

KASPress Ireland



News Summary

Top Story

17.02.17 – 23.02.17

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

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

London Office

The contest to succeed Enda Kenny as Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael is effectively under way after Mr Kenny told his parliamentary party on Wednesday night he would deal “conclusively” with the leadership issue when he returns from the United States after St Patrick’s Day. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Politics

Fine Gael leadership contender Leo Varadkar has expressed relief that the Taoiseach has made clear when he will announce details of his departure. On Thursday, the Minister for Social Protection said he feared there would be a showdown and he was pleased Enda Kenny had dealt with the issue effectively and concisely. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Michael Noonan is still "undecided" if he will seek re-election to the Dáil, but Fine Gael sources say he informed the party internally he will not stand at the next election. However, sources said Mr Noonan informed Fine Gael he would "stay on until the general election is called". To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The chronic lack of housing supply in Ireland has been severely criticised by the European Commission. Housing Minister Simon Coveney’s controversial ‘help-to-buy’ scheme has also been slammed as “counter-productive” by the EU only increasing demand for housing at a time of shortage, while the Government’s rent cap could put off new construction. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Reform of the way judges are appointed remains a Government priority in the current Dáil session, Taoiseach Enda Kenny has said. Mr Kenny told the Dáil on Wednesday there had been quite a deal of discussion with and correspondence from members of the judiciary in respect of their view about the issue. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The French foreign minister has further acknowledged the State’s unique economic challenges in relation to Brexit during talks on Wednesday. Jean-Marc Ayrault was in Dublin to meet Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan on a number of subjects, although focusing on Britain’s impending departure from the EU. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Minister for Finance Michael Noonan has insisted there is no possibility the State will follow the UK out of the EU. Speaking in Brussels ahead of a meeting of EU ministers of finance, Mr Noonan rejected a report over the weekend that “Irexit” was likely. Responding to the report, Mr Noonan said: “There is no possibility whatsoever [of Irexit].” To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Minister for Housing Simon Coveney has said a motion of no confidence in Taoiseach Enda Kenny would fail if it were put before the party. “I really hope that there isn’t a motion of no confidence. If there is, it will only be supported by a very small group in the party. “I think the vast majority of people in the parliamentary party now want to give the Taoiseach the time and space to manage a transition within the party,” he said on Monday. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Good Friday Agreement is a near “miracle” that must be protected in the wake of Brexit, including border issues, according to the European Commission first vice-president, Frans Timmermans. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Department of Agriculture has been accused of having a “lack of contingency plans” to safeguard farmers and the Irish agri-food sector from a hard Brexit. In response to a parliamentary question asked by Fianna Fáil TD Charlie McConalogue, it was revealed the department has assigned just three staff members to a dedicated Brexit unit. It also emerged that Bord Bia plans to hire just four additional staff at an estimated cost of €183,000. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

There is growing concern about the potential cost of the tribunal of inquiry into the treatment of Garda whistleblowers as it emerged that five recent commissions of investigation have cost the exchequer €15.026 million to date. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

A mix of human rights, civil liberties, culture and history strongly dominated President Michael D Higgins’s four-day official visit to Cuba this week. The trip marked the first time an Irish head of state visited Cuba while in office. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Ireland will resist restoration of a Border between North and South despite State agencies making contingency plans for such a possibility, said Taoiseach Enda Kenny. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The chairman of the Fine Gael parliamentary party has told the party’s TDs and Senators to show respect to Taoiseach Enda Kenny. In an email to TDs and Senators on Friday night, Martin Heydon said he was “greatly concerned that the Taoiseach and leader of our party is not being shown the respect his service and his office deserve”. To read more on Mr Heydon’s comments, [click here](#).

The Government has lost a key vote on a Fianna Fáil motion to create a Brexit minister, putting it under increased pressure to appoint an individual to the role in the coming weeks. The Fine Gael-Independents coalition lost the vote, which also included calls for Northern Ireland to be given special status within the EU, by 77 to 61 amid claims the Government is “throwing in the towel” on hopes of preventing a hard border. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Economy

Barclays has said it is considering making Dublin the headquarters of its European business as a result of Britain's decision to leave the European Union. The bank's chief executive Jes Staley told the BBC on Thursday that while Barclays remained committed to London, it was also considering adding hundreds of staff to offices in a number of European cities, including Dublin, Frankfurt and Milan. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Insurer RSA has warned of further price increases in its Irish business due to what it describes as a "challenging" market. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Global technology company, Looker has announced the expansion of its international operations with the opening of its new European Headquarters in Dublin. The expansion will create approximately 50 positions within Sales, Marketing, Professional Services and Support over the next three years. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [22]

An analysis of the Property Price Register carried out by leading property website, MyHome.ie has found that the level of property transactions across the country fell by 3.5% in 2016 to 47,175. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The food group Glanbia this week announced plans to sell 60 per cent of its diary business, which includes its consumer food and agribusiness divisions, to Glanbia Co-op for €112 million. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Facebook is close to a deal to lease an office building near Dublin's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), sources this week have revealed. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Irish Small & Medium Enterprises Association (ISME) have this week called for Ireland to become more cost competitive and flexible in its response to Brexit. This comes after prices on average were 0.3% higher in January compared with January 2016 while Consumer Prices in January decreased by 0.5% in the month. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

More than two million people were employed in Ireland at the end of last year, an increase of 3.3 per cent, as the jobless rate fell to its lowest level in more than eight years, new figures show. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Details of the first direct flights from Cork to the US could be announced within days after US authorities sanctioned the airline's final piece of operational paperwork over the weekend. It was the last document the low-fares airline needed before it could formally announce route details and begin selling tickets. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Connect Ireland, the job creation scheme backed by Kilkenny businessman Terry Clune, is understood to be seeking in excess of €7 million from the IDA as a dispute between the two sides escalates. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Technology giant Microsoft is to create 500 jobs at its Dublin campus with the launch of an EMEA inside sales centre in Sandyford. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Figures from the body which represents Europe's airports show that Dublin Airport recorded the biggest increase in passenger numbers of any major airport in 2016. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Society

Storm Doris has swept across the country on Thursday morning bringing violent gusts of wind and cutting power to an estimated 56,000 homes. Powerful winds have also led to the cancellation of flights and created dangerous road conditions with reports of fallen trees on some routes. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The number of homeless people in Ireland reached a new high of 7,167 last month. Some 4,760 adults and 2,407 children were homeless in January, a marginal increase of the previous record high of 7,148 reached in December, but a rise of a quarter on the same month last year (5,715). The situation remains worst in Dublin where 3,247 adults and 2,046 children are homeless. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

The Government's performance on children's rights is "barely acceptable" with little or no positive impact on their lives, a new report states. The Children's Rights Alliance, publishing its annual report card identifying serious issues for children, noted the Government had only been in power since May 2016, but criticised its performance on homelessness, the rights of Travellers and Roma children and on mental health. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Education Minister Richard Bruton has said it's "not fair" that children from outside a school's catchment area get preferential treatment to those within it, based only on religious denomination. Speaking at a conference on education reform, organised by Equate Ireland, he said he hoped to get a Bill on school admissions through the Dáil by September, the start of the new school year. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Millions of euros in tax refunds are going unclaimed by those caring for incapacitated relatives, experts have calculated. Up to a third of eligible taxpayers appear to be unaware they can get sizeable tax reliefs to offset some of the cost of nursing home fees, home-care costs and medical expenses. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Ireland is making "poor progress" in the economy, society and environment compared to other EU countries, according to a study by Social Justice Ireland (SJI). The research shows Ireland ranks 11th overall on the Sustainable Progress Index against 14 other EU countries. The index, due to be published on Wednesday, has been developed to show how Ireland is performing on the United Nations sustainable development goals. The 17 goals were divided into three sub groups: economy, society and environment. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

A union has warned the government it will "inflare" a dispute over staff shortages if it refuses to give nurses a €1,000 pay rise for taking industrial action. The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation's caution came after Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, said there would be "consequences" if "we get to a point that there is industrial difficulty". To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Renowned boys' boarding school Cistercian College, Roscrea, is to close down due to a shortage of new pupils. The closure announcement was made this week by the school's trustees and Abbot Richard Purcell, head of the Trappist community of Cistercian monks which has run the school since 1905. To read more on this story, [click here](#).

Headlines

- [23.02.2017] [Fine Gael leadership succession race under way](#) [Irish Times]
- [23.02.2017] [Varadkar relieved to avoid Fine Gael leadership 'showdown'](#) [Irish Times]
- [23.02.2017] ['Noonan will not stand again but will stay on until election'](#) [Irish Independent]
- [23.02.2017] [EU sharply criticises lack of housing in Ireland](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [23.02.2017] [Barclays looking at making Dublin its European headquarters](#) [Irish Times]
- [23.02.2017] [RSA still feeling effects of 2013 Irish troubles](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [23.02.2017] [Storm Doris: 41,000 homes still without power](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.02.2017] [Judicial reform remains Government priority, says Taoiseach](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.02.2017] [French minister acknowledges 'unique' issues Brexit causes State](#) [Irish Times]
- [22.02.2017] [US tech company announces 50 jobs for Dublin](#) [Business World]
- [22.02.2017] [Level of property transactions falls 3.5% in 2016](#) [Business World]
- [22.02.2017] [Glanbia to sell 60% of its Irish dairy business](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [21.02.2017] [Facebook close to deal for Dublin European HQ expansion](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [21.02.2017] [High cost of living damaging Irish business warns ISME](#) [Business World]
- [21.02.2017] [Numbers at work rise as inflation remains muted](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [21.02.2017] [Carers are missing out on millions of euro in tax reliefs](#) [Irish Independent]
- [21.02.2017] [Religious rules for schools 'not fair' – Bruton](#) [Irish Independent]
- [21.02.2017] [Number of people homeless reaches new high of 7,167](#) [Irish Times]
- [21.02.2017] [Government performance on children's rights 'barely acceptable'](#) [Irish Times]
- [20.02.2017] [Simon Coveney says motion of no confidence in Kenny would fail](#) [Irish Times]
- [20.02.2017] [Good Friday deal was a miracle: it must be protected](#) [Irish Independent]
- [20.02.2017] [Only three Agricultural staff assigned to Brexit issues](#) [Irish Independent]
- [20.02.2017] [Cork-US flights finally cleared for take-off](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [20.02.2017] ['Poor progress' in Ireland compared to other EU countries](#) [Irish Times]
- [19.02.2017] [Connect Ireland seeks €7m from IDA over jobs contract dispute](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [18.02.2017] [Warning over potential cost of whistleblower tribunal](#) [Irish Times]
- [18.02.2017] [Human rights and history fills President Higgins first day in Cuba](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [18.02.2017] [Refusal to give nurses pay rise will 'inflamm' dispute](#) [Irish Independent]
- [18.02.2017] [Famous boarding school to close due to drop in numbers](#) [Irish Independent]
- [17.02.2017] [Ireland to resist hard Border after Brexit, vows Taoiseach](#) [Irish Times]
- [17.02.2017] [Fine Gael TDs told to 'show respect' to Enda Kenny](#) [Irish Times]
- [17.02.2017] [Government under pressure to name a Brexit minister](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [17.02.2017] [600 Microsoft jobs ease FDI fears](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [17.02.2017] [Dublin topped Europe airport list last year](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]

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