

# BREXIT BRIEF

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The Brief seeks to provide up-to-date information on the progress and content of the UK-EU negotiations, and bring together relevant statements and policy positions from key players in Ireland, the UK and the EU.

The Brief is part of a wider communications programme covering the work of the IIEA's UK Project Group – including commentaries, speeches, texts and event reports – which are highlighted on the Institute's website. ([www.iiea.com](http://www.iiea.com))

## Introduction

The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland debate moved to a new, and highly charged, level with a speech by the UK Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost, to a diplomatic gathering in Lisbon on 12 October in which he described the Protocol as “the biggest source of mistrust between us and for all kinds of reasons, we need to fix it.”

He indicated that a new UK legal text would be shared with the Commission consisting, in effect, of an amended Protocol, reflecting the proposals in the July Command Paper. In a key passage, Lord Frost argued that the UK proposal looks more like a normal treaty

in the way it is governed, with international arbitration instead of a system of EU law ultimately policed in the court of one of the parties, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). He insisted that the role of the CJEU and the EU institutions in Northern Ireland create a situation where there appears to be no discretion as to how provisions in the Protocol are implemented.

The UK would seek the removal of the ECJ from the Protocol, he said, “but it is not just about the Court. It is about the system of which the Court is the apex – the system which means the EU can make laws which apply in Northern Ireland without any kind of democratic scrutiny or discussion.”

On the following day, 13 October, the European Commission published its detailed response to the UK Command Paper. Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič told a Brussels Press briefing that he was proposing a robust package of creative, practical solutions, designed to help Northern Ireland deal with the consequences of Brexit, while further benefitting from the Protocol. "If I were to label these proposed solutions, I would dub them the "package of enhanced opportunities. This is in fact our core purpose."

The Commission is proposing an alternative model for the implementation of the Protocol. On the one hand, the flow of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be facilitated for goods that are to stay in Northern Ireland. On the other, strong safeguards and monitoring mechanisms will put in place to make sure they stay in Northern Ireland. The package of measures is designed to address the Brexit-related problems that have been raised by Northern Irish people and businesses.

"Today's package proposes further flexibilities in the area of food, plant and animal health, customs, medicines and engagement with Northern Irish stakeholders. It proposes a different model for the implementation of the Protocol, in which the flow of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland - in respect of goods destined to stay in Northern Ireland - is facilitated to a significant extent. This facilitation is enabled by a series of safeguards and increased market surveillance to ensure the goods do not move into the EU's Single Market. This package opens the way to a resolution of all outstanding implementation issues, thereby establishing predictability, stability and certainty for people and businesses in Northern Ireland."

The Commission proposals contain no references to the role of the ECJ. Maroš Šefčovič replied to a press question by stating that in his recent visit to Northern Ireland only one of those he met made any reference to the CJEU. The CJEU's role in respect of the Single Market is recognised as fundamental.

The UK Government issued an immediate response to the Commission move, noting its publication, and indicating that "the next step should be intensive talks on both our sets of proposals, rapidly conducted, to determine whether there is common ground to find a solution. Significant changes which tackle the fundamental issues at the heart of the Protocol, including governance, must be made if we are to agree a durable settlement which commands support in Northern Ireland. We need to find a solution which all sides can get behind for the future, which safeguards the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, and which puts the UK-EU relationship on a stronger footing. We are ready to work hard with this in mind."

It was announced that Vice President Šefčovič and Brexit Minister Lord Frost would meet in Brussels on 15 October to discuss the Protocol situation and to plan for the necessary, urgent detailed negotiations. Vice President Šefčovič commented that "this process cannot be eternal" and that outstanding issues should be resolved by the end of the year.

## **Section One: State of Play**

### **Maroš Šefčovič at IIEA**

The previous week, on 7 October, Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič addressed an IIEA Webinar on the implementation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol. He spoke of the Commission's plan to would finalise its formal response to the UK Command Paper (see

section above) and noted that the sides would then enter into intense negotiations in October and through November. The Commission would table a “package of practical solutions” designed to gain the support of “a majority of stakeholders in Northern Ireland”. This would not be presented on a “take it or leave it basis” but in the hope that both sides would “leave their comfort zones to find a compromise”.

*Our relationship is now based on two agreements: the Withdrawal Agreement and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.*

*The UK government negotiated, agreed and signed both these Agreements, including the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland – the subject of today’s discussion. The UK Parliament ratified these Agreements.*

*Having exercised its sovereign right to enter into such international agreements, the UK government now carries the responsibility of respecting them.*

*Together, though, we did find a solution – the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. As you know well, it serves a number of purposes: It protects the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its parts; Respects the constitutional order of the United Kingdom; Avoids a hard border on the island of Ireland; And preserves the integrity of the EU’s Single Market; While ensuring that the UK as a whole leaves both the Single Market and the EU’s Customs Union – a key demand of Prime Minister Boris Johnson.*

*This solution was shaped, agreed and approved, together, by both sides. We*

*therefore also share responsibility for making it work on the ground.*

*While the negotiations were difficult, their outcome now presents a real opportunity for Northern Ireland – and the island of Ireland. This was one of my key messages when I was in Northern Ireland recently.*

*The exchanges I had during my visit only strengthened my conviction of the enormous benefits on offer to Northern Ireland. In particular, its unparalleled access to two of the world’s largest markets with more than 500 million consumers can be a powerful magnet for foreign investment, translated into jobs and growth.*

*As one of the business leaders I met in Northern Ireland put it, you can have jam on both sides on your bread. That’s certainly one way to enjoy the fruits of your labour!*

*The Protocol is not the problem. On the contrary, it is the only solution we have. Failing to apply it will not make problems disappear, but simply take away the tools to solve them. Simply opposing the Protocol, without providing real solutions, won’t make the problems go away either.*

*Rather, we are seeking solutions that work for all, including those opposed to the Protocol. The EU has already tabled and adopted several practical solutions to overcome the difficulties felt on the ground. Most recently, on 30 June, the Commission put forward a package of measures, including our commitment to change our own rules to ensure the long-term supply of medicines from Great*

*Britain to Northern Ireland. But I also need to be honest: while we will continue looking for solutions to minimise the effects of Brexit on everyday lives, we will never be able to remove them entirely. Such are the consequences of Brexit and the choices made by the UK Government.*

*I believe that our focus should be on those issues that matter most to the people of Northern Ireland and their everyday life.*

*In Belfast, I listened to stakeholders emphasise the need to facilitate East-West trade. That means long-term solutions in the food and plant safety (or SPS) area. I heard businesses ask for further trade facilitation in the area of customs. And I also heard a lot about the need for Northern Irish political institutions and other stakeholders to be properly heard.*

*But let me also be clear about what we will not do: We will not renegotiate the Protocol, as the UK is requesting. And we will not accept solutions which would effectively mean cutting Northern Ireland off from the EU's Single Market and related opportunities.*

## **Conservative Party Conference, Manchester**

The Conservative Party Conference heard a major speech by Lord David Frost who told a seminar that the UK "cannot wait forever" for the European Commission to respond to the demands contained in the July Command Paper. He warned the EU that it had until early November to renegotiate the Protocol or the UK would trigger Article 16 to suspend parts of the Brexit treaty.

He would soon share legal texts with Brussels setting out how the UK intended to bring about new arrangements – and warned that he could unilaterally suspend the existing deal if Brussels did not respond. The texts were intended to set out a blueprint for cutting EU red tape and dealing with the disruption of trade from Britain since the protocol came into force in January. He would engage with the EU in an "intensive manner for a short period" before deciding whether to trigger Article 16, adding that "When I say short, I mean weeks, three weeks."

Lord Frost said that the Protocol was "not working and needs to change." The government knew it was taking a risk when it agreed to the protocol in 2019 and the UK team were "worried right from the start that the protocol would not take the strain if not handled sensitively". The arrangements were "going to come apart even more quickly than we feared" with support collapsing across Northern Ireland.

He warned that the UK will react in a "robust" manner if the EU were to launch a retaliatory trade war in the event of Brexit talks on Northern Ireland breaking down. "We don't think retaliation makes any of those things any easier."

Lord Frost diplomatically concluded by declaring to an audience which included the ambassadors of most EU Member States that "the long bad dream of EU membership" was over. "The British Renaissance has begun."

Lord Frost followed up with a new element of the case against the Protocol, arguing that change was urgently needed because of the growth in all-island trade. The impact of post-Brexit red tape on goods moving into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK is blamed for a

situation in which some businesses are looking elsewhere for supplies leading to a significant increase in North-South trade. The UK is unhappy at what it calls “incentives” driving increase trade on the island. The value of imports from Northern Ireland to the Republic rose by 77 per cent in the first six months of the year, while exports from the Republic into Northern Ireland rose by 43 per cent.

Following Lord Frost’s appearance, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that Northern Ireland’s controversial post-Brexit arrangements could work in principle “if they were fixed” but warned the EU that they would be “ditched” if not.

In his major Conference speech, the Prime Minister made no reference to the Protocol issue and gave Lord Frost a characteristic Boris Johnson mention: “Is it not a sublime irony that even in French politics there is now a leading centre right politician calling for a referendum on the EU. Who is now calling for France to *reprendre le controle*? It’s good old Michel Barnier. That’s what happens if you spend a year trying to argue with Lord Frost, the greatest frost since the Great Frost of 1709.”

The Labour Party, through the Shadow NI Secretary, Louise Haigh, responded to Lord Frost’s speech: “Lord Frost negotiated every single word of the deal he now discredits at solving nothing. Communities in Northern Ireland are sick and tired of the political posturing from a government they have long since lost trust in. Tory Ministers should show some responsibility, and do what businesses across Northern Ireland have been telling them for months - get round the table and negotiate a veterinary agreement to help lower the barriers they created down the Irish Sea.”

Three Unionist Party leaders – Jeffrey Donaldson, Doug Beattie and Jim Allister, joined by Lord Trimble and Baroness Hoey - shared a stage at a Conference fringe event at which there was a simple theme – the Protocol must go! *A Belfast Newsletter* editorial stated that “Unionists send the Conservatives in Manchester a clear, united message against the Northern Ireland Protocol”. The event was described as “the latest moment in the coming together of unionists on matters of core principle, after decades of division.”

The DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, met the Prime Minister during the Conference and issued a statement following their conversation. “It’s time for action from Downing Street. I reminded the Prime Minister that if there is no action to remove the Irish Sea Border then we will have no option but to ask the voters in Northern Ireland for their verdict.”

## Labour Party Conference, Brighton

The Labour Party Conference in Brighton devoted little attention to the Northern Ireland situation. The Party Leader, Keir Starmer, made no direct reference to the problem in his ninety-minute address to delegates. He spoke about Brexit in a short passage, directed at the Prime Minister’s approach to the overall issue: “I think he’s a trickster who has performed his one trick. Once he had said the words ‘Get Brexit Done’ his plan ran out. He has no plan. The government is learning that it is not enough to Get Brexit Done. You need a plan to Make Brexit Work. I do see a way forward after Brexit if we invest in our people and our places, if we deploy our technology cleverly and if we build the affordable homes we so desperately need.” He further remarked that “I believe in the union of the nations on these islands but we have a cavalier government that is placing

it in peril. Labour is the party that wants to bring our nations together.”

The Labour Party Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Louise Haigh, spoke at a Sinn Fein fringe event where she described the Labour Party as an “honest broker” when it comes to Northern Ireland and arguing that Boris Johnson had “frayed the bonds” of the Good Friday Agreement with his Brexit deal. She then addressed the Conference in a formal speech which dealt with the Protocol issue in a few words, criticising the Prime Minister “Who negotiated every single word in the NI protocol and now blames everyone else for the consequences.”

The Party Shadow Secretary for International Trade, Emily Thornberry, said that it would be “profoundly tragic” if the government moved to trigger Article 16 of the NI Protocol, urging Downing Street to “step back from the brink”. She described the government as “so dogmatic that it won’t roll up its sleeves and solve problems- triggering Article 16 is not a long-term solution.” She repeated the party’s call for the UK and EU to reach a veterinary agreement to solve significant problems in the food and agri-business sectors.

Louise Haigh’s Conference Speech described the Labour Party as “a party totally driven to see justice and equality delivered across these islands”, and went on to describe the Labour Party’s role in it:

*Together our party helped to end a conflict that had raged for generations. And the peace has sustained because it was forged in the values that our movement holds dear – equality, human rights and social justice. Today we need to defend it.*

*Because as that precious agreement reaches its quarter century, it is more fragile than we have ever known it. This reckless Tory government has not only neglected the peace process, they have actively undermined it. And I don’t say this lightly. Northern Ireland should not be a partisan issue. In the Labour Party we pay tribute to the work done by John Major who helped lay the ground for the Good Friday Agreement.*

*But Boris Johnson has not, will not and frankly cannot live up to that standard. This is a Prime Minister who has repeatedly placed his own political self-interest over the interests of Northern Ireland. Who promised that he would never place barriers down the Irish Sea, and then did it. Who signed an international treaty and then broke it. Who negotiated every single word in the NI protocol and now blames everyone else for the consequences.*

*As Prime Minister he bears responsibility but not only is he refusing to show leadership, his addiction to dishonesty is costing communities in Northern Ireland dear. Self-interest over national interest, every single time. Conference, it makes me so angry because as well as the hurt and the anger I have seen in communities, I have seen something else too. There is a new generation coming of age in Northern Ireland. They grew up after peace. They want the promise of a shared society that the great John Hume imagined.*

*A true and lasting peace is about more than an absence of violence. A true and lasting peace is delivering what the agreement promised – a bill of rights, integrated education, shared housing. A true and*

*lasting peace is the collective hope of a shared future where reconciliation and social justice walk hand in hand.*

## DUP 50th Anniversary

The DUP held a celebratory dinner in a Belfast hotel to mark the party's 50th anniversary – the hotel in which they met to ratify the leadership of Edwin Poots. With much media attention on the absence of former leader Arlene Foster, the party's latest leader, Jeffrey Donaldson claimed in his address to the 200 diners – including Peter Robinson and Minister Poots together with Ian Paisley Jnr - that they had turned a corner after months of internal wrangling and once again moving in the right direction. He said "Let me assure you, despite what our critics might suggest, we are not done yet."

Dealing with the NI Protocol issue, Jeffrey Donaldson reiterated the demand for its removal and said "I do not know what the next few weeks will hold but let me be clear if there are difficult decisions to be taken I will be prepared to take them." He insisted that the party, by finding "long-term solutions that work for all our people" can emerge as the largest party from next year's Assembly election despite a year of poor poll ratings.

Baroness Eileen Paisley told the BBC that the DUP her husband led "in many ways is unrecognisable" and the BBC NI Political Correspondent remarked that "In 2021 the DUP is a long way from the 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign launched by Rev Ian Paisley in the 1970s. In many ways the liberalisation of public attitudes on moral issues presents the DUP with as many challenges as the constitutional questions."

## Northern Ireland Party Leaders

On 28 September 2021 the leaders of Northern Ireland's four main parties signed a joint Declaration affirming their opposition to the Northern Ireland Protocol. The leaders of the Democratic Unionist Party DUP (Jeffrey Donaldson), Ulster Unionist Party UUP (Doug Beattie), Traditional Unionist Voice TUV (Jim Allister) and Progressive Unionist Party (Billy Hutchinson) shared a platform to launch their brief document. They also appeared together in a video.

The Declaration states: "We, the undersigned unionist political leaders, affirm our opposition to the Northern Ireland Protocol, its mechanisms and structures and reaffirm our unalterable position that the Protocol must be rejected and replaced by arrangements which fully respect Northern Ireland's position as a constituent and integral part of the United Kingdom."

A week earlier, Jeffrey Donaldson, called for a unionist pact for the forthcoming Stormont election to help return "as many as possible pro-Union, anti-Protocol MLAs". He argued that the parties could work together to broaden the appeal of unionism, indicating that conscience votes on social issues could become more commonplace in the DUP and not ruling out attending a gay wedding, if invited.

While the TUV leader, Jim Allister, called for what he called "a pre-election pan-unionist pledge" the idea was rejected by the UUP leader, Doug Beattie, who said that he would "work with any political party if it is for the good of the people of Northern Ireland. But I will do pacts with nobody. I'm a confident unionist and I will ask people to look at me and ask 'is this somebody that is trustworthy that they can follow.'"

Jeffrey Donaldson and Jim Allister contributed a joint article to the Irish Times on 27 September 2021 in which they welcomed “the fact that there is no unionist party supporting the Northern Ireland protocol which had been foisted on Northern Ireland, broken the Act of Union, undermined the political institutions caused civic unrest and damaged our local economy.”

They wrote of the prospect of civic unrest and even greater disorder in Northern Ireland communities “seeing all the political means of resistance blocked, seeking for other ways to register their frustration and fears.” They stated firmly that “unionists cannot continue to operate structures set up to provide for co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic when the more vital relationship with the rest of our own country is being smashed.” The DUP have acted by effectively boycotting cross-border meeting under the various Good Friday Agreement arrangements.

## **Maroš Šefčovič at General Affairs Council 21 September 2021**

Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič spoke to a press briefing following the meeting of the General Affairs Council on 21 September 2021. He made a specific reference to the NI Protocol situation:

“Turning to EU-UK relations, I informed the Ministers about our ongoing engagement with the United Kingdom, as the EU continues to seek practical solutions to the issues that matter most to the people of Northern Ireland.

Solutions that we seek will be in the framework of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. We are absolutely convinced that the Protocol is the best solution we found with the UK to

address the unique situation of the island of Ireland. Because it means stability, certainty and predictability – and ultimately opportunities, as was confirmed to me during my meetings with Northern Irish stakeholders on the ground last week.

I appreciate the unity around the Council table and the support received from the Ministers for this approach.”

## **President Biden on Northern Ireland Accords**

US President Joe Biden, speaking before a meeting with Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the White House, warned against the return of a hard border on the island of Ireland. The President told reporters that the NI Protocol was an issue he felt very strongly about. “We spent an enormous amount of time and effort – the United States, a major bipartisan effort. And I would not at all like to see, nor I might add, would many of my Republican colleagues like to see, a change in the Irish accord, the end result having a closed border in Ireland.”

The Speaker of the US house of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, and the former US secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, have both warned against a breakdown in the talks over the NI Protocol, while the Chairman of the US Congress Trade Committee, Richard Neal, has insisted that the UK cannot obtain a trade agreement with the US as long as the dispute over the Protocol remains unresolved.

Foreign Minister Simon Coveney met Speaker Pelosi in Washington on 23 September with issues affecting Northern Ireland, and in particular the implementation of the EU-UK Brexit agreements high on the agenda.



## Section Two: The Evolving Debate

### UK Brexit Poll

A September opinion poll for *'Politico'* indicates that the number of people with a positive take on Brexit was down seven points from the equivalent poll in June. The poll results were: Brexit going well – 18 per cent (down from 25 per cent in June); going badly – 53 per cent (up 15 per cent from June); going neither well nor badly – 21 per cent; 'don't know'-8 per cent. The *YouGov* poll asked 6,500 British adults for their opinion.

### Barnier Brexit Diary

Michel Barnier's *'My Secret Brexit Diary'* – published by Polity Press on 30 September – is reviewed by Jonathan Powell in *The Guardian* who writes that the book "helps explain why Britain ended up being comprehensively out-negotiated over Brexit and saddled with a flawed withdrawal agreement and a deeply disadvantageous future relationship, both of which will cause us major problem for decades to come. Ultimately, Barnier can't even claim the satisfaction of a job well done, although he certainly out-negotiated the British. Everyone is a loser and we have still not felt the full cost."

A Diary entry in 2018 made the significant point that Brexit was the result of a popular feeling that a Leave vote was a vote against globalisation and against a Europe that did not protect people and communities...the same reasons that so many French voters vote for Marine Le Pen. He concluded that Brexit was a disastrously wrong answer to a legitimate set of questions. "We must pay attention to this. I think the EU must begin to answer by some changes in trade policy, industrial policy, possibly in immigration also."

From the outset, Michel Barnier saw the Irish question as "the stumbling block". He watched as Prime Minister Theresa May tried to protect the Good Friday Agreement with an increasingly complex set of arrangements – through the 'Backstop'- which were defeated, leading to her departure from office. He recognised that her successor as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, never took Northern Ireland seriously, proposing fictional technological solutions for the border. At one stage, Barnier had to tell a group of European Research Group MPs that the health of cows could not be assessed by drone.

Barnier's Brexit Diary appeared just as its author declared his intention to run for the presidency of his country in the election to be held next spring. He is seeking the nomination of the centre-right party *Les Republicains*. His early statements of policy have caused some controversy as he spoke of restoration of sovereign powers to the French state, enhanced French influence in Europe and a referendum on immigration policy. He declares that he is a Gaullist and "I'm still on the same track - a patriot and a European. And I'm a European in addition to being a patriot and not instead of being s patriot."

### 'Reconciling Ireland'

Irish High Court Judge, Richard Humphreys, has edited 'Reconciling Ireland' a unique compilation of all the texts of key British-Irish legal and political agreements relating to Northern Ireland. The 475 page volume contains the texts of forty documents – from the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 to the New Decade, New Approach deal of 2020. Judge Humphreys provides his expert analysis of each document making the book an exceptional reference work.

## Gene-edited Crops

The UK Government has moved to relax the regulation of gene-edited crops to enable commercial growing in England – but not necessarily in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland – now that changes are possible because the UK no longer has to follow very strict European Union regulations. The Government sees this development leading to the production of plants that are stronger and more resilient to climate change. The move involves separating the laws governing Gene Edited and Genetically Modified crops while EU rules require that they are treated in the same way. While the change has been welcomed by many scientists working in the field there have been warnings of weakening of standards meant to protect human health and the environment.

## Northern Ireland Tunnel

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has admitted that controversial plans for a tunnel between Northern Ireland and Scotland remain an “ambition” but told questioners in New York it was “not the most immediate project.” The project would only happen after the completion of the HS2 high speed rail project which is not set to be constructed for at least another decade. The tunnel project has enjoyed support by the DUP and the Scottish Conservatives but has been strongly opposed by the SDLP and the Scottish National Party.

## Section Three: Background Material and Further Reading

### Background Material

**European Commission** Online speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič on the implementation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol at the IIEA, 7 October 2021 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/Šefčovič/announcements/online-speech-vice-president-maros-Šefčovič-implementation-irelandnorthern-ireland-protocol\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/Šefčovič/announcements/online-speech-vice-president-maros-Šefčovič-implementation-irelandnorthern-ireland-protocol_en)

**Labour Party (UK)** Conference Speech of Party Leader Keir Starmer, 29 September 2021. <https://labour.org.uk/press/conference-speech-keir-starmer/>

**Labour Party (UK)** Conference Speech of Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Louise Haigh, 27 September 2021. <https://labourlist.org/2021/09/the-collective-hope-of-a-shared-future-louise-haighs-conference-speech/>

**European Commission** Press remarks by Vice-President Šefčovič at the General Affairs Council, 21 September 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_21\\_4828](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_21_4828)

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**The Guardian** EU could lift ban on UK sausages to sweeten Northern Ireland deal. *Guardian*, 8 October 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/08/eu-could-lift-ban-on-uk-sausages-in-effort-to-sweeten-northern-ireland-deal>

**Financial Times** Brussels offers to scrap many N Ireland border controls to ease tensions. *FT*, 9 October 2021. <https://www.ft.com/content/84767549-757e-4844-b4b0-3ae20f9ce385>

**The Guardian** EU urges UK to drop rhetoric in Northern Ireland Brexit row. *Guardian*, 7 October 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/07/eu-urges-uk-drop-rhetoric-northern-ireland-brexit-row>

**Irish Times** Boris Johnson says NI protocol needs to be 'fixed or ditched'. *IT*, 3 October 2021. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/boris-johnson-says-ni-protocol-needs-to-be-fixed-or-ditched-1.4689097>

**The Telegraph** Lord Frost threat to EU over Northern Ireland Protocol solution. *Telegraph*, 4 October 2021. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/10/03/lord-frost-draws-plans-replace-northern-ireland-protocol1/>

**The Guardian** UK promises 'robust' reaction if EU starts trade war over Northern Ireland. *Guardian*, 4 October 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/oct/04/david-frost-issues-veiled-threat-to-ditch-northern-ireland-protocol-brexit>

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**Belfast Telegraph** DUP can still be largest party in NI Jeffrey Donaldson. *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 September 2021. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dup-can-still-be-largest-party-in-ni-jeffrey-donaldson-40905772.html>

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