

EU finally allows life-saving drugs for thousands in NI and the Irish Republic

We are grateful to our affiliated organisation, Brexit Facts4EU.Org for their permission to co-publish their excellent research.

The EU Council has finally decided to allow life-saving drugs to be supplied from mainland UK for patients in Northern Ireland, the Republic, Malta and Cyprus. This is NOT, however, a permanent solution and some of the 'derogations' will be phased out over the next three years.

In what amounts to a set of face-saving measures by the EU, the EU Commission continued to blame Brexit rather than its own appalling behaviour in trying to deny life-saving medicines to the peoples of Northern Ireland and three EU member countries.

EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, admitted:



"The continuous supply of medicines is essential for hundreds of thousands of patients in Northern Ireland – as well as Cyprus, Ireland and Malta, whose markets are historically dependent on medicines from the UK."

Many months of stress for patients dismissed, as the EU claims to have been 'swift'

The EU's insistence on denying patients access to world-leading drugs from mainland UK has caused a lot of needless worry to patients with life-threatening conditions such as cancer.

Somewhat incredulously, the EU's Health Commissioner claimed last week that the EU's new measures represent *"a swift agreement"* to ensure that *"all citizens can continue to get the medicines they need"*. This is in spite of this dispute having started as a consequence of the EU-imposed N.I. Protocol in January 2020.



The EU's Commissioner responsible for negotiations with the UK, Vice-President Šefčovič said:

"We now have a lasting solution, which was delivered in record time. I will continue to work closely with the UK government to ensure predictability, legal certainty, and the prosperity of all communities in Northern Ireland."

EU Commission blames Brexit for its own behaviour

In a statement from the EU Commission on Tuesday they once again blamed Brexit for the problems which they themselves caused by their hostile and intransigent behaviour.

They stated: *"Today's solution is part of the Commission's package ... to respond to the difficulties that people in Northern Ireland have been experiencing **because of Brexit**."*

It isn't only life-saving drugs. Under EU rules, even something as simple of a packet of paracetamol was subject to restrictions.

This week's announcements recall the EU's attempt to block Covid-19 vaccines

When it comes to the EU's denial of healthcare to punish the United Kingdom, the EU Commission has form.

On 30 January 2021 Ursula von der Leyen's EU Commission announced it was triggering Article 16 of the N.I. Protocol, in order to stop the possibility of Covid-19 vaccines crossing into Northern Ireland. An immediate furore erupted in London and Dublin, with angry phone calls from the British and Irish leaders to the EU Commission President.

By midnight the EU Commission was forced to reverse its decision but the damage had been done. Northern Ireland's then First Minister Arlene Foster described it as *"**an incredible**"*

act of hostility”.

Finally, cats and dogs

Pet-lovers in Northern Ireland may wish to know that:

“Today’s legislative proposals do not cover veterinary medicines. Discussions on veterinary medicines will continue over the next months in order to gather information, identify any outstanding implementation issues and find the most appropriate way forward to ensure long-term continuity of veterinary medicines supply to Northern Ireland, as well as Cyprus, Ireland and Malta.”

~ EU Commission, 12 Apr 2022

Interim measures will apply until the end of this year but if nothing is agreed by the EU then yet another source of conflict will erupt.

OBSERVATIONS:

The EU has no right

Readers may wish to stop and ask themselves a question. What possible right can the EU have to prevent citizens in the United Kingdom from receiving essential medicines?

As ever, the EU Commission has dressed up its announcements as coming from the all beneficent EU, graciously allowing the peoples of Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Malta, and Cyprus to receive medications for a certain period.

Facts4EU.Org has read all the details announced by the EU last

week and frankly we are still none the wiser about the precise new rules, as they have not yet been drafted and put into law. What we do know is that many elements of them are time-limited.

The EU plays with peoples' lives

We would pose a further scenario. Imagine that last year you were diagnosed with a terminal condition. Perhaps the prognosis only gave you between three and six months left to live.

In desperation you read all you can. You discover a new experimental treatment from a UK pharmaceutical company which has just been licensed in the United Kingdom. However, you live in Northern Ireland. Thanks to the EU's hostile behaviour since the UK's vote to leave the bloc the EU's rules say it will not be available to you.

You must wait six months for the 'European [EU] Medicines Agency' to approve the new British drug. By which time, of course.....

If the UK government had not ignored the EU's rules on matters like these and many others, and had waited for the EU's 'swift decision', many British citizens would have been in dire straits.

For these and many other reasons, both CIBUK.org and Facts4EU.Org continue to campaign for the complete abolition of the abominable N.I. Protocol.