Twitter Thread by Tony Connelly



Tony Connelly
@tconnellyRTE

Irish foreign min Simon Coveney says he is "more optimistic" about progress in the EU UK Joint Committee over implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol.

2/ Last night @rtenews reported that if a free trade deal were to be concluded, a sequence would be put in place at the end of which the UK would drop the clauses in the Internal Market Bill which breach the Protocol. https://t.co/i2HRV6WqEE

3/ This morning, the EU's representative on the Joint Committee, which implements the Protocol, said he would be meeting his counterpart Michael Gove in Brussels today. https://t.co/WkRwFefAXu

> \U0001f1ea\U0001f1fa\U0001f1ec\U0001f1e7 I will meet @michaelgove today in Brussels to discuss the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. We are working hard to make sure it is fully operational as of 1 January 2021.
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> — Maro\u0161 \u0160ef\u010dovi\u010d\U0001f1ea\U0001f1fa (@MarosSefcovic) December 7, 2020

4/ Mr Coveney said: "There is more cause to be optimistic and positive in the context of the Joint Committee and its work in terms of implementing the Withdrawal Agreement and the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

5/ "Maros Sefcovic and Michael Gove have made really practical progress on many of the outstanding issues that were not resolved up until a few weeks ago.

6/ "So, I think they are making progress there and my view certainly is, if we could make progress on the broader trade agreement and the future relationship agreement, I think the outstanding issues linked to the Protocol certainly could be resolved."

7/ Mr Coveney added: "If they could be resolved then the need for the offensive elements of the IMB and potentially offensive elements of a financial/taxation piece of legislation may not be necessary at all.

8/ "Our view is that they are not not necessary either way because they are breaking international law, but from a British perspective those issues may be resolved."

9/ However, the minister said the sequencing was now "two steps away from where we are today."

10/ “I think if there is not progress on a trade agreement that avoids tariffs and quotas then the agreed implementation of the Protocol through the Joint Committee becomes more difficult as well."