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Ireland to resist hard Border even if UK exit deal fails

Government wants to avoid the Border being used by UK to leverage concessions

Irish issues the main block in talks as agreement close on UK's EU divorce bill

FIACH KELLY

Political Correspondent

mitment from Britain that detail of how the Border will there will be no hard Border in Ireland even if the United Kingdom leaves the European Union without an exit deal.

Senior Government sources have said they do not want mitment that there will not be the Border being used as a "gun" by Britain to pressure the EU into other concessions. Such a commitment now would remove that threat, it is suggested, and would help the Brexit talks progress.

The disclosure comes ahead of a day of intense contact between the British and Irish governments, with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Brit- must be no "regulatory diverish prime minister Theresa May holding a bilateral meeting on the margins of a summit in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The Government has re-• We are not going to

abandon Northern Ireland, no matter what the outcome

from the UK to Border issues, and Mr Varadkar will repeat that point to Ms May. Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney will also meet British foreign secretary Boris Johnson

Irishissues

EU leaders will have to decide at the next meeting of the European Council in December if sufficient progress has been made on the so-called divorce bill, citizens' rights and Irish-specific issues to allow the talks progress to the next phase. Phase two will focus on a transition period and the future trading relationship between the EU and the UK.

Ministers believe compromise is close on the financial settlement and that Irish issues are the main stumbling block, providing maximum leverage for Ireland.

Britain has so far said that page 18 the Border can be dealt with in

the second phase of the talks, according to sources.

Although the Government The Government wants a com- acknowledges that the exact operate cannot be finalised until the second phase, it wants proposals "in principle" from

This would include a coma hard Border no matter what happens later in the Brexit talks, including a total break-

No "regulatory divergence"

We are not going to abandon Northern Ireland, no matter what the outcome," a senior Government source said. The Government has said there gence" between North and South, post-Brexit, in order to allow for a "functioning all-island economy".

Writing in today's Irish Times, Mr Johnson says he understands "the importance of addressing the unique circumstances of Ireland, including the land border".

"I know the concerns about the possible impact on businesses and livelihoods. And I realise that for Irish people. peatedly asked for solutions the future of the Border is not simply a matter of economics. Above all there is the need to preserve the ties that exist between communities across the island of Ireland.

Former taoiseach Bertie Ahern said yesterday that Irish influence will diminish once the talks progress to the second

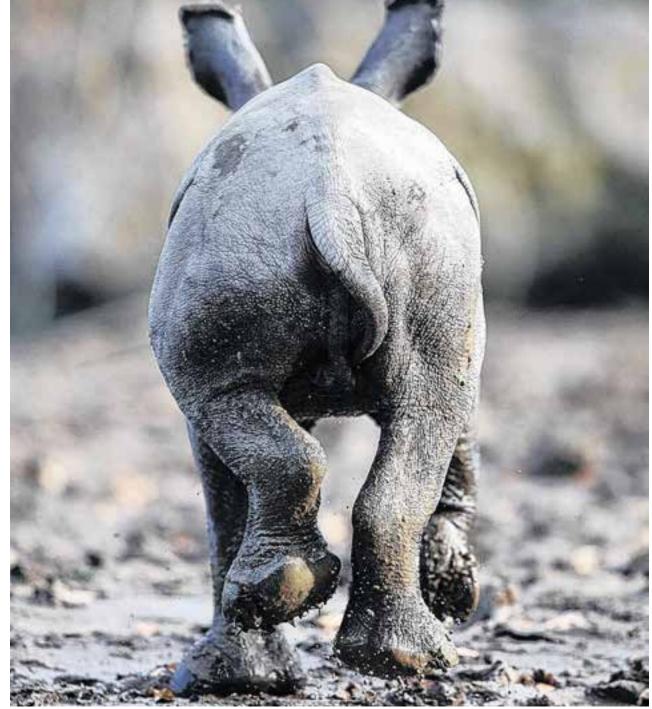
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UK will have 'no greater ally' in Brexit talks, says Coveney: Business Today

UK and Ireland can strengthen ties via Brexit: Boris Johnson,

Stepping out Rare southern white rhinoceros calf born at Dublin Zoo



■ A 50kg male rhino calf, yet to be named, was born on Sunday at Dublin Zoo. The birth is a significant success for the zoo's efforts to assist the survival of the southern white rhinoceros. PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK BOLGER

German party rejects plan for bailout payback

Outgoing German government party to vote against Ireland's early repayment plan

DEREK SCALLY and JOE BRENNAN

After a starring role in the Paradise Papers, Ireland will next week face attempts in Berlin to extend its stay in financial purgatory.

Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) is pressing Bundestag and there are no for the German parliament, signs yet it is receiving wider the Bundestag, to block Ire-support in the German parlialand's plans for an early repayment of bailout loans totalling €5.5 billion.

"We won't go along with this free pass for Ireland because we don't want ongoing tax dumping in the EU," said Carsten Schneider, the SPD parliamentary party's general secretary. "We're not talking about Ireland's 12.5 per cent tax rate here, but secret deals that reduce that tax burden to near zero.

The Government estimates it can save €150 million in interest payments by refinancing the bailout loans in international debt markets.

The plan depends, however, on all European Union states agreeing to waive the right of nationals. two EU bailout facilities, which gave Ireland €40.2 bil-(IMF) bailout as well as bilater- waivers being granted.

al loans from Denmark and

The centre-left SPD - junior partner in the outgoing German government – is urging other parties to join it in voting against Ireland's plan.

The SPD holds less than 22 per cent of the seats in the

/ We don't **want** dumping in the EU

ment. Sources within chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, which together with its Christian Social Union in Bavaria account for almost 35 per cent of the Bundestag, have indicated that the party was likely to back Ireland's request.

German politicians have, however, taken note of Ireland's starring role in the Paradise Papers, in particular reports of Dublin simultaneously closing one tax loophole and opening another for US multi-

Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe said last night lion during the crisis, to get that he had noted the SPD posiearly repayment at the same tion, and found it "disappointtime. The loans in question ing". He said he remained comprise the remaining Inter- hopeful that the Bundestag national Monetary Fund would consent to the required

More tree cover reduces rate of asthma attacks, study finds

JACK POWER

Living in a leafy suburb may do more than just boost property prices, as a study has found having more trees in urban areas can help reduce the rate of asthma attacks.

In areas with high air pollution, trees have a significant impact by helping to remove pollutants from the air, according to a study by the University of Exeter.

The research, published today in the Environmental International Journal, examined data from more than 650,000 serious asthma attacks in 26,455 urban neighbourhoods in England over a 15-year period.

The findings "suggest that tree planting could play a role in reducing the effects of air pollution from cars". "Trees can effectively remove

may explain why they appear to they can also spread allergenic be most beneficial where [air pollution] concentrations are high," said lead researcher Ian Alcock from University of Exebeen dispersed by wind.

ter's medical school. It found in areas of lower air pollution, open green spaces

harm," he said.

is 30:1 such as gardens and parks were more effective than increased

Dublin 4 – the ratio in Dublin 1

Residents per tree ratio in

quency of asthma attacks. Dr Alcock said trees proved both a defence mechanism and an irritant for asthma sufferers. He explained that while trees can remove the air pollutants pollutants from the air, and this that trigger asthma attacks,

pollen. Foliage can retain build-ups of the irritating pollutants that would otherwise have

'We found that on balance, urban vegetation appears to do significantly more good than

Ireland has the fourth high est rate of asthma in the world. A spokesman for the Asthma Society of Ireland said: "We have known for some time based on similar minor studies that the effect of having more green spaces can be quite helpful. From an urban-planning perspective the more green spaces and trees the better.

tree cover at reducing the fre-A study of tree coverage across Dublin published by UCD researchers last year found in the affluent area of Dublin 4 there was an 8:10 residents per tree ratio compared with a 30:1 ratio in Dublin 1.

vicar st 11, 12, 19 & 20 December 2017 2, 3, 10 & 11 January 2018

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Weather

Most places will be dry apart from scattered showers on western coasts in the afternoon. Highs of 7-11 degrees in light breezes.

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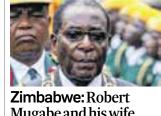


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