

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

13 April 2018 – 20 April 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

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



Tuesday 17 April 2018

Department of Justice and Equality

Jim O’Callaghan asked Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the extra gardaí that will be required post-Brexit if there is a hard or soft border; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Charlie Flanagan: As the Deputy will appreciate, it is the Garda Commissioner who is responsible for the distribution of resources, including personnel, among the various Garda Divisions and I, as Minister, have no direct role in the matter. Garda management keeps this distribution of resources under continual review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that the optimum use is made of these resources.

I am advised by the Commissioner that the allocation of resources is been kept under constant review in line with operational and security demands including any possible policing requirements post Brexit.

I am further advised that An Garda Síochána is acutely aware of the ongoing complex negotiations regarding Brexit and is committed to ensuring the organisation is prepared for all possible outcomes and any possible policing implications and challenges arising. I understand that a high level team composed of managers from across the organisation has been established by the Commissioner and that scoping exercises in anticipation of Brexit have been conducted by An Garda Síochána.

My Department is engaged on an ongoing basis with An Garda Síochána as part of the deep and detailed work being undertaken right across Government and the public sector in response to the UK decision to leave the EU. Furthermore, An Garda Síochána is represented at a senior level in the ongoing discussions between the Department of Justice & Equality and the UK Home Office in relation to the operation of the Common Travel Area.

The Deputy will be aware that there is close and ongoing cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI on all aspects of policing, with a particular focus on combatting security threats and cross-border crime. The Commissioner and the Chief Constable of the PSNI, who are responsible for operational policing cooperation, have repeatedly emphasised the scope and the value of the close and high quality cooperation between the two police services in combating crime, protecting community safety and saving lives. The two police services operate a joint Cross-Border Policing Strategy which has as its aims to improve public safety throughout Ireland, to disrupt criminal activity and to enhance the policing capability of both police services on the island.

I would also point to the Annual Cross Border Conference on Organised Crime and the Biennial Cross Border Organised Crime Threat Assessment, jointly produced by An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The conference provides the opportunity to assess and address changing trends in crime, and to build upon and enhance the operational actions already being undertaken. The Threat Assessment provides an insight into organised criminal activity on both sides of the border together with an assessment of the cross border nature of such criminality. All of this serves to inform operational strategies and resource allocation decisions.

I am confident that this cooperation will continue post Brexit and I and my officials are in regular contact with counterparts in the UK and with the EU Commission to ensure that crime and security cooperation along the border is not undermined by Brexit. In its approach to the Brexit negotiations, the Government has ensured that a very high priority has been given to protecting the gains of the Peace Process and the avoidance of a hard border - nationally and by our partner Member States and by the EU Commission.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-04-17a.1398&s=cross+border+2018-04-13..2018-04-20#g1400.r>

Tuesday 17 April 2018

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Charlie McConalogue Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the OPW has made efforts to secure new properties or previously owned properties along the Border in preparation for Brexit.

Kevin Moran: I can confirm that the Commissioners of Public Works have not taken measures to secure either new properties or previously owned properties along the Border in preparation for Brexit.

The Government is continuing to work with the EU Taskforce and its EU27 partners with a view to achieving an orderly withdrawal, including a transition period, as well as agreeing a framework for an ambitious future relationship with the UK. In this regard, a Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland is an integral part of the draft Withdrawal Agreement. It is drafted to give legal effect to the commitments and guarantees provided in the EU-UK Joint Report of last December on avoiding a hard border and protecting the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts, including North South cooperation and rights. It also reflects the agreement reached on the maintaining the Common Travel Area.

The Commissioners of Public Works, in liaison with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, continue to contribute as appropriate to the whole-of-Government response to Brexit, which is being taken forward through the cross-Departmental coordination structures chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-04-17a.733&s=cross+border+2018-04-13..2018-04-20#g735.r>