

Downing Street believes a major rescue mission needs to be launched after the EU threatened to introduce border checks on the island of Ireland. The very thing Brussels spent four years trying to stop. Ministers insist they are embarking on a genuine attempt to restore trust within Northern Ireland. Others detect a heaven sent opportunity for the UK to water down some of the most difficult aspects of the Brexit divorce.

Nationalists are calling for a calm approach. It's important that we all approach this in a cool-headed and calm way. Yes, we were disappointed and frustrated by what the European Commission said it was intending to do last Friday night, but of course it didn't actually do that. It didn't trigger Article 16. Yes, by all means, if the UK and EU can agree a set of easements and processes to make the protocol work better we're up for that. That's great, that's what we want. But let's be absolutely clear, the protocol needs to be upheld, it needs to be made to work, because it's a product of UK Government choices.