

# The Irish Backstop: a fake Europhile distraction

*In this second in our series of articles reviewing our recent 50th Anniversary annual rally, **CIB chairman Edward Spalton** introduces **Dr Ray Bassett's** speech on the crucial issue of the Irish backstop. Dr Bassett held senior positions in the Irish Foreign Service, including Ambassador to Canada. He was also deeply involved in the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement. In his speech, which can be viewed in full in the video below, Dr Bassett explains why the the whole idea of the backstop is not about the border, but to thwart Brexit.*

Ray Bassett was part of the Irish Government Talks Team during the negotiations on the Good Friday Agreement. He points out the great community of interest between the UK and Ireland, created by geography, economic and social ties – with over 600,000 Irish people living in the UK. It is very much in Ireland's interests that Brexit is a success, far more so than for any other European country.

Yet the EU has pressured the Irish government to demonstrate its loyalty to the EU project, against the interests of its own economy and people. They were also encouraged in this by treacherous British influences from Westminster and Whitehall. Dr Bassett believes that few politicians fully understand the scope and intent of the EU project, but are frequently influenced and corrupted by grants and by the prospect of EU positions at several times the salary available at similar level of responsibility in national politics or civil service.

Dr Bassett's damning conclusion is that the EU has not been prepared to make any compromises whatsoever on the Irish border, despite the existence of various legal anomalies

elsewhere on EU territory to accommodate local circumstances. The EU is determined to either thwart Brexit altogether, or ensure the UK is punished for it. That is the purpose of the backstop. The border issue could be perfectly well resolved through bilateral discussions between the British and Irish governments, if only they were allowed to work on it.

This is a deep and thoughtful insight into the way the EU has been able to persuade the Irish establishment to act against the interests of its own people in order to frustrate Brexit, using the pretext of the Good Friday Agreement.