

‘When in a hole, stop digging’

New postal legislation threatens to leave Windsor Agreement in tatters

The Prime Minister can't claim he wasn't warned. CIBUK along with many others identified the flaws and shortcomings in his fabled Windsor Agreement from the moment he opened his mouth at that famous press conference back in February with EU Commission President Ursula Von de Leyen.

We said at the time that it would soon start to unravel and that is what is now happening. The Prime Minister's assertion that the Windsor Agreement has 'removed any sense of the border in the Irish Sea' appears to lie in shreds as leading retailers and food suppliers struggle to put the terms of the Agreement into practice.

Green and Red Lanes

At its heart lie the Green and Red Lane systems.

The very existence of the Red Lane exposes the lie that Windsor removes any sense of border in the Irish Sea because if you are on the red lane, which arrives on 1st October, you will experience the full realities of the border.

This will effectively turn Northern Ireland into a foreign country so far as trading is concerned.

So, what about the Green Lane?

It is true that the customs paperwork and the health certification requirements are simplified, but the fact they

still exist is a problem since no custom or SPS forms are required if you move goods within your own country. That is what sovereign democracy actually means!

In addition, goods will be subject to 100% documentary checks (online) and 5-10% identity checks. Again, this does not happen if you move goods from London to Edinburgh or Cardiff to Dundee any more than it happened to the movement of goods from Manchester to Belfast before 2021.

And even if the customs forms are shorter, the fact that they are required at all means that businesses across the whole of the UK do not have full unfettered access to their own single market. It becomes a nation-wide problem not one confined just to Northern Ireland.

Access criteria for the Green Lane

First, businesses have to be part of a government run trusted trader scheme with a whole series of conditions attached.

Second, the good being transported require an identified end-consumer with an address in Northern Ireland, which means they cannot be moved to a storage depot and sent on later to an unknown customer.

Finally, the goods have to carry labels saying 'Not for EU.'

However, insiders say that this will involve a change in the packaging of thousands of items requiring alterations to production lines and resulting in many products not being ready in time for October when the rules come in for meat and dairy.

Furthermore, the additional packaging costs may be prohibitive for some businesses, in which case their products will have to remain in the 'red lane' and subject to full custom checks.

Green lane or bust

In relation to the Windsor Agreement as a whole, there is a further point to be made. The presumption behind the current legislation is that if people cannot green lane they will red lane whereas in practice serious restructuring is currently underway where businesses are looking to develop supply chains within the island of Ireland and onto the island from the wider EU, so they no longer need to cross the Irish Sea via a green or red lane.

All of which is helping to push Northern Ireland away from the UK economy and into an all-island economy.

Draft legislation deepens divisions

As if that were not enough, the Government has thrown the *Postal Packages Regulations 2023* into the mix. The provisions may appear tedious and inconsequential but they actually impose a border down the Irish Sea with respect to post.

If Parliament agrees to these regulations they will actively participate in the division of our country so that sending packets to Northern Ireland will be like sending packets to a foreign country from 31 August.

In practical terms these measures deny unfettered movement, and at a time of rising costs for consumers additional customs duties on packaged goods from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland will mean that either those packets will not be sent or the additional costs of posting will be passed onto Northern Ireland consumers.

Lack of due process and impact assessment

Finally, it should be noted that even as Parliament

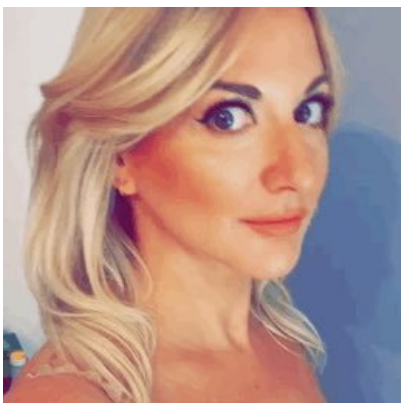
scrutinises the Postal Package Regulations there has been no consultation exercise, which is particularly inappropriate given the constitutionally divisive implications of these regulations.

It is also noticeable that the Government has provided no impact assessment on these measures and justifies this in the explanatory notes of the draft legislation partly on the basis that these regulations pertain to the implementation of the Windsor Framework and that this somehow exonerates the Government from having to produce an impact assessment.

Political objective

It is the EU's abiding ambition to make an example of the UK for having the audacity to vote to leave the European Union, and exploiting tensions between Westminster and Stormont provides them with the means to do so.

Nonetheless despite the EU's desire to see the Union fracture, support for the union and opposition to the break-up of the UK has not changed in recent years. The increase in support for Sinn Fein is not the result of an overall rise in the nationalist/Republic vote, but rather the decline of the SDLP and people moving from the SDLP to SF. Polling suggest pretty clear majority support for remaining in the UK.



‘The Independence Documentary’

Together with our partners at Facts4EU.Org, we’ve organised a TV-style documentary with a stellar line-up of well-known politicians and all kinds of interesting people, young and old, men and women, white and ethnic origin, presented by Alexandra Phillips. Alex will be known to many readers as an ex-GB News presenter and a frequent sight on everything from Question Time to Talk TV. We have finished filming – now we have the long task of editing, if we can get some extra funding. This is going to be big!

Please help today if you can: [click here to read more](#)

Conclusion

The Postal Packets (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023 draft legislation sound innocuous enough. But as with all legislation relating to the European Union, the implications behind it are enormous.

We will scrutinise its progress through Parliament and as ever, continue to expose the Windsor Framework for the grubby sell-out it really is, for which total and outright abolition is the only answer.

By Ben Philips, Communications Director, CIBUK

Main Image: montage © CIBUK 2023