

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

9 February 2018 – 16 February 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

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



Tuesday 13 February 2018

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Brendan Howlin Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the areas of North-South co-operation that fall outside the rules of the Single Market and the customs union; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Simon Coveney: The Government welcomed the decision of the European Council on 15 December 2017 that sufficient progress had been made in phase one of the Article 50 negotiations. In phase one, we secured concrete commitments on the protection of North South Cooperation, the All-Island economy, the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and the gains of the peace process. We have also secured clear and strong commitments on avoiding a hard border and the UK has set out, for the first time, how this will be achieved.

In the event that it is not possible to resolve the border issue as part of a wider EU-UK future relationship agreement, which has always been the Irish Government's preference, or through specific solutions, the UK has committed that "in the absence of agreed solutions, the United Kingdom will maintain full alignment with those rules of the Internal Market and Customs Union

which, now or in the future, support North-South cooperation, the all-island economy, and the protection of the 1998 agreement.”

The North South cooperation we enjoy today brings tangible benefits to the daily lives of people in the border region and contributes to economic opportunity and development. It is also a very practical outworking of the peace process which allows for the normalisation of relationships between people across the island, to mutual benefit. The Government is therefore firmly focused on protecting the full range of areas in which North South cooperation exists today.

The Guidelines agreed by the European Council in December underline that negotiations in phase two can only progress as long as all commitments undertaken regarding citizens’ rights, the financial settlement and the Irish-specific issues during the first phase are respected in full and translated faithfully into legal terms as quickly as possible. A key focus in the current phase of the negotiations is therefore on completing work on the withdrawal issues and on the drafting of the binding Withdrawal Agreement, where we and our EU partners expect to see the commitments made by the UK in phase one on all exit issues, including those involving Ireland, to be translated faithfully into legal terms as quickly as possible.

In this regard, we are working closely with the Commission Task Force and our EU partners in the coming weeks to advance the legal and technical work needed. This work is building on work carried out at the request of the EU and UK Coordinators for the High Level Dialogue on Ireland/Northern Ireland, where officials carried out detailed work over October and November last year to map out areas of cooperation that operate on a North South basis on the island of Ireland and which rely on EU law and policies.

This included looking at the six North South implementation bodies, the areas of cooperation under the North South Ministerial Council, which cover agriculture, environment, health, education, transport and tourism, as well as other areas where there is practical cooperation between North and South, including justice and security, energy, broadcasting and communications, inland fisheries, sport and culture.

The exercise highlighted how the maintenance and future development of meaningful North South cooperation rely on the EU legal and policy frameworks to give direction to this cooperation and to facilitate its operation. The EU frameworks are both overarching and the foundation to North South cooperation in many instances. Much of the cooperation is interconnected, mutually supporting and complementary; it is not easily quantifiable.

All areas of cooperation, to varying extents, rely on or are supported by EU acquis. Much of what happens involves the implementation of EU law and policies in a coherent and coordinated way that benefits the island of Ireland as a whole, particularly for reasons of size, economies of scale and geographic location.

The exercise underlined the need to avoid risks presented by any regulatory divergence from the rules of the EU Single Market and Customs Union. We want to ensure that this cooperation can continue in a meaningful way.

Like the UK, we have consistently said that it is our preference to resolve the Irish-specific issues through the wider future relationship agreement between the EU and the UK. However, in case this

is not possible, we must at the same time ensure legal certainty in the Withdrawal Agreement that reflects the commitments made by the UK in phase one of the negotiations.

We will continue to work closely with the Commission Task Force and our EU partners in the coming weeks to advance the legal and technical work needed.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-02-13a.221&s=north-south+2018-02-09..2018-02-16#g222.q>

Wednesday 14 February 2018

Department of Finance

Peter Fitzpatrick asked the Minister for Finance the steps being taken by his Department and the Revenue Commissioners, including consultations with the EU Commission and UK government, to ensure that there is no disruption to cross-Border movements of excisable goods under duty suspension between here and Northern Ireland post-Brexit once the UK leaves the excise movement control system; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Paschal Donohoe: The future arrangements that will apply to cross border movements of excisable goods will depend on the outcome of discussion on the future relationship between the EU and the UK. In accordance with EU rules, it will technically be the case that if such an agreement does not provide for UK participation in the EU excise movement control system, importers of excisable goods will still have the facility to import such goods from the UK with payment of excise duty suspended until the goods are released from the importer's excise warehouse.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-02-14a.221&s=cross-border+2018-02-09..2018-02-16#g222.q>