

Brexit and Northern Ireland

KEY:

A: Anne Marie
S: Shauna Mageean

A: Hello, everyone, welcome to our talk today on Brexit and Northern Ireland. Today's guest speaker is a colleague from the Northern Ireland Assembly Shauna Mageean, and Shauna is the EU Affairs Manager. So what I'm going to do now is hand over to Shauna, who's going to talk you through her presentation, and then I'll have a brief discussion with Shauna at the end. So without further ado, I'll hand over to Shauna. Thank you very much.

S: Thanks very much, Anne Marie, so I am just going to talk through this presentation around Brexit and its effects on the Northern Ireland Assembly.

So really just moving back to the start, where did Brexit come from. So there's a referendum in June 2016, and that was a Conservative Party commitment to have a referendum. The question on the paper was, should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? I think it's interesting, actually, to note the wording of that question for many people. They were being asked a very complex question in a very simple sentence. And what does remaining a member of the European Union look like?

What does leaving the European Union mean for the UK? But that was the question. We can see that there's a very high turnout. So seventy two point two percent and the no vote was fifty one point nine percent. It was a UK wide vote and that was the result. So as a result of that vote, then the UK left the EU. Interesting to note there at the bottom of that slide, just in relation to the regional breakdown of the votes.

So you can see there that England and Wales both voted to leave the EU, whereas Scotland to Northern Ireland voted to remain a member of the EU. But ultimately the result was the UK wide result at the top of the slide there.

So this is an interesting diagram, really. It gives a useful visual representation of the results of the referendum vote. So you can see in the yellow areas they were majority remain areas and then the blue areas, they were majority leave areas. So very clearly you can see the results. And Scotland, interestingly, if you look at Northern Ireland, you can see the west of the Bann area mostly was a remain and then the east was mostly a leave area.

And then you can also see there representation of London, which was a majority remain area, but little pockets throughout the UK, you can see. But it's useful just to note the areas which were remain, the areas which are majority leave. So what does Brexit really mean? There are two key threads to the whole Brexit process. So firstly, there was the divorce, if you like, the separation, and that was the unpicking of the relationship between the UK and the EU.

And that was done through the withdrawal agreement. And the withdrawal agreement really included three main tenants, if you like. There was discussion and agreement on how citizens' rights would be handled. There was discussion around the border in Ireland and also discussion

on the financial settlement. The future relationship is governed by the trade and cooperation agreement or the T.C.A., what is the T.C.A.? So it's a free trade agreement, which also includes a framework on law enforcement. It also includes a plethora of new committees and working groups, which make up a quite a complex governance structure to dictate the terms of the EU UK relationship in the future.

What is common between both of these are the separation agreement, i.e. the withdrawal agreement is a treaty binding in international law and that's its status today. The future relationship will also be a treaty binding in international law. But the difference is that the trade and cooperation agreement hasn't yet been ratified by the European Parliament. So it is provisionally applied and has been provisionally applied since 31 December 2020 at 11:00PM but it will be ratified hopefully in April by the European Parliament, at which point it will also become a treaty binding in international law.

So this little slide really is a useful timeline of the key events. So here at the start, we can see in June 2016, the referendum on EU membership took place by October 2019. That was whenever the negotiators on the withdrawal agreement on the UK and EU side reached a withdrawal agreement. And that withdrawal agreement includes the protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, which we'll talk a bit about later on. And alongside that withdrawal agreement document, there was a political declaration.

A political declaration was entirely separate from the withdrawal agreement. But it was really a vision statement, if you like, for what the UK EU relationship would look like in terms of the future relationship treaty that was still to be negotiated. So I would say October 19 was when a withdrawal agreement was agreed and it was signed by the UK and EU in January 2020. It came into force on the 1st February 2020 at that stage, then the U.K. officially left the EU and entered into what was referred to as the transition period.

So really, in terms of everyday life, there wasn't a great deal of change. EU law still applied in the UK. However, one of the key differences was that the UK was no longer represented in the EU institutions so no longer had members of the European Parliament MEPs. The government didn't participate in the European Council meetings, the UK Commissioner, as you know, every member state, every member state in the EU has an EU commissioner, but the UK EU commissioner had to resign.

And so while we were still following EU rules there was no seat at the table when those rules were being discussed. The negotiations on the future relationship formally began on the 2nd March, and those continued through 2020. On the 17th December 2020, the joint committee, which was one of the governance structures of the withdrawal agreement that I mentioned previously, it adopted a series of decisions in relation to the Northern Ireland or the protocol. On the 24th December 2020, the UK and the EU reached a deal on the future relationship, and that was the trade and cooperation agreement.

So it had to be done by the end of the 2020 by 31st December 2020. So negotiations really went right to the wire there.

And from the 1st January 2021, the trade and cooperation agreement enters into force, and that's the terms of the relationship that we have with the EU at the moment. But again, it is only provisionally in force and won't be agreed fully until ratified by the European Parliament. So what is the withdrawal agreement? So the withdrawal agreement is an international treaty, it was negotiated under the legal authority of Article 50 and that term, Article 50 is thrown

around. Really what it means is that that is the article from the Lisbon Treaty, which outlines the means by which a member country can leave the EU voluntarily.

And that was formally triggered on the 29th of March 2017. Worth noting that that article had never been used before. So this is an entirely new situation for the EU to grapple with the use of Article 50.

So the withdrawal agreement, as I said, had three main tenants.

So in respect of citizens rights, there were a number of things agreed in respect of citizens' rights to the UK and EU, some of which include reciprocal protection for EU and UK citizens where their citizens have exercised free movement throughout the EU by exit day. EU citizens residing in the UK before exit day, they would have special settled status, which would enable them to continue to live, work or study the UK. A new body would be set up to monitor citizens rights called Independent Monitoring Authority, and that would allow the EU to also monitor how EU citizens in the UK were being treated. EU citizens would have a statutory right of appeal in relation to free movement and EU citizens applying to stay in the UK after Brexit would have up to two years to obtain settled status and settled status would apply to family members, including children, parents, grandparents, etc.

Also, the second main tenant of the withdrawal agreement was the so-called divorce bill or the financial settlement. And in relation to that, the bill is around £30 billion for the UK to leave the EU. Well, you may well say what does that include? So that £30 billion includes budget payments that the UK already signed up to as when it was a member of the EU and includes bills for amounts the UK has committed to but not yet spent. It also includes shares of other liabilities that the EU has built up over the years.

For example, for all the UK citizens who worked as officials in the EU, their pension payments would still be due. So those were the three main aspects of what makes up that £30 billion. And the third key tenant of the withdrawal agreement was in relation to the border. There was a commitment to no hard border and no hard border was defined as the presence. There wouldn't be a presence of any physical infrastructure or related checks and controls on the island of Ireland.

The unique and special nature of the situation on the island of Ireland is highlighted, as is the UK and EU support for the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. So that is actually included in the withdrawal agreement. And in terms of specifics for Northern Ireland in the withdrawal agreement, we have the protocol so what does the protocol mean, it essentially boils down to the creation of an all Ireland regulatory zone for all goods. There would be new arrangements for goods coming from GB to Northern Ireland.

There's the so-called Stormont Lock where the Northern Ireland Assembly would have to give democratic consent to the protocol continuing. The withdrawal agreement stated clearly that the UK leaves the customs union. But that EU customs code will still apply to goods entering Northern Ireland, and it was also for Northern Ireland a key category of at risk goods, and these at risk goods are goods that the EU fears are at risk of moving into the single market. So what you have in a situation where the goods in GB or Northern Ireland could move easily across the border into the Republic of Ireland and thereby enter the EU and obviously they would have to be treated as EU goods rather than UK goods and any disparity in terms of customs or VAT or Excise would perhaps give those products an unfair advantage in the EU single market.

So that is what at risk goods means. And that was a big category of the discussions to be worked out as to how those sorts of goods would be handled in the future. In terms of the withdrawal agreement, how it's given effect, so the European Union withdrawal agreement at 2020 essentially converted the withdrawal agreement into UK law. I mentioned the withdrawal agreement set up a whole new set of governance, so there was a structure of Committees established by the UK and the EU to watch over how the withdrawal agreement would be implemented and how it will run in the future.

So at the top of that structure is a Joint Committee, and that is co-chaired by the UK and the EU. So on the UK side, Lord David Frost co-chairs with the EU vice president, Maroš Šefčovič. Formerly, that was Michael Gove. But since the 1st March, Lord Frost has taken on that role. And underneath the Joint Committee are a series of six specialised committees, and these six specialised committees are were created to focus on what was regarded as six key issues within the withdrawal agreement.

So the Committee on the protocol on Cyprus, there's a committee on other separation provisions, a committee on financial provisions, a committee on the Protocol on Gibraltar, a committee on citizens rights, and primarily for our attention here, a committee on the protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. So that specialised committee meets regularly and it provides a unique forum for the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Joint Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and for North-South Ministerial Council and other North-South bodies to feed their views on the withdrawal agreement into the specialised committee and then upwards to the Joint Committee.

There's also a joint consultative working group which is made up of officials, and that is the body that the E.U. will let the U.K. know of any other changes to their EU body of law, which could potentially apply in Northern Ireland in the future. So you can see it's quite a complex structure, but those structures have been established and are meeting and will pertain and will be an important way of monitoring how the withdrawal agreement is being implemented. So bit more detail on the protocol officially called Protocol on Ireland and Northern.

So what is the protocol mean? It essentially consists of arrangements to ensure there are no checks or controls, conducted, conducted at or near the border on the island of Ireland. As I mentioned, the arrangements contained within the protocol are to be subject to democratic consent to their operation. And continuation. The protocol also includes a commitment to no diminution of rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity for citizens in Northern Ireland. It also doesn't impinge any way on north south cooperation and indeed says that the it shall maintain north south cooperation. Importantly, the protocol gives some new functions to a couple of bodies that are already established in Northern Ireland the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission.

And these new functions are provided to these two commissions to monitor the implementation of the protocol in respect of citizens rights. And the protocol also lays out new arrangements on Customs, VAT and Excise. Now, when the protocol was announced, there was various reactions from the five main political parties in Northern Ireland, so you can see from these comments to say that there was one thing that the parties here were united around and that nobody was especially a big fan of the protocol.

You can see that Alliance party referred to the backstop, which was the previous arrangement for the management of the border issues proposed by the previous Prime Minister, Theresa May, where she had suggested that the whole of the UK would follow EU rules and in respect of goods. But that was rejected and the protocol offers that just Northern Ireland will follow those rules. So you can see Alliance said that they regard the protocol as worse deal than the backstop. The DUP criticised the protocol, saying that would undermine the integrity of the union.

The Ulster Unionist Party said that the protocol would place Northern Ireland on the window ledge of the union. Sinn Féin said there's nothing good to come from Brexit because the people in Northern Ireland did not consent to Brexit and the SDLP said that there is no such thing, no such thing as a good Brexit only degrees of harm.

So that's just a snapshot of the comments that were released at the time in relation to the protocol. So what is the big deal about the border. You can see that the border in Northern Ireland is not in a handy straight line. It cuts through fields, rivers and houses. And there are some people whose front gate is in Northern Ireland and their back gate is in the Republic of Ireland. So not a straightforward border in terms of an economic border, a trade border, an Excise border to try and secure. About 35,000 people commute across the border every day.

Around 6000 lorries cross the border every day.

In 2018, there were 46 million vehicles crossed between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and that's only 46 million at 15 of the crossing points. Now there are 208 crossing points on the border. So that was only at 15. So that gives you some measure of the amount of movement there is across the border, both social movement, but also freight movements. The border runs along the middle of 11 roads, it meets in the middle of at least three bridges, dissects two ferry crossings.

So you can see in terms of logistics, if you were to try and secure that border for the purposes of stopping movements of goods with differential VAT purposes or Excise purposes, you could imagine how difficult that would be. And we all know the history of the border in terms of the attempts to secure the border for security purposes during the troubles, where there were only 20 official border crossings and the rest of them were closed down. So in terms of the border, every year, 31% of Northern Ireland exports are to the Republic and just slightly less, than that 27% of imports to Northern Ireland come from the Republic and the main sector to be affected by any difficulty with those cross-border movements would by far be food and agriculture.

And so they'd be most exposed to any changes to the operation of the border.

Cross-border trade. The all island economy has really evolved, especially since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the relaxation of controls that used to exist on the border. Just to give some examples and real life examples of that. So wheat grown in the republic is processed in Northern Ireland, 40% of the chicken produced in the Republic of Ireland is processed in Northern Ireland. Guinness is brewed in Dublin, sent north of the border, to be bottled or canned and then goes back down to Dublin for export to the rest of the world.

And in terms of bread, as I mentioned, grain, that comes via GB in to Northern Ireland, it goes to the Republic to be milled into flour and then it comes back up to Northern Ireland to be baked into breads, bread and cakes and buns. And around a third of our milk is sold to dairies

in the Republic of Ireland and further from there it can be made into cheese, yoghurt, dried into milk powder moves back across the border. So that's just an example of how cross-border trade has developed over the years and has since become quite a large proportion of our trade.

So that's all very well in terms of border in the island of Ireland is quite difficult, but then what about the border between Northern Ireland and GB, which we've heard about in the news in terms of putting a regulatory border down the Irish Sea? What does that really mean for our trade? So here's some figures from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency from 2018. So these are useful graphics to really give a representation of what Northern Ireland's trade actually looks like and where our biggest market actually is.

So Northern Ireland sales to Great Britain. Northern Ireland sales to Great Britain were worth £10.6 billion in 2018, but that has fallen by 9%. But you can see it's more than double our trade with the Republic of Ireland and the sales to Northern Ireland, to the Republic of Ireland from Northern Ireland were £4.2 billion, but that grew by 9%. But you can see, as I say, that it's still half what we would trade with GB.

So GB is by far our largest market.

And terms of the Republic of Ireland, that is Northern Ireland single largest export market in terms of individual countries, but worth noting here that sales from Northern Ireland to GB are not classed as exports, obviously, because Northern Ireland is within the U.K. So they are classed as external sales rather than exports. Exports to the Republic of Ireland equate 6% of all sales by Northern Ireland businesses. And as I say, Northern Ireland sales to GB were £10.6 billion during 2018 and GB is by far the most significant single market for external sales and accounts for 15.4% of Northern Ireland total sales against the 6% for the Republic of Ireland.

In terms of what we do export. Exports from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland are mostly food and live animals and machinery and transport equipment. And in terms of imports from the Republic again food and live animal exports, I'm sorry, manufactured goods.

So by far our biggest market is GB. So now you start to see the problems difficult to secure a land the border on the island of Ireland purely because of the size and nature of the border. But yet a border in the Irish Sea presents difficulties in terms of our largest market for sales, which is GB. In terms of cross-border supply chain. You can see that actually the figures do show that a majority of our cross-border transactions are made by micro and small businesses and micro small businesses by far make up the most of the Northern Ireland economy and most of our trade Northern Ireland's trade in goods with the Republic is comprised of intermediate goods.

Intermediate goods are really ingredients and components. So it's all very well to think about final product. But also you have to consider if you are a manufacturer in Northern Ireland where do you source your ingredients from where do you source your components from? So if you bring them from GB, the last thing you want is any kind of regulatory difficulty from bringing things over from GB, new forms, new checks that have to be done or vice versa. If you bring them from the Republic of Ireland, the last thing you want is to have sales held up at the border or stopped to be checked, especially if you are importing fresh ingredients or live components live animals for processing.

So you can see the difficulty that actually a border can be. Our largest market is GB whereas securing an Irish border would be very difficult. I'll move on to democratic consent, which I had mentioned previously as the so-called Stormont lock that was included in the protocol, which makes up part of the withdrawal agreement. So what is democratic consent? What does it actually mean? So Article 18 of the protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland details the provisions for what democratic consent looks like.

And before the end of the four year period after the transition period, the Assembly will vote on whether Articles 5 to 10 of the protocol should continue to apply. Articles 5 to 10 are the sections of the protocol which really focus on regulatory alignment with goods. So sometimes it can be a bit of a misnomer when people say that the vote focuses on whether the protocol should continue. The vote will only focus on Articles 5 to 10 very important articles, but not the only articles within the protocol.

So if the Assembly votes against the provisions to continue to be applied, they will lapse after two years. And the first vote will take place before the end of 2024. So how does democratic consent work and it's worth paying a little bit more attention to this process now, because you may have heard in the media recently in respect of a number of judicial reviews that have been requested in respect of this mechanism for democratic consent of the Assembly. So consent to be provided by the Assembly if the majority of members present and voting, vote in favour of continuing the protocol.

There'll be a subsequent vote for years if it's a simple majority, the majority of members present or eight years if the vote receives cross community consent and cross-community consent for the Assembly means the majority of members present and the majority of nationalists and the majority of unionist voting in favour, or a weighted majority of 60 percent of those present and 40 percent of unionist and 40 percent of nationalists. So just to say that again, so the vote will first happen in 2024.

If it's a simple majority vote to say yes, the vote will happen again in 2028 if it achieves cross community consent in terms of the majority of people there and the majority of nationalists and unionist voting, it will happen in eight years time. The motion to the motion to vote on the continuation of Articles 5 to 10 will be laid by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

But in case they don't lay such a motion for a vote, any member of the Legislative Assembly or MLA can do that.

So what happens if they say no? What happens if the Assembly says no?

The government will then work with the EU to come up with measures, necessary measures to see how they're going to continue if the Assembly votes to do away with Article 5 to 10. There's no detail at this point what those necessary measures would look like. In terms of the vote if it does achieve a simple majority but not cross community consent. The UK government will undertake an independent review into the protocol and the implications of any decision to terminate it and what those decisions would impact have on social, economic and political life in Northern Ireland.

And when they're doing that review, they would consult Northern Ireland political parties, local businesses, civil civic society groups, trade unions, representative groups. So that's what democratic consent looks like. And as I say, you may have heard in the media some discussion

around the fact that the vote can be passed with a simple majority rather than with cross community consent.

So looking forward after Brexit, so now the UK has left the EU, they do lose access to a significant number of international agreements. Oftentimes when we talk about Brexit, we do focus on matters of trade, very important, obviously, and vital to the successful performance of an economy. However, there are a large number of international agreements that the UK has signed up to the sit outside the frame of trade, a significant number of regulatory cooperation agreements, for example, in relation to the sharing of data.

So the sharing of your Facebook information around the world, there are agreements on fisheries and access to waters, transport, particularly in relation to bilateral and multilateral agreements on aviation, agreements on customs, agreements on nuclear power and agreements on agriculture and lots of things to do with food and food hygiene and food safety. So that's just a useful diagram to look at and to see the complexity of unpicking decades of a relationship with the EU and the international agreements that the UK would no longer have access to.

And obviously the UK government may decide to replicate some of those deals which obviously has an impact on government time, on staffing the capacity to actually replicate those agreements. So implementing Brexit, what does that actually look like? So the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 that was passed in London, it deals with what is referred to as retained EU law. So what is retained EU law? Well, as you can imagine, since the UK joined the EU and started to abide by lots of EU rules over the years, there are many policy areas that are governed by EU law and those are all going to have to be unpicked, which is a mammoth exercise.

So what the UK government decided to do was in essence a copy and paste exercise. They looked at the statute book and the body of law that pertained while we were in the EU and they copied that across onto the domestic law books. And that is essentially retained EU law, EU law that we did abide by that now been copied across onto our domestic law books and will be changed and amended over the years. But obviously it was a massive cut and paste exercise to move the body of law over so that we would be ready to leave the EU.

And that's essentially what the Withdrawal Act 2018 dealt with. The Withdrawal Agreement Act of 2020 then it was the piece of legislation which gave effect to the withdrawal agreement in UK law. In addition, there have been a number of other acts and bills that have been brought in and respective agriculture, environment, fisheries. There's a trade bill that's still proceeding through Westminster, all areas where now the UK can set its own course in significant policy areas where previously they would have followed EU rules.

The UK will also be setting up a number of new public bodies. For example, environmental standards. Where previously there were a number of monitoring authorities centred in the EU who would have looked after environmental standards across all EU member states. The UK will now be setting up its own bodies. For example, there is a new Office of Environmental Protection to be set up. There will also be future changes in policy and legislation. As I mentioned, the UK government is now free to set its own course in terms of how it deals with fisheries, environment, agriculture, product safety, consumer choice, lots of areas where previously we would have had to abide by EU rules.

Now the UK government will be developing its own policy and legislation in those areas. The government will also be wanting to replace the existing free trade agreements that it had access to as an EU member state. So they're actively working on these free trade agreements, and you will have heard lots in the media around new agreements with Japan, for example, the UK government is very keen to have a free trade agreement with the United States. And there are talks in relation to free trade agreements with New Zealand.

So that is ongoing work. The UK will also want to establish new means of cooperation on defence, foreign and security policy. They will want to have trade deals with countries that don't have trade deals with the EU, such as China. And there are a number of obligations the UK would have signed up to while it was an the EU member states, for example, climate change agreements that the UK will now want to consider whether they wish to continue with those agreements or establish new ones.

In terms of devolution, so what does Brexit mean for devolution and specifically what does it mean for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the relationship of the regions with the UK government? Well, one big impact for devolution is in terms of EU law that would have touched on devolved competences. As you will be aware, there are lots of areas of UK law that are devolved to Belfast, to Edinburgh and to Cardiff, but a lot of those areas, one example being agriculture, the rules that Belfast would have been able to set were very much dictated by the EU. So there was limited flexibility for the UK government and subsequently for Stormont to make its own path in respect of those policy areas. But also what you can't have as a UK government is going in signing a trade deal with, for example, Japan or the United States. And then you find out that, well, Edinburgh has set one sort of set of standards for its cattle, for example, and its beef.

And that standard is no different to Belfast and different again to Cardiff. How could you go and sign a UK trade deal with a country where you couldn't have a set of flexible but standard levels across the UK? So really what has happened is that the UK government has decided implement what they call common frameworks, and these common frameworks are for policy areas where EU law and devolved competences currently intersect. And the reason why common frameworks are needed are to protect the functioning of the UK's own internal market and to ensure compliance with international obligations so the UK government can stand over the performance of the governments in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

So these common frameworks or agreements to cooperate will require legislation some of them, but other ones will just be memorandum of understanding to cooperate. They may be needed, for example, in policy areas such as animal welfare and fisheries management and support in relation to data sharing between police on human trafficking and areas like that, where it's important that devolved legislatures and devolved governments can't take action on areas within their own competence, but within a common framework of a wider UK agreement.

There's also been the Internal Market Act of 2020, heavily criticised by the devolved governments in Edinburgh and in Cardiff, and really the Internal Market Act was the UK government's attempt to, for the first time, quantify what the UK internal market looked like previously. We didn't ever have much discussion around that because obviously we were part of the EU single market, which dictated the flow of goods, consumer standards and regulations. But now the UK government is having to look at what the UK's internal market looks like. In relation to the criticism,

Jeremy Miles, who's the Brexit Minister in Cardiff, he criticised the Internal Market Act as a power grab because he viewed that the Internal Market Act was seeking an element of centralisation where the government in London was trying to bring some previously devolved powers back into London and take them away from the devolved administrations. The UK government countered that and said that they say that it's the biggest transfer of power in the history of devolution because they are devolving powers that were previously governed by EU rules.

So very controversial area. And the conversation that will run and run also impacted by discussions around the potential Scottish referendum on independence and really just around intergovernmental relations within the UK as a whole. Just last night, the government published two key reports. One was a review of intergovernmental relations that has been going on for several years. They published a progress update on that and really their attempt to this is really their attempt to work with the devolved governments in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff to see how the governments can all work together going forward on a more consensual basis.

And the second key report that was published was the Dunlop Review. Again, we've waiting on for several years. And it's the Dunlop Review on Union capability. And again, this is the UK government looking at the function of the Union as a whole and how they can work with the devolved administrations and strengthening the Union. So the trade and cooperation agreement, what is that? So it essentially is a trade agreement concluded between the UK and the EU signed, as I say, on the 24th December it's brought into law in the UK by the Future Relationship Act of 2020.

It essentially is a zero tariff zero quota agreement, and that actually resolves quite a lot of the issues around the border where we were unsure as to how goods would be treated differently. UK is now a third country to the EU. What does a third country mean? It essentially means you're no longer a member state. And you said outside the EU's structural arrangements, i.e. the single market on the Customs Union, the T.C.A. does establish a number of interim arrangements and review periods.

There are still quite a lot of areas that are still to be decided. This is very much not a done and dusted deal. There are outstanding issues still to be decided, one of which is transfer of personal data or as referred to as data equivalence. That's very important in relation to, for example, as I said, a sellers able to transfer databases of their buyers across the EU and UK also for the transfer of data in relation to criminals and international crime gangs.

There are new government structures for the UK and the EU, to work together on the operation of the agreement and as I mentioned earlier, the trade and cooperation agreement is only provisionally applied as it hasn't yet been ratified by the EU. So this is a slide that was prepared by the EU and agreed by the UK, so it describes the TCA as having four major pillars of cooperation. There are pillars in respect of free, fair and sustainable trade, including in goods, services and investment, digital trade, intellectual property like copyright and public procurement and rules for fair competition.

It has a pillar on connectivity in relation to transport, energy, fisheries, social security, EU funding programmes. There are citizen security, so new arrangements for law enforcement and cooperation in criminal matters, data exchange, anti money laundering and protection of fundamental rights. And as I mentioned, there's a new governance framework which will

essentially oversee the operation of the agreement in the future. So this slide is just showing this governance structure and really this is useful to demonstrate the complexity of the matters. At the top is a partnership council, a joint partnership council, and similar to the governance structure of the withdrawal agreement it is co-chaired by the UK and the EU and underneath that partnership council are a number of committees, and these committees focussed on the key areas agreed within the trade and cooperation agreement.

So there is one there's a trade specialist committee on public procurement, another one on our transport. So really a committee who will work away on each specific chapter of the agreement and then report its findings upwards to the Partnership Council, which can make any decisions. There are also a number of working groups to report into these specialised committees. Just a quick note at the top there, there is a civic society forum and that is the forum for the UK and the EU will each have members of the Civic Society Forum and from representative community groups, trade unions and civic society generally who will be able to give their opinion on the operation of the trade cooperation agreement.

And the agreement also includes also includes a partnership assembly.

So in terms of the Northern Ireland Assembly, I've just put up some work there that Brexit has meant for the Northern Ireland Assembly. Legislation and monitoring the protocol and how it's working these intra UK common frameworks, legislative consent. So where Westminster wants to legislate on the matter which touches on devolved competence. They have to seek the consent of the Assembly. Interesting to note there that the Assembly did not give its consent to the Withdrawal Agreement 2020.

There will in the future be new EU law in protocol areas that the Assembly will want to scrutinise. Northern Ireland Ministers do attend the withdrawal agreement structures. So obviously in the Assembly we want to scrutinise those structures and the ministerial performance at those structures. International engagement will also change because obviously we would be looking beyond EU, but also will be continuing to engage with the EU, particularly with the protocol. We'd be scrutinising the new functions for the European sorry, the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland and the Human Rights Commission of Northern Ireland.

Will Northern Ireland Ministers be represented at the structures of the trade and cooperation agreement, there's been no decision on that yet, but that will be something for the Assembly to scrutinise. Stakeholder engagement, a massive part of our work generally in the Assembly, not just in relation to Brexit, but obviously Committees and members are always very keen to speak to the stakeholders and find out how the Brexit and the protocol and the new T.C.A. are affecting them and their lives.

New statutory bodies will be set up on the Assembly will have a role in scrutinising those. I mentioned the Office for Environmental Protection, for example, and there's a new independent monitoring authority and citizens rights, the operation of the consent mechanism in 2024. Ministerial attendance at UK government meetings. So obviously for Assembly members and Assembly Committees, we must be scrutinising ministerial attendance at those government meetings. We'll also be looking at interparliamentary relations for the Assembly itself, looking at perhaps a new relationship with the European Parliament, for example, but also with other regional and national parliaments around the world.

And finally, there are trade deals. So the United Kingdom government will be wanting to, as I say, set forward and create its own trade policy and for example, with the United States, New Zealand, etc. And obviously, the Assembly will want to scrutinise those, especially where those trade deals could touch on areas of devolved competence, for example, in relation to agriculture and food production.

So there is a quick slide there to show looking to the future.

So future UK trade deals, new policies in agriculture and fishing, new public bodies, also new UK government schemes to replace the Erasmus scheme, which was an EU based scheme that students had access to. The government has announced the Turing scheme and there will be different roles for diplomacy because obviously, now, we'll have a different relationship with the EU, but also will have different relationships with countries outside the EU with whom we want to strike up trade deals, the role of devolved institution and trade agreements and international engagement remains to be seen.

It is something that I know that the Scottish government and the Welsh government have been very active in trying to make sure that the regional voice is heard in terms of whenever UK government goes to negotiate a trade agreement, that they do take account of regional concerns. There's the future of devolution and intra UK relationships and what that can look like in respect of the internal market, but also the wider politics of devolution and also our position in international relations, how the UK government and potentially the Northern Ireland Executive wish to position themselves in the future.

So this is another slide, perhaps looks a little bit small, but it's a very useful slide from the Institute for Government. The one thing the slide does demonstrate is that Brexit is not done. We may no longer be members of the EU, but our relationship with unpicking our past relationship with the EU and setting up and working on our relationship the EU in the future does require a substantial amount of work. There are deadlines through to 2028.

Just picking some here at random. You can see that by December 2021, the specialised committee on air transport has to see about ownership of aeroplanes the end of the grace period for imports of medicines to Northern Ireland and in 2024 obviously we have the first vote in the Assembly. In 2026 we see the end of the adjustment period on fishing in relation to how EU boats can access UK waters and vice versa. So you can see there are a number of review period and agreements and interim measures that still need to be monitored and worked on going forward.

So by no means is the work done, I would definitely describe Brexit as a marathon rather than a sprint. And really just to close off here, I follow I would advise you to follow me on Twitter. I have a Twitter account @NIAEUMatters and I use that account to both to highlight the work that the Assembly is doing on Brexit, but also to highlight and tweet other information I think would be useful to people wanting to find out more about all matters EU. And also on Assembly website if you go to Assembly business and scroll down to Brexit Brief.

I have a dedicated page on the Assembly website and that includes access to some useful documents. It's also the place where you can sign up to our weekly Brexit Brief, and I would recommend that because the weekly brief is very short, concise. If you sign up, you get it to your inbox every Monday and it just gives you a flavour of what has happened over the last week and will include links where you can pursue specific items further if there's something there of interest to you.

I should also say that we're in the process of updating our Brexit Brief page and very soon, hopefully in the next month we will have an FAQ section where we will try to demystify some of the acronyms and terms and some of the more complex topics that you'll hear discussed in the media with reference to Brexit. So I would encourage you just to keep checking back on that and certainly once that's up and running, we'll announce that on our Twitter page. So hopefully that has been useful.

And Anne Marie very happy to take some questions or have a chat.

A: Shauna thank you very much. And you've made a complicated story.

You set it out in a clear way. Thank you very much. Shauna, you mentioned there your newsletter and I just wanted to follow up on that. Some people like to listen to things as opposed to read things. Is there anything else you could sign post by way of how to keep up with this with the Brexit and all the developments as we know it's going to be in the news for quite a long time and lots of discussions about it.

So are there any other and things that you would sign and post people to maybe take a look at, sign up to?

S: Yeah. So in terms of Twitter, obviously I've recommend my own Twitter account. But in terms of other people on Twitter, you know, Katy Hayward from QUB , from Queens - @hayward_katy is a really useful source of information. Tony Connley is excellent on Twitter - @tconnellyRTE He's a journalist for RTE. And of course, our own John Campbell from BBC Northern Ireland @JP_Biz does a really good job on Twitter setting out and simplifying very complex discussions.

And if you're more of a podcast person, there are quite a few really interesting podcasts out there. Tony Connelly's Brexit Republic is a useful podcast. Obviously, he's presenting things from an Irish point of view. So it's a good chance to find out more about the EU opinion on some of these issues. The Centre for Brexit Studies in Birmingham also has some excellent resources online as well as the podcasts. The Holywell Trust in Derry does a really excellent Brexit focus, which focuses very much on local issues and in terms of other great resources.

I would say the Institute for Government have some excellent blogs on explainers, some really useful infographics.

I'm sort of a visual learner, so a lot a lot of times they have some really great useful charts and flow charts and the UK in a changing EU is a really good resource for further information, some in-depth reports, but also some really useful blogs.

A: Thanks for that, Shauna. Lots thereto go on. And going back, you mentioned there about that you hope or maybe by the time people are watching this recording, it will already be in place.

And that's a frequently asked questions section or an FAQ section, because sometimes you do, think goodness, what is the protocol or what is the Internal Market Act or it and the withdrawal agreement. Is that where you would direct people to? Is there anything else you would say, you know, this is also a good place, or how would you comment about the technical language that we associate with Brexit?

S: Yes so this is hopefully this FAQ is going to demystify some of that language. Sometimes you can get very in-depth and then you're saying, what does that acronym mean? It can be very confusing. So the FAQ section on the website will be designed to highlight that. And we're also going to have some links to some key documents where people can see the actual what we're talking about. And I have found the fact checker on the BBC website really useful as well. It has a really useful glossary of some of the acronyms and terms and what they mean and also has a really good section on looking at some of the quotes and the high level quotes you'll see in the media from certain politicians or other high profile figures, they fact check them to see are they actually correct.

And where, what the context for those figures and numbers and acronyms is. So I find the BBC website quite useful in that regard in terms of breaking things down into sort of bite size chunks that are easy to understand.

A: Excellent.

OK, well, Shauna, thank you very much. Take a breath now. A well-deserved break. And on behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service, we want to say a big thank you to you. And we hope our audience out there have learnt a bit. I know that we have. So thank you very much.

S: Thanks, Anne-Marie.