

NO DEAL EMERGENCY

Brexit and Human Rights Working Group

As representatives of Civil Society, we believe that Northern Ireland is on the brink of a No Deal Brexit emergency. In an evolving political landscape, a variety of factors indicate that the potential for a No Deal Brexit has now escalated significantly.

The forthcoming resignation of the Prime Minister on the 7th June means the current Draft Withdrawal Agreement is unlikely to be resurrected. The new PM may try to renegotiate the Withdrawal Agreement and the Backstop Protocol, but the EU insists that negotiations cannot be reopened.

The United Kingdom runs a serious risk of leaving the EU on 31st October without a deal by automatic operation of law, unless a new Prime Minister seeks a further extension to the negotiation period.

There is also currently no clear mechanism by which the UK Parliament can prevent a No Deal Brexit. Therefore, the possibility of the UK leaving without a deal in October, either by accident or design, has dramatically increased.

Failure to progress the current Withdrawal Agreement will mean the loss of even the limited safeguards to rights and other protections for Northern Ireland that were built into the Backstop Protocol.

Civil society organisations are clear that the backstop protocol is the bare minimum that is required to protect the Northern Ireland economy, the rights of citizens and the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

A No Deal Brexit means Northern Ireland will be thrown into a state of emergency and without a sitting executive to respond to this crisis, we face an unprecedented threat to our rights.

No Deal means:

- Our rights safeguards in the backstop protocol, including protections for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement would be lost.
- A hardening of the border would have a devastating impact on the all-island economy and the economic and social lives of people living and working in border areas.
- Increased bureaucracy and costs for businesses, strict controls on the movement of animals and food products across the border and the decimation of the agri-food sector.
- Losing access to medicines, radioactive materials and blood products that are regulated by the EU and imported from EU member states.
- An end to the single energy market.
- The removal of our environmental safeguards and oversight mechanisms.
- Food insecurity.
- Less money in the economy and its impact on government expenditure on public services, health and social care and social welfare.
- The potential erosion of workers' rights.

A No Deal Brexit would be a disaster for Northern Ireland. We call on the UK government to accept that a No Deal Brexit is not a viable option and to do everything in its power to prevent this possibility as a matter of urgency.

Brexit & Human Rights Working Group (Northern Ireland)

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Human Rights Consortium
Northern Ireland Committee Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland
Centre for Cross Border Studies
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Focus: the Identity Trust
PILS Project
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Children's Law Centre
Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality
Disability Action
UNISON NI