

## **Statement to Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union**

**Billy Gilpin, Director Train Operations, and Glenn Carr, General Manager, Rosslare Europort; Iarnród Éireann**

Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your invitation to attend today, to discuss the topic of **the impact on transport of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union**, as it relates to Iarnród Éireann. Our Chief Executive Jim Meade apologises that he is unavailable to be here today.

I will address our readiness for Brexit in the context of the operations of Enterprise services, and Mr Carr will do so in the context of our role as port authority for Rosslare Europort.

### **Enterprise and Brexit**

The Dublin to Belfast Enterprise service is jointly operated by Iarnród Éireann and our colleagues in Translink in Northern Ireland.

Since the committee last considered the impact of Brexit on transport services in 2017, we have continued to jointly work with Translink to understand the potential impact of Brexit on Enterprise services and to ensure – particularly as a “no deal” Brexit has become a more likely possible outcome – that we undertook the necessary measures to mitigate that impact, and ensure we continued to offer a seamless service to Enterprise customers.

This has been done with the support and guidance of officials of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and with the invaluable regulatory input and oversight of the Commission for Railway Regulation.

I am pleased to confirm to the committee that from a customer point of view, under all models of Brexit, Enterprise customers will see no change to the service we jointly provide with Translink.

In terms of European Directive 2012/34, as reflected in S.I. No.249 of 2015, the CRR is the Regulatory Body, Licensing Authority and Independent Monitoring Body for the heavy rail sector in the State. In addition to the regulation of rail safety, its functions include the Licensing of Railway Undertakings (more simply described as train operators) wishing to access the network.

Currently EU regulations allow Translink to operate south of the border based on the UK's EU membership and their drivers holding EU compliant Train Driving Licenses. Translink is well advanced in the process of obtaining approval from the CRR to be licensed as a Railway Undertaking in Ireland should a no-deal Brexit materialise.

If, for any reason, the licensing of Translink as a Railway Undertaking in Ireland is not completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October, we have developed proposals under which Enterprise Services south of the border would operate under Iarnród Éireann's operating arrangements and licences, pending the finalisation of Translink's status as a Railway Undertaking in Ireland.

As detailed, this understanding and progression of the licensing arrangements could not have been achieved without the practical and solution-based approach taken by the CRR and Department of Transport, and the partnership ethos between ourselves and Translink.

Regulatory matters will have been resolved in a manner which will protect the seamless service we provide with Translink, and which both companies have been proud to deliver.

Before I hand over to Mr Carr to discuss Rosslare's preparations, I'd like to briefly reassure the committee on the issue of fuel supply in the event of a hard Brexit. Iarnród Éireann on behalf of the three CIÉ operating companies keep defined minimum fuel supply levels, as provided for under the National Oil Reserves Agency standards, as part of the State's fuel security measures.

This equates to approximately two months supply for the operation of all rail and bus services across the CIÉ Group. We currently hold in excess of this level, with approximately three months supply, and intend to further increase these levels to ensure security of fuel supply for rail and bus services as contingency for any issues that potentially could arise in the early weeks of Brexit.

## **Rosslare Europort and Brexit**

Rosslare Europort is the second busiest Ro/Ro port in the country. On an average annual basis, the port handles up-to 120,000 freight trailers, 800,000 passengers, 20,000 trade cars and about 50,000 tonne of bulk.

The Port enjoys the advantage of having capacity, space and surrounding land availability to both ease the possible disruption of the Brexit process, and to attract new business. As the closest port to mainland Europe, Rosslare Europort offers the quickest direct sailing times to key European ports offering an alternative to the current use and dependency of the UK landbridge.

Opportunities for new routes are being explored with French, Belgian, Spanish and Dutch ports as well as with various shipping lines operating the Ro/Ro market.

Working closely with Government and State Agencies, Shipping lines and Haulage Industry, Rosslare Europort will be ready for both a no deal and transition deal on the 31st October.

Rosslare Europort was recommended and approved for significant facility upgrades as part of the government central case to meet Customs, Revenue, Agriculture and Immigration controls post-Brexit.

A 16 acre temporary Border Inspection Post (BIP) and facilities has been designed and built by the OPW which will help ensure that freight and passenger traffic will be efficiently discharged from the berths to the BIP away from the port which will help ensure any issues in the event of a no deal, will be managed in an orderly fashion as best as possible. The longer term Central case designs for permanent facilities are underway, and will link in with the Masterplan designs for the development of the port, also incorporating further improved road access and connections.

Additional resources in Customs, Revenue, Agriculture and Health have been recruited and trained by the relevant agencies to provide the necessary support and to ensure the efficient movement of freight and people through the port.

Through ongoing engagement with a stakeholder group with Government agencies, shipping lines and industry, both transition deal and no deal scenarios are finalised, with workshops and exercises having taken place, and more planned in the coming weeks.

Rosslare Europort would like to acknowledge the positive engagements and ongoing support through-out this process from the Department of An Taoiseach, Department of Transport,

Tourism & Sport, Finance, Agriculture, Health, Justice, OPW and the office of the Revenue Commissioner.

While a no deal Brexit brings fundamental changes and challenges as to how the movement of freight and people between the UK and Ireland at ports will operate, through the on-going contingency planning, communications process and the investment in infrastructure, resources and facilities at Rosslare Europort, these changes and challenges will be managed to ensure the efficient movement of trade and people between both countries.

We would be happy to address any queries you have on these matters.