Twitter Thread by Tony Connelly

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BREAKING: The EU and UK have agreed a trusted trader scheme that would mean exemptions from tariffs for up to 98pc of goods flowing between Great Britain and Northern Ireland from January 1, @rtenews has learned.
The other 2% wd potentially avail of rebates from any tariffs.

2/ Tariffs would mostly only apply if no free trade agreement is concluded between the EU and UK.

Both sides have also agreed that agrifood products coming from GB to Northern Ireland will be exempt from requiring export health certificates for a period of at least three months

3/ These have proved the biggest concern for UK supermarket chains in NI, who rely on large and mixed consignments of food coming from GB depots.
Export health certificates can cost up to £200 per product and need to be signed off by a designated veterinary inspector.

4/ It's understood the issue of how supermkts will comply with EU food safety rules could be dealt with through a UK commitment - possibly a declaration - that it does not intend to change its food safety rules from Jan 1. At that point the rules will be the same as the EU's.

5/ The trusted trade scheme would be subject to a review, or sunset clause, three and a half years after the Protocol comes into effect, according to an internal EU briefing

6/ If the EU is not satisfied with the way the scheme is operating, it can trigger an emergency brake through the EU UK Joint Committee, which is tasked with implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol.

7/ Alternatively, the system could be tweaked rather than halted completely, depending on how it is operating. The 3.5 yr review clause is deliberately timed to precede the first vote of the NI Assembly on whether or not the trade provisions of the Protocol should be continued.

8/ This is under the consent clause of the Protocol.

9/ It’s understood that chilled meats, sausages, mince and unfrozen prepared meals - which are prohibited and restricted from entering the EU from third countries - will be permitted for a period of time, pending a review by both sides.

10/ It’s understood that once a derogation period has elapsed, NI supermarkets will have to source such products locally or from the South.

11/ RTE News also understands that the various grace periods and derogations will give supermarkets time to improve their own food traceability and stock management systems...

12/ ...which in turn could play a role in reassuring MS as to the safety of food supplies entering the single mltarket from GB, which will be a third country.

13/ The EU and UK have also agreed in principle that exit summary declarations for goods going from NI-GB will not be required +the information will instead be generated from data - such as that held on manifests - that already exists for NI-GB ferry consignments.

14/ EU officials who are entitled to monitor the implementation of checks and controls at Northern ports will be based in temporary office space, such as co-working facilities, it’s understood.

15/ These officials, mainly from the customs sphere, will be recruited from member states and rotated in and out of Northern Ireland.

16/ However, EU member states will also be entitled to monitor UK customs databases within their own capitals as part of their surveillance of goods entering Northern Ireland, and thereby entering the rest of the single market.

17/ The College of EU Commissioners is this morning being briefed on the agreement, and both sides are expected to publish the details tomorrow.

ENDS