

# **Brexit and the implications for the island of Ireland**

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# Overview

- The trade union view of Brexit
- A word on the ‘negotiations’
- The trade union agenda
- What we have been doing
- The politics of Brexit
- Where may this Brexit go?

# The trade union view of Brexit

- ICTU and TUC campaigned vigorously against
- The current state of the EU – democratic deficit
- The balance between a social Europe and a neo liberal Europe
- A great act of ‘self harm’

# The trade union agenda – protecting workers' rights

- ER's devolved in NI –  
maintain and implement  
further EU directives
- Maintain ER in Britain to  
avoid downward pressure  
RoI
- Prevent employers from  
exploiting the crisis

# The Good Friday Agreement

- The maintenance and full implementation of the GFA
- A hard Brexit runs contrary to the GFA – How?
  1. Parity of Esteem – British and Irish equal rights??
  2. Threatens the equivalence of HR's N and S
  3. Will undermine N/S relations and E/W (strand 2 and 3)
  4. Brexit is a factor preventing a return to devolution

# Brexit and the erosion of rights

- Common EU membership – prevents solo runs
- A universal application of basic rights v arbitrary rights (in UK) subject to the whim of UK government/ministers
- The ECJ – no rights without remedy
- Supremacy of EU law v national law
- The ECHR

# Trade, Jobs and the borders

- To protect the interests of the island politically, economically, socially and culturally
  1. No hard border N and S
  2. No border in Irish sea within UK between NI and GB
  3. No economic border between the islands

# Current situation



— EU Regulatory and  
Customs Border



STRONGER TOGETHER

**CONGRESS**

Irish Congress of Trade Unions



# UK (as a whole) outside EU CU & SM



- EU Regulatory and Customs Border
- UK Regulatory and Customs Border

# The old 'backstop'



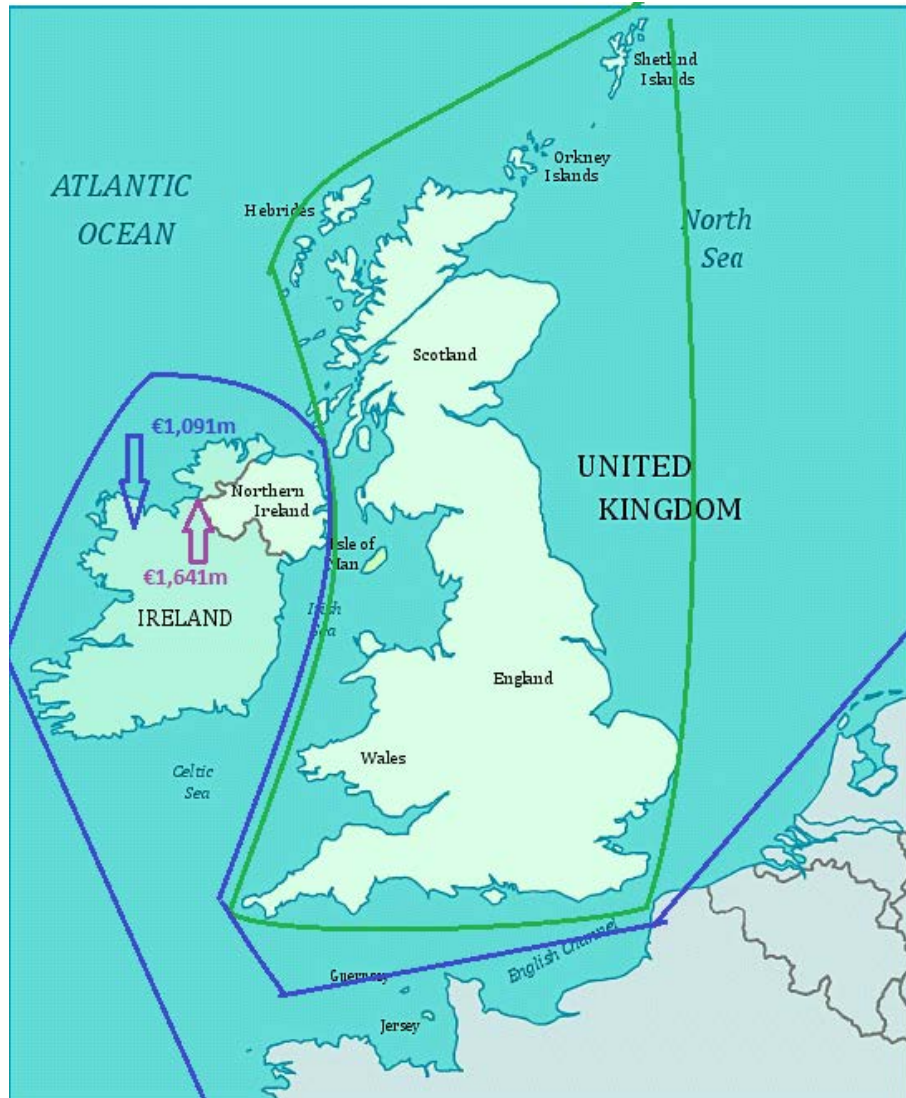
- EU Regulatory and Customs Border
- UK Regulatory and Customs Border

# The current 'backstop'



- EU Customs Border
- EU Regulatory Border
- UK Regulatory Border

# Trade between N and S





# Trade from NI and ROI to GB



# Trade, Jobs and the borders

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# Full maintenance of CTA and Free movement

- An estimated 20,000 people commute daily
- Need free movement of people on the island
- What of the position of EU citizens residing in the RoI and the UK?
- Racial profiling?

# The role of EU funding

- NI will lose £500m a year
- CAP funding will be hit
- Skills funding (ESF) will be hit
- Peace and infrastructure funding will be hit
- We want the UK and Rol govts to provide Brexit Adjustments Funds/TUM involvement/support jobs at risk



# What we have been doing on Brexit

- NI/RoI/UK/Europe wide
- Local parties in NI and SP's
- UK govt and opposition and English/Scottish and Welsh TUC
- Irish govt – through LEEF and Brexit stakeholder forums
- M Barnier and ETUC

# The WA and why we supported it

- Not 'Teresa Mays deal'
- Transition period
- The 'backstop' and the borders
- Citizens rights
- Far from perfect but softer Brexit
- Not a bad deal for workers across the island of Ireland

# The politics of Brexit

- In NI the issue has been ‘sectarianized’ and NI has no voice at the table
- In RoI it has taken up considerable time
- Britain is more divided than ever over Brexit on age/class/education/income grounds/urban v rural etc.
- Raised the specter of racism

# Where may this Brexit go

- M Barnier – there is no textbook
- The Withdrawal Agreement again or various iterations of?
- Is there a majority in House of Commons for anything?
- The UK Labour Party and the 6 tests? An election in UK?
- A possible constitutional crisis? A border poll?
- A vote on any final deal?