

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

20 October 2017 – 27 October 2017



Northern Ireland
Assembly

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



Tuesday 24 October 2017

Department of Health

Pearse Doherty asked the Minister for Health the extent of services and treatments that will be available to children on an all-island basis in the new national children's hospital; the way in which it is anticipated that Brexit will impact on plans to achieve and implement this proposed care delivery model; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Simon Harris: The development of the new children's hospital will have a positive impact on paediatric healthcare for the island of Ireland. The hospital will provide tertiary and quaternary paediatric services, including on an all-island basis, where agreed between the Department of Health and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland. There is potential to develop further clinical networks bringing benefit to patients across the island of Ireland building on the all-island Congenital Heart Disease Network established in March 2015.

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 health sector has a highly mobile workforce and free movement issues and the mutual recognition and assurance of professional qualifications are being considered.

These issues are currently being examined by my Department and its agencies and this work will continue over the period ahead. The key priorities for my Department are 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. These are also key factors in considering the prioritisation of risks.

The Department of Health will continue to work closely with 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.

An extensive programme of engagement with all other EU Governments and the EU institutions is under way. I am continuing to engage with my EU counterparts on an ongoing basis.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-10-24a.536&s=all-island+2017-10-20..2017-10-27#g537.q>

Wednesday 25 October 2017

Department of An Taoiseach

Micheál Martin asked the Taoiseach if he will report on his speech in Derry on 13 October 2017.

Leo Varadkar: I visited Derry on the 13th and 14th of October. On Friday 13th, I addressed the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce President's Dinner when I set out the Irish Government's ongoing commitment to the peace process and North/South Co-operation, particularly in the context of Brexit. I also highlighted the success of cross-border co-operation in the North West and the future potential of the region and re-iterated the Irish Government's commitment to provide a funding contribution to the construction of the A5 dual-carriageway.

On Saturday morning, I met with a delegation from the North West Strategic Growth Partnership which included elected representatives from across the North West.

At the meeting, I heard first hand about the work they are doing to build on existing strong cross border ties to ensure that the North West region can thrive.

I also paid a brief visit to the City Walls and the Peace Bridge.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-10-25a.138&s=cross-border+2017-10-20..2017-10-27#g140.r>

Thursday 26 October 2017

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Brendan Smith asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he has had specific engagement with farming and agrifood interests in Northern Ireland on the difficulties that will arise for this sector due to Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Michael Creed: Brexit poses enormous challenges for the agri-food sector in Ireland by virtue of its reliance on the UK market, and particularly the integrated nature of the trade with Northern Ireland.

The most immediate impact of Brexit has been the significant drop in the value of sterling against the euro, while some of the anticipated longer-term challenges are likely to include tariffs and trade, divergence in regulations and standards, border controls, and certification (including animal and plant health certification).

I and my officials have engaged extensively and on an ongoing basis with our UK counterparts, including those in Northern Ireland, since the Referendum result was announced in June 2016. Regular consultation has taken place at senior official level, both in the context of the North South Ministerial Council and on a more informal bilateral basis with Belfast and London, in an effort to maintain open and constructive lines of communication as developments have unfolded. These contacts will continue.

Prior to the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly in January 2017, I met with Michelle McIlveen (DUP), the then Northern Ireland Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, on a number of occasions to discuss the impact Brexit could have on the agri-food sector. These included more formal engagements in the context of the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC), such as those in Armagh in October 2016 and at the Plenary in November 2016.

In addition, I have hosted four All-Island Civic Dialogue events since last December, for thirteen different agri-food sectors under the Department of the Taoiseach's All Island Civic Dialogue process. The Northern Ireland agri-food sector has been very strongly represented at these events. In all of these engagements we discussed the severe implications that Brexit could have for cross border agri-food trade in particular, and the potential steps that could be taken to mitigate its impact.

All of the information gathered at these events has fed into my Department's preparations for the forthcoming negotiations as part of the EU 27 negotiating team.

The Government remains very focused on supporting the agri-food industry through the challenges ahead. I will continue to consult with the industry as the negotiations develop, and I will continue to press Ireland's case for continued free access to the UK market, without tariffs and with minimal additional customs and administrative procedures.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-10-26a.588&s=cross-border+2017-10-20..2017-10-27#g590.r>