

BREXIT BRIEF

Brexit Brief Issue 149

1 March 2023



Tony Brown

Introduction

The 'Windsor Framework' – containing the new 'Stormont Brake' – has become the latest in a long line of agreements seeking to govern relations between Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Ireland, and the European Union. The new agreement joins the ranks of 'The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement' (1998); 'The St Andrews Agreement' (2006); 'The Stormont House Agreement' (2014); 'The Fresh Start Agreement' (2015); 'New Decade New Approach' (2020), and represents an attempt by the UK Government and the European Union to resolve many of the political and trade issues caused by the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (the Protocol).

The UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, was described as walking a 'Brexit tightrope' as he worked towards finding a compromise with Brussels. Monday 27 February 2023 saw Prime Minister Sunak and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announce the launch of the Windsor Framework, a comprehensive document which "fundamentally amends the text and provisions of the original Protocol to uphold

Northern Ireland's integral place in the United Kingdom, address the democratic deficit and set out a new way forward."

Section One: State of Play

The Windsor Framework Unveiled

The UK Government, in a Statement from the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, unveiled the Windsor Framework as agreed by the UK and EU authorities:

A new way forward for a prosperous, stable future for Northern Ireland has been set out today (Monday 27 February), rewriting the Treaty to fix the practical problems for the people and businesses of Northern Ireland, protects Northern Ireland's place within our Union, and restores the balance of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

The Windsor Framework, agreed by the Prime Minister and European Commission President today, replaces the old Northern Ireland Protocol,

dealing with the issues it has created and providing a new legal and UK constitutional framework.

It delivers free-flowing trade in goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland by removing any sense of the border in the Irish Sea for goods staying within the UK. These goods will travel as normal through a new green lane without red tape or unnecessary checks, with the only checks remaining designed to prevent smuggling or crime.

It protects Northern Ireland's place in our Union, replacing swathes of EU laws with UK laws and ensuring the people of Northern Ireland can benefit from the same tax policies, food and drink, medicines, and parcels as the rest of the UK.

It puts the people of Northern Ireland in charge with active democratic consent. The Agreement rewrites the Treaty text with a new Stormont Brake that means the UK can veto new EU goods laws if they are not supported by both communities in Northern Ireland, which goes far beyond previous agreements or discussions on the old Protocol.

The UK Government will no longer proceed with the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, as the UK and EU have come to a negotiated agreement. Similarly, the agreement will mean the EU withdrawing all of the legal actions it has launched against the UK.

The details of the new arrangements are set out in extensive legal background papers which will be studied in coming days by parties with political, community, and business interests. In particular, provisions concerning the new 'Stormont Brake' will be given special attention. The Windsor Framework will be put to a vote in the House of Commons in due course.

Sunak – von der Leyen Press Conference, 27 February 2023

The Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission addressed a joint press conference outside the Windsor Guildhall following the launch of the Windsor Framework.

Prime Minister Sunak stated:

This afternoon, I welcomed President Von der Leyen to Windsor to continue our discussions about the Northern Ireland Protocol. I'm pleased to report that we have now made a decisive breakthrough. Together, we have changed the original Protocol and are today announcing the new Windsor Framework. Today's agreement: Delivers smooth flowing trade within the whole United Kingdom. Protects Northern Ireland's place in our Union. And safeguards sovereignty for the people of Northern Ireland.

This is the beginning of a new chapter in our relationship. For a quarter of a century the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement has endured because at its heart is respect for the aspirations and identities of all communities. Today's agreement is about preserving that delicate balance and charting a

new way forward for the people of Northern Ireland. I am standing here today because I believe that we have found ways to end the uncertainty and challenge for the people of Northern Ireland.

I believe the Windsor Framework marks a turning point for the people of Northern Ireland.

It fixes the practical problems they face. It preserves the balance of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. Of course, parties will want to consider the agreement in detail, a process that will need time and care. Today's agreement is written in the language of laws and treaties. But really, it's about much more than that. It's about stability in Northern Ireland. It's about real people and real businesses. It's about showing that our Union -that has lasted for centuries - can and will endure. And it's about breaking down the barriers between us. Setting aside the arguments that for too long, have divided us. And remembering the fellow feeling that defines us: This family of nations – this United Kingdom.

President Von der Leyen said:

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here in Windsor with you. And it is with a great sense of satisfaction that we stand here together. We are about to deliver on an important commitment we made to each other a few months ago. I remember our first discussions, when we saw eye-to-eye on how to support our Ukrainian friends. And I was encouraged by our trustful and strong

cooperation on this crucial geostrategic issue. But I also remember how the two of us were honest with each other about the difficulties in our bilateral relationship. It was vital to put that on the right footing too.

We committed to working hard together to do so. We knew that for us to be able to make the most of the potential of our partnership, solutions were needed for the issues around the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. We knew it was not going to be easy. We knew we needed to listen to each other's concerns very carefully. Above all, we had to listen to the concerns of the people of Northern Ireland. We knew we had to work hard, with clear minds and determination. But we also both knew, dear Rishi, that we could do it. Because we were both genuinely committed to finding a practical solution for people and for all communities in Northern Ireland.

Today, we can take pride in the fact that we have delivered on that commitment. Because today, we have reached an agreement in principle on the Windsor Framework. The Windsor Framework lays down new arrangements for the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. This new Framework will allow us to begin a new chapter. It provides for long-lasting solutions that both of us are confident will work for all people and businesses in Northern Ireland. Solutions that respond directly to the concerns they have raised.

Prime Minister Sunak in House of Commons

Prime Minister Sunak addressed the House of Commons on 27 February 2023, introducing the Windsor Framework and hearing the initial reaction of MPs across the House:

Today's agreement has three equally important objectives: first, allowing trade to flow freely within our UK internal market; secondly, protecting Northern Ireland's place in our Union; and thirdly, safeguarding sovereignty and closing the democratic deficit.

The Windsor framework goes further still, by safeguarding sovereignty for the people of Northern Ireland and eliminating the democratic deficit. Fundamentally, the Protocol meant that the EU could impose new laws on the people of Northern Ireland without their having a say. Some Members of this House, whose voices I deeply respect, say that EU laws should have no role whatsoever in Northern Ireland. I understand that view and I am sympathetic to it, but for as long as the people of Northern Ireland continue to support their businesses having privileged access to the EU market, and if we want to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland—as we all do—there will be some role for EU law. The question is: what is the absolute minimum amount necessary to avoid a hard border?

The Stormont Brake does more than just give Northern Ireland a say over new EU laws; it means that it can block them. How will that work? The democratically elected Assembly can oppose new EU

goods rules that would have significant and lasting effects on their everyday lives. It will do so on the same basis as the petition of concern mechanism in the Good Friday Agreement, needing the support of 30 Members from at least two parties. If that happens, the UK Government will have a veto. We will work with the Northern Ireland Assembly and all parties to codify how the UK Government will use that veto.

Let me just remind the House of the full breadth and significance of what we have achieved today. We have achieved free-flowing trade, with a green lane for goods, no burdensome customs bureaucracy, no routine checks on trade, no paperwork whatsoever for Northern Irish goods moving into Great Britain and no border in the Irish sea. We have protected Northern Ireland's place in the Union, with state aid reach-back fixed, the same tax rules applying everywhere, vet certificates for food lorries gone, the ban on British sausages gone, parcel paperwork gone, pet paperwork gone, garden centres now selling the same trees, supermarkets selling the same food and pharmacies selling the same medicines. We have safeguarded sovereignty for the people of Northern Ireland, with the democratic deficit closed, the Vienna Convention confirmed and thousands of pages of EU law scrapped. With the Stormont Brake, we have safeguarded democracy and sovereignty for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer, responded:

In this year of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, we must once again embrace compromise and put division behind us. This deal is not perfect, but because we recognise that the UK agreed to the Protocol and has an obligation to make it work, because we recognise that for the Protocol to work there will inevitably be trade-offs, and because we always recognise that peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland are hard won, Labour will support the Windsor Framework. I hope that in the coming days others will come to support the agreement in the same spirit, and will join Labour in voting to make the Protocol work, in voting to face the future, and in voting for country before party.

The DUP Leader, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, thanked the Prime Minister for his work on the new Windsor Framework and recognised that some progress had been made, while also voicing his continuing concern about the application of EU laws in Northern Ireland. He added:

My party will want to study the detail of what has been published today as well as examining the legal text, the political declaration and the Government's Command Paper. Where necessary, we stand ready to engage with the Government in order to seek further clarification, reworking or change as required. My party will now assess all the proposed outcomes and arrangements against our seven tests, outlined in our 2022 Assembly election

manifesto, to determine whether what has been published meets those tests and whether it respects and restores Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom.

Long Journey to a Deal

The past few weeks have seen the various challenges and controversies related to the Protocol making headlines in both print and electronic media across these islands and in Brussels. Those weeks were, of course, the first weeks of Rishi Sunak's premiership, following the departures of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss.

Andrew Rawnsley, in *The Observer*, has commented that sources in Whitehall "report that, despite all the other urgent and critical matters jostling for his attention, no issue has been devouring as much of the Prime Minister's time and energy as trying to land a deal that would ease the problems with the Northern Ireland Protocol."

The search for a deal has involved intense activity at the highest official levels in Whitehall and Brussels and among key players in the UK Government and the European Commission. Rishi Sunak has spoken to Ursula von der Leyen at least three times in the past fortnight; Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič have been in almost daily conversation; and Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris has been actively pursuing contacts in Northern Ireland, Dublin, and beyond. In addition, there was a high-level visit to Belfast by the Prime Minister himself to meet with party leaders and business representatives. The

Irish Government has also been active in supporting moves towards a solution, with the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, and Minister for European Affairs in regular contact with their UK counterparts, Northern Ireland parties, and civil society, while also working closely with the European Commission and European Parliament.

As Rishi Sunak seeks to find accommodation with the European Research Group (ERG) at Westminster and the DUP in Belfast, the former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has entered the debate on the Protocol, warning that dropping the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill – which he introduced in Parliament with the key involvement of Liz Truss as Foreign Secretary – would be a “great mistake.”

Bonfire of EU Regulations

Prime Minister Sunak is seeking to maintain the support of Tory Brexiteers by proceeding with what has been described as “the scorched earth Brexit philosophy” as contained in the Retained EU Law (REUL) Bill, which proposes to do away with some 4,000 pieces of retained EU legislation by the end of the year. The purpose of this exercise is to create a system of regulation “suitably agile and nimble for the new shackle-free UK.” Under the new arrangement, UK ministers will be granted wide ranging powers to re-make, retain, discard, or amend thousands of pieces of EU legislation, as they see fit.

The potential fallout for areas such as employment law, environmental regulations, and food safety law raises important issues. UK Courts will be encouraged to disregard old case law based on European statutes. The very definition of “business” could be reopened. An editorial in the Economist commented, “It is

like lighting a fire in a library, and handing the librarians a photocopier and marker pen to save what they can.”

An opinion piece written by Kathy Sheridan for the Irish Times expressed the view that the mass repealing of EU legislation also poses a problem for bodies and negotiators in Europe, who will be concerned at how the REUL Bill may affect the “level playing field” provisions in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Ms Sheridan goes on to write, “Threatening noises are already being made about “unilateral rebalancing measures”. The Protocol had better be Armageddon-proof.”

Prime Minister Sunak in Belfast

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited Belfast on 17 February 2023 for bilateral meetings with the five main Northern Ireland parties.

Speaking after the meeting, Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou McDonald, commented:

We have always believed that a deal on the Protocol was possible, and we've always known it was necessary. It is clear that significant progress has been made and we are very heartened by that. We now want to see a speedy concluding of matters.

The Alliance Party leader, Naomi Long, described the meeting as “constructive and very positive” despite no details on plans to resolve issues on the Protocol. She added, “He (Prime Minister Sunak) was very much in listening mode” and that there is “some heavy lifting still to be done” in order to secure a deal. The SDLP leader, Colum Eastwood, said that the Prime Minister had told his party that a deal “is not done yet. He

is clear that lots of progress has been made.” From the UUP, party leader Doug Beattie commented that the Prime Minister had not provided any detail on the negotiations, but he believed that “they are working very hard to come up with a deal.”

While four of the party meetings were described as relatively brief – lasting roughly fifteen minutes each– the DUP leader, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, spent well over an hour in discussions with the Prime Minister, who was accompanied by the Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris. Mr Donaldson said he had been given new details - and broadly liked what he had been told. “Clearly this is a big moment. On some very important issues there has been real progress, but there remain some outstanding issues that we need to get over the line,” he said.

The Prime Minister subsequently met Northern Ireland business leaders to hear their views on issues concerning the Protocol, before leaving for the Munich Security Conference at which he held bilateral talks with Commission President von der Leyen.

Another Stormont Recall Collapses

The sixth attempt to restore the Stormont Assembly and Executive failed on 14 February 2023 when the DUP refused to agree to the nomination of a Speaker. This DUP move thwarted the chances of proceeding with significant legislation on organ donation – referred to as Dáithí’s Law after a six-year-old Belfast boy awaiting a heart transplant.

Two candidates for Speaker – from the UUP and SDLP – were nominated but neither was elected as the DUP declined to provide the necessary cross-community votes. Former

DUP First Minister Paul Givan stated, “The Secretary of State and other parties know the position that the DUP takes in terms of the restoration of these institutions.” Sinn Féin’s First Minister designate, Michelle O’Neill, commented, “There is little else to be said. The power is in the gift of each party and every single MLA by legislating in this place here today. Not to do so is a dereliction of duty.”

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Chris Heaton-Harris, tweeted: “The quickest and simplest way to implement Dáithí’s Law remains for the NI parties to progress this legislation through the Assembly. I share the frustrations of Dáithí and his family. It is extremely disappointing that the NI parties have been unable to come together on this today.” He then progressed the issue to the House of Commons where the necessary legislation was fast-tracked and will become law in March.

Section Two: The Evolving Debate

DUP Statement 17 February 2023

The DUP leader, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, sent a ‘weekend message’ to his party members following his meetings with Prime Minister Sunak in Belfast on 16 and 17 February 2023, in which he wrote:

The next generation of Northern Ireland depends on the actions of the Prime Minister and the EU Commission President in the coming days. I have indicated to the prime minister that it is important he agrees the right deal rather than a rushed deal. Solutions must be found which respect Northern Ireland’s place within the United Kingdom and

its internal market and deal with the democratic deficit created by the Protocol. This is the time for Brussels to stretch itself and demonstrate that it is prepared to restore the balance and help cement stability in Northern Ireland for the next generation. This is a process to correct the wrongs of the last negotiation. This process is not just about today or tomorrow it is about the next generation and giving them a foundation to build on.

Cross-border Trade Increasing

The value of goods moving across the border grew by another 31% in 2022, according to official data published in Dublin.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) said North-South trade passed the five-billion-euro mark in 2022, reaching €5.354 billion (£4.76 billion) over the 12-month period – a rise of almost £1 billion more than in 2021. In the other direction, the CSO said €4.94 billion's worth (£4.4 billion) of goods were imported into Northern Ireland from the Republic during 2022, a rise of €1.3 billion (£1.16 billion) on 2021, or an annual jump of 32%.

While the figures have not been adjusted for inflation, the value of trade on the island of Ireland has increased significantly since the introduction of the Protocol at the start of 2021. The CSO said North-South trade rose by 65% in the first year of new checks on goods crossing the Irish Sea.

The annual trade data published by the statistics body on 15 February 2023 showed a significant increase across the board in the value of goods both imported and exported by the Republic. In terms of trade partners,

there was a surge in imports from Britain last year, with the value rising by 55% to €24 billion (£21.3 billion).

However, Britain accounted for only 8% of Ireland's exports. The EU bought around 38% (€80.6 billion) of Irish exports, while 30% (€63 billion) went to the USA. Exports to the rest of the world were valued at €42 billion.

Ireland's Minister for Trade, Enterprise, and Employment, Simon Coveney, welcomed this trade data, commenting that Ireland had maintained "its excellent position as a world-class supplier of goods and services" despite exporters facing challenges due to the war in Ukraine, rising inflation, and on-going Covid-19 disruptions on supply chains.

Secret Brexit Summit

The secret 'Brexit Summit' at the historic Ditchley Park estate caused considerable disquiet and even annoyance in pro-Brexit Tory circles, with Lord David Frost, the UK Government's former chief Brexit negotiator, making headlines by accusing those attending the event of wanting "to unravel the deals we did to exit the EU in 2020 and to stay shadowing the EU instead." Much media attention focused on the presence at Ditchley of the Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove.

The Prime Minister became aware of Michael Gove's attendance when he read the Observer coverage. 10 Downing Street did not criticise the minister's involvement stating that, "private individuals are able to come in and discuss whatever they wish. From the government's position we are focusing on further maximising the benefits of Brexit." One source was quoted, however, as saying that there were "eyebrows raised" in No 10.

Michael Gove indicated that he attended the meeting in his capacity as a Governor of Ditchley Park. It was reported that he had spoken of some of the shortcomings of Brexit but had argued the case for making Brexit work in the long term. Another source told the Observer that the Ditchley discussions were constructive, addressing the problems and opportunities of Brexit and dwelling on the economic downside to the UK economy, with Brexit seen as “acting as a drag on our growth and inhibiting the UK’s potential.” The Observer commented that, “It was in no sense a secret plot to influence the current government though it might be the start of a blueprint for the next one.”

LCC Chairman on Loyalist ‘unrest’

The chairman of the Loyalist Communities Council (LCC), David Campbell, has told the News Letter that if the DUP slackens in its approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, it would stir unrest in loyalist paramilitary ranks. Mr Campbell – a former chairman of the UUP and chief-of-staff to former First Minister David Trimble – launched the LCC in 2015 as a channel between mainstream unionist politics and loyalist paramilitaries, with links to the UDA, UVF, and Red Hand Commando.

The News Letter asked Mr Campbell if the loyalist leaders with whom he deals are having trouble keeping a lid on anti-Protocol anger within their respective groups. He answered:

I think with regard to their own organisations and their own groups, they retain the confidence of the membership, and that really is down to the fact Jeffrey Donaldson has stuck to his word, and the DUP have followed through on their electoral mandate. The

LCC has made no secret of the fact that it supports the seven tests the DUP are seeking. In meetings with Jeffrey it has been made clear to him that they support him holding the line on this even though everyone recognises it’s very difficult with the financial circumstances we’re in not to have an Assembly operating.

Asked if a deal comes forward in the next few weeks that falls short of these seven tests, we could be in for a “difficult summer”, Mr Campbell responded that he had concerns that current leaders, who he said had steered their organisations away from violence and criminality, could be swept away.

The News Letter pointed out that unionists have often sought to criticise nationalists – the Irish government in particular – for invoking the spectre of a return to violence to attain their political objectives around Brexit. Mr Campbell was asked if people could not make similar criticisms of what he is saying? He replied: “Well, I’ve made no secret of the fact that if the basis of the ceasefires is removed – in other words the constitutional stability that the Belfast Agreement provided – then these organisations are going to doubt the very basis on which they agreed their ceasefires.”

In an editorial, the Irish News commented: “This is a deeply alarming development which many will regard as carrying a strong element of threat from ruthless paramilitary groups who should long ago ceased to exercise any influence in society.”

A Belfast Telegraph report quotes senior UVF figures warning that loyalists will “wreck the place” and “the streets will be in flames” if any Brexit deal does not scrap the Irish Sea border.

Section Three: Background Material and Further Reading

Background Material

Hansard House of Commons Debates, 27 February 2023. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-27/debates/145ECA09-85E8-40C9-B631-5795DCABFA93/NorthernIrelandProtocol>

GOV.UK The Windsor Framework, 27 February 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-windsor-framework>

GOV.UK PM Speech on the Windsor Framework: February 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-the-windsor-framework-february-2023>

European Commission Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with UK Prime Minister Sunak, 27 February 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_1270

GOV.UK Political Declaration by the European Commission and the Government of the United Kingdom, 27 February 2023. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1138991/Political_Declaration_by_the_European_Commission_and_the_Government_of_the_United_Kingdom.pdf

GOV. UK HMG Legal position: The Windsor Framework, 27 February 2023. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1138993/HMG_Legal_Position_The_Windsor_Framework.pdf1

GOV.UK Windsor Framework unveiled to fix problems of the Northern Ireland Protocol, 27 February 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/windsor-framework-unveiled-to-fix-problems-of-the-northern-ireland-protocol>

European Commission. Joint statement by the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Rishi Sunak at the Munich Security Conference today, 18 February 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_1001

The Observer Rishi Sunak must not flinch from a vital fight with the Tory Brextremists. *Observer*, 26 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/26/rishi-sunak-must-not-flinch-from-a-vital-fight-with-the-tory-brextremists>

Irish Times Sunak has nowhere else to turn and nothing much to lose. *IT*, 22 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/02/22/sunak-has-nowhere-else-to-turn-and-nothing-much-to-lose/>

Irish Times Threat of Tory rebellion puts brakes on protocol deal but optimism remains. *IT*, 22 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/02/22/threat-of-tory-rebellion-puts-brakes-on-protocol-deal-but-optimism-remains/>

The Guardian Call to back Rishi Sunak on NI protocol deal amid fears ministers may quit. *Guardian*, 21 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/feb/21/rishi-sunak-ni-protocol-deal-eu-brexit-er-maria-caulfield>

The Guardian Rishi Sunak will not 'sell anyone out' on NI protocol deal says minister. *Guardian*, 22 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/feb/22/rishi-sunak-will-not-sell-anyone-out-northern-ireland-protocol-deal-johnny-merc>

RTE Spectre of Brexit haunts Brussels again. *RTE*, 21 February 2023. <https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2023/0221/1358041-brexit-analysis/>

The Telegraph The Northern Ireland question isn't about trade. It's about who governs. *Telegraph*. 21 February 2023. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/21/northern-irish-question-isnt-trade-who-governs/>

Irish News Newton Emerson: Without Stormont, we're only spectators in UK devolution debate. *Irish News*, 22 February 2023. <https://www.irishnews.com/opinion/columnists/2023/02/23/news/newton-emerson-without-stormont-we-re-only-spectators-in-uk-devolution-debate-3078524/>

Irish Times Bobby McDonagh: Protocol deal in DUP's best interest. Thing is, they just don't know it yet. *IT*, 21 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/02/21/protocol-deal-in-dups-best-interest-thing-is-they-just-dont-know-it-yet/>

RTE 'Narrow window' to secure protocol deal – Burke. *RTE*, 21 February 2023. <https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2023/0221/1357892-brexit-politics/>

The Telegraph Suella Braverman fires warning shot over Boris Johnson's Brexit deal. *Telegraph*. 21 February 2023. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/20/suella-braverman-fires-warning-shot-boris-johnsons-brexit-deal/>

Irish Times Northern Ireland protocol: Boris Johnson threatens Rishi Sunak's bid to end deadlock. *IT*, 19 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/02/19/north-protocol-talks-latest/>

The Telegraph Brexit warning from Boris Johnson is 'not completely unhelpful', says Penny Mordaunt. *Telegraph*, 19 February 2023. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/19/brexit-warning-boris-johnson-not-completely-unhelpful-says-penny/>

Irish Times EU-UK protocol deal will recognise status of Northern Ireland. *IT*, 18 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/02/18/eu-uk-deal-will-guarantee-constitutional-status-of-northern-ireland/>

BBC NI Protocol: DUP leader facing his own 'big moment'. *BBC*, 18 February 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-64687940>

Irish News Sunak protocol meetings high on positivity but low on detail, parties claim. *Irish News*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/02/17/news/sunak-protocol-meetings-high-on-positivity-but-low-on-detail-parties-claim-3068932/>

Irish News Varadkar 'quietly confident' that protocol deal can be reached within weeks. *Irish News*. 18 February 2023. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/republicofirelandnews/2023/02/17/news/varadkar-quietly-confident-that-protocol-deal-can-be-reached-within-weeks-3070699/>

Irish Times Northern Ireland protocol: deal 'not over the line yet' – Naomi Long. *IT*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/02/17/northern-ireland-protocol-fundamental-that-north-not-legally-separated-says-dup/>

Belfast Telegraph PM in 'listening mode' during NI Protocol talks in Belfast, but no details on imminent deal with EU. *Belfast Telegraph*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/pm-in-listening-mode-during-ni-protocol-talks-in-belfast-but-no-details-on-imminent-deal-with-eu/1153107743.html>

Financial Times Rishi Sunak to meet EU leaders to try to finalise Brexit deal. *Financial Times*, 14 February 2023. <https://www.ft.com/content/d9a7aa45-5e5e-4e9e-b878-3d1a3c1aa8ad>

Irish Times Editorial: The Irish Times view on the continued stalemate at Stormont. *IT*, 15 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/editorials/2023/02/14/the-irish-times-view-on-the-continued-stalemate-at-stormont/>

The Guardian The Guardian view on Britain and Europe: Brexit is never 'done'. *Guardian*, 15 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/15/the-guardian-view-on-britain-and-europe-brexit-is-never-done>

Irish Times 'Daithi's Law': DUP vetoes attempt to restore Stormont to pass organ donation law. *IT*, 15 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2023/02/14/daithis-law-mlas-return-to-stormont-in-doomed-bid-to-pass-organ-donation-law/>

The Guardian David Frost urges UK to 'embrace' Brexit and warns of plot to unravel deal. *Guardian*, 13 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/feb/13/david-frost-urges-uk-embrace-brexit-plot-unravel-deal>

Belfast Telegraph Sam McBride: Five points to take from the NI Protocol ruling. *Belfast Telegraph*, 8 February 2023. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/sam-mcbride/five-points-to-take-from-the-ni-protocol-ruling/84191422.html>

Belfast Telegraph Supreme Court has left DUP with nowhere to go but back into Assembly. *Belfast Telegraph*, 14 February 2023. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/malachi-odoherty/supreme-court-has-left-dup-with-nowhere-to-go-but-back-into-assembly/263080888.html>

The Guardian What exactly was Michael Gove doing at a secret Brexit summit? *Guardian*, 13 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/feb/13/what-exactly-was-michael-gove-doing-at-a-secret-brexit-summit>

The Guardian Sunak was unaware of Gove attendance at Brexit discussion, No 10 says. *Guardian*, 13 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/feb/13/david-frost-urges-uk-embrace-brexit-plot-unravel-deal>

Newsletter Any deal on NI Protocol must fix 'democratic deficit' warns senior party figure. *Newsletter*, 16 February 2023. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/any-deal-on-northern-ireland-protocol-must-fix-democratic-deficit-warns-senior-party-figure-4029228>

Newsletter All eyes on DUP reaction to EU/UK protocol deal but business leaders remain cautious. *Newsletter*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/business/all-eyes-on-dup-reaction-euuk-protocol-deal-but-business-leaders-remain-cautious-4030745>

Irish News DUP warned of 'new conversation about constitutional change' as Sammy Wilson says ECJ role should be 'removed not reduced'. *Irish News*, 16 February 2023. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/politicalnews/2023/02/16/news/dup-warned-of-new-conversation-about-constitutional-change-as-sammy-wilson-says-ecj-role-should-be-removed-not-reduced-3067129/>

Politico UK businesses pray Rishi Sunak can sell a Brexit deal. *Politico*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-business-hope-end-tory-brexit-rishi-sunak-northern-ireland-protocol-dispute/>

Newsletter Loyalist Communities Council chairman: If DUP goes soft on Northern Ireland Protocol it will stir unrest in UVF/UDA ranks. *Newsletter*, 17 February 2023. <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/loyalist-communities-council-chairman-if-dup-goes-soft-on-northern-ireland-protocol-it-will-stir-unrest-in-uvfuvf-ranks-4032399>

Irish News Value of cross-border trade increased by another 30 per cent in 2022 – CSO. *Irish News*, 15 February 2023. <https://www.irishnews.com/business/2023/02/16/news/value-of-cross-border-trade-rose-by-30-per-cent-in-2022-cso-3063949/>

Irish Times Donaldson's best tactic is to sell the protocol arrangement unapologetically. *IT*, 24 February 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/02/24/donaldsons-best-tactic-is-to-sell-the-protocol-arrangement-unapologetically/>

The Guardian NI protocol: Sunak criticised over 'plan for EU chief to meet king'. *Guardian*, 25 February 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/25/government-denies-sunak-wanted-king-to-endorse-ni-protocol-deal>

BBC Northern Ireland Protocol deal: Moment of truth approaching for DUP. *BBC*, 25 February 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-64769712>

RTE No Brexit deal unless DUP concerns addressed – Cleverly. *RTE*, 24 February 2023. <https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2023/0224/1358716-protocol-commons/>

Belfast Telegraph NI will Burn: UVF's chilling warning. *Belfast Telegraph*, 26 February 2023. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/ni-will-burn-uvfs-chilling-warning-over-new-ni-protocol-betrayal/1714828166.html>

Further Reading

Geoffrey Bell. The Twilight of Unionism. Verso.

The Institute of International and European Affairs,

8 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

T: +353-1-8746756 F: +353-1-8786880

E: reception@iiea.com W: www. iiea.com

The Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) is Ireland's leading international affairs think tank. Founded in 1991, its mission is to foster public discourse in order to broaden awareness of European and international issues in Ireland and contribute to more informed strategic decision-making by political, business and civil society leaders. The IIEA is independent of government and all political parties and is a not-for profit organisation with charitable status. In January 2021, the Global Go To Think Tank Index ranked the IIEA as Ireland's top think tank.

© Institute of International and European Affairs, March 2023

Creative Commons License

This is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the license.

[https://creativecommons.org/licenses/Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0))

You are free to:

- Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- Adapt - remix, transform, and build upon the material
- The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any

reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



The IIEA acknowledges the support of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union



The Institute of International and European Affairs,

8 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

T: +353-1-8746756 F: +353-1-8786880

E: reception@iiea.com W: www. iiea.com