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**For Written Answer on :** **07/11/2018**
**Question Number(s)**: **44** **Question Reference(s): 46011/18**
**Department:** **Foreign Affairs and Trade**
**Asked by: Gerry Adams T.D.**
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**QUESTION**

**REPLY**

**Question No.**  44
Parliamentary Question - Oireachtas

To ask the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if the findings of a study (details supplied) are available to the Government; and if these findings will be made available to persons and members of Dáil Éireann.
- Gerry Adams.
\* For WRITTEN answer on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018.
Ref No: 46011/18

A confidential study conducted by the British government and the European commission listed 142 cross-border activities on the island of Ireland that would be negatively impacted by a hard Brexit.  The Joint Report between the British government and the EU Commission, dated 08 Dec 2017 referenced the report which shows that "North-South cooperation relies to a significant extent on a common European Union legal and policy framework.  Therefore, the departure from the European Union gives rise to substantial challenges to the maintenance and development of North-South cooperation."

**REPLY**

The North South cooperation we enjoy today brings tangible benefits to the daily lives of people in the border region and contributes to economic opportunity and development.  It is also a very practical outworking of the peace process which allows for the normalisation of relationships between people across the island, to mutual benefit.

The Government is therefore firmly focused on protecting the full range of areas in which North South cooperation exists today in the context of the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the UK, and in doing so works closely with the Commission Taskforce.  This includes our involvement in discussions, where appropriate, while respecting the negotiations structures that have been mandated by the European Council.

At the request of the EU and UK Coordinators for the High Level Dialogue on Ireland/Northern Ireland, officials carried out detailed work over October and November 2017 to map out areas of cooperation that operate on a North South basis on the island of Ireland and which rely on EU law and policies.

This included looking at the six North South implementation bodies, the areas of cooperation under the North South Ministerial Council, which cover agriculture, environment, health, education, transport and tourism; as well as other areas where there is practical cooperation between North and South, including justice and security, energy, broadcasting and communications, inland fisheries, sport and culture.

It has been made public that an initial listing established over 140 areas of North-South cooperation within this framework.  This number was identified in the early stages of the process and was not prepared by the Irish Government.  The listing provided a basis for further discussions in the course of the dialogue.

The exercise overall highlighted how the maintenance and future development of meaningful North South cooperation relies on the EU legal and policy frameworks to give direction to this cooperation and to facilitate its operation.  The EU frameworks are both overarching and the foundation to North South cooperation in many instances.  Much of the cooperation is interconnected, mutually supporting and complementary; it is not easily quantifiable.

The Joint Report agreed by the EU and UK negotiators on 8 December 2017 acknowledged that cooperation between Ireland and Northern Ireland is a central part of the Good Friday Agreement, and that the UK departure from the Union gives rise to substantial challenges to the maintenance and development of North-South cooperation.  The UK has accordingly committed to protecting and supporting continued North-South cooperation across the full range of contexts and frameworks of cooperation, including the continued operation of the North-South implementation bodies.  This is further reflected in the draft Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, including in Article 8, the text of which has been marked green, meaning that it is agreed at negotiator level.

As the mapping exercise was conducted by the EU and UK in the course of their dialogue on Ireland and Northern Ireland, joint publication of a final report is ultimately a matter for the EU and UK.