

KASPress Ireland



News Summary

Top Story

31.03.17 – 06.04.17

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

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

London Office

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has pledged to help Ireland safeguard its interests in the upcoming Brexit talks saying she is aware Irish concerns including the "very important issues of war and peace". Her remarks came ahead of a meeting with Taoiseach Enda Kenny in Berlin on Thursday evening where she also praised Ireland's growing economy. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [6]

Politics

Former taoiseach Bertie Ahern told a parliamentary committee on Thursday that if Britain leaves the customs union some form of Border set-up will be inevitable. Mr Ahern said the status of the State as an EU border frontier will present a challenge in terms of keeping access as open as possible between Northern Ireland and the Republic, as well as the islands of Ireland and Britain. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [5]

Fine Gael and Labour are threatening to withhold support from the final report of the Oireachtas committee on water charges, arguing that the current draft breaches European law. The committee descended into chaos on Tuesday as members held a series of votes on the first chapter of the draft report which examines the funding of water services. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [5]

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has defended the Government's approach to Brexit negotiations against sharp criticism that he had failed to get the same right of veto on Northern Ireland that Spain got on Gibraltar. He also denied assurances to the Government on Ireland and Northern Ireland's position were "soft". To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

Fine Gael has lost three votes held by the Oireachtas committee on water charges on Tuesday. Members remain deeply divided over the introduction of a charge for excessive usage. In a statement Fine Gael said it wants to agree a report that "resolves the problem of how we fund domestic water services in Ireland and is honest with the Irish people." To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

Privatisation of Bus Éireann has been ruled out by Minister for Transport Shane Ross. In heated Dáil exchanges with Opposition TDs, he said he had stated time and again privatisation was not on the agenda. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald is to consider giving more powers to the Policing Authority and the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) as part of a root-and-branch review of the force. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

Fine Gael TD, Josepha Madigan, has this week proposed a Bill to change the constitution to allow for quicker divorces, cutting the current four-year waiting period to two years before a court can grant a divorce. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

People Before Profit will oppose any attempt to bring in water charges including excessive use charges, according to its Dún Laoghaire TD Richard Boyd Barrett. "We will resist anything that tries to leave the back door open to bringing those charges back in. Excessive use charges are that," he said. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

Fine Gael leadership contender Leo Varadkar has described Sinn Féin's demand for a border poll as "alarming", insisting a vote on Irish unity "at any point in the near future" would be counterproductive. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

Social Protection Minister Leo Varadkar has said any move to pass a motion of no confidence in the Garda Commissioner would not be good for the future of parliament. Mr Varadkar today called on parties such as Sinn Féin and Labour to reconsider their decision to submit no confidence motions. Speaking to reporters in Dublin, Mr Varadkar said he believes Ms O'Sullivan is "part of the solution" in dealing some of the "very dirty practices" within the force. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [31]

Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan has welcomed the draft negotiating guidelines for the forthcoming Brexit process circulated to governments on Friday. He said the section relating to Ireland were "as good as could have been hoped for". To read more on this story, [click here](#). [31]

The draft EU negotiating guidelines, which set out the EU's approach to the Brexit talks that will shortly begin with the UK, suggest the EU will accept the continuation of the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [31]

Economy

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has officially opened the Frankfurt Office of Collen Construction today during a two-day trade visit to Germany. The event marks the launch of the Dublin based family-owned construction company in Europe where its focus will be on construction of turn-key data centres. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [6]

Ireland is set to increase its economic growth forecast for this year to between 4 and 4.25% but updated figures due next week will reflect increased uncertainties led by Brexit in later years, the head of the finance department said on Wednesday. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [6]

It was announced on Wednesday that Irish IT Services company, Version 1, will be creating 365 IT services jobs over the next three years at its base in Dublin's city centre. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [5]

Builders want the Government to scrap plans for a 'rainy day' fund in favour of more investment in infrastructure. Amid spiralling property prices in parts of the country and slow progress on new builds, the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) says it is being hampered by the lack of roads, bridges and water facilities. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

There was a seasonally-adjusted total out of work of 141,400 in March, down from a revised 144,700 (145,100) in February and 181,200 in March 2016. This according to the latest monthly unemployment data released this week from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

The scope for one European Union centre to undercut another through its interpretation of regulatory rules in a bid to win business after Brexit is limited, Ireland's central bank governor, Philip Lane, said on Tuesday. To read more on the governor's comments, [click here](#). [4]

Three hundred and eighty Irish jobs were saved through examinership in the first quarter 2017. This is according to the latest Baker Tilly Hughes Blake Examinership Index. The figure is almost triple that shown in the first quarter 2016 when 138 jobs were saved, reflecting an evolving landscape where private equity funds are applying increased pressure to Irish businesses. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

Housing Minister Simon Coveney has rejected Opposition demands to suspend the Government's help-to-buy scheme, amid claims it is fuelling the latest surge in house prices. Mr Coveney last night said the scheme was crucial in helping couples who have been "locked out the market for years". To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

House price price inflation picked up significantly in the first three months of the year, making the return to double-digit growth more likely. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

Co. Armagh based meat supplier, Eurostock Foods, which has recently been rebranded as Bawnbua Foods, has today announced new contract wins worth in excess of €11.75m. Over the last three years, Bawnbua Foods has invested €2.35m in its business and plans to invest a further €1.18m throughout 2017 to support its ongoing development. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

The Halo Business Angel Network (HBAN) have announced their five-year business angel outlook that predicts business angels will invest €85 million in 264 high potential start-ups in the period running 2017 to year-end

2021. It will mark a 79% increase in investment over the previous five years which saw €47.4 million invested in 244 companies. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

The government fears that Irish companies will relocate to Britain to avoid the tariffs and currency risks which are among the potentially devastating impacts of Brexit. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

The future of Coillte, the state forestry agency, is under threat because of its heavy reliance on the British market. 40 per cent of revenues come from sales of wood panels and saw log to Britain. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

Ulster Bank is facing strike action across its branch network in retaliation against changes to the RBS-owned lender's pay reform proposal which unions say will "reduce staff future earning proposals significantly." To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

Business leaders reacted angrily to the wildcat industrial action that hit customers and staff trying to get to work. Employers' group Ibec called it "outrageous" and labelled the action by workers "illegal". Patricia Callan, director of the Small Firms Association, said its members were "totally exasperated" by the action. She said that the Bus Éireann workers' action could cost the economy "hundreds of millions of euro". To read more on this story, [click here](#). [1]

Value-added tax revenue has been temporarily flattered to the tune of as much as €350 million over the past two years by technology multinationals running European sales through Ireland. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [1]

Complaints about mortgages led the way when it came to issues coming before the Financial Services Ombudsman last year, with the ombudsman also stating he was concerned that some banks were denying customers access to online banking. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [1]

Society

Maynooth University (MU) has been ranked in the top 50 of the world's youngest universities, the best ever placing for Ireland. It is 49th in the UK-based Times Higher Education (THE) Young University Rankings, while Dublin City University (DCU) is in the top 100, rising five places this year, to 74th. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [5]

Complaints from asylum seekers can be investigated by the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children. The Government's watchdog bodies are now accepting complaints from children and adults housed in the 33 direct provision centres around the country. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [4]

The proposed student loan scheme would cost the Exchequer €10bn over 12 years, an economist claimed. Dr Charles Larkin of Trinity College Dublin said the Irish higher education system is neither small enough nor large enough to make an income contingent loan system work. There is no plan at the moment introduce a student loan a scheme but an expert group has suggested it as an option to address the funding challenge for higher education. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

Cork city and county will receive €46m in funding to allow the development of over 3,000 homes by 2021, the Irish Examiner can reveal. The funding will support six projects in Cork city and county, as part of a national investment of over €220m. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [3]

Six young people from the "Calais Jungle" migrant camp in France arrived in Ireland over the weekend for resettlement. Four who arrived on Friday on a flight from Paris are understood to be teenage boys from countries including Syria, Sudan and Eritrea. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [2]

The Abortion Rights Campaign has returned a grant it received from a US-based foundation following a warning from the Standards in Public Office (Sipo). The campaign said it returned the grant from the Open Society Foundation established by the billionaire George Soros. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [1]

Childcare services say they are facing a staffing crisis as they are unable to retain staff due to low wages. Professional childcare workers can earn less than €10 per hour with some staff on part-time contracts coming out with as little as €5,130 a year, a survey published last year found. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [1]

In a major win for doctors at Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) who have been battling to reduce appalling gynaecology waiting lists, Health Minister Simon Harris has committed to support a plan that will see a €7.5m capital investment over the next three years. To read more on this story, [click here](#). [31]

Headlines

- [06.04.2017] [Ireland to increase 2017 growth forecast](#) [Business World]
- [06.04.2017] [Angela Merkel pledges to help Ireland 'safeguard its interests' in the upcoming Brexit talks](#) [Irish Independent]
- [06.04.2017] [Taoiseach opens Frankfurt office for Irish construction company](#) [Business World]
- [05.04.2017] [Border checks inevitable if UK exits customs bloc – Bertie Ahern](#) [Irish Times]
- [05.04.2017] [FG to demand penalty for homes at 70% over 'normal' water usage](#) [Irish Times]
- [05.04.2017] [Taoiseach announces 365 jobs cut Irish IT company](#) [Business World]
- [05.04.2017] [Maynooth University \(MU\) has been ranked in the top 50 of the world's youngest universities](#) [Irish Independent]
- [04.04.2017] [Gibraltar is not Ireland, says Kenny in defence of Brexit stance](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.04.2017] [Water committee deeply divided on charges as FG loses votes](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.04.2017] [Privatisation of Bus Éireann ruled out by Minister](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.04.2017] [Fitzgerald to outline independent review of Garda to Cabinet](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.04.2017] [Builders call for 'rainy day' emergency fund to be spent now on construction](#) [Irish Independent]
- [04.04.2017] [Irish unemployment rate falls to 6.4%](#) [Business World]
- [04.04.2017] [Central Bank says regulatory influence on Brexit moves limited](#) [Business World]
- [04.04.2017] [380 Irish jobs saved through examinership in first quarter](#) [Business World]
- [04.04.2017] [Asylum seekers given access to ombudsman](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [03.04.2017] [Minister rejects calls to shut down scheme for first-time buyers](#) [Irish Independent]
- [03.04.2017] [Referendum to allow for quicker divorces to be proposed](#) [Irish Times]
- [03.04.2017] [House price surge: Government scheme, new lending rules blamed](#) [Irish Times]
- [03.04.2017] [Irish meat supplier announces contract wins worth over €11.75m](#) [Business World]
- [03.04.2017] [Record year for Irish angel investment in 2016](#) [Business World]
- [03.04.2017] [Student loan scheme would cost Exchequer €10bn over 12 years, says Trinity economist](#) [Irish Independent]
- [03.04.2017] [Cork city and county to get €46m to build 3,000 homes](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [02.04.2017] [People Before Profit vow to block any move to water charges](#) [Irish Times]
- [02.04.2017] [Sinn Féin's push for border poll 'alarming', says Varadkar](#) [Irish Independent]
- [02.04.2017] [Government fears exodus of Irish firms and jobs to Britain](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [02.04.2017] [Brexit puts future of Coillte under threat, new report reveals](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [02.04.2017] [Ulster Bank may face strike action](#) [Sunday Business Post] [Paywall]
- [02.04.2017] [Six young people arrive in Ireland from Calais Jungle](#) [Irish Times]
- [01.04.2017] [Technology multinationals boost VAT take by up to €350m](#) [Irish Times]
- [01.04.2017] ['Outrageous' disruption could cost economy millions of euro, say businesses](#) [Irish Independent]
- [01.04.2017] [Abortion Rights Campaign group returns US donation after SIPO warning](#) [Irish Times]
- [01.04.2017] [Childcare services are facing a 'staffing crisis' due to low wages](#) [Irish Times]
- [01.04.2017] [Mortgages top banking complaints](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [31.03.2017] [Varadkar warns parties against moving on Commissioner](#) [Irish Independent]
- [31.03.2017] [Charlie Flanagan welcomes Brexit guidelines on Ireland](#) [Irish Times]
- [31.03.2017] [Brexit: EU document suggests Common Travel Area to remain](#) [Irish Times]
- [31.03.2017] [Maternity hospital windfall as €7.5m promised by Simon Harris](#) [Irish Examiner]

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