



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies

# MEDIA WATCH

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**8 September 2017 – 15 September 2017**

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## Brexit effect on cross-border health schemes discussed

The Government is drawing up contingency plans, should cross-border healthcare schemes be affected by a hard Brexit, the health minister has said.

Under the cross-border healthcare directive and the travel abroad scheme, Irish patients have the option of being treated in Northern Ireland if waiting lists are lengthy or a treatment is not available in Ireland.

However, there is concern over the future of the arrangements post-Brexit.

"The issue of access to health services in Northern Ireland, the UK and other EU member states under the Treatment Abroad Scheme or Cross Border Directive is being considered," health minister Simon Harris said on Friday.

Also under consideration is how Brexit may affect the health and social care workforce and regulatory issues.

"The implications of the UK no longer being part of a harmonised regulatory system in relation to food safety standards, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics are being examined," said Mr Harris.

"The implications of Brexit for networks and organisations such as the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, European Reference Networks on rare diseases, or the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control are also under consideration.

"Ensuring continuity in the supply of medicines and medical devices following the UK's departure from the EU is a priority."

Mr Harris was speaking at an All-Island Civic Dialogue on the implications of Brexit for Cross-border Health Co-operation in Dundalk.

He insisted that cross-border health co-operation will continue post-Brexit "because it makes perfect sense for it to continue".

"It is in the best interests of patients and of common benefit to Ireland and Northern Ireland," he said.

"Brexit will undoubtedly pose challenges for the health sector, as it will for every other sector. But I have no doubt that the strength and maturity of networks and relationships that have built up over time will be of great benefit as we seek to manage the implications of Brexit collectively on an all-island basis," the minister said.

**Source: The Belfast Telegraph**

**8 September 2017**

## **Lakeland to create 85 jobs in Cavan; Milk powder plant with 160,000 tonne output opened after €40m investment**

Cavan-based Lakeland Dairies will create 85 new jobs between now and 2019 after having invested EUR 40 million in a milk powder plant.

The facility in Bailieborough was officially opened yesterday by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed and is understood to be one of the largest in Europe.

"Notwithstanding challenges on the horizon, amongst which Brexit is obviously paramount, all stakeholders in the Irish dairy sector are well placed to benefit from the current recovery under way," Mr Creed said.

Commenting on the challenge posed by Brexit, Mr Creed said: "In a sense, the elephant in the room that concerns us is Brexit and I know that it is of particular concern to a company like Lakelands, which operates on a cross-Border basis.

"We have engaged as a Government extensively on this matter with all stakeholders, and in particular in the context of the Border regions - with companies that are operating and straddling the Border, including Lakeland and LacPatrick.

"Over the next five years Ireland will continue to be amongst the world's fastest-growing dairy producers. The goals that were set in Harvest 22/20, are increasing milk output by 50 per cent and may be reached by year end 2107, with production reaching 7.5 billion litres. "

During the building process more than 180 construction workers were employed. The expanded facility will create 85 new jobs across the Lakeland group between now and 2019.

Lakeland employs 800 people and has 2,400 dairy farmers supplying milk to the co-operative from across 15 counties, north and south. The processing centre at Bailieboro will produce 160,000 tonnes of milk powders and 50,000 tonnes of butter annually.

Michael Hanley, the group chief executive, said the investment would help the company address opportunities in the areas of infant formulas and dairy proteins.

Positive development

"It is a positive development and it is a competitive development, designed to secure the future of 2,500 Lakeland milk suppliers and their families and for dairy farming in the northern half of Ireland."

Mr Hanley went on to say that the company's preparations for various Brexit scenarios were well under way.

"In Lakeland we are planning for all types of post-Brexit scenarios and contingencies - soft Brexit, hard Brexit, cliff-edge Brexit, customs, customs posts, short transition and long transition periods, etc," Mr Hanley said.

"Rest assured, while we are confident, we are not complacent in relation to Brexit - there is a lot of baloney to be talked yet," he added.

**Source: The Irish Times**

**13 September 2017**

## **NI peace projects could still receive EU cash after Brexit through Dublin**

Northern Ireland peace projects could continue to receive EU funding after Brexit, with money funnelled through the Republic of Ireland, a committee of Irish parliamentarians proposed.

Programmes to prevent inter-community conflict, promote reconciliation, cross-border cooperation and the development of infrastructure and jobs should be protected amid heightened political and economic instability, legislators added.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK which will have a land border with the EU after Brexit and faces particular challenges due to its links with the Republic.

The report said: "One solution could include funds continuing to flow to Northern Ireland on a 'lean-to' basis post-Brexit via Ireland's EU membership and through the North-South Ministerial Council. This option should be explored further under the Government's planning."

An Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement on Wednesday launched a report considering the impact of Brexit on the 1998 Good Friday Agreement which largely ended decades of violence.

It said division between the communities was still very evident, with low levels of trust and high levels of residential and social segregation.

It added: "Within this context there still remains a real need for the region to address a number of key issues in order to support the overall peace process.

"These include more efforts to develop and deepen reconciliation between divided communities, increase tolerance and respect to reduce the levels of sectarianism and racism, promote increased community cohesion and address the legacy of the past."

Victims' campaigner Raymond McCord took a High Court case over concerns European peace money could be discontinued following Brexit.

His son Raymond McCord Jnr, 22, was a former RAF radar operator who was killed by Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in north Belfast in 1997.

Mr McCord said unionist communities would have no problem with peace funding for Northern Ireland coming through the Republic after the divorce in March 2019.

He said: "You go to hospital and, God forbid, you take a youngster.

"He has had an operation and needs blood, you are not asking where it comes from.

"It is for the benefit of that child or your family isn't it?

"It is not a case that you are taking a bribe or you are easily caught, it is anything but it."

Gina McIntyre, chief executive of the Special EU Programmes Body which distributes funds from the EU to Northern Ireland, said there was great support for continuation of its work programmes.

She added: "We should not be complacent about how they are to be achieved, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we need those programmes."

The Peace 4 programme is a cross-border initiative funded through the European Union designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland.

It also contributes to the promotion of economic and social stability by improving cohesion between communities.

Europe has contributed approximately €229 million (£206 million).

The UK government has previously pledged to maintain peace projects in Northern Ireland after EU withdrawal.

**Source: The Belfast Telegraph**