

## OUR PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

### ECONOMY & TRADE

Trade between Ireland and the UK amounts to €1.2 billion in goods and services per week. Therefore, Brexit undoubtedly has implications for businesses and self-employed people across our entire country. While we are confident that our economy is resilient and that the appropriate fiscal policies are in place, our response will continue to evolve as the Brexit process furthers in order to adequately adapt to any new challenges which present themselves. We doubled the number of Minister-led trade missions in 2016 and this will continue this year, along with a series of special trade initiatives.

### THE BORDER & THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA

The invisible border on our island is an important dividend from our Peace Process. Brexit raises the possibility of that border becoming an EU frontier. Fine Gael believes it is critically important to maintain the open border. The Common Travel Area (CTA) allows people to move freely across both islands. The CTA has been in place since Irish independence and it is part of our unique historical relationship with the UK. Fine Gael wants to preserve the CTA, conscious of its central importance to the lives of so many people as well as having long-established benefits for trade and tourism.

### NORTHERN IRELAND & THE PEACE PROCESS

Common EU citizenship for all the people of the island of Ireland helped to foster our Peace Process. On a more practical level, the EU had a pivotal role in the Peace Process - providing generous financial support and a forum for cooperation on areas of mutual interest for politicians and officials across both islands. Fine Gael wants to preserve the gains of the Peace Process and, to this end, in Government we are working closely with our colleagues in Northern Ireland, the UK Government and our partners across the EU, in line with our obligations under the Good Friday Agreement.

Since the referendum, focused plenary meetings as well as a series of sectoral meetings have been held by the North South Ministerial Council. Common principles have been agreed and work is being undertaken to identify the possible risks, opportunities and contingencies that may arise from Brexit. Protecting the gains of the Peace Process, the invisible border and the Common Travel Area are shared priorities.

### THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION & IRELAND'S PLACE WITHIN IT

Many EU referendum debates over the years have given us all a good

understanding of the many advantages of EU membership and support for EU membership remains high. Fine Gael has always been firmly committed to Ireland's membership of the EU and the Eurozone. We want Ireland to be at the heart of a strong and resilient EU. At the meeting of European leaders last September, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD outlined Ireland's vision for the renewal and the future of the European Union.

We are committed to continuing to contribute to that ongoing discussion so that the EU can be reflective of the needs of European citizens and responsive to the challenges currently presented. An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD, the Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Charlie Flanagan, TD, the Minister of State for European Affairs, Dara Murphy, TD, and all other Fine Gael Ministers remain actively engaged with their European counterparts in relation to Ireland's concerns regarding both Brexit and the future of the EU itself.

**For more information or to contact us with your feedback, please visit**

**BrexitResponse.ie**

### PAUL KEHOE TD

Minister with Responsibility for Defence

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*Deirdre Clune MEP, Seán Kelly MEP, Michael D'Arcy TD, Cllr Jim Moore, Cllr Frank Staples, Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan, Cllr. Oliver Walsh, Cllr. Paddy Kavanagh, Cllr. John Hegarty, Cllr. Anthony Donohoe, Cllr Larry O'Brien, Cllr Willie Fitzharris.*

**GET INVOLVED!** Getting involved in politics at a local level can be a very enjoyable experience! There are lots of different ways to participate and make a difference. I am always very grateful for any help people are willing to give. If you'd like to play a part in public affairs in our area please email: info@GetOnBoard.ie

FINE GAEL

# BREXIT: OUR RESPONSE

## PUBLIC MEETING

WITH LEO VARADKAR TD  
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION  
AND GUEST SPEAKERS

MONDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY

AT 8pm  
IN

THE RIVERSIDE PARK  
HOTEL, ENNISCORTHY



**PAUL  
KEHOE TD**

Minister with Responsibility  
for Defence

» **BrexitResponse.ie** «

FINE GAEL

# BREXIT: OUR RESPONSE

## DEAR RESIDENT,

Brexit undoubtedly poses one of the greatest challenges our country has faced over the last 50 years. It has the potential to impact every community on our island - both North and South. For this reason, Fine Gael has established a Working Group to lead the Party's engagement with representative bodies, business groups and local communities across the length and breadth of Ireland.

We know that many people have concerns about Brexit and its potential impact on our country. For this reason, we have established a dedicated webpage at [BrexitResponse.ie](http://BrexitResponse.ie) which provides information on some of the concerns and questions which are most frequently raised with myself and my colleagues in Fine Gael.

The UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, MP, has now triggered Article 50 and the formal Brexit process has begun. As we move forward, your input and feedback will continue to be very valuable to me, and to Fine Gael. I invite you to contact us via [BrexitResponse.ie](http://BrexitResponse.ie) to let us know your views and concerns.

Brexit has profound implications for Ireland. As a Government, we have been preparing for Brexit for almost 18 months now, beginning with contingency plans which were scaled up into a full whole-of-government response led by the Taoiseach once the referendum result was known. Every Minister and every Government Department has clear responsibilities, coordinated by the Cabinet Committee on Brexit chaired by the Taoiseach.

Part of our Brexit response has involved an intensive programme of diplomacy, highlighting Ireland's key concerns and unique circumstances with EU partners. By the time Article 50 was formally triggered on 29 March, there has been over 390 engagements with EU Member States and Institutions at ministerial and official levels. That intensive engagement will continue.

The results of that engagement were demonstrated in the priority given to Ireland in Prime Minister May's Lancaster House speech in January and in her formal notification of the UK's intention to leave the EU on 29th March (the so-called triggering of Article 50). Moreover, the Commission's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, has confirmed that the unique circumstances on our island will be given priority attention by the Commission.

The Irish Government is ready for the negotiations ahead. We have faced very challenging EU negotiations in recent years and consequently we are drawing on a well of experience and expertise in government and outside of government.

Fine Gael as a Party, and in Government, will continue to consult throughout the negotiation process and our programme of public meetings are part of that important dialogue. We want to explain our approach in government and we want to hear your feedback.

Alongside that Fine Gael process, a wide range of sectoral consultations have been hosted by Government Ministers feeding into plenary sessions of the All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit - and these will continue. You will find information on a whole range of other Brexit related issues on the Government's website: [www.MerrionStreet.ie/Brexit](http://www.MerrionStreet.ie/Brexit) as well as on Fine Gael's website [BrexitResponse.ie](http://BrexitResponse.ie)

As always, if I may be of assistance to you with any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Paul*

## FINE GAEL'S APPROACH

### FINE GAEL WORKING GROUP ON BREXIT

Fine Gael believes in Ireland being at the heart of the European Union. I, along with my colleagues in Fine Gael, will be working hard to ensure we have a strong and comprehensive response to secure Ireland's position in the future of the European Union, which will remain integral to both the development of our country and of the European Union itself.

To frame Fine Gael's response to tackling the challenges posed by Brexit, An Taoiseach established a Fine Gael Working Group on Brexit which focuses on two distinct streams. The domestic stream of the Working Group, chaired by Alan Farrell, TD, is engaging with interest groups, small and medium sized businesses, and communities across Ireland to directly address their concerns and to share information about Fine Gael's approach and the work underway. These discussions will feed into both Fine Gael's, and the Government's response as the Brexit process continues. The second stream, the North-South stream, chaired by Fergus O'Dowd, TD, concentrates on the potential impact of Brexit on North-South relations with a particular focus on the border region.

### FINE GAEL'S PREPARATION FOR A BREXIT VOTE

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD, as one of the longest serving and most experienced members of



*An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD, meeting with Prime Minister, Theresa May, MP.*

the European Council, is leading from the front on Ireland's Brexit response, which requires a whole of Government approach. Ireland and the European Union are so integrated and our relationship with the United Kingdom is such that each and every Government Department is impacted by Brexit. As a result, every Department must directly engage with the challenges and opportunities arising from Brexit.



*Minister for Foreign Affairs, Charlie Flanagan, TD, meeting the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire, MP.*

Following the decision taken by the UK electorate, An Taoiseach established a special Cabinet Committee on Brexit and appointed a Second Secondary General in the Department of the Taoiseach to co-ordinate the Government's response. Budget 2017 introduced a number of measures to mitigate the immediate impact of the Brexit vote and a huge diplomatic initiative has been underway for months, promoting Ireland's unique concerns.

### MITIGATING THE RISKS OF BREXIT FOR BUSINESSES

In Budget 2017, the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, TD, introduced a number of measures to counter some of the impacts of Brexit including:

- Allocating significant additional resources to Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to protect Irish jobs and assist Irish businesses;

- A package of measures to help the agri-food sector;
- An extension of benefits to the self-employed;
- Positive changes to the tax regime for entrepreneurs;
- The retention of the 9 per cent VAT rate for the hospitality sector;
- Additional funding for Revenue to enable it to minimise possible costs for business while maximising the facilitation of trade.

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### PUBLIC MEETING

MONDAY,  
8<sup>TH</sup> MAY  
AT 8pm

IN

THE RIVERSIDE  
PARK HOTEL,  
ENNISCORTHY