



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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New wave of cross-Border shopping

Quantifying the impact of Brexit on the Republic's economy at this stage is like trying to measure the impact of rainfall on the Irish psyche. We know it's likely to be profound, but who can really say for sure.

Up to now Brexit has been filtered through a series of warnings about what might happen, but there has been little in the way of hard data. The latest quarterly accounts from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), however, went some way to remedying that.

A €300 million squeeze on excise duty receipts in the second quarter of this year is blamed on a pick-up in cross-Border shopping, triggered by a weaker sterling which has been 15-20 per cent down against the euro since last year's Brexit referendum.

A previous study linking a rise in traffic volumes across the Border to the slide in sterling hinted at the trend without quantifying it.

Whether it persists or even accelerates will be dictated by the undulations of sterling, which are being driven by a number of currents not least Theresa May's rather opaque utterances on Brexit, which seem to generate more heat than light. In 2009, the last time the euro and sterling flirted with parity, there was a major pick-up in cross-Border shopping, and an equal and opposite reduction in retail trade in the South.

A repeat of this could seriously hamper recovery in the Republic's retail sector, which was the slowest part of the Irish economy to recover from the crash and is still perpetuated, in many cases, by discounting rather than a pick-up in spending power.

The other Brexit-led trend in the CSO's numbers was the decline in consumption, a key driver of domestic activity.

Consumption in goods and services fell 1.1 per cent in the quarter on the back of a fall-off in new car sales and a significant rise in used imports from the UK. Experts suggest Irish consumers are ditching the purchase of mainstream models here in favour of buying used, premium brands in the UK.

To date the Brexit factor has not really affected the State's headline economic numbers. Having said that, we're only at the beginning of the process.

Source: The Irish Times

18 September 2017

Call for Northern Ireland to have honorary EU status while staying in UK

More than 200 supporters have signed a petition calling for Northern Ireland to be given "honorary" European Union membership while remaining part of the UK.

Former European Commission head in Belfast Jane Morrice has said the country could become a European place of global peace-building.

Her petition called on Prime Minister Theresa May, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to grant the special status.

It has received 244 signatures of support.

The online campaign said: "The aim is to protect peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland; to ensure respect for the European rights and fundamental freedoms of Northern Ireland citizens; to guarantee freedom of movement between the UK and Ireland and to safeguard the spirit of good relations and cooperation between the UK, Ireland and the EU enshrined in the Good Friday Belfast Agreement."

Sinn Fein and the SDLP are campaigning for Northern Ireland to be given special status within the EU following Brexit.

The Democratic Unionists supported Leave in the referendum.

Honorary EU association would retain the status of Northern Ireland as part of the EU, part of the UK and part of the British/Irish and North/South Council in keeping with the Good Friday Belfast Agreement, the petition said.

It would respect the will of the people of Northern Ireland who voted to stay in the EU, keep the Irish border open and recognise the right of those who wish to retain EU citizenship as British and/or Irish citizens, it added.

"Associate EU membership should permit Northern Ireland to stay in the customs union, the single market and the common travel area and find ways to allow the freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services East/West and North/South of the British Isles.

"It should guarantee support for farmers, fisheries, research, student exchange and other economic and social imperatives and ensure and extend funding for cross-community, cross border and global Peace outreach programmes."

Ms Morrice is a former member of the Women's Coalition, which participated in the peace talks which led to the 1998 peace accord.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

22 September 2017

Population ties binding Britain and Republic revealed as Brexit looms

THE number of Republic-born people in Britain is nearly 100,000 higher than the Republic's British-born population, official analysis shows.

On average, 375,900 people born in the Republic were living in Britain from January 2013 to December 2015, compared with 277,200 British-born people in the Republic in 2016.

The study - the latest in a series of publications looking at cross-border movements in the context of the Brexit negotiations - reveals differences in the age profiles of the two communities.

More than three-quarters (79%) of the people born in the Britain and living in the Republic were estimated to be 15 to 64 years old, compared with 55% of those who were born in the Republic and resident in Britain. Of the Republic-born population living in Britain, two in five (42%) were aged 65 years and over, compared with 10% of the British-born population in the Republic. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report also details how:

- There are an estimated 110 million border crossings annually between the Republic and Northern Ireland for reasons including work, business, trade, education, health and family.
- There were 3.7 million visits from Britain to the Republic last year, with seeing friends or relatives the most common reason for making the trip, followed by holidays.

- In February 2017, of all British State pensions received by residents living in the European Union (excluding Britain), 28% were received by those living in the Republic.

- British-born people make up one in eight workers in "culture, media and sports occupations" in the Republic.

- For Republic-born residents living in Britain, one in three works in a professional occupation, with the most common professions being teaching and education, nursing and midwifery, and IT and telecommunication.

Emma Rourke, ONS director of public policy analysis, said she believed the data will prove "indispensable" as the negotiations over Britain leaving the EU develop.

"The complex and historic relationship between the UK and Ireland is one of the most challenging areas facing the UK and the EU as Brexit negotiations proceed," she said.

"The sort of analysis we have published today with our colleagues in the Irish and Northern Ireland statistical agencies is going to be indispensable as these negotiations develop.

"It will be more important than ever to have clear and comprehensive data on how and where citizens of our two countries are living and working across borders."

Source: The Belfast Telegraph