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**For Oral Answer on : 26/06/2019**  
**Question Number(s): 55,62 Question Reference(s): 26892/19, 26893/19**  
**Department: Justice and Equality**  
**Asked by: Brendan Smith T.D.**

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### QUESTION

\* To ask the Minister for Justice and Equality his views on the need to provide additional staffing resources to the Border region for the remainder of 2019 and 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Brendan Smith T.D.

For ORAL answer on Wednesday, 26 June, 2019.

\* To ask the Minister for Justice and Equality his views on the need to provide additional staffing resources to the Border region in 2020 in view of the adverse impacts of Brexit; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Brendan Smith T.D.

For ORAL answer on Wednesday, 26 June, 2019.

### REPLY

As the Deputy is aware, the manner in which the resources of the Garda Síochána are deployed is solely a matter for the Garda Commissioner and his management team and I, as Minister, have no direct role in this regard.

However, I can assure the Deputy that Garda management keeps the distribution of resources under continual review in the context of crime trends and policing priorities so as to ensure that optimum use is made of resources.

It is Government policy that we are not countenancing a hard border but, both the Government and An Garda Síochána are acutely aware that Brexit does increase the risk that dissidents and criminals may seek to undermine peace on the island and engage in general illegal cross border activities.

Garda deployments in all areas of the country, including those along the Border, have benefitted from increased recruitment in recent years. Since the reopening of the Garda College in September 2014, almost 2,800 recruits have attested as members of An Garda Síochána, with 346 of those assigned to the border region. I am advised by the Commissioner that the strength of the Northern Region as of 30 April 2019, the latest date for which figures are currently available, was 1,452 Gardaí. There are 57 Garda Reserves and 153 Garda civilian staff attached to the Northern Region. An additional 50 Gardaí were assigned to the region with effect from 7 June 2019.

The increased resources coming on stream have provided the Commissioner with the capacity to expand the resources available to the specialist bureaus that come within the ambit of Special Crime Operations including the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Armed Support Units, the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau and the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau all of which are particularly active in the Northern Region.

The Commissioner has been provided with an additional €100 million in 2019 bringing his total budget to almost €1.8 billion. This substantial investment will allow the accelerated

recruitment programme to continue at the same time as new and leading edge technology is deployed to support our front line Gardaí in carrying out their work and increasing visibility. The Garda Commissioner has informed me that it is his intention to recruit a total of 600 trainee Gardaí in 2019 along with a net 600 Garda Staff (civilians). The recruitment of these additional Garda staff will allow the Commissioner to redeploy this year a further 500 fully trained Gardaí from administrative duties to the frontline duties for which they are trained. I believe that the injection of this large number of experienced officers into the field, along with the new recruits, will be really beneficial in terms of protecting communities. This and on-going recruitment will clearly provide the Commissioner with the resources needed to deploy increasing numbers of Gardaí to deliver a visible, effective and responsive policing service. As part of this ongoing increase in Garda resources, the Commissioner has deployed a number of additional Gardaí to border counties in recent months and this will continue.

In the event that a “no deal” Brexit gives rise to additional requirements in border areas, further resources can be provided through normal deployment. These requirements will be kept under ongoing review by Garda management with a view to addressing any policing requirements for the Border region which may arise depending upon the outcome of the Brexit negotiations.

The Deputy will also be aware that there is close and ongoing cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI on all aspects of policing, with a particular focus on combatting security threats and cross-border crime. The Garda Commissioner and the Chief Constable of the PSNI, who are responsible for operational policing cooperation, have repeatedly emphasised the scope and the value of the close and high quality cooperation between the two police services in combating crime, protecting community safety and saving lives. The two police services operate a joint Cross-Border Policing Strategy which has as its aims to improve public safety throughout Ireland, to disrupt criminal activity and to enhance the policing capability of both police services on the island.

I want to assure the Deputy that An Garda Síochána has the full support of the Government in dealing with the implications of Brexit and will provide the necessary resources to keep our people and our communities safe.