

# 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 Russian invasion of Ukraine, with its terrible humanitarian implications, continues to dominate political and wider community concerns.

The situation led to a significant disruption to the joint effort to find an agreed outcome to the ongoing negotiations on the Withdrawal Agreement, and in particular on the NI Protocol, by the start of the pre-election period prior to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections in May. The pre-election period begins at the end of March. Officials close to discussions in Brussels on the Ukraine crisis which, significantly, involve the UK Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, have suggested that talks will continue in a "discreet" way but with no deadline.

Preparations for the May Assembly elections -- and the inevitable political positioning -- are continuing and intensifying with much interest shown in the search for unionist unity.

## Section One: State of Play

### Martin – Johnson Meeting 12 March 2022

The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson met in London on 12 March 2022. Following their discussions they attended the England-Ireland rugby international at Twickenham (which Ireland won 32-15).

The Prime Minister reiterated the need to make significant changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to protect peace and

stability in Northern Ireland and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions. He expressed the hope that “the same spirit of co-operation that had characterised the UK/EU relationship in respect of Ukraine could also be applied to resolving the issues with the protocol.”

The Taoiseach welcomed the ongoing engagement between the EU and UK on issues relating to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (the Protocol) and highlighted the importance of reaching durable, practical solutions for people and businesses in Northern Ireland.

*Statement by Taoiseach Micheál Martin*

The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Johnson had a bilateral meeting today [Saturday 12 March] prior to watching the Ireland-England rugby match together. They discussed the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine and the profound global security, economic and humanitarian consequences.

The Taoiseach, who had just come from a meeting of EU leaders in Versailles, emphasised the strength and unity of the EU response. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister welcomed the close collaboration between the EU, UK and other partners to hold Russia to account, to provide support to Ukraine and to address the humanitarian needs of its people. In an uncertain world the EU and the UK are key partners with shared values.

They also discussed political developments in Northern Ireland. Looking ahead to the Assembly elections [in May] and the need for the [British and Irish] governments to work closely together to ensure a return to the full operation of the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement. The Taoiseach welcomed

the ongoing engagement between the EU and UK on issues relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol and highlighted the importance of reaching durable, practical solutions for people and businesses in Northern Ireland.

*Statement by Prime Minister Boris Johnson*

The Prime Minister met with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in London today (Saturday 12 March).

Both leaders discussed their deep concern around the intensification of hostilities near Kyiv and condemned the attacks by Russian forces on civilians. The Prime Minister said this was a critical moment for Ukraine and for wider European and international security.

They agreed on the vital importance of continued unity in the face of Russian aggression, including through humanitarian relief, defensive military support to the Ukrainian government and further sanctions to target the Putin regime.

The Prime Minister reiterated the need to make significant changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

He said that while greater ambition and flexibility was needed from the EU in the negotiations, it was his hope that the same spirit of cooperation that had characterised the UK/EU relationship in respect of Ukraine could also be applied to resolving the issues with the Protocol.

## **Ukraine and the Brexit Agenda**

The impact of the Ukraine crisis on UK politics has led to suggestions that, in the words of a *Politico* headline of 05 March 2022, ‘Putin blows up Brexit’.

The DUP, with its supporters in the Tory Party's European Research Group (ERG), continues to demand urgent action on the Protocol and on setting a deadline for triggering Article 16. The party leader, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, argues that the war in Ukraine must not place a "freeze" on government action and insists that the DUP will continue to participate in anti-protocol rallies across Northern Ireland.

However, it is widely argued in London circles that the Ukraine situation has reduced both ministerial capacity and appetite for a confrontation with Brussels over Article 16. The two members of the Government primarily involved in the NI negotiations – Foreign Secretary Truss and Europe Minister Cleverley – are fully engaged in the responses to Ukraine. A London source commented "The whole of Government is entirely focused on the war, and there's very little ministerial capacity for anything else."

An *Irish News* editorial on 07 March argues that "Boris Johnson who has shown little interest in the north and stayed silent when Paul Givan's resignation as First Minister collapsed the Stormont Executive, is understandably now focused on the Ukraine crisis." It is now considered unlikely that there will be any move by the Prime Minister to act on Article 16 before the Assembly election in May. The current negotiation process will continue.

The *Politico* article made the point that the Ukraine situation had led to a notable degree of rapprochement between the EU and UK, with politicians and officials on both sides working together in the search for coordinated responses. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has held substantial talks with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The EU invited the Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, to attend the Foreign Affairs Council for discussions on

sanctions. She told Brussels correspondents that it was vitally important for the UK and its European allies to show "complete unity" in responding to Russian aggression.

Contact between UK ministers and their senior staff and the European Commission has become frequent, with the Secretary General of the European External Service, Stefano Sannino, visiting London for meetings with the Europe Minister James Cleverley and the head of MI6. A UK official commented "It has been very encouraging how united we've been with the EU. Brexit doesn't affect our desire to work together at all."

## House of Commons Questions, 8-9 March 2022

In the House of Commons on 8 March 2022, during Foreign Office Questions, the DUP MP Ian Paisley asked the Foreign Secretary: "I think the importance of the international events the House is dealing with this morning is a clear demonstration that the Department is not ultimately the right place for the protocol to be dealt with. In that vein, can I ask that the Secretary of State recognise the huge damage being done by the protocol? It is costing businesses in Northern Ireland £100,000 per hour. It has damaged the sovereignty of Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom. It is costing a 27% increase in haulage prices. Will the Secretary of State now set a deadline—an absolute deadline—to deal with this matter once and for all?"

The Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, gave a measured response, described in the *Irish News* as 'sidestepping' the question: "I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I am dealing with this matter. I met various European countries last week to discuss reforming the Northern Ireland protocol, which simply

is not working. Communities in Northern Ireland are being treated unfairly and there is an issue with getting goods from GB into Northern Ireland. We have put forward a concrete proposal that will also protect the EU single market and we need to see movement from the EU.”

In the House on 9 March 2022, the Labour Party Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Kyle, raised the issue of informing the House on the state of play on the NI Protocol:

*Since the Executive collapsed, there has been no statement to the House. Following five rounds of negotiations between the UK and the EU Governments, there has not been a single statement to the House. Will the Secretary of State promise to bring discussions out of the shadows and start making statements to the House, so that we can have things on the record and not behind closed doors?*

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis, replied:

*I think the hon. Gentleman misunderstands how negotiations need to work. We have been clear that it is right and appropriate that we have the space to have those private negotiations with the EU, which is why we have not gone out and publicly outlined some of the specific details we have put. But we have been very clear, and I am very clear publicly as well as privately, that we take no options off the table. We do need to resolve this.*

*There is a point at which there is a judgment call for the UK Government to make on whether those negotiations are able to progress in a way that gives us confidence that we can get to a*

*positive resolution. We have not seen that flexibility from the EU yet, but we will continue to strain every sinew, and the Foreign Secretary continues to talk to Maroš Šefčovič, to do everything we can to get a resolution that works. But we have to be very clear: this is about a resolution that respects all aspects of the Good Friday agreement and protects the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.*

## **Anti-Protocol Rally in Crossgar, 11 March 2022.**

The latest in a series of anti-Protocol rallies took place in Crossgar, Co. Down on Friday, 11 March 2022. The speakers included Sir Jeffrey Donaldson (DUP), Jim Allister (TUV), Jill Macauley (UUP), the former Brexit Party MEP Ben Habib and Baroness Kate Hoey. Jeffrey Donaldson said:

*The only leverage we have is our participation in those institutions, that is the reality, and if we continue to do business as usual we will be taken for granted.*

*When I became leader of my party I gave the Government notice that if they didn't act I would take certain actions and I gave them longer than I had intended because we had (the) pandemic and I wanted to give the opportunity for the UK Government to do the right thing and the reality is the Prime Minister has not done the right thing, he has not acted to protect Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom and therefore I acted in the way I said I would.*

*I come under attack for that, from the usual suspects, those who wanted the rigorous implementation of the protocol,*

*and I faced them today and they told me again the only answer was to get back into the Executive. But I am very clear, I will not be going back into the Executive until this matter is dealt with.*

Sir Jeffrey pointed out that unionist leaders had met on 07 March and discussed the need for greater unionist unity and co-operation in the forthcoming election: "That's what I want to happen. I want our votes to transfer to the other unionist candidates." He said that in his own constituency of Lagan Valley his party is reviewing whether it will run three candidates as it intended, to maximise unionist representation. He said he believes unionists can win four seats in the constituency. There are currently three unionist MLAs in the constituency, as well as one Alliance and one SDLP MLA.

The TUV leader, Jim Allister, urged the UK to not "sit back, hiding behind endless jaw-jaw with Brussels. It's time Boris Johnston regained full control over this UK territory and, until he does, there will be no stability or end to protest." Jim Allister said:

*Anyone doubting the adverse constitutional impact of the Protocol need look no further than the reality that under the Protocol, when it comes to trade, GB is defined as a foreign or 'third country'. In consequence, goods, because they are passing from territory governed by UK laws to territory governed by EU laws, are submitted to checks and EU tariffs.*

*That is the very essence of the offence of the Protocol and why it is Union-dismantling. This is where it comes into irreconcilable conflict with Art 6 of the Acts of Union - the unfettered trade guaranteed by Art 6 is utterly fettered by the iniquitous Protocol. Hence, its*

*partitioning of the UK with the Irish Sea border which is then implemented through the folly of the Poots Posts.*

*This is not the dry meaningless stuff of constitutional theory; this is the living reality of what it means, without consent, to be colonised under foreign control. All the laws that as a result govern our trade and what goods we can bring from the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland are foreign laws, made in a foreign jurisdiction.*

*Laws we did not make and cannot change - laws which even the proclaimed sovereign parliament of the United Kingdom cannot change, because the Protocol, not Downing Street rules over us in these regards. We, a supposed part of the great and independent United Kingdom, are left as craven rule takers from our imperial and disreputable masters in the EU.*

*Let's be very clear. If we want to maximise the unionist vote, then we need to vote for all anti-protocol unionist candidates, that is pretty simple, but it's pretty necessary.*

Baroness Hoey said it is time for unionism to "wake up", claiming it had compromised too much over the years. "I believe we must do our utmost to get anti-protocol candidates elected. Make sure all your family are registered to vote. Make sure every single person you know understands the importance of the protocol."

The Crossgar rally was originally due to take place on 25 February but was postponed following the sudden death of the DUP MLA Christopher Stalford. The event was organised by the Orange Order's Lecale

District Lodge No2. Further anti-protocol rallies are due to take place in Ballymoney on Friday, 25 March, Lurgan on Friday, 8 April, Castlederg on Thursday, 21 April and Newbuildings on Saturday, 23 April.

## The Northern Ireland Parties ahead of the May elections

The DUP continues to strenuously oppose the NI Protocol, with Party leader Jeffrey Donaldson insisting that he will not be going back into the Executive until the Protocol matter is 'dealt with', by which he means 'done away with'. But the party is seriously divided at the same time as the unionist community as a whole is divided.

Uniting the DUP is recognised as extremely difficult because it is clearly a party of very different personalities with differing views on so many issues. The Foster-Poots-Donaldson leadership saga reflects a situation where Jeffrey Donaldson is seen to be fighting fires on all sides, with almost daily private briefings and divisive tactics playing out within the party. A great deal of controversy and bitter personality comment surrounded the recent story of a meeting between Sir Jeffrey and the UUP leader Doug Beattie at which the DUP leader was said to have declined an invitation to return to the UUP which he had left in opposition to the Good Friday Agreement. This was discussed at the IIEA's ['The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: The DUP Perspective'](#) on 24 February with Sir Jeffrey.

Sir Jeffrey Donaldson's need, as DUP party leader, to find a seat in the Assembly has been greatly eased by the decision of the party organisation in South Belfast to co-opt the former party leader Edwin Poots to take the seat occupied by Christopher Stalford, who died tragically at the age of 39 on 19 February. Edwin Poots is an elected

DUP MLA for Lagan Valley- one of two DUP representatives in that constituency, along with Paul Givan, until recently First Minister. His departure, and his likely election as MLA for South Belfast in May, means that Jeffrey Donaldson can stand for the party in Lagan Valley, which he currently represents as MP in Westminster, with every prospect of retaining two seats, along with Paul Givan.

Efforts to produce a united unionist front in the forthcoming Assembly election continue with considerable difficulty. A vote-sharing deal between the DUP and TUV failed to bring the UUP on board. The DUP MP Sammy Wilson was heckled at an anti-Protocol rally by hardliners who insist that the DUP's position is not extreme enough. Business and community voices argue for moderation and express fear of instability, finding support in Doug Beattie's UUP. There is a growing gulf between the hard line and the moderate groupings.

The commentator Alex Kane, writing in the *Irish News*, argues that unionists are "so busy falling out, falling over and fuelling civil wars they've lost sight of what it actually means to be a unionist. Too often they seem keener to score points over each other than presenting a united, coherent response to their political/constitutional opponents."

The Alliance Party conference on 05 March 2022 heard party leader, Justice Minister Naomi Long, argue that a strong showing by the party in the May elections could herald the end of a political system based on binary division, with effective veto powers for blocs of unionists or nationalists, stating that "Those who don't identify as either unionist or nationalist are the fastest growing group in society. It is important that our institutions are modernised to reflect that reality and to ensure that our voters count as much as everybody else's."

Naomi Long expressed confidence that the party will increase its Assembly representation with a “double digit number” of MLAs. “I’m not putting a cap on our ambitions, I rule nothing out.” She argued that “People have had enough of the constant dramas and the political soap operas. They want politicians who don’t just identify more problems or worse still, add to them- but who are focused on finding solutions, on making things better.” She specifically ruled out the idea of Alliance designating as unionist to enable her to become Deputy First Minister.

The party’s Westminster MP, Stephen Farry, told delegates that the party is a “protocol realist” and committed to closer alignment between the UK and EU with a view to bringing about measures that reduce the level and impact of border checks which “bring economic friction and undermine some people’s sense of identity.”

The commentator Newton Emerson has argued, in the Irish Times, that “Alliance’s vision is the way the Belfast Agreement was meant to evolve, with a strengthening centre enabling normalisation. This was supposed to happen quickly – instead it has taken two decades to create a growing centre, no longer led by the UUP and SDLP as originally imagined.”

The SDLP leader, Colum Eastwood, speaking ahead of the SDLP Spring Conference said far too often politicians were distracted from the job at hand by the myopic issues that blight politics in the North:

*People here are sick, sore and tired of issues like the Protocol and sham fights over who’s going to be First Minister getting in the way of real progress. Our communities want politicians who deliver*

*for them, who listen to the problems they are experiencing in their daily lives and take it to the Assembly, to Westminster and do something about it. Our young people are worrying about the climate crisis and considering leaving this place behind forever. How do you think they feel when they turn on the television at night and see politicians discussing issues that are completely divorced from their lived reality.*

The UUP leader, Doug Beattie, has accused rival unionists of trying to create divisions in his party after details of the meeting on unionist unity were leaked with the DUP claiming that the UUP would not support the call to voters to transfer votes among anti-protocol candidates. He argued that the DUP is “running scared” of the UUP and fears losing seats to it. He claimed that research showed that people wanted “a confident, positive, inclusive unionism” and was “turned off by negativity”, calling on unionists not to “circle the wagons”.

TUV leader, Jim Allister, told the party annual conference on 12 March 2022 that If the “union-dismantling Protocol” still exists after the May Assembly election no unionist should go back into any future Executive. “As long as the price of Stormont is the implementing of the Protocol then that is something which no unionist should be aiding and abetting.”

## **Section Two: The Evolving Debate**

### **NI Budget Impasse**

Sinn Fein has called on the DUP to renominate a First Minister, even for a limited period, to permit the NI Executive to meet to agree a budget and release an additional £300 million in funding for a range of projects. The NI

Finance Minister, Conor Murphy of Sinn Féin has argued that the budget cannot be finalised without an Executive in place, indicating that legal advice on the matter has been received from the Northern Ireland Attorney General, Brenda King.

Without an agreed budget, government departments must rely on emergency arrangements to keep their services running in the 2022/2023 financial year, with the prospect of mounting cost of living pressures in the context of the Ukraine crisis. The DUP insists that there are alternative ways to adopt the budget in the absence of an effective Executive. The SDLP has contacted the NI Secretary, Brandon Lewis, to explore the possibility of a UK Government intervention to resolve the matter.

## Public Accounts Committee Report on Brexit

The UK Parliament's spending watchdog – the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) – has reported that UK firms have been hit by “increased costs, paperwork and border delays” as a result of Brexit. The report summarised its assessment:

*The transition period ended on 31 December 2020. Since that date, trade volumes have been suppressed by the impact of COVID-19, EU exit, and wider global pressures. It may not be possible to separate out the impact of these individual elements on the UK's trade with the EU, but it is clear that EU exit has had an impact, and that new border arrangements have added costs to business. We have repeatedly raised concerns about the impact of changes to trading arrangements on businesses of all sizes and we remain concerned.*

*Cross border passenger volumes have been a fraction of normal levels since the end of the transition period because of COVID-19 but they may increase from these low levels considerably during 2022. There is potential for disruption at the border, when passenger volumes return to more normal levels and when further checks at ports are introduced as a result of the EU's planned introduction of its new Entry and Exit system. This is particularly the case at the juxtaposed controls such as at Dover, where EU officials carry out border checks on the UK side of the border. Departments should be doing all they can to mitigate this risk and, more generally, factoring increases in passenger and trade volumes into their planning.*

*In our view, there is much more work that departments should be doing in the shorter term to understand and minimise the current burden on those trading with the EU, to address the immediate delivery and readiness risks in introducing import controls, and to have a border in place which is operating effectively without further delays or temporary measures.*

## Brexit Impact on Ireland

The Oireachtas Committee on Trade, Enterprise and Employment has been told by the Department of Enterprise and Trade that:

*In large measure, Brexit was not the calamitous event that we all feared, and this can be attributed, in no small measure, to the level of preparedness of Irish business for the changed trading relationship with the UK in the aftermath of Brexit. Businesses have faced the realities of the new trading relationship.”*



The Committee was told that while, for many firms, Brexit is done, this is not the case for those in the agri-food sector and businesses in this sector need to continue preparing for the UK import controls which had been set to come into effect from the beginning of the year but have benefitted from what was described as a “temporary reprieve.”

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has reported significant changes in the trading relationship between Ireland and the UK. Data for 2021, particularly on exports to Great Britain and on trade flows North-South in Ireland is encouraging. There has been a decline in the use of Great Britain as a ‘land bridge’ for Irish traders moving goods between Ireland and the continent, with no clarity as to whether this change is temporary or permanent, leading to continued uncertainty regarding the future of aspects of trade between Ireland and the UK.

## Section Three: Background Material and Further Reading

### Background Material

**Department of the Taoiseach** Taoiseach Micheal Martin and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson – Bilateral Meeting, 12 March 2022. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f2e69-taoiseach-micheal-martin-and-british-prime-minister-boris-johnson-bilateral-meeting/>

**GOV.UK** PM meeting with Taoiseach Micheal Martin, 12 March 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-taoiseach-micheal-martin-12-march-2022>

**House of Commons** Committee on Public Accounts. EU Exit: UK Border post transition, 22 January 2022. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8781/documents/88926/default/>

**Hansard** House of Commons. Foreign Office Questions, 8 March 2022. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-08/debates>

**Irish News** Liz Truss sidesteps Ian Paisley demand to give EU an ‘absolute deadline’ over protocol issues. *Irish News*, 8 March 2022. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/03/08/news/liz-truss-sidesteps-ian-paisley-demand-to-give-eu-an-absolute-deadline-over-protocol-issues-2609510/>

**BBC** Brexit: Northern Ireland Protocol talks to continue. *BBC*, 8 March 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-60654362>

**The Telegraph** Brexit on back burner as Ukraine war hits Boris Johnson’s ability to trigger Article 16. *Telegraph*, 3 March 2022. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/03/brexit-back-burner-ukraine-war-hits-boris-johnsons-ability-trigger/>

**Politico** Putin blows up Brexit. *Politico*, 5 March 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-sends-brexit-to-the-backseat/>

**Belfast Telegraph** Boris Johnson ‘not interested’ in Northern Ireland, claims former Labour press secretary, Alastair Campbell. *Belfast Telegraph*, 6 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/boris-johnson-not-interested-in-northern-ireland-claims-former-labour-press-secretary-alastair-campbell-41415228.html>

**Irish News** Editorial: Protocol moving down the political agenda. *Irish News*, 7 March 2022. <https://www.irishnews.com/opinion/leadingarticle/2022/03/07/news/editorial-protocol-moving-down-the-political-agenda-2607423/>

**Irish News** Ukraine war must not see British government freeze action on protocol, Donaldson warns. *Irish News*, 4 March 2022. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/03/04/news/ukraine-war-must-not-see-british-government-freeze-action-on-protocol-donaldson-warns-2606403/>

**News Letter** unionists urged to maximise vote at anti-protocol rally in Crossgar. *News Letter*, 11 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/unionists-urged-to-maximise-vote-at-anti-protocol-rally-in-crossgar-3608507>

**Belfast Telegraph** Donaldson reveals unionist leaders met to discuss maximising their vote in May. *Belfast Telegraph*, 11 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/donaldson-reveals-unionist-leaders-met-to-discuss-maximising-their-vote-in-may-41438150.html>

**BBC** TUV conference: Party to gather as Jim Allister predicts gains. *BBC*, 12 March 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-60708470>

**Belfast Telegraph** Edwin Poots confirmed to replace Christopher Stalford for south Belfast seat. *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-assembly-elections-2022/edwin-poots-confirmed-to-replace-christopher-stalford-for-south-belfast-seat-41419681>

**Belfast Telegraph** Conservative farmer Edwin Poots parachutes into liberal south Belfast. *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/news-analysis/conservative-farmer-edwin-poots-parachutes-into-liberal-south-belfast-41419736.html>

**Irish News** Plans revealed for more anti-protocol parades. *Irish News*, 3 March 2022. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/03/03/news/large-crowds-are-expected-at-up-coming-anti-protocol-parades-2604358/>

**News Letter** United front from unionism for rescheduled anti-protocol rally. *News Letter*, 8 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/united-front-from-unionism-for-rescheduled-anti-protocol-rally-3602643>

**Irish News** Brian Feeney: Ukraine war means it's all over for the protocol protests. *Irish News*, 9 March 2022. <https://www.irishnews.com/opinion/columnists/2022/03/09/news/brian-feeney-ukraine-war-means-it-s-all-over-for-the-protocol-protests-2608606/>

**News Letter** 'Major rally' details announced as unionists voice regret at Sinn Fein anonymity ruling. *News Letter*, 4 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/major-rally-details-announced-as-unionists-voice-regret-at-sinn-fein-anonymity-ruling-3597985>

**News Letter** Support for anti-NI Protocol rallies will continue to grow while the EU behaves like a colonial power towards Northern Ireland, Kate Hoey has said. *News Letter*, 9 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/anti-protocol-movement-will-grow-due-to-eu-colonial-attitude-3603902>

**News Letter** If the 'price' of torment is implementing the NI Protocol then unionists should give up on devolution, TUV leader Jim Allister said today. *News Letter*, 12 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/we-are-only-in-the-shallows-of-the-protocol-mr-allister-said-3608738>

**Belfast Telegraph** Rival unionists trying to undermine UUP, claims Doug Beattie. *Belfast Telegraph*, 13 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/rival-unionists-trying-to-undermine-uup-claims-doug-beattie-41440252.html>

**BBC** Naomi Long: Alliance 'can end Stormont political soap operas'. *BBC*, 6 March 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-60577371>

**Belfast Telegraph** Alliance Party can herald end of binary system at Stormont, says Long. *Belfast Telegraph*, 5 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-assembly-elections-2022/alliance-party-can-herald-end-of-binary-system-at-stormont-says-long-41414731.html>

**News Letter** Alliance Party conference: We want to fix problem of NI Protocol, says Stephen Farry. *News Letter*, 6 March 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/alliance-party-conference-we-want-to-fix-problems-of-ni-protocol-says-stephen-farry-3598806>

**Belfast Telegraph** Sooner rather than later, Alliance will have to step off fence on a border poll. *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/allison-morris/sooner-rather-than-later-alliance-will-have-to-step-off-fence-on-a-border-poll-41418348.html>

**Belfast Telegraph** Alliance leader Naomi Long: "We can become the biggest party...I will not put a cap on our ambitions". *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 March 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/alliance-leader-naomi-long-we-can-become-the-biggest-party-i-will-not-put-a-cap-on-our-ambitions-41409603.html>

**Irish Times** Northern Ireland's future will be decided by rising tide of Alliance voters. *IT*, 10 March 2022. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/northern-ireland-s-future-will-be-decided-by-rising-tide-of-alliance-voters-1.4822676>

**News Letter** NI Protocol: Doug Beattie to lead UUP delegation to Brussels to engage with European Union. *News Letter*, 27 February 2022. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-protocol-doug-beattie-to-lead-delegation-to-brussels-3588651>

**Belfast Telegraph** Sir Jeffrey Donaldson is fighting fires on all sides in a deeply divided party. *Belfast Telegraph*, 28 February 2022. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/allison-morris/sir-jeffrey-donaldson-is-fighting-fires-on-all-sides-in-a-deeply-divided-party-41392062.html>

**BBC** Jeffrey Donaldson and Doug Beattie at odds over 'party switch'. *BBC*, 1 March 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-60554309>

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