



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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Brexit upheaval will pose threat to the peace process, new report warns

Brexit will threaten the peace process, increase division in Northern Ireland and hamper relations with the Republic, a new study has warned.

The study by BrexitLawNI - researchers from Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University and Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) - claims that Britain leaving the EU will also weaken human rights and equality protections.

Project leader Professor Colin Harvey from the School of Law at QUB said: "This is a profound constitutional moment for Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland. Brexit will threaten the peace process and weaken protections for human rights and equality.

"It risks disrupting North-South co-operation, increasing racist immigration enforcement and dividing British and Irish citizens. It could also reduce international oversight of human rights and introduce a new focus for conflict between divided communities. Many of these matters have simply been neglected in the discussions thus far and that must change."

For 18 months, the BrexitLawNI team conducted interviews, consultations and town hall meetings to explore the possible impact of Brexit.

The research indicated widespread anxiety about the long-term impact of Brexit on relationships on the island.

"We urgently need a bespoke solution for this region that will minimise the negative impact of Brexit and provide a positive way forward," he said. "It remains clear that Northern Ireland will require a special arrangement if the problems we identify are to be credibly addressed."

The study also found that Brexit has had a political impact across the island of Ireland in 'mainstreaming' discussions on Irish reunification.

Professor Rory O'Connell, of the Transitional Justice Institute at UU, said: "The 1998 Agreement found nuanced solutions to difficult issues of sovereignty, identity and the border, embedding these in a rights-respecting framework. Brexit risks unpicking these carefully, painfully-worked out solutions"

Brian Gormally, CAJ director added: "There is a real danger that Brexit could re-ignite conflict here. As the leaving process lurches ever nearer to a 'hard' or 'no-deal' Brexit, there is a risk of nationalists becoming more and more disillusioned at the disregarding of the will of the majority here while unionists come together in defence of Brexit and the border.

"The last thing we need is a new bone of contention."

Source: RTE

19 September 2018

Derry campaign group takes Brexit border message to Dublin; Derry Girls Against Borders has called on people to take a stand against any borders in the island.

Campaign group Derry Girls Against Borders has taken their message to Dublin on Wednesday to encourage those in the Irish Republic who are against a hard border post-Brexit to join their fight.

The group has also called on those involved in the Brexit negotiations to listen to the fears and anxieties of those living in border communities.

Their campaign message includes taking a stand against any borders on the island of Ireland or down the Irish Sea, and the freedom and flexibility currently afforded to those on the island to continue.

[Derry campaign group takes Brexit border message to Dublin twitter 1](#)

Co-founder Sarah Wallace, who is originally from Londonderry and now lives and works in Dublin, says people from both north and south of the border must come together to protest against checkpoints and visas to travel across the Irish border that could soon become a reality.

"Thousands of people cross the border every day, most people don't even notice they're crossing it - and that's how it should stay," she said.

Ms Wallace added that although the border issue had dominated headlines, the conversation to date had not yet focused on the effect a border would have on local communities and how heavily the Northern Ireland peace process depends on the border issue.

"Parts of the Good Friday Agreement depend on the border and the peace process cannot be put at risk.

"We're non-partisan, we're appealing to everyone, even those who voted for Brexit but did not vote for a hard border, to join in this fight against it."

The panel discussion held in Dublin's Trinity College heard from a number of people who live in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Before we lived in it, my house and the land around it was often patrolled by guards to catch smugglers. We don't want to go back to the dark days of violence and smuggling, and limits on a free community
Tate Donnelly

One issue that was addressed was the epidemic of border-smuggling during the Troubles and how easy it would be to restart due to the porous nature of Ireland's border.

Tate Donnelly, from Co Monaghan, spoke about his experiences growing up in a house directly on the border.

"When I go for a jog, or walk my dog, I can't count how many times I cross the border and back again.

"Before we lived in it, my house and the land around it was often patrolled by guards to catch smugglers. We don't want to go back to the dark days of violence and smuggling, and limits on a free community."

It is believed more than 30,000 people cross the Irish border daily, which has between 200 and 300 hundred crossings.

It has been estimated 7,000 jobs could be impacted in Co Donegal alone should a hard border be implemented when the UK leaves the EU.

The group - which is collecting signatures for a petition to hand over to political representatives from the governments in London, Dublin and Brussels - travels to London on Thursday to take their message across the Irish Sea.

Source: The Belfast Telegraph