

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

7 December 2018 - 14 December 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Tuesday 11 December 2018

Department for Public Expenditure and Reform

Lisa Chambers asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he has formally met his UK counterpart to discuss Brexit and its impact on east-west trade reciprocal arrangements and all other Brexit-related matters that fall within the remit of his Department; the number of times they have formally met to discuss Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Paschal Donohoe: In the wake of the UK referendum on EU membership, Government Ministers have taken every opportunity to engage with the Article 50 Task Force, our EU partners and the UK to advance Ireland's Brexit priorities.

As Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform I have responsibility for the three EU-funded cross-border programmes in which Ireland and the UK are partners, namely the PEACE Programme, the Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland INTERREG Programme, and the Ireland/Wales INTERREG Programme.

Ministerial discussions relating to the PEACE Programme and the INTERREG Programme with Northern Ireland and Scotland normally take place under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council, in which context I had a number of meetings and discussions with the Northern Ireland Finance Minister, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir. The Council has not met for two years, however. Nevertheless, Minister Patrick O'Donovan and Minister Helen McEntee have each met the UK Minister with responsibility for Cohesion policy, Lord Henley, in the margins of the April and November meetings of the General Affairs Council devoted to Cohesion policy, where they took the opportunity to underscore the Irish Government's continuing commitment to the successful implementation of the current PEACE and INTERREG programmes and the proposed new PEACE PLUS programme.

In addition, I have met the Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford, on two occasions since the referendum to discuss the Ireland/Wales INTERREG Programme.

Source <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-12-11a.329&s=cross+border+2018-12-07..2018-12-14#g331.r>

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Martin Kenny: This morning several cross-Border agencies appeared at the rural affairs committee and in the AV room, including the Irish Central Border Area Network, the Centre for Cross Border Studies and people from the east Border region. All of them were coming with a deep concern, particularly in the context of Brexit. There is a commitment in the programme for Government to continue to fund these agencies and to make sure the Border corridor is not adversely affected by Brexit. These groups are extremely concerned about how they are going to survive into the future. Basically, their ask is that we put a plan in place. Both Governments need to come together and come up with a short-term plan, not a long-term plan, with funding and resources to ensure this area of the island, which will be most adversely affected by Brexit, and these agencies have an assurance they will get the kind of funding and resources they need so they can work into the future. I would like a commitment from the Taoiseach that he will work with counterparts in the British Government to come up with a solution so a project can be put forward and funding delivered for these communities.

Leo Varadkar: It is our policy that PEACE and INTERREG funding should continue and the draft proposals from the European Commission provide for PEACE II to form part of the multi-annual financial framework, MFF, for next year. Obviously, I cannot make commitments on behalf of the EU or the UK Government but I can say it is this Government's policy and our determination to work with our European and British colleagues to ensure funding for cross-Border co-operation continues. In fact, if anything, it will become more important than ever after Brexit. The Deputy has that commitment on my behalf.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2018-12-12a.265&s=cross+border+2018-12-07..2018-12-14#g336>