

Debate Pack

CDP-115 (2021)
John Curtis,
Tim Robinson,
Julie Gill
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The Northern Ireland Protocol

1	Background	2
2	Press and media articles	14
3	Gov.uk	16
4	PQs	24
5	Other Parliamentary material	41
6	Further reading	44

1 Background

A debate on a Motion relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol is scheduled to take place on Thursday 15 July 2021 in the House of Commons Chamber.

1.1 The Northern Ireland Protocol

Background

The Northern Ireland Protocol

Following the UK's decision to leave the EU, the two sides drew up a [Withdrawal Agreement](#) (WA) that set out how the UK's exit would work. This Agreement came into force on 31 January 2020.

The WA is separate from the [UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) (TCA) that sets out the UK-EU future relationship. The WA will continue to apply regardless of any future changes to the TCA.

The Northern Ireland Protocol (the Protocol) is an integral part of the WA. The Protocol sets out Northern Ireland's post-Brexit relationship with both the EU and Great Britain (the rest of the UK). Its principal purpose is to maintain an open land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland (NI). The Protocol enables the seamless movement of goods between NI and Ireland and the rest of the EU.

Trade in goods under the Protocol

The Protocol states that NI remains part of the UK customs territory and so NI will be included in UK free trade agreements. UK authorities are responsible for implementing the Protocol in both GB and NI.

However, more significantly the Protocol states that NI must follow the EU's rules for bringing goods in and out of the EU (the customs code) and many EU single market rules for goods, while GB will set its own customs and regulatory rules.

This approach necessitates implementing new checks and controls for goods moving both from Great Britain to Northern Ireland but also, to a lesser extent, from Northern Ireland to Great Britain. This is often referred to as "putting the border in the Irish Sea".

Consent for the Protocol from the Northern Ireland Assembly

Under what is known as the "[consent mechanism](#)", the parts of the Protocol relating to the movement and labelling of goods, as well as VAT, State Aid, and the electricity market, will cease to operate if the Northern Ireland

Assembly doesn't give its regular consent. Its first opportunity to do so will be in late 2024.

If the Northern Ireland Assembly resolves not to pass a consent resolution by a simple majority, then Northern Ireland's alignment with EU law will come to an end two years later. It would then be up to the UK-EU Joint Committee, established under the withdrawal agreement, to make recommendations to the UK and the EU on what should replace the Protocol arrangements.

Article 16

Article 16 purpose

The Protocol includes an emergency brake mechanism that allows either party to suspend parts of the Protocol in order to deal with serious difficulties. This is set out in [Article 16](#).

Article 16 (1) states that if the application of the Protocol leads to “serious economic, societal or environmental difficulties that are liable to persist”, or to “diversion of trade” then either side can impose “appropriate safeguard measures”. These measures, however, need to be targeted in scope and duration to directly address the problems they are trying to fix.

For more information on how the process of triggering Article 16 works, and the countermeasures the other party can put in place see Commons Library Insight: [Northern Ireland Protocol: Article 16 and EU vaccine export controls](#).

EU Covid-19 vaccine measures and Article 16

On 29 January 2021 the European Commission released [new rules](#) controlling the export of Covid-19 vaccines out of the EU.

Alongside this announcement, the EU said it would also trigger Article 16, to prevent vaccines potentially being sent to Northern Ireland from the EU, and then onto Great Britain.

After condemnation of this move by [all of NI's major political parties](#), and the [UK](#) and [Irish](#) Prime Ministers, the European Commission took down the original proposal, and clarified that they would no longer plan to trigger Article 16, [describing](#) the move as an “oversight”.

Calls to trigger Article 16

Some Northern Ireland Unionist politicians were already [calling for Article 16 to be triggered](#) in early January, to stop customs controls and checks on goods moving from GB to NI that are causing disruptions to the flow of goods.

Experts [have suggested](#) such measures are not a quick fix for these problems. The EU's aborted attempt to impose its own measures gave further impetus to these calls with Arlene Foster, then Northern Ireland's First Minister, [calling](#)

for it to be triggered on 30 January. Ms Foster [said again](#) in May 2021 that it “may well be the case” that the Prime Minister Boris Johnson, will have to use the provision because of the Protocol’s impact on trade.

Grace periods and easing of NI trade

Joint Committee decisions and grace periods

The WA set up an EU-UK Joint Committee (Committee), to oversee its implementation. The Protocol also left some decisions on the trading of goods up to the Committee, including how and under what conditions goods could enter NI tariff-free.

In December 2020 the Committee set out a [series of decisions](#) on how the Protocol would operate in the long term.

The Committee also responded to UK requests to temporarily relax some rules that were meant to apply to NI under the Protocol. These are often referred to as “grace periods”.

The following relaxations/grace periods were agreed:

- **Export declarations.** Most goods being sent by firms from NI to GB, will now not require pre-departure and/or export declarations. Instead HMRC will collect “equivalent” information from sources such as shipping manifests.
- **Supermarket Agri-food imports.** Supermarkets and their suppliers bringing agri-food products into NI, were given a **three-month** grace period before they must comply with the EU’s full [Sanitary & Phytosanitary \(SPS\) regime](#) (SPS measures exist to protect humans, animals, and plants from diseases, pests, or contaminants).
- **Chilled meats.** Supermarkets were given a **six-month** grace period before having to comply with EU SPS rules for bringing in certain types of chilled meats, such as sausages, from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, subject to conditions on labelling, certificates and transport.
- **Medicines.** NI was granted a **year-long** grace period for implementing in full the EU’s rules on testing and selling human and veterinary medicines.

Separate to these declarations, on 31 December a three-month grace period for online retailers sending parcels into NI [was announced](#).

The European Commission [said at the time](#) that these grace periods were “temporary solutions” that are “subject to strict conditions to ensure that all relevant stakeholders will be in a position to fully comply with the Protocol in the course of 2021”. On the chilled meats grace period specifically, it said that “all stakeholders are expected to use this time effectively to adapt supply chains for chilled meats sold in Northern Ireland”.

Trading problems

Despite these grace periods, there have been issues with trade in goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Part of the reason was that the Committee decisions and grace periods were only announced a few weeks before the Protocol came fully into force on 1 January 2021.

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has taken evidence from [industry](#) and [customs experts](#) on some of these issues, why they are happening, and what can be done to help overcome them.

Having more time to familiarise themselves with new export and import processes will only assist NI companies so far. This is because the Protocol's [placing of checks "in the Irish Sea"](#), rather than at the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, creates new processes and paperwork that create barriers to trade primarily for goods moving from Great Britain to NI.

That notwithstanding, opportunities to trade freely with Ireland and the rest of the EU remain, and trade from NI to GB remains largely unaffected. The region could therefore become [potentially more attractive](#) to investors from outside the UK.

UK requests for further easing

After the EU's Article 16 "oversight", the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, and UK Co-Chair of the Joint Committee, [sent a letter](#) to the EU Committee Co-Chair, Maroš Šefčovič, asking for further easing of rules for NI to help deal with delays and other problems UK firms were facing sending goods to the region. Mr Gove asked for the EU to agree to the following steps:

- Extending the grace period for supermarkets and their suppliers in time and scope, so it extends until at least 1 January 2023, and is widened to include "all relevant local businesses and services" as authorised traders, as well as a "proportionate, risk based long-term solution" for retailers;
- find a permanent solution for movement of chilled meat products from GB to NI which will be otherwise prohibited at the end of the grace period, with an extension of the grace period until at least 1 January 2023 while this is negotiated;
- extend the grace period for parcels until at least 1 January 2023 to allow time for a "light-touch permanent solution" for parcels to be agreed, and widen this extended grace period to deal with regulations affecting the delivery of items such as organic foods and plants;
- extend the grace period for medicines for a further year at least to 1 January 2023 and sort out other issues on the movements of medicine into NI;

- find a solution to restrictions on the amount of steel that can be imported into NI tariff-free (so called Tariff Rate Quotas); and
- negotiate a bilateral arrangement to deal with barriers on pet travel between GB, NI and Ireland.

EU response

Mr Šefčovič, responded to Mr Gove's letter with [his own](#). He suggested that the UK was not implementing the Protocol fully, giving several examples:

- The Border Control Posts (BCPs) or Entry Posts were not yet fully operational, and they were not performing a sufficient number of physical checks;
- packaging is not being labelled and consignments not monitored at their destination, and goods are entering without declarations or valid certificates;
- the EU had not been given full access to the UK's customs data and systems that the Protocol requires; and
- the UK was not implementing the decision on NI firms giving "equivalent information" rather than filling out customs declarations properly.

On the requests from the UK, Mr Šefčovič stated the following:

- The EU would look at solutions to steel and tariff rate quotas;
- for chilled meats, agri-food and parcels, the grace periods would not be extended, and were offered on the basis that firms would use the time to prepare for complying with EU rules, though they could look at "pragmatic solutions"; and
- for issues with pet travel and the movement of items like seed potatoes and plants, any flexibility would require the UK to align with EU rules in these areas.

End of grace periods

UK unilaterally extends supermarket agri-food and parcels grace periods

On 3 March 2021, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, [announced that](#) the UK Government was unilaterally extending the three-month grace period for supermarket agri-food imports, for a further six-months to 1 October.

The Government also unilaterally extended the grace-period for parcels, also to 1 October. All parcels entering Northern Ireland would have required customs declarations from 1 April, without the extension. The logistics industry [said](#) it was not ready to deal with that volume of new administration.

A UK Government spokesperson [said](#) Lord Frost, the Cabinet Office minister with responsibility for EU relations, in a call with his EU counterpart Mr Šefčovič, underlined the extension was needed for "operational reasons" and such measures were "well precedented in other international trade arrangements, and that they were entirely consistent with our intention to discharge our obligations under the Protocol in good faith".

The UK Government also said it would update its guidance to firms set out to help address practical problems on soil attached to the movement of plants, seeds, bulbs, vegetables and agricultural machinery. The EU's plant regulations that apply to NI under the Protocol, do not permit soil from Great Britain to enter the region.

Reaction to unilateral extension

On 3 March, European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, said in [a statement](#) that the UK's extension of the grace periods amounted to "a violation of the relevant substantive provisions of the Protocol", and "the good faith obligation under the Withdrawal Agreement". He added, in a reference to the UK Government's [original proposals for the Internal Market Act](#), that "this is the second time that the UK government is set to breach international law".

On 15 March, the Commission sent [a letter a formal notice](#) to the UK Government, using powers under the Northern Ireland Protocol to begin a formal infringement process against the UK. It also warned it could launch a dispute under the Withdrawal Agreement's dispute settlement mechanism, that could lead to provisions of both the WA and TCA being suspended. The EU has not so far taken any further steps in progressing this process, but is likely to be looking at what solutions can be found in Joint Committee discussions.

Northern Ireland's then First Minister Arlene Foster, [welcomed](#) the government move and said the EU had refused to deal with an issue that "would have caused a huge amount of problems for us at our ports".

Ms Foster added that it showed the UK government "can go further, so we need to see permanent solutions".

However, her deputy first minister, Sinn Fein's Michelle O'Neill, [described](#) the government's decision as "another unilateral attempt to override what has been agreed".

Ms O'Neill added "what everyone should be focused on is achieving agreement to find solutions to the issues that are outstanding, but it's very clear the protocol must be made to work."

Simon Hoare, the chairman of the House of Commons NI Affairs Select Committee, [tweeted](#) that the case for extending the grace periods was

"compelling" but that the unilateral move struck him as an "approach most likely to have negative/unhelpful consequences".

EU floats the ideas of flexibilities

On 9 June, the European Commission [published a document](#) in which it suggested several areas where it had identified potential flexibilities in the implementation of the Protocol.

- **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures:** The Commission has suggested that the UK continues to follow, even if only temporarily, the EU's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) rules, as it does now. Saying most checks on GB-NI trade would be removed if there was a so-called "Swiss-style veterinary agreement". The Commission noted, however, the UK has refused this option, "even though the EU has suggested that this temporary agreement could be reviewed once the UK concludes new trade deals". The Commission says it has also explored other solutions to SPS checks:
 - Connecting EU and UK SPS databases to enable a swift handling of entry/exit data for SPS goods;
 - Guide dogs: the EU is working with the NI Executive on operational details with the aim of facilitating guide dogs accompanying persons entering NI from GB;
 - Tagging of animals: moving from GB to NI: the EU is "open to considering a solution" to avoid multiple re-tagging when animals move multiple times between GB and NI during their life.
- **Medicines:** "currently exploring solutions to provide a long-term perspective for medicines supply to Northern Ireland";
- **VAT:** finding solutions "to sustain the access to affordable second-hand cars for citizens in Northern Ireland";
- **Tariff Rate Quotas:** Progress in this area is "expected over the coming weeks", although [EU] "Legislative changes would be necessary in this area".

The Commission said in the document that the UK has not "adopted a similar constructive attitude". It listed several areas where the UK has not complied with the Protocol:

- The construction work of permanent Border Control Posts (BCPs) has been halted.
- The temporary facilities in place in Northern Ireland do not work to their full capacity and have acute human resource problems.
- The traceability requirements agreed as part of the grace periods in December 2020 to ensure that the food products concerned are only sold

to consumers in supermarkets in Northern Ireland are not being complied with.

EU & UK find some solutions to trading problems

UK requests extension of chilled meats grace period

As the end of the six-month grace period for chilled meats approached in June 2021, the UK Government [considered](#) unilaterally extending this period also. However, it then [chose to ask the EU](#) to consider extending it, going through the Joint Committee.

On 30 June, the EU agreed to the request for a period of three months (ending on 30 September 2021). It [stated that](#) the purpose of this additional period “is to allow stakeholders, and in particular supermarkets in Northern Ireland, to complete the adjustment of their supply chains”. It also said the “temporary solution is subject to strict conditions”:

- Meat products remain “under the control of the Northern Ireland competent authorities at all stages of that procedure”;
- These meat products must be accompanied by official health certificates; and
- They must be exclusively sold to end consumers in supermarkets located in Northern Ireland, and must be packed and labelled accordingly.

The EU also underlined “the importance of ensuring that Border Control Posts in Northern Ireland have the necessary infrastructure and resources to be able to perform all the controls required by the EU's Official Controls Regulation”.

Other solutions found

As well as extending the grace period for chilled meats, the Commission said it had found other flexibilities and practical solutions to some of the most pressing issues related to the implementation of the Protocol:

- **Medicines:** The Commission has identified a “creative solution to ensure the continued long-term supply of medicines from Great Britain to Northern Ireland”. It will require the EU to change its own rules, and the Commission will put forward a legislative proposal in the early autumn.
- **Guide dogs:** The Commission identified a solution to facilitate the movements of guide dogs accompanying persons travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.
- **Green Card:** The Commission announced a decision to waive the obligation to show the motor insurance Green Card for drivers from the UK. This will be “particularly helpful for Northern Irish motorists crossing the border into Ireland”.

- **Movement of certain animals:** The Commission has identified a solution to facilitate the movement of livestock from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, removing the need for re-tagging when animals move multiple times between Great Britain and Northern Ireland during their life. The Commission adopted an implementing act to that effect on 29 June 2021. The Commission is also working on a regulatory solution to facilitate the swift return of livestock to Northern Ireland from exhibitions or trade fairs in Great Britain, saying the relevant implementing acts will be adopted in October 2021. Work is also ongoing on a solution regarding the risk control of scrapie, to facilitate the movement of sheep and goats between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Lord Frost and Brandon Lewis write an open letter

On 2 July, in a [joint article in the Irish Times](#), Brexit minister Lord Frost and Northern Ireland secretary Brandon Lewis, wrote that while the decision a few days before to extend the grace period for chilled meats was “welcome”, it “addresses only a small part of the underlying problem”.

They diagnosed the problem as “in short, a seriously unbalanced situation is developing in the way the protocol is operating”. This situation “risks economic harm in Northern Ireland and damage, in turn, to the essential balance within the Belfast Agreement itself”.

The Ministers said that they “assumed that the requirements to facilitate trade between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, and to try to avoid checks and controls at Northern Irish ports, both spelt out in the protocol, would be meaningful”.

Mr Frost and Mr Lewis argues that the way forward is to “find a new balance in the way the protocol is operated”, and to do so “rapidly”. This new balance “has to mean that goods must be able to move as freely as possible within the customs territory of the UK and that goods important to Northern Irish consumers supplied from Great Britain continue to be available”.

The Irish Foreign Minister, Simon Coveney, [said](#) the letter was “a very strange way to make friends and build a partnership” in a week when the EU had offered concessions.

The Irish Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, [asked the UK Government](#) to show the same “generosity of spirit” and “goodwill” that the EU had shown by extending the grace periods, adding that “the time for warning each other is over. It’s time for engagement, constructive engagement, with a view to reaching a resolution”.

On 6 July, Maroš Šefčovič, referred to the EU’s infringement procedure on the UK’s unilateral extension of the supermarket agri-food grace period, and [warned that](#) “without satisfactory steps by the UK to remedy these measures

we will have no choice but to step up these legal proceedings”. Mr Šefčovič said however, that legal steps over the protocol were not the EU’s preferred option and that the three-month extension for free movement of chilled meats into Northern Ireland showed its willingness to find pragmatic solutions.

Proposals for permanent solutions

Veterinary agreement

A more permanent solution to controls on animals and plants, known as Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks, would be for the UK and EU to sign a veterinary agreement.

The EU has two such agreements in place, one with [Switzerland](#), and another with New Zealand (NZ). The EU-Swiss agreement removes all documentary and identity checks, and most physical checks, as well as most veterinary certificates. However, it requires Switzerland to largely align to the EU’s food and plant safety and animal health rules.

The EU-NZ agreement is an “equivalence agreement”, in which both sides certify their rules and regulations are equivalent to each other, allowing them to reduce border processes for agri-food. However, veterinary certificates would still be required, and the EU prohibition on chilled meats would also still apply. It could, however, simplify border processes, particularly the frequency of physical inspections.

The European Commission have [published a document](#) showing what import requirements, authorisations and prohibitions for animal products exist under the EU-Swiss agreement, EU-NZ agreement, and for third countries without any such arrangements.

Views on EU-UK veterinary agreement

An EU-UK veterinary agreement has been [advocated](#) by NI Alliance MP Stephen Farry. While the Ulster Unionist Party advocates removing the Protocol entirely, its former leader Steven Aiken said in February 2021 that he [supports](#) a Swiss-style deal. Also in February, former DUP leader and First Minister, Arlene Foster, [acknowledged](#) that such a deal would help with SPS checks, but said it would not help with customs checks and other barriers to trade.

The Ulster Farmers’ Union have also said [they support](#) the idea, as has [Glyn Roberts](#), the Chief Executive of Retail NI. The CBI have [argued for](#) a “bespoke” EU-UK Veterinary agreement.

Asked in the House of Lords, whether the Government would consider an EU-Swiss style veterinary agreement, Lord Frost responded in March 2021:

On the question of a SPS or veterinary agreement, we proposed in the TCA negotiations last year that there could be an equivalence

arrangement between us and the EU. Unfortunately, the EU was not open to that. We continue to be open to such an equivalence arrangement, if the EU is interested in it.¹

One of the concerns critics of an EU-UK veterinary agreement have raised is that it could make trade deals with other countries such as the US more difficult, as it would create barriers to their agri-food products coming into the UK.

It was [reported](#) in June 2021 that President Biden told the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, that a temporary UK-EU agreement on food standards would pose no barrier to a separate UK-US trade deal. Asked about these reports when giving evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 16 June, Lord Frost responded:

We have aspirations to agree FTAs with a large number of countries and trading blocs, and obviously the US will be a big and important one, but that does not change the nature of the problem. The fact is that you need control of your own rules to conclude any trade agreements with anybody.²

Other solutions

Raoul Ruparel, Theresa May's special adviser on Europe when she was Prime Minister has [suggested two other longer-term solutions](#).

Firstly, a UK-wide “novel SPS agreement based on managing divergence” to try and limit the need for any checks or certification.

The concept of managing divergence has been used on the parts of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), that relate to labour and social employment law, subsidy policy and climate and environment policy, often called the “level playing field”. Under a system of “[rebalancing measures](#)” if one side raises its standards and the other does not, the former can take reciprocal action. These rebalancing measures could include temporary suspension of parts of the Agreement (which could involve imposition of tariffs). There is possible recourse to an arbitration tribunal where such measures are taken.

Secondly, a Northern-Ireland specific scheme, that would use the concept of “at risk goods”, used in the Protocol to decide whether to apply tariffs on goods moving from GB to NI. Agri-food goods deemed “not at risk” of moving on from Northern Ireland to the EU's single market would be exempt from the EU's agri-food requirements. Mr Ruparel acknowledges that this approach would “require some derogation from EU law”, meaning that EU institutions and all EU Member States would have to agree to pass new EU law. He also

¹ [HL Deb 25 March 2021 \[Northern Ireland and Great Britain: Trade\]](#).

² Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol](#), HC 157, Q969.

advocates setting up “extensive monitoring and data sharing”, to “bolster confidence in such a plan”.

This second solution is also known as a “trusted trader scheme”. As with the “at risk goods” solution to tariffs, only certain trusted traders registered with the UK Government can access the scheme. Food groups such as the British Retail Consortium and the Federation of Wholesale Distributors are [said to be](#) pressing for such a scheme. However, Peter Hardwick, trade policy advisor at the British Meat Processors Association, [said such a scheme](#) “wouldn’t work” and argues those advocating such a scheme “don't quite get where the Commission is coming from with this”, adding “it doesn't matter how trusted the traders are, once it's in Northern Ireland you can't prevent its movement across the EU”.

2

Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[John Bruton: UK ministers need to read the NI protocol they signed](#)

The Irish Times

John Bruton

7 July 2021

[Martin says 'window of opportunity' exists for agreement on Northern Ireland protocol](#)

The Irish Times

Pat Leahy

6 July 2021

[Sausage wars blown out of proportion, says meat company](#)

The Irish Times

Freya McClements

6 July 2021

[Brexit protocol has damaged relationships with Britain and Ireland, says new DUP leader](#)

Irish Examiner

James Ward

4 July 2021

[Irish taoiseach urges No 10 to match EU generosity over NI protocol](#)

The Guardian

Mattha Busby

3 July 2021

[David Frost and Brandon Lewis: We must find a new balance in how NI protocol is operated](#)

The Irish Times

David Frost and Brandon Lewis

2 July 2021

[Brexit: What's the Northern Ireland Protocol?](#)

BBC News

Tom Edgington and Chris Morris

1 July 2021

[Brexit: NI Protocol is lawful, High Court rules](#)

BBC News
John Campbell
30 June 2021

[UK government must 'tell the truth' and implement NI protocol – Chris Patten](#)

The Irish Times
Freya McClements
23 June 2021

[The Northern Ireland Protocol is currently caught between an untrusting Brussels and an unrealistic London](#)

LSE Blogs
Colin Murray
17 June 2021

[Brexit: 11 things you need to know about the UK-EU 'Sausage War'](#)

ITV News
Carl Dinnen
9 June 2021

[How to fix Brexit's Northern Ireland protocol problem](#)

Politico
Raoul Ruparel
26 March 2021

[Rebuttal: The Protocol is the Problem, not the Solution, for Northern Ireland](#)

Briefings for Britain
11 March 2021

3

Gov.uk

[Extension to Northern Ireland Protocol grace period for chilled meats agreed](#)

Cabinet office

30 June 2021

Chilled meats from Great Britain, such as sausages, which would otherwise be prohibited in Northern Ireland, will continue to move from Great Britain to Northern Ireland after the UK and the EU agreed to extend the grace period allowing this until 30 September.

The extension means that Northern Ireland consumers will be able to buy chilled meat products from Great Britain, and allows for further discussions to continue on a permanent solution.

Cabinet Minister Lord Frost said:

We are pleased we have been able to agree a sensible extension on chilled meats moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland - one that does not require rules in the rest of the UK to align with future changes in EU agrifood rules.

This is a positive first step but we still need to agree a permanent solution - Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom and its consumers should be able to enjoy products they have bought from Great Britain for years.

This is a very clear sign that the Protocol has to be operated in a pragmatic and proportionate way. The chilled meats issue is only one of a very large number of problems with the way the Protocol is currently operating, and solutions need to be found with the EU to ensure it delivers on its original aims: to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, safeguard Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom, and protect the EU's single market for goods. We look to work energetically with the EU to do so.

The Government proposed to the EU that it would be sensible to extend the chilled meats grace period, on certain conditions, and detailed discussions have followed between the Government and the Commission. Crucially, the agreement does not require the rest of the UK to align with any changes in EU agrifood rules during the grace period - there is no dynamic alignment.

Otherwise, the arrangements for the extension are largely the same as those agreed in December. The UK will aim to introduce product-level labelling as soon as practicable but businesses will be given time and support to put the arrangements in place.

The Protocol is continuing to cause disruption in a number of areas beyond just chilled meats. The UK government has submitted a dozen papers to the Commission on various issues, including goods movements and medicines and the need to resolve these issues is as pressing as ever.

The Government is working through the Joint Committee on longer term sustainable solutions to these issues recognising that businesses and people in Northern Ireland deserve clarity and certainty on the way forward.

[Declaration by the United Kingdom on Meat Products: 30 June 2021](#)

Cabinet Office

30 June 2021

The Government has been consistently clear that there should be no barriers on the movement of meat products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. In order to avoid any disruption to those movements, the Government has been engaged in intensive discussions with the EU regarding arrangements from 1 July, when the grace period agreed at the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee in December would otherwise have expired.

Further to those discussions, the UK and EU have agreed to extend the grace period until 30 September. In line with that agreement, the United Kingdom has today set out a unilateral declaration, of which the EU has taken note, relating to the movement of meat products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. This sets out the conditions under which meat products otherwise classed as prohibited and restricted goods will move from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, including being accompanied by official certificates and labelled for sale only within the United Kingdom.

[Declaration by the United Kingdom on Meat Products: 30 June 2021](#)

Policy Paper

Cabinet Office

30 June 2021

Further to the Unilateral Declaration made by the United Kingdom to the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee on 17 December 2020 regarding meat products, of which the European Union took note the same day, for the period from 1 July until 30 September 2021, meat products (as defined in the 17 December Declaration) will be brought from Great Britain into Northern Ireland under the following conditions:

- The meat products enter Northern Ireland through a designated place as defined in point (38) of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council and they are subject to a channelling procedure applicable from the designated place to the destination supermarket in Northern Ireland,
- They are sold exclusively to end consumers in supermarkets located in Northern Ireland, and they are not to be sold to other operators of the food chain,
- They are accompanied by official certificates issued by the UK competent authorities (based on similar models as are already existing or are put in place during the period for fresh meat, minced meat and meat preparations), and

- They are packed for end consumers and will bear a label making clear that the products are for sale only in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom will endeavour to introduce product-level labelling as soon as is practicable.

During this period, the United Kingdom will not amend the rules applicable to meat products already in force in the rest of the United Kingdom.

UK statement on the meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: 9 June 2021

Cabinet Office

9 June 2021

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met in London today. Lord Frost and Vice-President Šefčovič commended the extensive technical discussions that have already taken place on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

The UK set out the extensive steps already taken to operate the Protocol, both by the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and by businesses across the UK.

The UK made clear its continued commitment to constructive engagement in order to find pragmatic solutions that ensure the Protocol operates in a way that safeguards the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions, minimises its impact on the day-to-day lives of communities in Northern Ireland, and maintains the integrity of the EU's Single Market. The UK will continue to put forward detailed proposals, as we have throughout this year, and looks forward to discussing any proposals the EU may put forward.

There is an urgent need for further discussions in order to make real progress, particularly to avoid disruption to critical supplies such as medicines.

The UK's assessment of the state of play is as follows.

The UK is concerned that substantive progress has not yet been made in many areas, notably:

- SPS / veterinary arrangements. The UK has made a proposal which recognises the high standards of both Parties and establishes mechanisms to identify and address any risk arising from changes made on either side;
- Arrangements further to reduce and remove burdens for trusted agri-food traders moving goods for use or consumption in Northern Ireland - for example enabling streamlined processes for highly trusted retailers with full traceability and auditability of supply chains. Here too the UK has made a proposal.
- Prohibition on imports to Northern Ireland of fresh minced meat or other SPS commodities such as seed potatoes;
- Pet travel from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. The UK sees no reason why Part 1 listing could not be granted by the EU, which would resolve the problems.

- The application of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for goods entering Northern Ireland, including on steel. As a result of EU legislative changes last year, Northern Ireland traders are currently at a unique disadvantage;
- The criteria for the UK Trader Scheme (UKTS) and the application of the concept of “goods not at risk”.
- Movements of goods sent from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in parcels

In the following areas, whilst progress has not yet been made, the UK has been led to understand that further proposals will be received from the EU:

- The supply of medicines to Northern Ireland.
- Approval processes for high-risk plants intended for export to the EU to be moved into Northern Ireland;
- Livestock movements between Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

Finally, there has been some progress towards solutions on the following limited areas:

- Assistance dogs entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain;
- EU access to UK customs IT systems and databases - on which the UK has provided detailed plans for interim and long-term arrangements;
- Clarifying and refining the process for allocating “XI” Economic Operator Registration and Identification numbers (EORI) for those trading in Northern Ireland;
- Setting out the basis on which Northern Ireland businesses importing second-hand vehicles from Great Britain can benefit from a VAT margin scheme;
- Implementing a technical Interface between the UK EHCO and EU TRACES systems.
- Implementation of the Export and Transit Trans-European Systems in Northern Ireland.

The UK will continue to work actively to find solutions. If solutions cannot be found, the Government will of course continue to consider all options available for safeguarding peace, prosperity and stability in Northern Ireland.

The Joint Committee also discussed the ongoing implementation of citizens’ rights for persons eligible under the Withdrawal Agreement. The UK set out the continued success of the UK’s EU Settlement Scheme, where over 5 million applications have been concluded, underlined its determination to respect EU citizens’ rights, and urged the EU and Member States to do likewise as regards UK citizens within the EU.

[Lord Frost calls on EU to show pragmatism on the Protocol after meetings with a number of business and community representatives in Northern Ireland](#)

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, The Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG, and The Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP

11 May 2021

In his first official visit to Northern Ireland, Lord Frost has met with a number of business and community representatives to listen to their experiences and to

reaffirm the Government's commitment to address issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol. The visit forms part of the UK Government's ongoing engagement with stakeholders in Northern Ireland, including through the Northern Ireland Business Engagement Forum and Brexit Business Taskforce.

Lord Frost was able to talk to a range of businesses from several sectors, notably aerospace, manufacturing, food and drink, retail, and life sciences, to hear how they are adapting to the new arrangements and to understand the challenges they are facing.

Lord Frost and SoSNI also visited Larne Port, a Point of Entry for goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, to see how checks and controls under the Protocol are currently being operated. They met Border Force and DAERA officials, and EU Commission staff present under the Protocol arrangements.

Throughout the visit, Lord Frost and SoSNI heard about the challenges in the operation of the Protocol and the consequent disruption for businesses and communities. In particular they heard concerns about the level and complexity of paperwork required even on goods remaining in Northern Ireland, notably in the agrifood sector; about disruption to supply chains from Great Britain and consequent diversion of trade; and about the risks associated with the expiry of the grace periods and the introduction of further processes as a result.

Lord Frost and SoSNI also pledged to continue working closely with all sectors of opinion in Northern Ireland, including the NI Executive, as talks with the EU Commission continue.

Lord Frost, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, said:

It's clear from my visit that the Protocol is presenting significant challenges for many in Northern Ireland. Businesses have gone to extraordinary efforts to make the current requirements work, but it is hard to see that the way the Protocol is currently operating can be sustainable for long.

We're committed to working through the issues with the EU urgently and in good faith. I hope they will take a common sense, risk-based approach that enables us to agree a pragmatic way forward that substantially eases the burdens on Northern Ireland.

Solutions must be found rapidly in order to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions and to minimise disruption to the everyday lives of people in Northern Ireland - as the Protocol itself requires. As the Prime Minister has made clear, we will continue to consider all our options in meeting our overriding responsibility for sustaining the peace and prosperity of everyone in Northern Ireland.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis said:

Over the past two days, I have had productive meetings with Lord Frost and representatives from across Northern Ireland, building on my extensive engagement since the start of this year.

It is vital that the experiences, opportunities and challenges faced by people and Northern Ireland are understood and at the heart of our approach. I will continue these constructive and practical discussions in the weeks ahead, supporting Northern Ireland's business needs and minimising the risk of disruptions at a crucial time.

**Statement following the meeting between Lord Frost and Vice President Šefčovič:
16 April 2021**

Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office

16 April 2021

Lord Frost, Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, met Commission Vice President Šefčovič yesterday evening in Brussels.

They reviewed the situation as regards the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland in a constructive atmosphere.

Lord Frost said that the intensive discussions between the Co-Chairs of the Specialised Committee on the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland in recent weeks had begun to clarify the outstanding issues, and some positive momentum had been established. But a number of difficult issues remained and it was important to continue to discuss them. He agreed there should be intensified contacts at all levels in the coming weeks.

Lord Frost repeated the UK's commitment to working through the joint bodies provided for by the Withdrawal Agreement. He underlined that any solutions had to be consistent with the overriding commitment to respecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions and to ensuring minimum disruption of everyday lives in Northern Ireland.

Finally, Lord Frost and Vice President Šefčovič agreed to further engagement with business groups, civil society and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland shortly.

**UK statement following the meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised
Committee - 26 March 2021**

Prime Minister's Office

26 March 2021

The seventh meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee was held today via video conference and co-chaired by officials from the UK Government and the European Commission. It took place in a constructive atmosphere.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Executive also attended as part of the UK delegation in line with the commitment made in the New Decade, New Approach deal.

The UK and EU took stock of the outstanding issues raised by both parties and discussed the way forward. The UK made clear that continued progress would require action from the EU as well as the UK. Accordingly, the UK set out its expectation that establishment of an agreed work programme would help to ensure

the acceptable resolution of those issues in a way that ensured minimum disruption to everyday life in Northern Ireland.

The UK also welcomed the EU's commitment jointly to engage with business, civil society and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. They agreed that there should be further dialogue in the coming weeks.

Noting the need for ongoing engagement and the need to make meaningful progress in a constructive fashion, the UK and EU agreed to remain in regular contact over the coming weeks.

In taking this work forward, the UK continues to be clear that the operation of the Protocol must take place in a proportionate and pragmatic way, capable of maintaining cross-community confidence, and consistent with the overriding need to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions, including East / West as well as North / South.

[Lord Frost call with European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič: 3 March 2021](#)

**Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office
3 March 2021**

Lord Frost spoke to European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič this evening.

This was their first meeting since Lord Frost took up the role as Minister co-chairing the Partnership Council and the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee with the EU.

He underlined, as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had in his letter of 2 February, that progress still needed to be urgently made to address the direct and often disproportionate impact that aspects of the Protocol are having on the citizens of Northern Ireland, contrary to its intended purpose. He acknowledged the work of the Joint Committee over the last few weeks since the Commission's triggering of Article 16 of the Protocol on 29 January, but noted that these discussions had not yet resolved the current difficulties.

Lord Frost explained that the measures announced today, following official-level notification to the Commission earlier this week, were temporary technical steps, which largely continued measures already in place, to provide more time for businesses such as supermarkets and parcel operators to adapt to and implement the new requirements in the Protocol. He underlined that these were needed for operational reasons and were the minimum necessary steps to allow time for constructive discussions in the Joint Committee to continue without the prospect of disruption to the everyday life of people in Northern Ireland in the coming weeks.

He noted that such operational measures were well precedented in other international trade arrangements, and that they were entirely consistent with our intention to discharge our obligations under the Protocol in good faith.

He and Vice President Šefčovič agreed that both parties would remain in close contact.

[Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee](#)

Cabinet Office

22 December 2020 (updated 16 June 2021)

This page contains information relating to the activity of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee.

[UK statement following the meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee - 16 July 2020](#)

Cabinet Office

16 July 2020

The second meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee was held today in Brussels, co-chaired by officials from the UK Government and European Commission.

A representative from the Northern Ireland Executive also attended as part of the UK delegation in line with the commitment made in the New Decade, New Approach deal.

The UK and the EU exchanged updates on the implementation of the Protocol and discussed the preparatory work for future decisions to be taken by the Joint Committee.

The UK reiterated that our approach will at all times be focused on protecting the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and gains of the peace process. We reiterated the central importance of protecting Northern Ireland's place in the UK's customs territory as set out in our Command Paper.

Both the UK and the EU noted the intensification of technical discussions, as agreed in the Joint Committee last month. The UK also noted its intention to provide further guidance to businesses in Northern Ireland in the coming weeks.

[The UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol](#)

Policy Paper

Cabinet Office

Updated 27 May 2020

[The Northern Ireland Protocol](#)

Cabinet Office

CP346

December 2020

4

PQs

Points of Order

07 July 2021 | 698 c907

Asked by: Sammy Wilson

On a point of order, Mr Speaker. On 23 June, my colleague my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson) asked the Prime Minister whether article 6 of the Act of Union (Ireland) 1800 had been impliedly repealed when the Northern Ireland protocol was approved by the House of Commons. The Prime Minister answered emphatically no.

Last Thursday, the High Court, responding to a case made by the Government's lawyers, said that the Northern Ireland protocol was not in conflict with the 1800 Act because article 6, which guaranteed equal trade across the United Kingdom, had been impliedly repealed when the withdrawal Act was passed through the House of Commons. Mr Justice Colton agreed that indeed article 6 had been overridden by the passing of the withdrawal Acts here in the House of Commons.

Here is the point, Mr Speaker: the Government's case was approved, presented and argued before the Prime Minister gave the answer to my right hon. Friend in the House of Commons. That answer therefore must have been misleading to the House.

Mr Speaker:

Order. I suggest "inadvertently".

Asked by: Sammy Wilson

Inadvertently misleading to the House. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister can be called to apologise for inadvertently misleading the House. What steps does he intend to take to undo the damage that the change to the Act of Union has caused constitutionally and economically to Northern Ireland?

Mr Speaker:

I am grateful to the right hon. Member for giving me notice of this point of order. He raises the issue of legal interpretation, which is not a matter for the Chair. He will know, too, that the Speaker is not responsible for Ministers' answers. The Prime Minister and the Minister will have heard the right hon. Gentleman's comments. If the Prime Minister believes his answer requires a correction, there are processes by which one can make that happen, although he may take a different view from the right hon. Member about the facts of the case. In any event, the right hon. Member has put his point on the

record, and I am sure he will find other ways of pursuing it. I do not think this is the end of the matter for now, but it is just for this moment.

(*Compiler note: [Question asked at PMQs on 16 June 2021](#))

[Armed Forces: Northern Ireland](#)

06 Jul 2021 | HL1391

Asked by: Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of deploying British armed forces personnel to Northern Ireland in response to the opposition to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Answering member: Baroness Goldie | Ministry of Defence

The policing of all public order and protest events within Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). The UK Government will continue to work closely with the PSNI. The safety and security of Northern Ireland remains our key commitment. Further policing support required by them would be provided via mutual aid support from other UK police forces. Defence would only provide support following a request from the PSNI via the well-established MACA (mutual aid to civil authority) process once mutual aid from other police forces had been exhausted, or if the support requested required niche capability not held by police forces within the UK. Defence has not received any request from PSNI to support them in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol. Until such a request is made by the PSNI no assessment or planning on this issue will be undertaken by the MOD.

[Trade Agreements: Australia](#)

5 Jul 2021 | HL1235

Asked by: Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government in what ways, if any, the application of the UK–Australia free trade deal agreed on 14 June will be different in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK.

Answering member: Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Department for International Trade

The Government will ensure the agreement works for the whole of the UK and takes appropriate consideration of the UK's constitutional arrangements and obligations. The Government will provide for application of the treaty to all four constituent nations of the UK, taking into account the effects of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

Ministers and officials from the Northern Ireland Executive receive regular updates on the deal. Northern Ireland exporters will benefit fully from the

Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Around 90% of all goods exports from Northern Ireland to Australia are machinery and manufacturing-based goods, and once in force this FTA will remove all tariffs on UK exports to Australia, which will help further boost Northern Ireland's exports.

Business of the House

01 Jul 2021 | 698 c414

Asked by: Jim Shannon

In the High Court yesterday, Mr Justice Colton confirmed what the Prime Minister himself had repeatedly denied in this House, which is that the withdrawal Act, which we in the DUP rejected in this House on all three occasions, has repealed article 6 of the Act of Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We are no longer equal partners in trade. The consequences for Northern Ireland from the Government deal are clearer than ever before. The Northern Ireland protocol has the potential to derail the democratic process. As summer approaches and opinion can potentially become inflamed, this House has a role to play, as the decision has emanated from the Government here. This House can and must change this for the sake of long-lasting peace. Will the Leader of the House agree to a very urgent debate in this House so that Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom can be clearly laid out?

Answering Member: Jacob Rees-Mogg | Leader of the House

The court judgment was unquestionably an important one, and it is clear that the protocol, as it is currently operating, is presenting significant challenges for the people and businesses of Northern Ireland. We will continue to work through those issues with the EU to try to find a way forward to ensure that the protocol is implemented in the proportionate way intended. That is how we hope to sustain peace and prosperity for everyone in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom is fundamental. It is just as much a part of the United Kingdom as Somerset is, and there is no court judgment or ruling that could possibly remove part of the United Kingdom from our United Kingdom. We must all do everything we can to support Northern Ireland within our United Kingdom and to ensure that the trade flows that go with it and that underpin the economic success of our United Kingdom work properly.

UK Relations with EU: Northern Ireland

28 Jun 2021 | HL1070

Asked by: Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Her Majesty's British ambassador to France has discussed the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland with the foreign minister of France.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Ministers and Senior Officials regularly engage with their French counterparts on a range of priority issues. Her Majesty's Ambassador to France has discussed the Northern Ireland Protocol on a number of occasions with Senior Officials and Ministers in the French Government. The Prime Minister and President Macron also discussed the Protocol in the margins of the G7 Leaders Summit on 12 June, where the Prime Minister made clear his desire for pragmatism and compromise on all sides but underlined that protecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions was paramount.

Overseas Trade: Northern Ireland

28 Jun 2021 | 16266

Asked by: Carla Lockhart

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Irish Republic's Central Statistics Office showing the value of Irish Republic exports to Northern Ireland increasing between January to April 2021 by 40 per cent to €977 million, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the Northern Ireland Protocol is not causing the displacement of Great Britain to Northern Ireland trade with Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland trade.

Answering member: Robin Walker | Northern Ireland Office

The Protocol is a delicate balance, designed to support the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and avoid disruption. This means that East-West political, economic and social links are safeguarded as well as North-South.

The statistics in question do not specify the end destination of goods and do not show what proportion are being sent into the rest of the UK. They also do not include trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and without this, the scale of any displacement is difficult to estimate.

However, longstanding trade flows are being disrupted. The UK is working hard and in good faith to find solutions. Last week's Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee allowed for an open and frank discussion on the progress made to date and the challenges ahead, emphasising the need for urgent solutions.

To support the significant trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain we have launched the UK Trader Scheme and the Movement Assistance Scheme to support traders operating under the Protocol. We will also establish a reimbursement scheme for goods that attract a tariff, but which can subsequently be shown to have remained in the UK customs territory and further details will be announced in due course.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

25 Jun 2021 | HL1108

Asked by: Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported statement by President Macron that Northern Ireland is not a full part of the United Kingdom.

Answering member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

We do not comment on private diplomatic exchanges. The Government believes it is important that all discussions related to the Northern Ireland Protocol take place on the basis of the clear statements in the Protocol itself that it respects the UK's territorial integrity (Article 1(2)) and that Northern Ireland is part of the UK's customs territory (Article 4) and internal market (Article 6(2)).

Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland

24 June 2021 | 813 cc384 – 387

Asked by: Lord Thomas of Gresford

To ask the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost) what steps he is taking to promote bilateral negotiations with the European Union to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, the Government are working hard and in good faith to resolve outstanding issues with the Northern Ireland protocol, including by providing the EU with more than a dozen detailed proposals on the way forward. We continue to look to make progress in these discussions, but the situation is now urgent. If we cannot find solutions, we have to consider all options to meet our obligations to support peace, prosperity and stability in Northern Ireland.

Asked by: Lord Thomas of Gresford

My Lords, in the light of the encouraging report last night that there is a prospect of agreement with the EU on extending the grace period in Northern Ireland in certain areas, can the Minister confirm that the Government have abandoned threats of unilateral action as a fruitless negotiating tactic and

intend henceforth to solve problems through the dispute resolution mechanisms agreed within the protocol?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, we continue to discuss the grace period for chilled meats with the European Commission. It is not yet resolved and there are still a number of issues to sort out. We will continue to consider all our options on this or any other matter if we cannot resolve them by consensus.

Asked by: Lord Hain

My Lords, why on earth should Brussels, Dublin or Belfast trust him?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

The question of trust is important in these negotiations. Trust is required on all sides. The protocol is, in our view, not being operated in the pragmatic and proportionate way we hoped for when we agreed it. If we are to establish trust between us again, we need to operate it in that fashion.

Asked by: Baroness Hoey

My Lords, I know that the noble Lord understands the fragility of the situation in Northern Ireland due to the protocol. I hope that he also understands the feeling that I saw at the rally in Newtownards last week. People feel not just angry but desperately upset and saddened that they have been neglected by their Government. Can the Minister answer what criteria Her Majesty's Government will use to judge when the protocol is not realising its objective, in Article 1, to protect the Belfast agreement in all its dimensions, not just north/south—which sticks out strongly for the Irish Government—but east/west too?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, the question asked by the noble Baroness is obviously a very political one. It is important to bring political judgment to these questions, rather than mechanical criteria. It is clear that we have already seen political turbulence in Northern Ireland and that the delicate balance of the Belfast/Good Friday agreement risks being disrupted. We keep this matter under close review and recognise a clear responsibility to act in support of stability and security in Northern Ireland, if necessary.

Asked by: Lord Caine

My Lords, earlier this week, the Irish Government said that they would “go the extra mile” to find solutions to the problems caused by the protocol. In welcoming that intervention, does my noble friend agree that it would also help if the Irish Government impressed on their EU partners the extent to which implementation of the protocol is now fuelling political instability in Northern Ireland, and that solutions are urgently needed if we are to avoid the situation deteriorating to the extent that it threatens the institutions established under the 1998 agreement?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, I very much agree with the sentiments expressed by my noble friend. We welcome the intervention and statement referred to by the Irish Government; we should all go the extra mile to find solutions to problems. I urge all EU member states to look carefully at the situation in Northern Ireland and consider whether they can support durable and pragmatic solutions to restore the balance in Northern Ireland and support the Belfast/Good Friday agreement. That is certainly what we will be doing.

Asked by: Baroness Ludford

My Lords, the Minister may have seen that his colleague, the noble Lord, Lord Patten of Barnes, told the *Irish Times* that the UK Government should “tell the truth” and implement the “legally binding” Northern Ireland protocol, adding that

“the problem at heart is not the sausages you get from Sainsbury’s but the porkies that we all get, home and abroad, from Downing Street.”

Is it not the case that honesty from the Government about what they have negotiated, signed and ratified would be a good start in finding that durable and pragmatic solution to which the Minister just referred, with maximum flexibility?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, I have the highest respect for the expertise of my noble friend Lord Patten on Northern Ireland. I read his speech in full this morning; it is extremely interesting. I note that he urges the European Union to show flexibility in some areas, for example areas where we have pressed for flexibility such as the trusted trader scheme and pharmaceuticals. I do not believe that the conclusions he draws from the Brexit process, as it affects Northern Ireland, are correct. It is important that all those commenting on the situation in Northern Ireland show responsibility in the way they do so. If I may say so, the tone of some of his comments in that speech was not entirely consistent with that.

Asked by: Lord Robathan

My Lords, today is the fifth anniversary of when the British people had the temerity to vote to be free of the restrictions of the EU. Surely it is not beyond the wit of man to arrive at a mutually beneficial settlement on the Northern Ireland protocol, particularly for the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but also for those of Great Britain. What concerns me about these negotiations is whether both sides are negotiating in good faith. I hope my noble friend can reassure me that they are and that the EU is not trying to punish the British people for their determination to leave the EU.

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

I give both sides the courtesy of believing that they are negotiating in good faith. I am sure they are but, as I said frequently in the negotiations last year, the European Union spent a bit too much time speculating on our intentions and not looking at actions and what we said. To turn that principle around, we look at the actions of the European Union on Northern Ireland and the things it does and says about the protocol. Those actions and words, in the way we are operating the protocol, cause the difficulties we are facing, so I urge, as we always do, thought about pragmatic and proportionate solutions as the way forward.

Asked by: Baroness Wheatcroft

My Lords, on 7 November 2019, the Prime Minister said of the Northern Ireland protocol:

“There will be no forms, no checks, no barriers of any kind.”

Can the Minister say how the Prime Minister reached that conclusion?

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

At the time, we faced the need to find pragmatic and proportionate ways to implement the protocol in a balanced way, respecting all the dimensions of the Belfast/Good Friday agreement—east-west, as well as north-south. If we are to find a solution, it will be in re-establishing that balance and making sure that east-west trade is subject to as few difficulties as possible, so that the balance in these arrangements can be re-established.

Baroness Smith of Basildon

My Lords, in answer to an earlier question, the noble Lord, Lord Frost, said that these were matters of political judgment. Indeed, his political judgment brought us the Northern Ireland protocol which he negotiated in the first place. I want to look forward on the subject of how this will work. Has he yet had the opportunity to read the written evidence to the inquiry that our Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland Sub-Committee is undertaking? If not, I urge him to do so. I particularly refer him to the submissions from the Northern Ireland Business Brexit Working Group and from Queen’s University, Belfast. If he has not read those, he really must do so, because they look at a pragmatic, best-interests way forward. Surely any judgment is best made on the basis of facts, not just of political views.

Answering Member: Lord Frost | Department: Cabinet Office

My Lords, I have indeed looked at that evidence. It is extremely interesting in all kinds of ways. Obviously, we talk directly to many of the groups which have submitted evidence. When I look at the views expressed by the business group, I am struck that it recommends solutions which we ourselves have put forward. We have put forward a proposal for the veterinary agreement based on equivalence, for a trusted trader scheme, for arrangements for

pharmaceuticals, and so on. I think we have a good common understanding of the problems. The difficulty is in developing a constructive negotiation that gets us towards solutions.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

23 Jun 2021 | HL941

Asked by: Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their most recent assessment of the total cost to UK businesses of EU tariffs being applied on goods entering Northern Ireland from elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Answering member: Lord Agnew of Oulton | Treasury

The Northern Ireland Protocol is clear that Northern Ireland is fully part of the UK's customs territory. As such, there should be no tariffs on internal UK trade and tariffs should only be charged if goods are destined for Ireland or the EU Single Market more broadly, or if there is a genuine and substantial risk of them ending up there. Traders are able to declare goods 'not at risk' and therefore face no duty if their goods are for sale to, or final use by, end consumers located in the UK that are brought into Northern Ireland by a trader authorised under the UK Trader Scheme.

The Government has also made full use of provisions in the Protocol to waive tariffs on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, even where they are classified as 'at risk' of entering the EU market. In addition, the Government will establish a reimbursement scheme for goods that attract a tariff, but which can subsequently be shown to have remained in the UK customs territory.

In order to help traders moving goods, the Government has also provided £270 million to support businesses trading between Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the Trader Support Service. More than 39,000 traders have registered for this free to use service which provides education for traders and can complete customs declarations on their behalf.

Northern Ireland Protocol

22 Jun 2021 | 697 c735-6

Asked by: Ian Paisley

What estimate he has made of the costs incurred by businesses trading between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a result of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Answered by: Jesse Norman | Treasury

Top of the morning to you, Mr Speaker.

The protocol is explicit in its respect for the UK's territorial integrity, and the Government are committed to delivering it with as little impact on businesses and day-to-day lives as possible. The Government have set up the free-to-use trader support service to support businesses trading between Great Britain and Northern Ireland at a cost of £270 million and have made full use of provisions within the protocol to ensure that no tariffs are charged on internal UK trade.

Asked by: Ian Paisley

I refer to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

Does the Minister accept that the protocol actually discriminates against British businesses trading between GB and Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and GB? It undermines trade, damages consumer opportunities and rights, and increases costs to both consumers and businesses on both sides of the channel. What action will the Government take, and indeed encourage others to take, to save British businesses and the economy from this economic discrimination? How long will businesses have to wait for a solution and what compensation has the Treasury calculated to cover the loss in trade, which, at present, is running at hundreds of millions of pounds?

Answered by: Jesse Norman | Treasury

I thank the hon. Member for his question. Of course, this follows a wide concern that he has put in front of the House on many previous occasions. I do not accept the characterisation that he has given of the situation in Northern Ireland, but I absolutely agree with him that the Government need to continue to press for the Northern Ireland protocol to be implemented in a proportionate and pragmatic way. That is an important goal of the Government. He talks about the schemes in place. Let me remind him that, so far, the trader support service has processed something like, I think, 700,000 consignments, 59,000 traders have been registered, there is the Brexit support fund and there is the new movement assistance scheme, as he will know, for food and agriculture trade. We retain a focus on making those systems, rules and support work as effectively and as widely as possible.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

17 Jun 2021 | 15177

Asked by: Gregory Campbell

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many (a) Northern Ireland businesses have been adversely impacted by and (b) complaints the Government has received on the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol since 1 January 2021.

Answering member: Robin Walker | Northern Ireland Office

I have engaged extensively in the build up to and since the Protocol was implemented at the start of this year, talking to businesses throughout Northern Ireland and across sectors. These experiences have also been set out to me in writing as correspondence and as reports for individuals businesses and business representative organisations.

I have heard first-hand about the range of experiences under the Protocol as it is currently operating for people and businesses in Northern Ireland. Where concerns have been raised - for example about reduced choice of products from Great Britain, burdensome checks and processes on products for supermarkets, cancelled deliveries, increased costs, risks to the supply of generic medicines and the impact on investment and growth - these have shaped and guided the Government's approach to Protocol implementation.

Business of the House

17 Jun 2021 | 697 c485

Asked by: Jim Shannon

The Leader of the House will be very aware of deep concerns in Northern Ireland that this Parliament and this Government have on a number of occasions gone over the heads of the people of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives and imposed legislation on marriage, abortion and the Northern Ireland protocol without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. Now the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland proposes to do the same on legislation related to sensitive matters on the Irish language and other cultural issues. Will the Leader of the House ensure that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland comes to the House to make a statement on this at the earliest opportunity? This goes against all that is democratic. The Northern Ireland Assembly is the correct place for legislation. Again, unfortunately and disgracefully, this place rides roughshod over regional Administrations and the democratic process.

Answering Member: Jacob Rees Mogg | Leader of the House

The hon. Gentleman and I normally see eye to eye on most issues, but on this I must diverge from him. The New Decade, New Approach deal was an historic achievement that brought to an end the three-year political impasse in Northern Ireland. Commitments in that deal were negotiated and agreed by all parties in the Executive, but there has now been a delay, a problem, in bringing forward some fulfilment of those commitments. That is why the Government have now committed to delivering these important commitments through the United Kingdom Parliament. I say to him, as a Unionist, that ultimately it is this Parliament—and we rejoice in it being this Parliament—that is the uniting focus of our nation, so when something is agreed at a political level and then not implemented, it is absolutely right that it should be implemented through this Parliament. I happen to think that the other

changes, which were done when there was no clear majority in this Parliament, were done for more political, rather than constitutional, reasons.

Engagements

16 Jun 2021 | 697 c276

Asked by: Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson

I know that, like me, the Prime Minister cares passionately about the Union. Can he confirm that the passing of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and the Northern Ireland protocol that forms part of it, has not resulted in an implied repeal of article 6 of the Act of Union, which enables Northern Ireland to trade freely with the rest of this United Kingdom? Will he commit fully to restoring Northern Ireland's place within the UK internal market?

Answered by: Boris Johnson | Prime Minister

Yes, of course. I can give assurances on both counts. I can say that unless we see progress on the implementation of the protocol, which I think is currently totally disproportionate, then we will have to take the necessary steps to do exactly what the right hon. Gentleman says.

Northern Ireland Protocol: Implementation

16 June 2021 | 697 cc267-269

Asked by: Jerome Mayhew

What discussions he has had with EU officials on the need for pragmatic implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Asked by: Jack Brereton

What discussions he has had with EU officials on the need for pragmatic implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

There have been extensive technical discussions with the European Commission, both as part of the formal withdrawal agreement structures and in support of them. I have joined Lord Frost in his comments, engagements with Vice-President Šefčovič, Northern Ireland businesses and civil society, as I have said, as well as meetings with the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney. These discussions have covered a wide range of issues related to the operation of the protocol. There is an urgent need for this ongoing dialogue to make real progress soon—as soon as possible—so that we avoid any disruption to critical supplies such as food and medicines.

Asked by: Jerome Mayhew

[...]

I know that both negotiating teams worked hard, but it was really disappointing to see the lack of a significant breakthrough last week. We need pragmatic, sensible arrangements in place, just as we need devolved government working again with a new First Minister. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the EU needs to engage with the practical proposals that are being put forward on issues such as veterinary agreements and authorised trader schemes if we are to make progress on the ground?

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I know that he has a huge knowledge and understanding of the nuances and the issues in Northern Ireland. It is absolutely right that we need to see a pragmatic and flexible approach. The EU has talked about that, and the vice-president himself outlined that point on British media. We need to see that in practice as we move forward. As I said, we have put forward a whole series of proposals and we look forward to the European Commission engaging with those in a real and direct way.

Asked by: Jack Brereton

Following some of the comments last week, particularly those from President Macron, will my right hon. Friend do everything in his power to make it very clear to those in the EU who want to divide up our country that Northern Ireland is an integral part of the UK?

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

My hon. Friend makes a correct and an important point. We have been crystal clear on this, and I will be again today: Northern Ireland is a full and an integral part of the United Kingdom. Authority is exercised within Northern Ireland by the UK, not the EU. We believe that being part of the UK is in the best interests of all in Northern Ireland, but we also believe, and I think it is fundamental, that Northern Ireland contributes to making us a stronger and more prosperous United Kingdom.

Asked by: Carla Lockhart

Given that certain provisions of European Union law apply to the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, can the Secretary of State explain the legal effect of the unilateral extension of grace periods? Does he not agree that the time has come to do the right thing by the people of Northern Ireland and make use of the diversion of trade provisions of article 16 that allow for legally effective action against arrangements that are damaging the United Kingdom's internal market, businesses in Great Britain and consumers in Northern Ireland? Secretary of State, the time for action is now, not when the Belfast agreement is in complete tatters.

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

We are working hard and in good faith to find solutions. Our overriding focus, as I have said, is on stability and safeguarding the Belfast/Good Friday agreement and restoring cross-community confidence in the practical operation of the protocol. The protocol could work with common sense, good faith and flexibility from the EU, and we are working to resolve the issues urgently, acutely aware of the time constraints that we face, as the hon. Lady rightly outlined. We are continuing to talk, and I hope that we can make better progress through the Joint Committee structures designed for resolving these problems. If we cannot do that, as I and the Prime Minister have said, no options are off the table.

Northern Ireland Protocol: Implementation

16 June 2021 | 697 cc269-270

Asked by: Kevin Brennan

What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

We have taken extensive steps to implement the protocol, including providing £500 million for a range of support schemes, such as the trader support service and the movement assistance scheme. The trader support service alone has created 1.8 million declarations, supporting nearly 700,000 consignments since January. Despite these huge efforts, though, the protocol is presenting significant challenges for Northern Ireland, and we are seeing sustained disruption to trade, which is causing real impacts on livelihoods and disruption for citizens. So unless pragmatic, risk-based solutions can be found rapidly to a range of issues, cross-community confidence in the protocol will be eroded. We will therefore be continuing to work actively with the EU to find urgent solutions.

Asked by: Kevin Brennan

Is not the truth that the Prime Minister signed up for something in the protocol that he had no intention of honouring, in the way and practice he has followed throughout his life and got away with? The truth is, though, that he is not getting away with it now. Is not that the reality?

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

I suggest that the hon. Gentleman has a very good read of the protocol. The protocol that we signed up to is very clear that it will not disrupt the everyday lives of people in their communities, but it will respect the integral market of the United Kingdom and the Good Friday/Belfast agreement. Arguably, two—some would argue all three—of those things are currently in breach. We have a duty to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland and we will do that.

Asked by: Ian Paisley

Is it not a fact that the protocol has partitioned the United Kingdom? It has undermined business, damaged the political and social fabric of Northern Ireland, and our EU partners, in whose single market we share, do not even know that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. There are more checks now happening between GB and Northern Ireland than between Belarus and the EU and between Russia and the EU. This morning, Lord Frost has told us that there is no risk whatever for any of these goods entering the single market. Give us a timeline, Secretary of State: when will this be fixed?

Answering Member: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

The hon. Gentleman makes some very important and correct points. The protocol was always about dealing with goods that are at risk or are moving into the European Union. It is farcical to have a situation with products that are never moving into the European Union. Indeed, businesses, including well-known super- markets that do not even have stores in the Republic of Ireland, are having to go through the same sort of checks. We want to ensure that that is resolved. We absolutely understand that the EU's core focus, as it has said, is on protecting its single market. For us, this is about respecting the single market, but our core focus is on protecting the Good Friday/Belfast agreement in all its strands, and ensuring that the residents and citizens of Northern Ireland can have access to the products that they should have as an integral, important part of the United Kingdom.

Negotiations: Lord Frost and the European Commission

16 Jun 2021 | 697 c262

Asked by: Simon Hoare

[...]

Does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agree that mutual trust is possibly the key ingredient to sorting out the position with regard to the Northern Ireland protocol? Our Committee has just had Lord Frost before us for an hour and a half, taking questions; I think that he agreed on that proposition as well. What is my right hon. Friend doing as Secretary of State to ensure that the issue of trust and its importance is understood across Whitehall?

Answered by: Brandon Lewis | Northern Ireland

My hon. Friend the Chairman of the Select Committee makes an important point. I have not had a chance to see the transcript of the meeting this morning that he and his Committee had with Lord Foster, but I work closely with Lord Foster on these issues and one of the key things is that mutual understanding and trust. That is one of the reasons I have always felt strongly that our colleagues, friends and partners in the EU should be engaging with civic society and businesses in Northern Ireland to ensure that they really understand the sensitivities and the nuances in Northern Ireland. I am

pleased that the Commission and Maroš Šefčovič have done a couple of those meetings already. I would like to see more of that as we go forward, so that we can build that understanding. It is fundamental to the basis of having trust that each one understands why it matters to deliver on the protocol in the way that was always intended: in a pragmatic, flexible way that delivers for the people of Northern Ireland.

Joint Consultative Working Group: Membership

09 Jun 2021 | 8789

Asked by: Stephen Farry

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will set out the proposed membership of the Joint Consultative Working Group in relation to the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Answering member: Penny Mordaunt | Cabinet Office

The Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG) is an official level group and Article 15(2) of the Northern Ireland Protocol establishes that the JCWG shall be composed of representatives of the United Kingdom and the European Union.

The Group's rules of procedure set out that, where appropriate and by decision of the co-chairs, experts or other persons who are not members of delegations may be invited to attend meetings of the JCWG in order to provide information on a particular subject. This has not been necessary so far.

Engagements

09 Jun 2021 | 696 c955

Asked by: David Jones

According to newspaper reports, the European Union is unhappy with the negotiating style of the right hon. Lord Frost. Does my right hon. Friend agree that in fact Lord Frost is doing a superb job negotiating in the national interest? Does he further agree with Lord Frost's assessment that the Northern Ireland protocol, as currently applied, is unsustainable and that matters would be considerably easier if the European Union were to adopt a more pragmatic approach rather than the purist approach it is adopting at the moment?

Answered by: Boris Johnson | Prime Minister

I thank my right hon. Friend and I agree with him completely, because I think that David Frost—Lord Frost—is doing an outstanding job. I venture to say that he is the greatest Frost since the Great Frost of 1709 or whenever it was.

[House of Commons written question 6291](#)

01 Jun 2021 | 6291

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he is taking to scrutinise the effects of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on Northern Ireland.

Answering member: Robin Walker | Northern Ireland Office

The agreement reached with the EU gives us full control over our own laws, courts, borders and seas. It will help unlock investment and protect jobs right across the UK, giving us fantastic opportunities as an independent trading nation, striking trade deals with other partners around the world.

The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol is a unique, and delicately balanced, solution to a unique and sensitive set of problems. It aims to uphold the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in all its aspects; safeguard Northern Ireland's integral place in the United Kingdom, its customs territory and internal market, while preventing a hard border on the island of Ireland.

It is clear over the months that the Protocol has been in force that there have been issues having a direct, and often disproportionate, impact. It is critical that these issues can be addressed in order to protect the political, social and economic fabric of life in Northern Ireland and to restore confidence on the ground. It is our priority to move discussions with the EU forward and to ensure the Protocol is given effect in the pragmatic and proportionate way intended.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I have met, and will continue to meet, with business and community representatives to listen to their experiences, to understand what the data tells us about impacts under the Protocol and to reaffirm the Government's commitment to addressing issues with the Protocol. We will continue to work closely with all sectors of opinion in Northern Ireland as talks with the EU Commission continue.

5 Other Parliamentary material

5.1 Ministerial Statements

[Northern Ireland Protocol : UK Approach](#)

Statement on the Government's approach to implementing the Northern Ireland protocol as part of the withdrawal agreement with the European Union.

20 May 2020 | 676 cc591-601

[Eighth Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee](#)

09 Jun 2021 | HCWS78

5.2 Written Ministerial Statements

[Northern Ireland Update](#)

03 Mar 2021 | HCWS819

[EU Withdrawal Agreement](#)

Statement on the implementation of the Northern Ireland protocol as part of the withdrawal agreement with the European Union.

09 Dec 2020 | 685 cc845-871

[Regulations to implement the consent mechanism in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol](#)

02 Nov 2020 | HCWS547

[Northern Ireland Protocol : UK Approach](#)

20 May 2020 | 676 cc591-601

5.3 Urgent Questions

[Northern Ireland Protocol](#)

Urgent question on the Government's unilateral action on the Northern Ireland protocol.

10 Mar 2021 | 690 cc865-881

Northern Ireland Protocol: Implementation

Urgent question on the implementation of the Northern Ireland protocol.
02 Feb 2021 | 688 cc833-845

Northern Ireland Protocol: Disruption to Trade

Urgent question on the disruption to trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a result of the Northern Ireland protocol.
13 Jan 2021 | 687 cc297-311

Northern Ireland Protocol: Implementation Proposals

Urgent question on the preparations for the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.
18 Nov 2020 | 684 cc326-344

Northern Ireland Protocol: UK Legal Obligations

Urgent question on the UK's commitments to its legal obligations under the Northern Ireland protocol.
08 Sep 2020 | 679 cc497-517

5.4

Select Committee oral evidence sessions

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
16 Jun 2021 | HC 157 2021-22

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
09 Jun 2021 | HC 157 2021-22

Brexit and the Northern Ireland protocol.

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
26 May 2021 | HC 157 2021-22

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
19 May 2021 | HC 157 2021-22

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
28 Apr 2021 | HC 767 2019-21

Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee
21 Apr 2021 | HC 767 2019-21

[Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.](#)

Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee

17 Mar 2021 | HC 767 2019-21

5.5

Early Day Motions

[UK-EU veterinary agreement](#)

EDM: 16 (session 2021-22)

Stephen Farry

11 May 2021

That this House recognises that the absence of a UK-EU veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules on movements of animals and food products between Great Britain and the EU and between Great Britain and Northern Ireland is creating major barriers for UK food exporters and also significantly contributes to the volume of checks in relation to the implementation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol; understands that a veterinary agreement can be negotiated with the EU through and building upon the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement; and calls on the Government to prioritise the negotiation of a bespoke UK-EU veterinary agreement.

6 Further reading

6.1 House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries

[Northern Ireland Protocol: Article 16 and EU vaccine export controls](#), Commons Library *Insight*, 2 February 2021

[Brexit: Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland Democratic Consent Regulations](#), Lords Library *In Focus*, 27 November 2020

[United Kingdom Internal Market Bill and the Northern Ireland Protocol: What happened at the Lords committee stage?](#), Lords Library *In Focus*, 17 November 2020

[Joint Committee decisions on the Northern Ireland Protocol](#), Commons Briefing Paper CBP-9102, 23 December 2020

6.2 Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service [RaISe]

[Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland](#)

Briefings

[Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol: The Dedicated Mechanism](#), NIAR 297-20, 30 October 2020

[Agricultural Support and Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol](#), NIAR 278-20, 12 October 2020

[The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol – overview and potential issues](#), NIAR 143-20, 18 June 2020

[Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Article 2](#), 15 June 2020

6.3 Parliamentary Committees

[Northern Ireland Protocol: Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee Decisions and declarations of 17 December 2020: Government's response to the Committee's Forty-first report of Session 2019–21](#), Second Special Report of Session 2021–22, European Scrutiny Committee, HC 533, 6 July 2021

[Northern Ireland Protocol: Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee Decisions and declarations of 17 December 2020](#), Forty-First Report of Session 2019–21, European Scrutiny Committee, HC 1343, 9 April 2021

[Government response to the House of Lords European Union Select Committee's 9th report of session 2019-21: The protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland](#) 4 September 2020

[The Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland](#), 9th Report of Session 2019–21, European Union Committee, HL Paper 66, 1 June 2020

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