



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Significant increase in cross-border trade recorded during 2017

Cross-border trade between the Republic and Northern Ireland increased substantially in 2017.

Exports from the Republic to Northern Ireland increased by just under a fifth to (EURO)1.9bn (£1.7bn) during the year, according to preliminary figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Meanwhile, imports from NI to the Republic increased by 17% to just under (EURO)1.3bn (£1.15bn).

Overall, the United Kingdom remained an important trading partner for Ireland, with exports to the UK increasing by (EURO)1bn (£900m) or 8% to (EURO)14bn (£12.4bn).

The increase in exports to the UK was driven by increases in chemicals and related products of and food and live animals, which increased by 22% and 8% respectively.

Imports from the UK to Ireland also increased during the 12 months, up 10% to (EURO)17bn (£15.1bn).

The main increases in imports from the UK were of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials which grew by almost a third to (EURO)2.7bn (£2.4bn), and of chemicals and related products, which increased by just over a quarter to (EURO)2.3bn (£2bn).

However, with just over a year to go until Brexit, the future shape of the trading relationship between the UK and European Union remains unknown.

Alan McQuaid, economist with Merrion, warned yesterday that while we can only speculate as to how Brexit will impact Ireland going forwards, there is likely to be a negative impact on trade.

"The UK is the second largest single country for Ireland's goods and the largest for its services," Mr McQuaid said.

"At the same time, Ireland imports 30% of its goods from the UK.

"While the UK might only account for 16-17% of Ireland's total exports, 30% of all employment is in sectors which are heavily related to UK exports."

Businesses in Ireland have been urged to prepare for the worst, in the event that tariffs are imposed on cross-border goods.

In addition, concerns have been raised over whether Irish hauliers will have access to the UK landbridge, to transport goods from here to mainland Europe.

In a record year for Irish exports, total exports topped (EURO)122bn (£108bn) in 2017.

The 2% increase in exports contributed to a preliminary trade surplus of (EURO)45bn (£40bn) for the year, according to the CSO.

Imports also grew to record levels, up by (EURO)2.7bn (£2.4bn) or 4% to (EURO)76.8bn (£68.2bn).

Source: The Irish Times

16 February 2018

North deserves better than political impasse

North deserves better than political impasse IN THE bleak history of the Troubles, blame games have always been preferable to picking up the pieces in the aftermath of another fine mess. One has to ask what is it about the North that condemns it to being used and abused by so many elected to serve in its highest offices? What other part of these islands has been so consistently failed and sold short? Politicians will never miss a good photo opportunity, but the people of this island, North and south, deserve better than this.

Last Monday a mood of excited expectation was stoked as British Prime Minister Theresa May and our Taoiseach took to the skies to be sure to be on hand to capture the moment when a deal was done. Had they been listening more intently, and done their homework, they would have known to avoid the embarrassment of another spectacular disappointment.

The DUP and Sinn Féin are shamelessly exploiting the situation for different reasons. The institutions of democracy so tortuously built after decades of bloodshed are now just cheap bargaining chips in a deeply cynical game. Suspicions are hardening that just as Sinn Féin sees Brexit as a chance to go for bust on a United Ireland, the DUP sees an opportunity to press home its advantage in Mrs May being dependent on their votes.

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA), and the principle of consent by which it was engineered, could be consigned to history's dustbin if things continue to slide.

The DUP may seek to exert more control with the prospect of direct rule, but the Irish Government says this cannot happen under the terms of the GFA.

It sees the establishment of either an inter-governmental conference or new elections as the next step if the deadlock cannot be broken. We are within weeks of marking the 20th anniversary of the

GFA. Was the optimism of that landmark deal just a flicker, or can a sense of purpose, direction and conviction be restored? The answers will not be found in recriminations.

Source: The Irish Independent