



Mr. Padraig Grant  
Clerk to the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2  
D02 XR20

Your Ref.: Ref: HPLG-i-783

Dear Padraig,

I refer to your letter from the Joint Committee of 23<sup>rd</sup> November in relation to the impact of Brexit on the housing market and specifically on the current work permit regime.

I think it would be useful at the outset to set-out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DEBI) in relation to the work permit regime. Work permits are granted by DEBI who are also responsible for policy in relation to meeting labour market demands. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of this Department work closely with DEBI to ensure that the issuing of immigration permissions are aligned with the issue of the work permit. It also sets out the policy in relation to family members of permit holders to join the sponsor in Ireland and provides for them to have access to the labour market in accordance with the terms and conditions on that policy.

Regarding the substantive point of the impact of Brexit on the need for additional labour from outside the EEA, it is unclear how Brexit, per say, will impact on the availability of labour. Under the arrangements as part of the Common Travel Area, UK nationals enjoy the right to come to Ireland and do not have to register their immigration permission to reside and work lawfully in the State. Both the Irish and UK Governments are committed to the continuation of the CTA and this position is endorsed by the EU Commission. Thus it is not envisaged that the UK moving outside of the EU will change current CTA arrangements post Brexit and accordingly it is not envisaged that it will impact the supply of labour available from the UK.

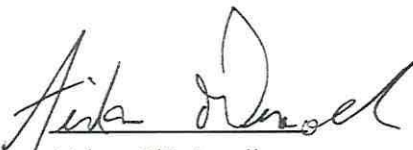
As outlined, the consideration of skills shortages in the construction industry (and generally in the labour market) is a matter for DEBI in the first instance. As I understand it, this is considered in the overall context of requirements generally in the marketplace as distinct from examining it through the specific prism of Brexit, although any such impacts would feed into that overall process. This Department will continue to work with DEBI to dovetail the work permit regime and the subsequent immigration permissions that follow.

I am advised that the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys T.D. has met recently with Construction Industry Federation (CIF) representatives to discuss the labour and skills challenges in the sector and engagement is ongoing with her officials, in consultation with officials from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

For the sake of completeness, INIS also operates a small number of schemes to provide immigration permissions with a right to work to some specific categories of non-EEA nationals not covered by the work permit regime. These include, for example, persons on short term contracts, temporary workers, etc. However, these categories are very much secondary to the main work permit regime and it is unlikely that Brexit will impact significantly on their operation.

I hope that this helps clarify the position and if you require any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Aidan O'Driscoll  
Secretary General

10 December, 2018