

Legislative Monthly Newsletter

December 2020

Irish Political Developments



See [here](#) for more
Government
information on new
Covid-19 guidelines

New Covid Guidelines – Level 5 of the Plan for Living with Covid

Construction

- Construction will be closed with effect from 6pm on Friday 8th January, with limited exceptions for essential cases.

Click & Collect

- Click and collect from non-essential retail outlets should no longer be permitted with immediate effect. (Existing orders may be collected).
- Click and deliver will continue to be permitted.

International Travel

- From 9th January 2021, all passengers arriving at Irish airports and ports whose journey originates in Great Britain or South Africa will be requested to have evidence of a negative result from a PCR Covid-19 test taken up to 72 hours prior to arrival in Ireland.
- This new mandatory requirement will be in place until 31st January 2021, and will be kept under review in light of the evolving epidemiological situation.

Supports

- Both the EWSS and the PUP will remain in place until at least 31 March 2021 at the current rates.

Schools & Childcare

- Schools will remain closed until 1 February.
- Childcare services, including regulated childminders, will remain closed with the exception of services for vulnerable children and children of essential workers. Other existing childcare arrangements can continue to operate for vulnerable children and children of essential workers only.
- The resumption of the ECCE programme is delayed until 1 February.

Oireachtas Business

Recently discussed / considered Bills & Acts

- Joint Committee on Climate Action launch [report](#) on Pre-Legislative Scrutiny on the draft of the Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020
- Public Service Pay [Bill](#) 2020 (Dáil)
- Personal Insolvency (Amendment) [Bill](#) 2020 (Seanad)
- Investment Limited Partnerships (Amendment) [Bill](#) 2020 (Dáil)
- Finance [Bill](#) 2020 (Seanad)
- Planning and Development, and Residential Tenancies, [Bill](#) 2020 (Dáil)
- Health Insurance (Amendment) [Act](#) 2020
- Organisation of Working Time (Amendment) (Carry over of Annual Leave) (Covid-19) [Bill](#) 2020 (Dáil)

Consultations

Chambers Ireland past submissions

- Chambers Ireland's [submission](#) for the RSA Consultation by the Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030
- Chambers Ireland's [submission](#) for the Public Consultation by the Environmental Protection Agency on Green Public Procurement

Upcoming submissions for January & February

- Review of the [National Development Plan](#)
- Code of Practice for the 'Right to Disconnect'
- The National [Air Pollution Control Programme](#)
- [Employment Investment Incentive](#)

Please contact the Chambers Ireland team if you wish to discuss any of these consultations.

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European Political Developments

 EU Strategy for
Covid-19 vaccines

 Commission
published the EU
Strategy on Offshore
Renewable Energy

Brexit

EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement finalised

The [EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) concluded between the EU and the UK on 24 December sets out preferential arrangements in areas such as trade in goods and in services, digital trade, intellectual property, public procurement, aviation and road transport, energy, fisheries, social security coordination, law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, thematic cooperation and participation in Union programmes. It is underpinned by provisions ensuring a level playing field and respect for fundamental rights.

While it will by no means match the level of economic integration that existed while the UK was an EU Member State, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement goes beyond traditional free trade agreements and provides a solid basis for preserving our longstanding friendship and cooperation.

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement consists of:

- a [Free Trade Agreement](#), with ambitious cooperation on economic, social, environmental and fisheries issues,
- a [close partnership on citizens' security](#),
- an [overarching governance framework](#).

Foreign policy, external security and defence cooperation is not covered by the Agreement as the UK did not want to negotiate this matter.

In addition, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement does not cover any decisions relating to equivalences for financial services, the adequacy of the UK data protection regime, or the assessment of the UK's sanitary and phytosanitary regime for the purpose of listing it as a third country allowed to export food products to the EU. Indeed, these are unilateral decisions of the EU and are not subject to negotiation.

Trade

EU and China reach agreement in principle on investment

The EU and China have concluded in principle the negotiations for a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) as of 30 December 2020.

China has [committed](#) to a greater level of market access for EU investors than ever before, including some new important market openings. China is also making commitments to ensure fair treatment for EU companies so they can compete on a better level playing field in China, including in terms of disciplines for state owned enterprises, transparency of subsidies and rules against the forced transfer of technologies.

For the first time, China has also agreed to ambitious provisions on sustainable development, including commitments on forced labour and the ratification of the relevant [ILO fundamental Conventions](#).

In other news

- The Commission has proposed a €5 billion [Brexit Adjustment Reserve](#) to help counter the adverse economic and social consequences in the Member States and sectors that are worse affected.
- New rules on [importing and exporting plastic waste](#) have entered into force from 1 January 2021, banning the export of plastic waste from the EU to non-OECD countries, except for clean plastic waste sent for recycling.
- Irish consumers found to pay the [third highest](#) prices for communications (telephone, internet, postal, etc.) across the EU.