

Brexit - for Ireland must include peace in Northern Ireland and open borders

Subtitle .: Foreign Minister Flanagan: We were prepared before the referendum for everything - lobbying for Irish core demands - unlimited commitment to the EU - effort to EU agencies

Dublin / London (APA) -

The decision of the British to leave the EU, affects the neighbouring country of Ireland probably more than most other EU countries. "We were disappointed, but not shocked. We had foreseen problems," said Ireland's Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan at the annual congress of the Association of European Journalists (AEJ). After all, Ireland has experience with eight national referendums.

Although Ireland would still prefer the United Kingdom to remain in the EU, it assumes that the British will proceed with Brexit in March 2017. It was prepared for anything, from "hard" to "soft" Brexit. The central goals for Ireland in the exit negotiations, for Flanagan are clear: maintain the peace process in Northern Ireland under the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, open borders to Northern Ireland, travel freedom and free as possible trade between the United Kingdom and Ireland. Flanagan also noted the need to raise awareness of Ireland's position in the EU capitals, London, Paris, Berlin and Brussels through diplomatic channels.

About 30,000 people daily cross the "invisible barrier" between Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) and the Republic of Ireland. Milk is "produced in the south, processed in the north and sold as Irish milk". And mackerel also fail to comply with invisible maritime borders. Trade between the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland amounts to 1.2 billion euros - per week. Although Flanagan hopes that the British keep the Customs Union, but he was not sure of this.

Flanagan leaves "no doubt about what team we will stand with when the negotiations begin: we are in the Team Europe". The EU is not perfect, but no other institution is perfect. He noted that much too little was said about the advantages and too much about the disadvantages. Too often, the EU was criticized about things it wasn't doing, things which had been forbidden her beforehand or which the member countries had not agreed.

Even if the exit of the British was negative, Flanagan noted other specific opportunities that open up: the banking centre in the City of London with a million jobs could tempt Dublin to offer itself as an alternative. Also new locations have to be found for the Medicines Agency EMA and the Banking Authority - both for Ireland to try. These agencies vying also Austria, as Finance Minister Hans Jörg Schelling and Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz (both ÖVP) had announced the end of June.

EU Task Force fighting against Russian propaganda

Subtitle .: EU media have taken over 2,000 false stories in the previous year - the focus of Russia's "disinformation" went from Syria and Ukraine via Turkey now to Germany and Merkel

The EU has its own unit, the Russian propaganda and misinformation exposes and refutes specifically for one year. Your English-Russian held website will not only inform Russians, but to inform people in the West. For the past year alone the East StratCom Task Force found 2,000 items in EU media, which were based on false Russian propaganda.

The easiest to debunk are stories on the known channels such as the tv channel Russia Today, about Sputnik or national media. More problematic are "dark networks" with "pseudo-NGOs" and "pseudo-think tanks", really bad "Troll networks" that are based within the EU psycho-terror, said a member of currently eleven East StratCom at the **AEJ** annual Congress in Kilkenny Ireland.

One must also not be restrained in describing the activity as propaganda. Because the Russian government is still very committed, by financing "disinformation channels", giving them weekly instructions on what to write, and from whom they quote and there are even penalties to enforce strict compliance with the guidelines. Even in the military doctrine it is clearly stated that destabilizing propaganda and false facts can be used and that cameras, video and Internet were "a weapon".

The range of disinformation is very large – a rich of historical revisionism about conspiracy theories, denial of facts ("There are no Russian troops in Ukraine"), threats and lies to absurd allegations. For example the EU has been accused within a week, that they would legalize pedophilia, incest, necrophilia and cannibalism.

Control is visible again: around the anti-Turkish propaganda that began after the shooting down of a Russian fighter plane over Syria and was instantly stopped after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russia's Vladimir Putin met and reconciled their differences.

Since January, the negative propaganda has turned against the EU, in particular Germany. And the most targeted person was German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Through the propaganda Russia can detract from developments at home on the one hand, while on the other hand trying to denigrate the West. That is already noticeable with a Russian accusation that a German-Russian had been raped in Germany, which in Germany could bring 12,000 people to the streets - and politicians in Russia continue to use the rape accusation as a fact, although it has proven to have never existed.

East Stratcom has two weekly publications on false stories out of Russia (<https://euvsdisinfo.eu>) including in the latest edition an Austrian case: Russian

President Vladimir Putin describing an Austrian Supreme Court judgment against a refugee from Iraq accused partly of rape and sexual abuse as an "acquittal" and deduced from this that a society that does not defend their children has no future. Of course, Russia is not working in a vacuum and there is distorted propaganda information in the West. But the difference is that there is a choice in western countries - British readers had media available so they could be informed objectively and factually correct before the Brexit referendum, while the media market in Russia was "very tight" and Russian information channels were targeted against the EU.

The East StratCom Task Force also noted the false objectivity by juxtaposition of two alleged different opinions. For instance the Russian propaganda channel Russia Today using an extreme opinion and a moderate opposite position – leaving in the minds of viewers the impression that truth lies probably in the middle. Instead of merely apparent balance it needed rather more "objectivity". The Task Force would like to reach the position that they are no longer needed. But the reality is otherwise, and just now it has had an increase of 16 persons and EUR 1.2 million budget: "It looks as if it would give us much longer."

"profil" editor Lahodynsky elected for another two years as **AEJ President**

"profil" editor Otmar Lahodynsky has been re-elected to two more years as president of the "Association of European Journalists" (**AEJ**). He has held the position since, 2014. The organization, founded in 1962 has also added a new section in its annual meeting held in Ireland Kilkenny Bosnia-Herzegovina.