



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

19 January 2018 – 26 January 2018

22 January 2018

SDLP call for 'Border Bank' to help ease Brexit impact

SDLP leader Colum Eastwood has urged the British and Irish Governments to create a "Border Bank" to provide protection from Brexit.

He will make his case for a North-South Structural Fund at this week's political talks.

Mr Eastwood said he had previously discussed the matter with Prime Minister Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

He suggested that interest Dublin pays to the UK for a 2010 crisis loan could help finance the project.

The Loans to Ireland Act saw the UK give £3.2bn to the Republic as part of an international rescue fund to stop the Irish economy collapsing after the banking crisis. Interest payments of £42m have since been paid twice a year, and will continue until at least March 2021.

Mr Eastwood said: "I raised the need for both Governments to agree to use the Loans to Ireland funds to support the border areas, north and south. Areas around the border are at particular risk because of Brexit." The Foyle MLA said he will argue that some of the interest payments can be used for cross-border development for sectors hit hardest by EU withdrawal.

"Our unique proposal would be to channel some of this money into the creation of a new North-South Structural Fund, the Border Bank," he explained. "The new Border Bank could finally help deliver City Deals and progress projects that require funding, such as such as Narrow Water Bridge, the A5 and A6."

Fresh talks to restore the Executive are to begin on Wednesday, this time including the five main local parties and the British and Irish Governments.

Secretary of State Karen Bradley has set a time limit of two weeks, as she will update MPs at Westminster on progress on February 7. DUP MLA Simon Hamilton welcomed the talks, but called for "realism" from Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein's Northern leader Michelle O'Neill said: "We are determined to find a resolution that sees the institutions restored and delivering rights for all citizens."

Source: The Belfast Telegraph

23 January 2018

Migrant workers face racism and uncertainty since Brexit vote

MIGRANT workers are living in fear following the Brexit vote, a Northern Ireland community organisation said.

Immigrants faced more racist taunts like "your time is up" while struggling with uncertainty over their futures, the Community Intercultural Programme (CIP) added.

An EU-funded cross-border project entitled Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries, will be launched in Portadown, Co Armagh today.

CIP chief executive Stephen Smith said: "Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers are experiencing increased racism in the environment of fear created by the discourse around Brexit. "Our project will counteract this."

He will be working with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland in the Republic, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Ulster University to promote migrant rights.

The project will support the labour market integration of BME workers in the agricultural, food processing and services sectors in Donegal/Derry, Cavan/Armagh and Monaghan/Newry-Down, securing their rights and conducting research.

Mr Smith said people became more uneasy about their status in Northern Ireland after the Brexit referendum and unsure whether they can continue to work and bring up children there.

He said Brexit-related racism was more verbal than physical: "It is the verbals of people saying 'your time is up and you are going home'.

"The whole uncertainty and what is going to happen means it is like a vacuum.

"Different voices speak and that is having consequences for people who have been here a fair length of time and bought a house and are educating their children here. It is the vacuum and the lack of guarantees that is driving uncertainty."

The cross-border project received €1 million under the EU's Peace IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

Match-funding has also been provided by Stormont's Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Affairs in Ireland.

MRCI director Edel McGinley said: "This is a new and innovative approach to cross-border cooperation that puts workers' rights at its heart.

"This project will tackle sectarianism, discrimination, racism and exploitation experienced by EU and non-EU migrants in precarious and insecure sectors of the labour market along the border region."

Source: The Irish News