



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies

# MEDIA WATCH

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**9 November 2018 – 16 November 2018**

**11 November 2018**

## Brexit negotiations require cool heads

AS the Brexit endgame approaches, things are becoming fraught, and this seems to be especially so for those on the fringes of negotiations - the DUP and the hardline Tory Brexiteers.

In writing to the DUP leadership, [Theresa May](#) ▼ undoubtedly thought she was heading off any potential trouble from that quarter in the wake of her Cabinet discussions this week. Instead she has confused matters more than they already were and in the process, upset Arlene Foster.

It was known from earlier last week that what was likely to go to the British Cabinet was a proposal for a backstop encompassing the entirety of the UK, but with some additional custom measures for Northern Ireland to ensure alignment with EU standards. That did not frighten the unionists and would effectively mean no hard border between north and south.

The difficulty arises from the British insistence that there needs to be a built-in review process in the backstop - something which neither the Irish Government nor the EU objects to in principle. But the rest of the EU do insist that the review cannot lead to the backstop having a finite existence without being replaced by something equally acceptable, or the British having a unilateral right to abandon the backstop. Even in the event of no deal, it would still have to be part of the "divorce" agreement.

Mrs May concedes that including this in the final agreement might appear to allow for the possibility of customs restrictions between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK - the dreaded border down the Irish Sea - but insists she would never allow this to actually come into force.

However, she has worried Mrs Foster, who says the letter raises alarm bells for "those of us who value the integrity of our precious union and for those who want a proper Brexit for the whole of the UK".

On another front, Mrs May will have to fight those in her Cabinet and party who are insisting the backstop can only be temporary so that Britain will not be tied to EU rules indefinitely.

They are quite bloody-minded in their approach, as exemplified by the former Brexit Secretary, David Davis, who has suggested that if MPs reject Mrs May's proposed deal, the EU will be willing to offer a better agreement.

Compare that with the approach of Tanaiste Simon Coveney who says that even if Mrs May succeeds in getting it through her own parliament, there is no guarantee that the deal will get final approval in Brussels, and you can see that in what should be the final days of negotiation after two and a half years, the matter is far from settled.

And as we get closer to the end, the Taoiseach may come under gentle pressure, either to concede some ground on the backstop, or to play ball on tax harmonisation to ensure continued solidarity from the rest of our EU partners. He will only get through what is immediately ahead with a cool head and a strong resolve.

**Source: The Sunday Independent**

**16 November 2018**

## Soft borders an open road for smugglers

JUST over 40% of exporters on the island of Ireland are reporting a negative impact from Brexit, according to cross-border body INTERTRADEIRELAND (ITI).

But 41% of businesses responding to ITI's business monitor for July to September said they had experienced continued growth.

ITI has said its research shows that cross-border trading increases a business's probability of rapid growth by some 60%.

Based on the views of more than 750 businesses, the organisation's quarterly monitor is considered one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys on the island.

In keeping with other recent trade surveys, it showed 54% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) reporting issues with rising costs of overheads, with 41% of larger firms (50-plus employees) reporting skills shortages. Aidan Gough, ITI's designated officer and director of strategy and policy, said the monitor highlighted the higher growth performance of exporters and cross-border traders.

He said almost half of all firms that trade across the border are growing, with 30% of these companies experiencing a rapid growth in sales, compared to just 18% that do not export.

"Goods firms exporting across the border have 9% higher levels of productivity than firms that don't export beyond their local market, moreover turnover is almost 100% higher and employment is almost doubled," he said.

The monitor found that 42% of exporters reported Brexit has already had a negative impact on sales, with 38% stating that it has impacted negatively on investment decision-making within their organisation.

**Source: The Irish Times**