

# Northern Ireland and Brexit Transcript

## KEY:

N: Narrator

### How We Got Here

N: On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom voted in a referendum by 52% to 48% to leave the European Union, a political and economic union of 28 countries it had belonged to for almost 50 years.

After the referendum, the EU and UK negotiated the Withdrawal Agreement and Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

These cover the terms of the UK's exit, future trade arrangements, co-operation on justice, security matters, citizens' rights and Northern Ireland, which is the only part of the UK that has a land border with the European Union.

The issues here are complex.

The EU and UK agreed that they wanted to protect the 1998 Belfast or Good Friday Agreement and avoid a hard border – that means no physical infrastructure or checks and controls – on the island of Ireland.

At the same time, the EU wants to protect its single market.

### The European Union and the Single Market

Any citizen of the EU can study, live, shop and work in any EU country, and the EU's single internal market removes trade barriers and ensures free movement of goods, services, capital and people.

However, the EU has strict controls on what goods can enter this single market.

For example, it usually bans the import of some chilled meats to protect public health.

So now the EU controls and checks goods moving from the UK to the EU to ensure they comply with its rules.

### Agreements and Opposition

The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland which came into effect on 1 January 2021, and the Windsor Framework, agreed in March 2023, were agreements signed by the UK and the EU to try to resolve these issues.

But political opposition to what was agreed has had consequences for the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, including there being no devolved government for a time. There have also been a number of court cases relating to Brexit.

### **Rights, Travel and Education**

Brexit has had a wide range of implications: for trade and travel, and for citizens' rights and education.

Most people born in Northern Ireland can choose to have a British or Irish passport, or both. With an Irish passport, you can continue to travel and work freely in the EU.

With a British passport only, your travel rights may be more restricted and depend on which EU country you are travelling to.

After Brexit, the UK stopped being a member of some EU-wide student and research programmes. In some cases, it has rejoined or set up its own alternative schemes.

There's also now no freedom of movement for EU citizens wishing to move to Northern Ireland; the UK has introduced a new immigration system.

The funding that Northern Ireland has received since 1995 from the EU's PEACE programme is not affected by Brexit.