

KASPress Ireland



News Summary

15.12.16 – 22.12.16

Welcome to **KASPress Ireland**, our weekly summary of relevant and interesting news from the Irish press.

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Top Story

British Prime Minister Theresa May will visit Ireland in January to hold a summit with Taoiseach Enda Kenny about the UK's exit from the European Union. The Taoiseach confirmed on Wednesday that Ms May will come to Dublin towards the end of January to discuss the issues surrounding Brexit, particularly its implications for relationships between the UK and Ireland. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Politics

Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan has played down suggestions by British Prime Minister Theresa May that the future status of Irish residents of the UK could be altered in the post-Brexit period. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The attack at a Berlin Christmas market on Monday night that killed 12 people and injured dozens more was "unspeakably evil", Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald has said. "This appears to have been an attack not just on people innocently going about their business preparing for Christmas, but on freedom itself," she said. "Our values of democracy and liberty are the target of those who wish to see a world of dark tyranny imposed on us all." To read more on the Tánaiste's comments, [click here](#).

New restrictions on members of the Garda going on strike or taking other forms of industrial action are expected to be discussed by the Cabinet on Tuesday. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald brought two Bills to Cabinet on Tuesday on tackling domestic violence. Ms Fitzgerald said she hoped the Domestic Violence Bill and the Victims of Crime Bill would be enacted by next summer to allow for Ireland's ratification in early 2018 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Department of Finance has said it intends to review the help-to-buy scheme introduced in the budget to eliminate any “potential abuses”. The department was responding to the publication of warnings issued by its own officials before the scheme was introduced that it could be used by EU nationals to buy properties outside Ireland. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Fianna Fáil has called for the Competition Authority to investigate a group of landlords who are threatening to bring in a number of new charges for tenants in response to Government measures to control rents. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [17]

There is no possibility of the Republic of Ireland and the UK striking a bilateral deal with each other outside of the imminent Brexit negotiations involving the EU, Taoiseach Enda Kenny has stressed. To read more on the Taoiseach’s comments, [click here](#).

The amendment to housing legislation allowing landlords increase residential rents by a maximum of 4 per cent a year has been passed in the Dáil by 53 votes to 43 with 24 abstentions. Fianna Fáil abstained in the vote, which was opposed by Sinn Féin, the Labour Party, Social Democrats, the Green Party and a number of Independent TDs. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

British Prime Minister Theresa May is hiding her views on Brexit “behind a barricade of clichés”, EU commissioner for agriculture and rural development Phil Hogan has said. He also criticised the UK’s foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, who favours a “hard Brexit”, as always appearing “to believe passionately in whatever he’s saying at any given time”. To read more on Mr Hogan’s comments, [click here](#).

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have reached agreement on the controversial issue of rent caps. Minister for Housing Simon Coveney has fast-tracked the examination of a number of areas including Waterford, Limerick, Galway and commuter towns to see if they are rent pressure zones. He said areas likely to see rent pressure zones would be prioritised outside of Cork city and the four Dublin local authority areas. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [15]

Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan has rejected claims from Northern Ireland’s police chief that weaker immigration checks in the Republic of Ireland are providing a route for criminals to enter the UK. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [15]

Economy

The Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME) have today published the results of their latest Government Satisfaction Survey for the fourth quarter of 2016. SMEs' overall satisfaction with the Governments' performance has declined for the fourth consecutive quarter. To read more on the report, [click here](#).

Almost 3,400 mortgages were approved in the three months to the end of November, up 30.8 per cent versus the same period a year earlier. New figures from Banking and Payments Federation Ireland also show the value of mortgages approved jumped by 43.2 per cent. In November alone, mortgage value approvals were up by 61 per cent. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The housing minister is targeting Airbnb owners regularly letting out properties in a bid to boost the number of homes available to renters. Simon Coveney said he had written to local authorities to ensure Airbnb providers were not operating like hotel owners. His comments in the Seanad come as a cross-departmental group examining homestays here begins its work. It will report by June. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Irish banks continue to face a challenging operating environment as they continue to deal with legacy issues such as non-performing loans while also grappling with future challenges such as Brexit, the governor of the Central Bank has said. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The long-term sustainability of Irish banks' business models depends on generating sufficient net income but some lenders ability to do so remains unsustainably low, Irish Central Bank Governor Philip Lane said on Tuesday. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Department of Finance was wrong to claim the European Commission misinterpreted Irish tax laws over the Apple tax scandal, a minister has conceded yesterday. In its final report, the commission found that Apple received "selective treatment" from Revenue which amounted to illegal State aid, as other companies did not benefit from similar tax rulings. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Ireland announced on Friday the appointment of global coordinators for the planned sale of a stake in Allied Irish Banks (AIB), but said it would not commit to a fixed timeframe for the transaction. Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Davy and Deutsche Bank will act as the global coordinators, the finance ministry said in a statement. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The European Commission has been accused of trying to rewrite Irish tax rules and of wrongly interpreting laws in a strongly worded defence by the Government on whether Apple received €13bn in state aid. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Central Bank is hiring 18 new staff members to manage financial firms that move to Ireland in the wake of Brexit. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Law Society figures show 94 solicitors from Britain have taken out practicing certificates in Ireland since the Brexit referendum. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Activity at the Irish Stock Exchange has remained strong during 2016 with a number of listings on the ESM. This is according to a new report from PwC. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) have this week released their Quarterly Economic Commentary for winter 2016. The ESRI forecasts GDP growth of 4.2% and 3.5% respectively in 2016 and 2017. These forecasts have, however, been revised marginally downwards since the beginning of the year, largely as a result of the Brexit referendum and other potential trade-related uncertainty. To read more on this report, [click here](#).

Society

The birth rate has fallen to its lowest in a decade, according to the Department of Health's annual report on the state of the nation's health. At the same time, the number of over-65s is rising by around 20,000 a year. To read more on the report, [click here](#).

Almost 7,000 people will spend Christmas in emergency accommodation around the country, according to the Simon Community. The charity said such a level of homelessness is "not acceptable for any man, woman or child in Ireland in 2017". To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Homeless campaigner Fr Peter McVerry has warned that another 25,000 families could lose their homes unless the Government takes drastic action. Fr McVerry praised the occupation of the empty Apollo House office block by the Home Sweet Home movement for highlighting the problem of people living on the streets. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [21]

President Michael D Higgins has used his annual Christmas message to sound a warning note about "new forces" in society seeking to utilise hate and racism. To read more President Higgin's Christmas message, [click here](#).

Growing risks to the quality of third-level education in Ireland due to a lack of funding are highlighted in a new report from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). It warns the "system is approaching a point where the available resources will not be able to assure adequate quality of provision". To read more on the report, [click here](#).

Health Minister Simon Harris has accused international pharmaceutical companies of "kidnapping" Irish patients with samples of life-saving drugs before demanding a ransom from the Government once the free trial is over. To read more on the Health Minister's comments, [click here](#).

Taxpayer-funded retirement lump sum payments for HSE staff are now running at €8m a month, the Sunday Independent has uncovered. The revelation comes days after the HSE warned that its record €14bn budget for next year may not be enough to put the health service on a sustainable financial footing. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Death rates from heart attacks among patients admitted to hospital wards across the country over five years have fallen significantly. The rate per 100 admissions fell from 11.1 in 2005 to 5.9 in 2015. To read on this story, [click here](#).

Hospitals struggling to cope with the winter trolley crisis may be hit with a one-day work stoppage within weeks. The action could trigger in early February, bringing chaos to services, following a vote by 90pc of nurses for industrial action. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Flu cases are on the rise and at-risk groups are urged to get vaccinated. The alert was issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) the country's disease watchdog. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The HSE has been forced to abandon its promise to have no public patient on a waiting list for more than 15 months for surgery. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Headlines

- [22.12.2016] [Theresa May to visit Dublin in January for meeting on Brexit](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.12.2016] [Charlie Flanagan plays down threat to status of Irish in Britain](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.12.2016] [Government must focus on reducing the cost of living warns ISME](#) [Business World]
- [22.12.2016] [Mortgage approvals up by more than 30% in last three months](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.12.2016] [Baby boom is over but ranks of over-65s swell by 20,000 a year](#) [Irish Independent]
- [22.12.2016] [Airbnb targeted to boost number of homes available to renters](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [21.12.2016] [Tánaiste describes Berlin attack as 'unspeakably evil'](#) [Irish Times]
- [21.12.2016] [Almost 7,000 to spend Christmas in emergency accommodation](#) [Irish Times]
- [21.12.2016] [25,000 more families could lose homes, says Fr Peter McVerry](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [20.12.2016] [Garda strike restrictions to be discussed by Cabinet](#) [Irish Times]
- [20.12.2016] [Lane says Irish banks face a challenging environment](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [20.12.2016] [Net income "unsustainably low" at some Irish lenders warns Central Bank governor](#) [Business World]
- [20.12.2016] [Apple tax ruling: Department of Finance's claim was wrong says Katherine Zappone](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [20.12.2016] [President Higgins laments hate and racism in Christmas address](#) [Irish Times]
- [19.12.2016] [Domestic violence Bills to be brought before cabinet](#) [Irish Times]
- [19.12.2016] [Ireland appoints coordinators for AIB IPO](#) [Business World]
- [19.12.2016] ['Europe is trying to rewrite Irish tax rules'](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [19.12.2016] [Students to suffer if risks to quality of third-level education not addressed](#) [Irish Independent]
- [18.12.2016] [Department of Finance to review help-to-buy scheme](#) [Irish Times]
- [18.12.2016] [Central Bank in hiring round to manage firms fleeing Brexit](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [18.12.2016] [Irish law set for post-Brexit British invasion](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [18.12.2016] [Pharma companies are 'kidnapping' patients with free drugs](#) [Irish Independent]
- [18.12.2016] [HSE forks out €8m every month on staff lump sums](#) [Irish Independent]
- [17.12.2016] [Landlords threaten to impose levies in response to 4% rent cap](#) [Irish Times]
- [17.12.2016] [Taoiseach rules out bilateral Brexit deal](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [16.12.2016] [Amendment introducing rent rise cap passed in Dáil](#) [Irish Times]
- [16.12.2016] [May hiding Brexit views 'behind barricade of clichés' – Hogan](#) [Irish Times]
- [16.12.2016] [Irish stock exchange has remained strong during 2016](#) [Business World]
- [16.12.2016] [Fall in rate of heart deaths in hospitals](#) [Irish Independent]
- [16.12.2016] [Nurses vote for strike as flu worsens trolley crisis](#) [Irish Independent]
- [15.12.2016] [Rent controls will extend beyond Cork and Dublin, says Minister](#) [Irish Times]
- [15.12.2016] [Irish border is not 'weak' says Charlie Flanagan](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [15.12.2016] [ESRI downgrades Ireland's economic outlook for 2017](#) [Business World]
- [15.12.2016] [Flu is on the rise and 'actively circulating' – experts warn](#) [Irish Independent]
- [15.12.2016] [HSE is forced to abandon target on waiting lists](#) [Irish Independent]

Newspaper (average daily net circulation/political stance - February 2015)

Irish Independent (circulation: 112,383) politically populist; Conservative

Irish Times (circulation: 76,194) politically Liberal/Progressive; centre-right on economic issues

Irish Examiner (circulation: 33, 198) politically Centrist

Sunday Business Post (circulation: 32, 498) politically Liberal