

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

7 July 2017 – 14 July 2017



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Wednesday 12 July 2017

Department of Health

Brexit Documents

Stephen Donnelly asked ask the Minister for Health the position regarding the development of sectorial response plans to Brexit; the publication date of these plans; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Simon Harris: On 2 May, the Government published a comprehensive document on Ireland and the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. This document sets out the approach of the Government to the forthcoming negotiations, following the successful campaign to have key Irish issues recognised in the EU negotiation position.

Following on from publication of this document, work is underway across departments to prepare adaptive Sectoral Brexit Response Plans to mitigate emerging sectoral challenges. These plans will build on ongoing cross-Government research, analysis and consultations with stakeholders, and will encompass the following themes:

- Sustainable fiscal policies to ensure capacity to absorb and respond to economic shocks, not least from Brexit;
- Policies to make Irish enterprise more diverse and resilient, to diversify trade and investment patterns, and to strengthen competitiveness;
- Prioritising policy measures and dedicating resources to protect jobs and businesses in the sectors and regions most affected by Brexit;
- Realising economic opportunities arising from Brexit, and helping businesses adjust to any new logistical or trade barriers arising;
- Making a strong case at EU level that Ireland will require support that recognises where Brexit represents a serious disturbance to the Irish economy.

All of this work is ongoing and must also respond to the emerging developments in the Brexit negotiations. There is no decision as yet on publication dates.

I should add, that the Department of Health and its agencies have been conducting detailed analysis on the impacts of Brexit in the area of health. A number of issues are being examined and contingency planning for a range of eventualities is underway. A key issue will be to ensure that there is minimum disruption to health services and that essential services are maintained on a cross-border, all-island and Ireland-UK basis. The key priorities for my Department are therefore to ensure continuity in the provision of health services and to avoid, or mitigate against, changes to the current situation that would have a negative impact on human health. The Department of Health will continue to work closely with the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other departments on Brexit, and to work and contribute as required to the cross Governmental response, including on the themes identified, in light of the ongoing cross-Government research, analysis and consultations with stakeholders.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-07-12a.834&s=cross-border+2017-07-07..2017-07-14#g836.r>

Wednesday 12 July 2017

Department of Justice and Equality

Policing Issues

Niamh Smyth asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the steps he will take in the Border region to address the impact of a hard border and the potential increase of criminal activity; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Charles Flanagan: It has always been the case that Ireland and the United Kingdom cooperate closely on immigration and border matters, in particular as they relate to securing the Common Travel Area (CTA) and we will continue to cooperate, and to strengthen that cooperation, in the future. Both Governments have publicly declared their commitment to ensuring no return to a so-called 'hard border' on the island of Ireland. There are excellent relations at official and political level in relation to enhancing the operation of the Common Travel Area and we are committed to that continuing.

There is close and ongoing cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI on all aspects of policing, with a particular focus on combatting security threats and tackling cross-border crime. The Garda Commissioner and the Chief Constable of the PSNI, who are responsible for operational policing cooperation, have repeatedly emphasised the scope and the value of the close and high quality cooperation between the two police services which is instrumental in combating crime, protecting community safety and, indeed, saving lives. The two police services operate a joint Cross-Border Policing Strategy which has as its aims to improve public safety throughout Ireland, to disrupt criminal activity and to enhance the policing capability of both police services on the island.

It is the firm intention that in the context of the UK's departure from the European Union there will be no diminution in the level of co-operation in this regard, and every effort will continue to be made to achieve that outcome.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-07-12a.231&s=cross-border+2017-07-07..2017-07-14#g233.r>

Thursday 13 July 2017

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Brexit Issues

Timmy Dooley asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources further to Parliamentary Question No. 248 of 25 May 2017, if he will elaborate on the engagement that he mentioned; and the number of meetings that he and his Department have attended regarding the implementation of EU roaming regulations in Northern Ireland following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.

Denis Naughten: EU Roam Like at Home took effect by way of EU Regulation on 15 June 2017 and is now in force EU-wide. That includes in Northern Ireland as part of the UK. Therefore until the UK leave the European Union, this EU law has full effect in the UK, including Northern Ireland.

As stated previously, it is not yet possible to say what impact Brexit will have on cross-border roaming charges once the UK formally leaves the Union. That will be largely dependent on the future relationship between the EU and UK, which is a discussion that will follow the current negotiation phase of the Exit Deal.

The position remains that the UK Government White Paper on Brexit sets out that the UK wishes to ensure that the UK telecoms companies can continue to trade as freely and competitively as possible with the EU.

As you will be aware, my officials and I take every opportunity to discuss the potential impacts of Brexit with our EU and UK colleagues, including with the European Commission Article 50 Task Force.

With respect to Northern Ireland specifically, meetings have yet to take place at Ministerial level since the collapse of the Executive back in January. The Irish Government, through the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, continues to work towards the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Executive and there are ongoing contacts at official level.

Prior to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive, I attended the North South Ministerial Council which convened in November 2016 and included an audit of policy areas impacting North and South, which was to include a range of matters that affect both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-07-13a.2722&s=cross-border+2017-07-07..2017-07-14#g2724.r>