

Micheal Martin TD

An Taoiseach.

-----

Leo Varadkar TD

An Tánaiste

-----

Paschal Donohoe TD

Minister for Finance

18 January 2021

Dear Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister Donohoe,

I enclose a letter which the IRHA has sent to the President of the EU Commission today seeking the intervention of the EU Commission to address serious and far-reaching challenges being presented to trade as a consequence of Brexit.

Regrettably, the approach being adopted by the relevant Irish authorities at the Irish Ports is creating an unmitigated mess in the post Brexit environment and fundamentally undermining Irish trade and commerce. Our members and their customers are experiencing appalling examples of lack of co-ordination by the Revenue, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the HSE concerning checks on goods arriving in Dublin. Instead of adopting an approach aimed at facilitating trade, the Irish authorities seem intent on operating disjointed, duplicating, unco-ordinated and excessive checks on goods arriving into Ireland. They are employing complex and excessive requirements in a way that will bring trade to a complete standstill if not addressed.

The attached list details some of the specific challenges being faced at present and which urgently need to be addressed unless you want to see the trade in goods between Ireland and GB or Ireland and the EU grind to a halt.

What is of particular concern is the absence of any oversight or governance control over these entities, who seem to be allowed to operate within their own silos, regardless of the adverse impact that their respective operations are having on trade and commerce. The excessive and unrelenting regulatory zeal being exhibited at present in the Ports will result in a reduction in trade, commerce and employment.



This is not just a case of some in the business community being unprepared for Brexit – that is undoubtedly the case for some businesses. It is obvious by now that a core problem is that the Irish authorities are operating systems, protocols and procedures that were not properly trialled before implementation. We have already seen the Revenues IT system collapse twice under pressure.

There are some very practical steps that can be taken to address these challenges, but the most important intervention would be the appointment of someone outside of the public service to review and oversee the manner in which the Revenue, the HSE, DAFM, the Gardai and the Port Authorities are managing the response to Brexit. Ideally someone with practical experience of trade and commerce and with a business background who can view the operation of arrangements from a first hand perspective and report back to Government and the EU Commission.

Could I please implore you to give this issue the priority that it deserves and adopt a hands on approach to resolving these issues which pose a direct and serious threat to the viability of our economy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Eugene Drennan

President

IRHA