



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Irish firms warned over lack of preparation

Wayne O'Connor CONCERN is growing over a high level of Brexit complacency among Irish businesses.

Government agencies have warned Business Minister Heather Humphreys that further plans must be drawn up to help vulnerable businesses survive post-Brexit.

The future regulation of accounting and auditing services has been raised as a problematic area, because firms in the sector have operated on an all-island basis for decades.

Last month the minister chaired her first Brexit Coordination Group meeting with department officials and representatives from key agencies, including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Federation Ireland.

Notes from the co-ordination group meeting obtained by the Irish Independent under the Freedom of Information Act show Enterprise Ireland executive director Kevin Sherry told Ms Humphreys that Brexit poses a significant challenge to many of its clients.

She was also warned companies needed to be more prepared for Brexit.

"It was noted that the high level of complacency among firms is concerning," says the note.

"It was agreed that the department and its agencies must continue to work with firms and business representative bodies to ensure enterprise moves quickly to develop mitigation strategies."

Government agencies told the minister that multinational companies based here are exposed to market risks because of Brexit and fear it will lead to transport and supply-chain issues.

Mr Sherry said while the outcome of Brexit negotiations remains uncertain, it will result in "increased costs and trade disruptions".

He said 1,673 of Enterprise Ireland's clients export to the UK and 651 are left highly exposed by Brexit.

Source: The Irish Independent

13 March 2018

Cross-border drugs gang jailed after joint operation between PSNI and Gardai

Four members of a cross-border drugs gang have been jailed after pleading guilty to a number of offences.

Desmond Enfield (34) of Ramelton, Co Donegal, Kieran Austin (61) from Lurgan and Darren Donnelly (33) of Sixmilecross, Omagh, all previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply Class B controlled drugs.

Seamus Boyce (38) of Letterkenny, Co Donegal, previously pleaded guilty to possession of Class B controlled drugs and conspiracy to supply Class B controlled drugs.

The gang were handed their sentences before Craigavon Crown Court on Tuesday.

The four were initially arrested after the discovery in April 2016 of £300,000 worth of herbal cannabis after vehicle searches in Lurgan.

It follows a joint operation between the PSNI's Organised Crime Unit and An Garda Síochána into the importation and supply of controlled drugs.

The men were given the following sentences:

Desmond Enfield was given 24-months imprisonment, with 12 months to be served in prison and 12 months on licence, as well as a Forfeiture Order issued for a Audi vehicle

Seamus Boyce was given 16-months imprisonment, 8 months to be served in prison and 8 months on licence, as well as a Forfeiture Order for a Ford vehicle

Kieran Austin was given 16-months imprisonment, with 8 months to be served in prison and 8 months on licence

Darren Donnelly was given 12-months imprisonment, with 6 months to be served in prison and 6 months on licence

Detective Inspector Tom McClure, of PSNI's Organised Crime Unit, said: "On April 22, 2016 officers searched three vehicles in a layby at Derrymacash Road, Lurgan. In one of the vehicles, officers uncovered herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of £300,000 in 15 vacuum packed plastic bags in the back of one of the vehicles.

"The three male occupants - Desmond Enfield, Seamus Boyce and Kieran Austin - were arrested at the scene as they were caught in the act of supplying £300k of herbal cannabis.

"Further enquiries by the PSNI's Organised Crime Unit resulted in significant evidence which proved the involvement of HGV driver Darren Donnelly in this drugs gang. All four have now been sentenced for their role in the supply of controlled drugs by an organised crime gang operating in Derry/Londonderry and County Donegal areas.

"I would particularly like to acknowledge the assistance provided by our partners in An Garda Siochana who worked closely with us in this cross-border proactive investigation. This organised crime gang were supplying large quantities of controlled drugs into the Derry/Londonderry and Donegal areas which had the potential to cause significant harm."

He added that "the supply of controlled drugs by gangs is the cause of significant harm in our communities" and that "there is no place in our society for these individuals who are only interested in making money for their own personal gain at the expense of others".

Source: The Belfast Telegraph