

## KASPress Ireland



### News Summary

29.12.16 – 05.01.17

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

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

London Office

### Top Story

Ireland is among the least likely countries to vote to leave the European Union, new research suggests. A Red C poll found that 80pc of Irish citizens would vote to remain in the union, an increase of 2pc on 2015. It makes Ireland one of the most pro-EU countries on the continent, along with Spain. The survey also shows that 62pc of Irish people believe the union is heading in the right direction. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

### Politics

Demand for Irish travel documents hit new heights last year following the UK's decision to leave the European Union with more than 733,000 passports issued. Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan said there were a number of reasons behind the surge but noted that in the months after the Brexit vote saw a 41 per cent increase in applications from Britain and a 27 per cent rise from Northern Ireland. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The survival of the Government will be in doubt if Fianna Fáil opens up a greater opinion poll lead over Fine Gael, Government chief whip Regina Doherty has said. Ms Doherty said there would be "no reason" for Fianna Fáil to stick to the confidence and supply agreement for its three-year duration if the party's popularity continues to improve. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage predicts that if the Irish public sees the UK faring well post-Brexit then they will consider leaving the EU. Mr Farage said: "If the British government gets on with Brexit and two or three years down the road, we are clearly better off, better off democratically because we are running our own affairs, better off economically because we've reached out to the world, better off in terms of some of our industries and we've got our fishing waters back, then the pressure will be on Ireland and public opinion in Ireland will very much move in our direction." To read more on Mr Farage's comments, [click here](#).

Transport Minister Shane Ross has said the spike in deaths on Irish roads last year was "calamitous", and has said dramatic and tough new laws to stamp out drink driving are likely. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The constant focus on the Fine Gael leadership is “disruptive” of efforts to prepare for the consequences of Brexit, Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan has said. Endorsing the view of the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, that the challenges of Brexit have implications for the leadership of Fine Gael, Mr Flanagan told The Irish Times that the Taoiseach’s experience on the European stage was especially important at present. To read more on Mr Flanagan’s comments, [click here](#).

Fine Gael will not change its leader in 2017, says Public Expenditure Minister Paschal Donohoe, who feels Enda Kenny is too busy to stand down as Taoiseach. Mr Donohoe, who is seen as a reluctant contender to be Mr Kenny’s successor, has said the Taoiseach has an important role as leader of the “underdog” minority Government. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The uncertainty over future water charges will not collapse the Government or force a general election, Taoiseach Enda Kenny has said. In the strongest indication to date that Fine Gael will not make the continuation of water charges a make-or-break issue for the minority administration, Mr Kenny played down their potential to break the confidence and supply agreement with Fianna Fáil which props up the Government. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has said the rise of far-right parties and candidates is a cause of concern for European countries. Mr Kenny instanced the emergence of right-wing parties and candidates, as well as populist anti-establishment movements, in a number of European Union States including Austria, the Netherlands, France, Spain and Italy. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Minister for Transport Shane Ross is to be allowed to refuse to fill vacancies on State boards. Mr Ross has agreed new procedures for appointments to State boards with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. It is understood the measures will force boards to justify why current and future voids need to be filled. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

US president-elect Donald Trump has reportedly chosen Brian Burns to be the next ambassador to Ireland. Mr Trump told the *New York Times* he had chosen Mr Burns to succeed Kevin Francis O’Malley in the role. Mr Burns is the son of an adviser to Joe Kennedy, the father of former US president John F Kennedy. He has strong Irish roots and is understood to have traced his ancestry to Co Kerry. To read more on Mr Burns’ appointment, [click here](#).

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has ruled out any prospect of a Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil ‘grand coalition’ government in time for the Civil War commemorations after the next general election. Mr Kenny dismissed any such move as he insisted there are no plans to jettison poorly performing ministers next year. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Minister for Health Simon Harris has said he is disappointed health service support staff are to ballot for strike action. Siptu plans to ballot some 30,000 healthcare assistants, radiographers, home helps and other grades on a variety of pay issues this month. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

## Economy

Growth in Ireland's services strengthened in December, returning to near the level it had reached before neighbouring Britain voted to leave the European Union, a survey showed on Thursday. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The State has raised €4bn for 20 years in the first bond deal of the year. The money has been borrowed at an interest rate of 1.72pc per year. The new 20-year syndicated bond deal attracted investor bids totalling €10.75bn. While most of the cash was left on the table, the final amount borrowed is double the original target. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Figures from the Department of Finance show that the Exchequer took in almost €47.9 billion in tax last year, €639m more than expected. The figure was also 5 per cent higher than 2015 and exceeded the previous peak reached in 2007. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The latest monthly unemployment data, released this morning, were broadly in line with expectations, showing a seasonally-adjusted total out of work of 157,700 in December, down from a revised 160,500 (160,700) in November and 193,200 in December 2015. To read more on the latest unemployment figures, [click here](#).

Manufacturing in Ireland rose to a 17-month high in December, according to the latest Investec PMI index. Based on a survey of managers, it measures output on an index scale of 50, where a number above 50 shows growth. The data points to resilience despite Britain's June vote to leave the EU. To read more on the Investec survey, [click here](#).

IDA Ireland, the state agency responsible for attracting foreign investment to the country, has reported a record level of employment last year at companies it supports, while warning of potential negative effects from Brexit, financial market turmoil and cost pressures. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Irish Independent has this week reported that the Central Bank has begun laying the groundwork to accommodate a significant number of London-based financial services firms looking to move operations to Dublin in the wake of Brexit. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Sharon Donnery, the deputy governor of the Irish Central Bank, has been awarded another high-profile role with an upcoming appointment to a key European Central Bank committee. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

New figures from the Central Bank indicate that November was a strong month for consumer spending, with households withdrawing €1 billion more than they deposited during the month. This is in line with patterns seen in November 2014 and 2015. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC), which represents tourism interests across the country, has described 2016 as a "remarkable" year for the sector. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Up to 40% of Ireland's multi-billion-euro farming and fishing export markets are at risk in a worst-case Brexit fallout scenario, warns Agriculture Minister Michael Creed. He admitted there is "no upside" to British voters deciding in a referendum last June to leave the EU and that "until they put their cards on the table", Ireland will remain in the dark on the likely impact in this country. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

## Society

Out-of-hour GP services are in crisis as they are being "overwhelmed" with visits from parents availing of free medical care for their children. During the Christmas period, the service saw a 30pc-plus increase across the country compared with last year. The significant rise is being put down to the introduction of the free under-six GP service. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Health Minister Simon Harris urged the director general of the HSE, Tony O'Brien, to consider removing hospital managers who are failing to reduce the record number of patients languishing on trolleys in overcrowded wards. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Local authorities rejected more than 1,000 homes offered by Nama for social housing because of a lack of demand for housing in their areas. Of more than 6,600 houses and apartments offered by Nama, some 16 per cent were turned down by city and county councils because there was "no demand" for social housing. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Health Minister Simon Harris has urged older people to stay in their nursing homes if they are suffering from flu-like symptoms as he faces the worst trolley crisis on record. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The number of families helped by Barnardos increased by eight per cent last year compared to 2015, according to preliminary figures released by the children's charity on Tuesday. Chief executive Fergus Finlay said that Ireland is great at picking up the pieces while the better way to proceed would be preventative care. He said the State has never believed in early intervention. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Government is facing an additional bill of €250m should nurses and other medical staff be granted controversial additional payments awarded to gardaí by the Labour Court. The Health Service Executive has drawn up the projected estimate, but some have said it could even be higher, which would severely undermine the health budget for 2017. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

An "unprecedented" 7,000 people are homeless in Ireland, with one family losing their home every day last month, and a shocking 2,549 children living in emergency accommodation. The Department of Housing confirmed the situation yesterday amid opposition party claims the Government is trying to "bury bad news" during the New Year's Eve celebrations. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Teachers will be subject to the first fitness to practise-style hearings this year. A number of teachers have already been the subject of complaints to their own professional standards body, under legislation enacted last summer. For the first time, there is a law allowing the Teaching Council to investigate allegations of underperformance and serious misconduct by members of the profession. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

A HSE drive to recruit nurses attracted just 36 hopeful recruits on the first day of the event in Dublin. The employment initiative at Dr Steevens' Hospital in Dublin 8 was billed as an event to attract nurses and midwives. It was hoped it would tempt Irish nurses living abroad back home. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

## Headlines

- [05.01.2017] [Record 733,060 Irish passports issued last year](#) [Irish Times]
- [05.01.2017] [Government survival in doubt If FF gains in polls, says Doherty](#) [Irish Times]
- [05.01.2017] [Irish services sector rebounds further from Brexit lows](#) [Business World]
- [05.01.2017] [NTMA borrows €4bn in 20-year bond](#) [Irish Independent]
- [05.01.2017] [Parents using emergency GP care 'as routine'](#) [Irish Independent]
- [05.01.2017] [Remove managers who fail to fix trolley crisis – Harris](#) [Irish Independent]
- [04.01.2017] [Nigel Farage says Irish will consider EU exit if UK fares well](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.01.2017] [New law to fight drink driving 'likely'](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [04.01.2017] [2016 tax take ahead of target despite late weakness](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [04.01.2017] [Unemployment rate falls to 7.2%](#) [Business World]
- [04.01.2017] [Manufacturing shakes off Brexit jitters with 17-month high](#) [Irish Independent]
- [04.01.2017] [Councils rejected over 2,000 Nama homes for social housing](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.01.2017] ['Frail elderly with flu better served staying in nursing homes,' says minister](#) [Irish Independent]
- [03.01.2017] [Fine Gael leadership talk is 'disruptive', Minister says](#) [Irish Times]
- [03.01.2017] [Fine Gael will not change leader in 2017: Paschal Donohoe](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [03.01.2017] [IDA highlights Brexit opportunities, but warns on uncertainty](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [03.01.2017] [Central Bank prepares to accommodate London-based financial services firms](#) [Business World]
- [03.01.2017] [Number of Irish families helped by Barnados up by 8% last year](#) [Irish Times]
- [02.01.2017] [Water charges will not force general election, says Kenny](#) [Irish Times]
- [02.01.2017] [Extra pay for nurses to cost €250m](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [01.01.2017] [Enda Kenny says rise of far-right parties is a concern](#) [Irish Times]
- [01.01.2017] [Key ECB role for Central Bank official](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [31.12.2016] [Shane Ross will be allowed to not fill State board vacancies](#) [Irish Times]
- [31.12.2016] ['Unprecedented' 7,000 people are officially homeless](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [30.12.2016] [80pc agree with Ireland staying in EU](#) [Irish Independent]
- [30.12.2016] [Brian Burns reported to be next US ambassador to Ireland](#) [Irish Times]
- [30.12.2016] [Taoiseach Enda Kenny rules out 'grand coalition'](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [30.12.2016] [Central Bank figures signal strong November spending](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [29.12.2016] [Simon Harris 'disappointed' by health staff strike ballot](#) [Irish Times]
- [29.12.2016] ['Remarkable' year for Irish tourism, but Brexit a worry](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [29.12.2016] [Minister warns of Brexit risks to farming and fishing exports](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [29.12.2016] [Teachers face being struck off in 'fitness to practise' hearings](#) [Irish Independent]
- [29.12.2016] [Just 36 nurses attend HSE recruitment drive](#) [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