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Cross Border Studies

# MEDIA WATCH

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**18 May 2018 – 25 May 2018**

20 May 2018

**Cabinet ministers visit Northern Ireland over customs arrangements;  
The Brexit and Business secretaries joined their Northern Ireland  
counterpart Karen Bradley to meet cross-border companies**

David Davis and Greg Clark are visiting Northern Ireland as part of their work on future customs arrangements with the EU after Brexit.

The Brexit and Business secretaries joined their Northern Ireland counterpart Karen Bradley in meeting cross-border companies as part of their working group focusing on a proposed "highly-streamlined" option for tackling one of the thorniest outstanding issues.

The Irish border and the potential impact of regulatory differences is central to negotiations on a pact ahead of next year's withdrawal from the EU.

The Prime Minister has split her ministers into two teams as they work towards a reconciliation on how to manage arrangements with the EU after the exit.

One group - Brexiteers Liam Fox, Michael Gove and Remain-backing Cabinet Office minister David Lidington are considering a "customs partnership" whereby the UK would collect tariffs on behalf of the EU without the need for new border checks.

The Brexit Secretary's group will look at "maximum facilitation" - a solution based on using technology to minimise the need for customs checks after Brexit.

The maximum facilitation group is in Northern Ireland to meet representatives from the freight industry, cross-border businesses and community stakeholders to further explore how the customs model could address the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, a statement from the Brexit Department said.

It added: "Both of the customs models currently under consideration are designed to meet the UK's three guiding principles: allowing us to trade goods and services as freely as possible with the EU, enable us to have an independent trade policy, and avoiding any hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland while maintaining the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom."

The ministers are not expected to talk to members of the media during their visit.

**Source: Belfast Telegraph**

**22 May 2018**

## Tech border is not a solution, say hauliers; Truckers tell UK Brexit chief his plan is a non-starter

HAULIERS in the North have told UK Brexit Secretary David Davis that his vision of the so-called 'max fac' solution, which envisions using technology to avoid a hard border, is a non-starter. After meeting with him in the North, the Freight Transport Association agreed the 'north-south trading route will be difficult to administer' but they still wanted no delays at the border.

Mr Davis told business people in the North during the brief visit on Sunday that the British government wants no border infrastructure 'whatsoever.' In a statement, the FTA said the meeting was 'a welcome opportunity to raise the concerns of the logistics industry directly with those at the negotiating table in Brussels, particularly the need to avoid infrastructure at the border, and the fact that technology at the border on vehicles will not be a workable solution'.

It added: 'Clarity over the rules of origin for goods is vital, and despite the fact that compliance for the north-south trading route will be difficult to administer, I am confident that our message - that Ireland needs to remain open for business, with no delays at its borders - will be carried into the next round of talks with the EU.' Gavin Killeen, managing director of Nuprint Technologies, was one of the business owners who met with the government delegation. He told the BBC that Mr David assured them that there would be no visible border, even if new technology was used to monitor trucks crossing the border. 'He was very clear at the start that they wish to have no hard border whatsoever, they wish there to be no infrastructure in place at all, there would be no effect on the movement of goods or people across that border.

'They didn't go into the detail of how that was going to be achieved, but that's what they set out, where they want to be and that's their objective of where they want to get to,' he said.

Meanwhile, DUP leader Arlene Foster has said that the Irish Government's 'very aggressive' Brexit stance has left unionists fearing they are attempting to reclaim the North.

She blamed Leo Varadkar for what she sees as a change in attitude from Dublin since Enda Kenny's departure last year.

Addressing a conference on unionism in London yesterday, Ms Foster said: 'Our worry as unionists has been... the very, very aggressive nature of the Irish government... And that leads a lot of unionists in Northern Ireland to think "is this just about the European Union, or is it about something else? Is it about trying to claim the fourth green field in terms of Northern Ireland?"' Yesterday, a high-ranking Government source told the Mail that Ms Foster's claims had 'no basis whatsoever'.

'That's empty political rhetoric that doesn't do any good,' the source said.

**Source: The Irish Daily Mail**