

BREXIT BRIEF

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Introduction

The Brief seeks to provide up-to-date information on the progress and content of the UK-EU negotiations, and bring together relevant statements and policy positions from key players in Ireland, the UK and the EU.

The Brief is part of a wider communications programme covering the work of the IIEA's UK Project Group – including commentaries, speeches, texts and event reports – which are highlighted on the Institute's website. (www.iiea.com)

Section One: State of Play

Decisions, Commitments and Resignation

The Brexit saga came to a formal, legal conclusion in the final week of April with the decisions of the European Parliament on Tuesday, and the Council of the European Union on Thursday, to ratify the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) that was signed on Christmas Eve 2020. Attention now moves to the complex and sometimes divisive area of implementation, with critical emphasis on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (the Protocol).

In an interview with the *BBC NI Spotlight* programme, British Prime Minister Boris

Johnson made a significant policy commitment in respect of the Protocol, saying that his government was working on “removing the unnecessary protuberances and barriers that have grown up and getting the barnacles off the thing and sandpapering into shape”. However, he made no concession to the unionist demands to scrap the Protocol. On the question of Irish unity, he asserted that he could not envisage a border poll in Ireland for “a very, very long time to come”.

The sudden resignation of the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Arlene Foster, and the launch of a leadership contest in the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), produced the headline in *The Guardian* – “Arlene Foster has been thrown to the wolves by Johnson's Brexit

games” and– in his farewell article as *RTÉ’s* Northern Ireland Editor - Tommie Gorman’s reference to “the existential question of Brexit, the forbidden fruit dangled before the DUP and consumed by them in 2016.”

The former European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, told London’s *I* newspaper that he should not have listened to then British Prime Minister David Cameron when he told him “not to interfere in the Brexit debate, not to come to London, not to do interviews with the British press” Juncker said that he made “a mistake” because he did not defend the EU’s point of view in the UK. “They asked me to shut up, so I shut up. I should have spoken out rather than stay silent”, he lamented.

Arlene Foster Resignation

Reporting for *RTÉ*, Tony Connelly wrote that “It was fitting that Arlene Foster resigned the very day that the future EU-UK relationship was finally and formally given its blessing by the European Parliament. Her career as DUP leader and First Minister was mercilessly bound up with the Brexit withdrawal process, which pitched Northern Ireland right into the thick of the negotiations”.

The controversy surrounding the Protocol played a major part in bringing an end to Arlene Foster’s leadership and it will be a central issue of debate in the forthcoming contest between Edwin Poots and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson. A Brussels official commented that “This will create uncertainty”. The official went on to say that the question of what direction will the DUP take and whether they will try to find solutions within the Protocol or go completely on an opposition line in order to stave off the threat of the Traditional Unionist

Voice are things that are beyond the control of Brussels or London.

European Parliament Votes for Ratification of Trade and Cooperation Agreement

On Tuesday, 27 April 2021 the European Parliament voted by a large majority to grant consent to the agreement setting the rules of the future EU-UK relationship. The Consent Decision was adopted by 660 votes for, five against and 32 abstentions, while the accompanying Resolution, setting out Parliament’s evaluation of and expectations from the deal, passed by 578 votes, with 51 against and 68 abstentions. The agreement had been provisionally applied since Friday, 1 January 2021. Parliament’s consent is necessary for the agreement to enter into force permanently on Friday, 30 April 2021.

The Parliament Resolution welcomed the conclusion of the EU-UK TCA “which limits the negative consequences of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU and establishes a cooperation framework which should form the basis of a strong and constructive future partnership, avoiding the most disruptive elements of a ‘no-deal’ scenario, and providing legal certainty for citizens and businesses.”

The Resolution reiterated its position that “the UK’s withdrawal from the EU is a historic mistake and recalls that the EU has always respected the UK’s decision while insisting that the UK must also accept the consequences of leaving the EU and that a third country cannot have the same rights and benefits as a Member State.”

Recalling that throughout the process of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, the Parliament had sought to protect peace and prosperity

on the island of Ireland, uphold the EU's legal order, safeguard the autonomy of EU decision making and preserve the integrity of the customs union and internal market, the Resolution welcomed "that these goals have been largely achieved by the EU-UK TCA and the Withdrawal Agreement, through an enforceable level playing field, including for state aid, social and environmental standards, a long-term settlement on fisheries, an economic agreement which will mitigate many of the negative consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and a new framework for justice, police and internal security cooperation based on full respect for the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU's data protection legal framework."

The Parliament, however, expressed regret at the limited nature of the Agreement "due to the lack of political will on the part of the UK to engage in important areas, notably foreign, defence and external security policy, which falls well short of the stated ambitions in the Political Declaration; regrets also the UK's decision not to participate in Erasmus+, depriving young people of such a unique opportunity."

The Resolution emphasised that "the UK as a signatory to the Withdrawal Agreement is legally bound to fully implement and respect its provisions and welcomes the withdrawal of the offending provisions of the UK Internal Market Bill; condemns the UK's more recent unilateral actions, and "calls on the Commission in this regard to pursue with vigour the infringement proceeding against the UK launched on 15 March 2021 under Article 12(4) of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland".

Referring to Northern Ireland, the Resolution recalled that "the design of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and Article 16 thereof, reflects a very delicate and sensitive political balance; insists that proposals or actions which could alter this balance should not be taken lightly or without proper prior consultation by either party; highlights the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, and the role given to the Northern Ireland Assembly in the Protocol, including its required consent to the continued application of the Protocol in four years' time."

Parliament expressed the need for ongoing and enhanced dialogue between political representatives and civil society on all aspects of the Protocol and the broader Northern Irish peace process; expressed deep concern at the recent tensions in Northern Ireland and recalled that the EU is one of the main guardians of the Good Friday Agreement and is determined to protect it.

Council of the European Union Ratification of Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 29 April 2021

On Thursday, 29 April 2021 the Council of the European Union, under the Portuguese Presidency, adopted a Decision on the conclusion of both the EU-UK TCA and the Security of Information Agreement. The following statement was issued:

This is the last step for the EU in the ratification of the Agreements. The UK will now be notified of the finalisation of the internal EU procedures. Following this, the agreements and accompanying texts will be published in the Official Journal of the EU before the end of the month. On 1 May 2021,

both agreements will enter into force.

The Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ana Paula Zacarias, commented:

Today we open a new chapter in our relations with the UK. The conclusion of the trade and cooperation agreement will give legal certainty to the new EU-UK relationship, in the interests of citizens and business on both sides of the channel. We value the UK as a good neighbour, an old ally and an important partner.

Šefčovič Statement on Conclusion of Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 29 April 2021

Following the ratification of the TCA, The EU's Joint Committee and Partnership Council Co-Chair issued a lengthy statement:

The European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič warmly welcomes the ratification of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which will now be fully applicable as of 1 May 2021. This comes after an overwhelming vote of consent by the European Parliament on 27 April and subsequent Council decision today, thereby concluding the ratification process. The EU and the UK will exchange letters to that effect.

The ratification of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is good news for European citizens and businesses. It provides a solid foundation for our longstanding friendship, cooperation and partnership with the United Kingdom on the basis of shared interests and values.

In practice, the Agreement helps avoid

significant disruptions, while protecting European interests and upholding the integrity of our Single Market. It also ensures a robust level playing field, by maintaining high levels of protection in areas, such as climate and environmental protection, social and labour rights, or State aid. Moreover, the Agreement includes effective enforcement, a binding dispute settlement mechanism and the possibility for both parties to take remedial measures.

Democratic scrutiny will continue to be key in the implementation phase of the Agreement in order to ensure faithful compliance. Unity among EU institutions and Member States will remain a cornerstone during this new chapter in our EU-UK relations.

Vice-President Šefčovič reiterates that the European Commission looks forward to a strong, constructive and collaborative partnership with the United Kingdom, based on mutual trust and respect. We have far more in common than that which divides us. He will reach out this week to Lord David Frost, co-chair of the EU-UK Partnership Council, to prepare the launch of its work, including the work of Specialised Committees

Finally, the Commission will continue to work tirelessly for joint solutions so that the Withdrawal Agreement, and the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland in particular, is also fully implemented and works for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland.

President von der Leyen on the Parliament's Vote

On the evening of the vote of the European Parliament, European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen said the following:

The Agreement comes with real teeth – with a binding dispute settlement mechanism and the possibility for unilateral remedial measures where necessary.

Let me be clear: We do not want to have to use these tools. But we will not hesitate to use them if necessary. They are essential to ensure full compliance with the TCA and the Withdrawal Agreement, which were both negotiated in such fine detail and agreed by both sides.

And this is one of the reasons ratification is so important. It will give us the tools we need to ensure full and faithful compliance with the obligations, which both sides signed up to. And it will also focus minds on finding pragmatic solutions where they are needed – most urgently around the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

And on this front, I am glad to report some progress on the work being led by Vice-President Šefčovič as co-chair of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. In recent days and weeks, we have seen a new, constructive dynamic and we will continue to work closely with the UK to find constructive solutions that respect what was agreed. The next step is to mutually agree on compliance paths, with concrete deadlines and milestones.

To support this process, Vice-President Šefčovič will continue to engage with all stakeholders in Northern Ireland to listen to their concerns and to see what needs to be done. We need solutions – not soundbites if we are to make the Protocol work for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland. This is the commitment and responsibility we all took when we agreed to the Protocol. And the EU is steadfast in its determination to make it work.

Statement by Prime Minister Boris Johnson

As the result of the vote was announced on Tuesday, 27 April, Boris Johnson issued a brief statement recognising the end of a five-year saga that seen two of his predecessors in Downing Street forced from office. He said that “this week is the final step in a long journey, providing stability to our new relationship with the EU as vital trading partners, close allies and sovereign equals”. “Now is the time to look forward to the future and to building a more global Britain”, he added.

David Frost Response

Lord David Frost tweeted: “Hugely welcome the overwhelming vote by European Parliament for our trade agreement with the EU. Hope we can now begin a new chapter together as Europeans, characterised by friendly cooperation between sovereign equals. Thank you Commission representative Michel Barnier for helping get us here.”

He subsequently commented:

Today marks an important moment as the European parliament have voted

in support of our trade and cooperation agreement with the EU. Last year, both sides worked tirelessly to agree a deal based on friendly cooperation and free trade between sovereign equals. Today's vote brings certainty and allows us to focus on the future. There will be much for us and the EU to work on together through the new partnership council and we are committed to working to find solutions that work for both of us. We will always aim to act in that positive spirit but we will also always stand up for our interests when we must – as a sovereign country in full control of our own destiny.

Michel Barnier Remarks at European Parliament, 27 April 2021

The EU Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, addressed the European Parliament before its vote on the TCA.

Recalling the experience of four years of “very difficult negotiations” he described Brexit as a “warning” and stated that:

This a divorce. It's a failure, a failure of the European Union. And we have to learn lessons from it as politicians here in the European Parliament and Council, in the Commission, in all of the capitals. Why did 52% of the British vote against Europe? There are reasons for that social anger and tension which existed in many regions of the UK, but also in many regions of the EU. Our duty is to listen and understand the feelings of the people. This social anger shouldn't be confused with populism and we should do everything to respond to that in each of the member states and at the union level.

Michel Barnier also said that:

For Ireland, peace is very important. Everybody has to shoulder their responsibilities and respect what they have signed up to. This is something that affects peace and lasting trust between the EU, the UK, Ireland, all of us. As for Ireland, we don't look at it just in terms of goods, services and trade. Instead, men and women need peace, which is very fragile.

Governance of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

The formal ratification of the TCA will permit the EU and UK to proceed with its governance chapter. A significant agenda for discussion and decision between the EU and UK relates to the establishment of the provisions of the Agreement for its implementation and governance.

The Agreement establishes a Partnership Council, comprised of representatives of the Union and of the United Kingdom at ministerial level, co-chaired by a senior EU Commissioner and a British Minister, to supervise and facilitate the attainment of the objectives of this Agreement and any supplementing agreement. Either side will have the right to refer to the Partnership Council any issue relating to the implementation, application and interpretation of this Agreement or of any supplementing agreement. The Partnership Council, will meet at least once a year but can meet any time either side requests it, will have its own secretariat staffed by officials from each side.

The Council will be assisted in the performance of its tasks by a Trade Partnership Committee, in turn assisted by as many as eighteen

specialised sectoral committees and four working groups dealing with different aspects of the agreement.

The Agreement enables the European Parliament and Westminster to set up a Parliamentary Partnership Assembly of MEPs and MPs “as a forum to exchange views on the partnership”. And it envisages the creation of a Civil Society Forum involving unions, business groups and NGOs from both sides.

Minister Coveney at EU Affairs Committee, 29 April 2021

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD, spoke to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the ratification of the TCA, and on the Protocol:

Ratifying the TCA will put a full toolbox at our disposal to make the best of the new framework for EU-UK cooperation. The Agreement provides for 23 dedicated Committees and Working Groups, under an overall EU-UK Partnership Council to oversee the implementation of all aspects of the EU-UK relationship, with a view to making them work as well as possible. These will become forums where the EU can come together with the UK to iron out the practical details of how we cooperate, on issues from trade to aviation to law enforcement.

Ireland and all Member States will have the right to participate in these meetings as part of the EU delegation. We hope that the work of these joint bodies can begin as soon as possible, and we look forward to engaging in them fully, in support of our interests and values.

This week’s developments are something of a milestone, therefore, in opening up new paths for us to maximise the potential of the TCA. They also serve as a timely reminder of what the Agreement has gained for us and what it avoided.

The TCA is of course not the only treaty that establishes new EU-UK arrangements. The Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, also provides a vital framework that is of particular importance for this island. The Protocol is the only solution to the problems created by Brexit for the island of Ireland and we firmly support ongoing contacts between the EU and the UK on its full implementation.

The Government respects and has listened to the concerns voiced by some on aspects of how the Protocol operates. I know from my own engagements with Vice-President Šefčovič that the EU is doing everything possible to reflect these concerns and, working with the UK, to implement the Protocol in a way that impacts as little as possible on people’s everyday lives. I welcome particularly the recent commitment to joint EU-UK engagement with NI stakeholders in the weeks ahead on the issues involved.

I firmly believe that acting together, within the framework of the Protocol, the EU and UK can find solutions to the outstanding issues. I welcome the recent constructive engagements between Vice President Šefčovič and Lord Frost. Finding a sustainable and collaborative way forward is ultimate-

ly to the benefit of all communities in Northern Ireland, and to the EU and UK as a whole. It will also foster stability that, given recent very concerning disturbances in Northern Ireland, is needed now more than ever.

Exploring Solutions

In his comments on the Ratification of the TCA, Lord Frost said:

There will be much for us and the EU to work on together through the new partnership council and we are committed to working to find solutions that work for both of us." Comments of a similar positive nature from Ursula von der Leyen, Maroš Šefčovič and Simon Coveney reflect the growing evidence of serious efforts to explore ways in which the long list of post-Brexit difficulties can be resolved, in particular those related to the Protocol.

EU and UK officials are meeting regularly to look for ways in which the Protocol can be made less burdensome and divisive. Senior officials have spoken of technical discussions on the implementation of the Protocol by the UK and exploration on the EU side of assessing risks to the single market and ways in which they might be mitigated.

Of particular importance is the establishment of a joint Agri-food Forum, with participation at senior level from DG SANTE, the Commission Food Safety and Animal Health Directorate, and DEFRA, the UK Department of Agriculture together with officials from Lord Frost's Cabinet Office staff. The Forum is charged with finding a way to start negotiations on a new veterinary agreement which could deal

with some of the most difficult Protocol issues.

Opinion Poll Findings

The week of Monday, 19 April 2021 saw the publication of results from three opinion polls in Ireland, North and South.

The regular *RedC* poll, for *European Movement Ireland*, shows 84% support for Ireland's EU membership. While 53% are happy that the EU is moving in the right direction almost half of respondents have no confidence in the EU's COVID-19 strategy. A clear majority support further EU efforts in the areas of Climate Change and the Digital Economy with 54% support for further EU cooperation on security and defence (up 5% since the 2020 Poll). At the same time, 56% are opposed to deeper EU economic and political integration with opposition to enhanced EU competence in Health. A majority do not believe that there will be a united Ireland within the next ten years.

In a poll for the *BBC NI Spotlight* programme, 48% of people in Northern Ireland want to see the Protocol scrapped while 46% support its retention. Fifty six percent would support an Assembly vote for Northern Ireland to remain in the EU Single Market in 2024 (the same percentage as the pro-EU vote in Northern Ireland in 2016) A majority of people on both sides of the border believe that Northern Ireland will have left the UK within 25 years. If there were a border poll in the near future, 49% of respondents in Northern Ireland said they would prefer for Northern Ireland to remain in the UK, whilst 51% of the population in Ireland for unity.

A poll commissioned by Queen's University reveals that 75% of people in Northern

Ireland believe that the UK Government is not responsive to Northern Irish concerns – with no more than 5% trusting London. Sixty-five percent agree that Brexit necessitated specific arrangements for Northern Ireland but opinion is sharply divided on the Protocol. Fifty percent do not believe that the EU and the Dublin administration take views from Northern Ireland on board in applying the Protocol. Looking forward to the 2022 Stormont election 47% will only vote for parties fully supporting the Protocol while 42% make opposite commitment.

A fourth poll – for the *Sunday Independent* on Sunday, 2 May 2021 – finds that most people north and south believe that Brexit has made a united Ireland more likely to happen. However, people across the island are far more circumspect about the prospect of a united Ireland than some headline findings suggest. The poll shows apprehension in both Ireland and Northern Ireland around the potential of unification to jeopardise peace on the island and even lead to violence.

Section Two: The Evolving Debate

North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), 21 April 2021

The twenty first North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Trade and Business Development meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh, and by videoconference on Wednesday, 21 April 2021. The meeting was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Diane Dodds MLA, Minister for the Economy, and Conor Murphy MLA, Minister of Finance. The Tánaiste chaired the meeting.

The Joint Communiqué issued following the meeting listed discussions across a range of issues and noted progress in key policy areas: InterTradeIreland report on the year 2020; COVID-19 response; progress on North/South collaboration in relation to the Horizon 2020 Programme, on the US-Ireland R&D Partnership and on the InterTradeIreland Synergy Programme. The Council noted the 2019 InterTradeIreland Annual Report and Accounts and an update on the staffing complement of the body. The Council appointed Margaret Hearty to the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Trade and Business Development Body.

The fact that this meeting took place was significant since, on two recent occasions, scheduled NSMC meetings were cancelled at the last minute because the DUP said its Minister was not available, leading to accusations of a DUP boycott of North/South engagement. A Northern Ireland Executive source underlined the fact that the meeting's agenda had not included any Protocol-related issues.

Vice-President Šefčovič at the Informal Video Conference of European Affairs Ministers, 19 April 2021

The Vice-President dealt with a range of current issues, including COVID-19, and spoke of EU-UK developments:

Turning to EU-UK relations, I updated Ministers on recent developments. First, on the Withdrawal Agreement, last week I met with Lord David Frost, my counterpart in the EU-UK Joint Committee, to press for the full implementation on the ground of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. You will probably have seen my state-

ment. Therefore, I will re-emphasise only: the need for joint action as opposed to unilateral decisions; and the importance to mutually agree on compliance paths, with concrete deadlines and milestones.

The EU's approach remains to be vigilant but helpful. And we are ready to listen and help local actors in Northern Ireland. Another round of outreach, jointly with the UK, will take place soon. On the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, I welcomed that the two leading European Parliament committees – AFET (Foreign Affairs) and INTA (International Trade) – voted overwhelmingly in favour of the TCA, allowing the prospect of a plenary vote in April. This is good news, as the TCA is beneficial for European businesses, establishing a level playing field as well as effective governance to enforce both, the TCA and the Withdrawal Agreement.

Prime Minister and Taoiseach 27 April 2021

No 10 Downing Street issued the following Statement on Tuesday, 27 April 2021:

The Prime Minister spoke to the Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this evening. They updated one another on the Covid situation and progress on vaccine rollouts in their countries. They agreed to continue working together to fight the pandemic and to consider ways they may support each other. They discussed Northern Ireland and the importance of continued good relations between the UK and Ireland to the peace process. They committed to

strengthening the partnership further and finding new ways to cooperate on areas like trade and science. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach looked forward to meeting in person as soon as possible.

Business Concerns

British trade groups, including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the British Chamber of Commerce and the Food and Drink Federation, have urged the UK Government to use the arrangements in the deal for a range of 20 management committees to address urgently the 'teething problems' which have emerged since the Brexit trade deal entered into force in January. The CBI argued that, following the formal ratification of the TCA by European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, "the next phase is normalising relations between the UK and the EU in order to smooth trade and maximise the benefits of the new economic partnership."

A cross-party UK Trade and Business Commission, convened by Hilary Benn MP and the chairman of Virgin, Peter Norris and involving MPs across the political spectrum, will examine UK-EU trading relations and British trade deals with the rest of the world. Peter Norris spoke of a "unique forum for businesses and politicians to come together and discuss how to ensure that trade benefits our economy and future prosperity. We will be focused on identifying solutions..."

On the same day, late in April, French and British fishermen protested against the post-Brexit deal on fishing quotas. In Cornwall, fishermen argued that the 'disastrous' Brexit deal means "there is no way we are ever going to rebuild our coastal communities and put

out a viable call out for recruitment of young people.” They demanded what they thought they had voted for in 2016 – control of British territorial waters and the ability to govern who fishes there. In northern France, fishermen blocked trucks carrying fish from UK waters to processing plants in *Boulogne-sur-Mer* in a protest against difficulties in obtaining licences to fish in British waters. “You want to keep your waters? OK, so keep your fish!” read one sign. French officials have appealed to the European Commission to resolve the situation.

Section Three: Background Material and Further Reading

Background Material:

Council of the European Union Council Decision on the conclusion of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom, 28 April 2021. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5022-2021-REV-3/en/pdf>

European Commission Statement by Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič following the conclusion of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 29 April 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_2045

European Commission Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 27 April 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_21_1967

European Parliament Resolution: The EU-UK trade and Cooperation Agreement, 27

April 2021. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0140_EN.html

European Parliament Resolution: The outcome of the EU-UK negotiations, 27 April 2021. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0141_EN.html

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Department of Foreign Affairs Minister Coveney and Minister Byrne welcome final steps in ratifying the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 28 April 2021. <https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/press-releases/press-release-archive/2021/april/minister-coveney-and-minister-byrne-welcome-final-steps-in-ratifying-the-eu-uk-trade-and-cooperation-agreement>

European Commission Speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič at the press conference following the informal video conference of European Affairs Ministers, 19 April 2021. <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/sefcovic/announcements/>

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Cooperation Agreement, April 2021. <https://www.europarl.eu/thinktank>

North South Ministerial Council Joint Communique, 21 April 2021. <https://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/sites/northsouthministerialcouncil.org/files/publications/>

GOV.UK PM call with the Irish Taoiseach: 27 April 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-the-irish-taoiseach-27-april-2021>

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Irish Times Concerns over UK 'good faith' as European Parliament ratifies Brexit deal. *IT*, 28 April 2021. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/concerns-over-uk-good-faith-as-european-parliament-ratifies-brexit-deal-1.4549881>

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