

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

20/05/2016 - 27/05/2016



Northern Ireland
Assembly

During this week the Northern Ireland Executive was formed with Ministers appointed.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-25-05-2016.pdf>



Tuesday, 24 May 2016

Department of Health

Cross-Border Health Initiatives

Summary: Pearse Doherty asked the Minister for Health the timeframe in which he will reimburse persons availing of the cross-border health care directive scheme under the rules of the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Simon Harris: Under the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, insured patients are entitled to have costs of cross-border healthcare service reimbursed if the healthcare service in question is among the benefits to which they are entitled in their Member State of affiliation. The [HSE](#) endeavours to reimburse the cost of treatment incurred or the cost of providing such healthcare in the State, which ever is the lesser, to the applicant within 30 days of receipt of a claim for reimbursement, in line with Prompt Payment Legislation.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2016-05-24a.1344&s=cross-border>

Tuesday, 24 May 2016

UK Referendum on EU Membership

Summary: Micheál Martin asked the Taoiseach if he has spoken to the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Ms Arlene Foster, recently; and if he will make a statement on the matter of the UK Referendum on EU Membership

Enda Kenny: In the spirit of partnership, as the Deputy will understand.

We agreed to meet soon and I intend to visit Britain, perhaps on a number of occasions as my schedule permits, before the referendum on 23 June 2016. I meet Prime Minister Cameron regularly in the normal course of events on a bilateral basis and at European Council meetings. Our recent bilateral discussions have centred on the importance of the UK remaining a member of the European Union.

When I met the Prime Minister on 25 January in Downing Street, the focus then was on the European Council meeting on 18 February this year and the constructive role Ireland could play in the negotiations. A package of reforms was subsequently agreed by Heads of State and Government which provides a strong basis for the Prime Minister's campaign for the United Kingdom to stay in a reformed European Union. This, as everybody knows, is clearly of particular importance to Ireland given that our relationship with the UK is closer than with any other EU member state. The Prime Minister fully recognises our mutual interest in matters relating to Northern Ireland, the importance of a reformed and more effective European Union, the common travel area and our strong economic ties.

The Irish Government has been very active in our engagement with the UK Government, and with our UK partners, in outlining our concerns and interests in this matter.

Irish citizens in the UK have a vote in the referendum and it will be important that the Irish Government's position is clearly understood. In this context, a number of Ministers will make visits to Britain in the coming weeks in cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Glasgow where there are very strong Irish communities, and this week the Minister of State, Deputy Kehoe, will visit Birmingham.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has also been very actively involved in EU-UK issues both in Britain, in Northern Ireland and in capitals across Europe. He is in close touch with the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, and met him in London most recently on 5 April. The Minister, Deputy Flanagan, will be in Manchester and Liverpool next week on a programme of meetings and events relating to the UK-EU debate.

The Minister, Deputy Flanagan, is also in touch constantly with political leaders in Northern Ireland, including on the issues that are of concern to us regarding a possible leave vote. He was in Belfast yesterday and goes to Derry this evening. Our embassy in London is very active in ensuring that there is awareness of the Government's position, both in the Irish and wider British community. Our ambassador to the UK gave evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in Westminster on the UK-EU issue.

Naturally, the Government is very much aware of the risks associated with a possible overall leave result in the referendum. Early in 2015, I established a division in my own Department to strengthen our focus not just on North-South relations on the island, but the wider set of relationships that exist between Ireland and Britain, including our interdependent economies and issues that arise in the context of the EU-UK debate. This unit works closely with the EU division within my Department, which supports the Cabinet Committee on the European Union.

While the Economic Management Council has not and will not be re-established, and therefore has no role in the matter, the Government continues to plan in order to be as prepared as possible and to actively manage any contingencies that may arise. Departments, agencies and key stakeholders will continue to broaden their analysis of the strategic, policy, operational and sectoral issues that would require priority attention, particularly in the event of a leave vote. This work is being co-ordinated by my Department.

There is an established framework for bilateral co-operation and dialogue between the Irish and UK Governments under the joint statement which both I and Prime Minister Cameron signed in 2012. That framework includes a work programme that is overseen by Secretaries General and Permanent Secretaries of Government Departments here and in London. If the UK votes to leave the EU, it will be more important than ever to have strong bilateral relations and mechanisms by which key policy issues can be addressed.

With regard to contacts in Northern Ireland since the Assembly elections, I spoke on the phone this morning to the First Minister, Arlene Foster, following her appointment as First Minister. I congratulated her on her appointment as First Minister and wished her well in forming a new government. I confirmed that the next North-South Ministerial Council meeting would be held in Dublin next month and that I hoped to make a visit to the North before the summer recess. First Minister Foster indicated to me that she expects that the difficulty, in so far as the putting together of the Executive is concerned, can hopefully be sorted out today.

I also spoke to the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, on the phone on 12 May and I congratulated him on his appointment as Deputy First Minister and on his re-election to the Northern Ireland Assembly. I look forward to continuing to work with First Minister Foster and Deputy First Minister McGuinness to meet challenges and develop opportunities to benefit all the communities across the island of Ireland.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2016-05-24a.6&s=cross-border#g43>