

## Irish Govt. Criticised For "Inaction" On Preparing For Brexit Fallout

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It has emerged that only a quarter of State agency posts announced by the Department of Jobs to deal with Brexit have been filled to date.

Stephen Donnelly, who is Fianna Fáil Spokesperson on Brexit, has criticised the Government for its inaction on preparing State agencies for the fallout associated with Brexit.

"The preparation undertaken by Minister for Jobs Mary Mitchell O'Connor for Brexit has been woefully inadequate to date," Stephen Donnelly tells Hot Press.

The Minister informed him that only 12 of the 39 posts in Enterprise Ireland have been filled, only 1 of 10 posts at the IDA and no additional staff are in place in either Science Foundation Ireland or the Health and Safety Authority.

"The Government committed to providing a 50 additional posts to prepare Ireland for Brexit, but now we find that only 13 staff are actually in place," he points out.

The TD continues: "The Irish Exporters Association recently described Irish businesses as being 'woefully unprepared' for Brexit. Despite 15 in 20 companies believing that they will be impacted, only 3 in 20 have done anything about it.

Unfortunately the State itself is not leading by example as it is leaving key posts unfilled as we head towards Brexit.

"Despite it being almost a year on from the referendum the Government has not yet woken up to the reality of the economic impact that Brexit will have on every region in Ireland. Their failure to properly



resource and staff our State agencies means that we are also ill-prepared to capitalise on the few potential gains that are to be had because of Brexit.

"The lack of urgency by the Government in preparing State agencies for Brexit is deeply disappointing."

Stephen Donnelly, who was the focus of the 'Hot Press Interview' back in January, said that Fianna Fáil is now calling on Minister Mitchell O'Connor to "act urgently to address this shortfall".

He urged her to provide "monthly updates" to the Dáil on recruitment. "With only 22 months left in the Article 50 negotiations, and no deadline in place for future trade talks, Irish businesses cannot be allowed to go without the supports they need," he concludes.