



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies

# MEDIA WATCH

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**12 January 2018 – 19 January 2018**

**13 January 2018**

## Brexit could hit funding for north's universities, report warns

BREXIT could affect universities' ability to carry out research, the Royal Irish Academy has warned.

A report from a taskforce, led by former Ulster University vice-chancellor Prof Gerry McKenna, found that the north will be badly affected by the loss of European Union funds.

It said the north's universities, which are already underfunded, could lose money for essential research and skills.

The report made several recommendations including keeping fees at their present level and increased support for all-Ireland university bodies. It suggested that if funding from EU projects is halted after Brexit the British government should match and ring-fence the same funds.

Prof McKenna said the north's higher education sector could become isolated from both Britain and the Republic.

He said there was a "real danger that post-Brexit, individual universities and research funding agencies in the UK and Ireland, while recognising the mutual potential benefits of UK-research Ireland collaboration in EU-funded programmes, may not perceive the Northern Ireland universities as being essential to their strategic plans".

"In such a scenario the local universities could find themselves relatively isolated, both within the UK and on the island of Ireland. Such a scenario would be detrimental to Northern Ireland and in contravention of the objectives of the Good Friday Agreement," he said.

Meanwhile, NUS-USI president Olivia Potter-Hughes has said there must be no decrease in international students in the north after the UK leaves the EU.

Ms Potter-Hughes was responding to news that international students are worth £170m to the Northern Ireland economy.

“We believe guarantees are vital to protect student and apprentice mobility cross-border, and we want the common travel area to be protected,” she said.

“NUS-USI also believes continued access to EU funding on teaching and learning, EU student and academic mobility and exchange programmes is essential. There must be no increase in fees or additional barriers put in place for students studying on a cross-border or EU-wide basis.”

**Source: The Irish News**

**13 January 2018**

## **Foster to make conciliatory gesture towards Irish State on Brexit; DUP leader to emphasise close ties between North and South**

Democratic Unionist Party leader Arlene Foster will today make a strong conciliatory gesture towards the Irish Government on Brexit by saying it is not in Northern Ireland's interest if the Republic does not prosper.

In a major speech to be delivered at the inaugural Killarney Economic Conference, which is organised in partnership with The Irish Times, Ms Foster will emphasise the close ties between the two states. The speech will be seen as a placatory move by Ms Foster to draw a line under the row that erupted before Christmas over Border issues after Brexit. A series of acrimonious comments from both sides severely strained relationships between the Government and the DUP.

Childhood

Ms Foster will defend her party's support for Brexit, but will say she fully understands the concerns of the Irish Government and people.

"I appreciate that nowhere will be more impacted by the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union than Ireland."

The address is expected to acknowledge the shared links between both communities, with Ms Foster drawing on her own childhood in Co Fermanagh.

"I grew up only a few miles from the Fermanagh and Monaghan border. I saw for myself growing up how, even during our darkest days, we shared close economic, cultural and social ties across the Border. My own grandmother used to travel back and forward across the Border on a bicycle to sell Irish lace in Clones.

"Those ties have strengthened since the Troubles ended to the extent that in recent times we have enjoyed an extraordinarily, unimaginably positive relations between our two states," she will say.

Hard-won progress Ms Foster

says she does not want to lose any of those gains as the progress was "hard won". She said she can still retain her sense of unionism while being proud of the cancer centre at Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry, which treats patients from both sides of the Border.

She will argue that, although Brexit will present challenges, it does not mean that all such progress will be undone.

She will liken Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to semi-detached houses that look the same on the outside but are very different inside. However, both remain connected.

"Success for one of us is success for the other. As we chart a new course for the future, it is not in our interests to see the Republic of Ireland do anything other than prosper," she will say. "We will continue to have our own identities and for our part we will no longer be members of the European Union, but our futures will still be closely connected."

Ms Foster will also restate her view that Brexit can present new opportunities that will mutually benefit both states.

"Brexit is not about pulling up the drawbridge, building a wall and cutting ourselves off from our nearest neighbours.

"We must all recognise that change is coming as a result of the referendum. It is our job as politicians to help shape that change but to do so in a way that ensures that those economic, cultural and social ties that have endured through difficult times and have thrived through better ones continue into the future."

Short-term challenges

She will also reject the view put by the DUP's opponents that the party is blasé about the concerns of others and is indifferent to the consequences.

"That simply isn't true. We believe there are new longer-term opportunities as well as short-term challenges from the UK's departure from the European Union."

**Source: The Irish Times**