Britain, and so, unlike many other Brexit-hit sectors, we simply cannot adapt our product to suit new markets," he said. "Royal Ascot, Cheltenham, Aintree and Epsom cannot be replicated in another country."

Any uncoupling of the relationship between the British and Irish horse-racing industries would be very damaging to British racing, he said, and catastrophic to the Irish racing and breeding industry, which was worth more than EUR 1 billion a year.

He said Horse Racing Ireland would meet Minister for Agriculture Michael Creed today to discuss Brexit. He hoped the Irish industry could join with the British and French industries to compile a document for the attention of the European Commission's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier.

The committee was also warned that poachers and pollution did not recognise borders and could thrive on "ineffective legislation, chaos and inertia" after Brexit. Sharon McMahon of the cross-Border Loughs Agency said the UK's withdrawal from the EU was potentially one of the biggest threats to the environment in the medium to long term.

Source: The Irish Times

9 June 2017

Brexit to harm health in Border area: Irish Medical Organisation

THE impact of Brexit on access to healthcare will be particularly felt in the Border regions, it has been warned.

The Seanad Special Committee on Brexit was told the departure of the UK from the EU would have a significant impact on healthcare on the island of Ireland.

The Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) warned Brexit would increase deprivation rates and isolation in the Border counties, which would have a knock-on impact on people's health.

The organisation said that ongoing collaboration in healthcare would pose a challenge post Brexit.

IMO president Dr Ann Hogan said: "Regardless of how hard or soft, a future Border will be in place, impeding the free movement of patients, ambulances and doctors across the Border.

"Common European regulations regarding pharmaceuticals, medical devices and data protection may no longer apply.

"Legislation which has aided the movement of healthcare professionals may no longer apply.

"In addition to the rights of doctors to work in both jurisdictions, the automatic recognition of medical qualifications will no longer apply. Bureaucracy will affect both the flow and training of medical professionals between both jurisdictions.

"We cannot be complacent and assume that co-operation will continue into the future once the UK has left the EU. Planning must begin immediately."

Some 1.6 million people live in the Border regions. An increasing number of patients have taken advantage of patients' rights in cross-border regulations with 700 patients accessing care in Northern Ireland last year.

Source: The Irish Independent