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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Government Misguided in Approach to Irish Border Question**

Following the news that the EU has rejected all of the UK Government’s suggestions for resolving the Northern Irish border issue, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) says that the Government’s current approach is misguided and fails to recognise many of the central concerns about food.

A report in the Daily Telegraph claimed that all of the UK’s current proposals for avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic after Brexit had been dismissed out of hand by the EU as unworkable. Having ruled out a customs union with the EU, the UK instead set out plans for either a customs partnership or a customs arrangement. Both of which options are unsatisfactory to EU negotiators.

Although the UK has so far focussed on “technological solutions” as a way of allowing frictionless border traffic in Ireland and at other ports of entry into the UK, a recent paper published by CIEH and the Food Research Collaboration at City University has made it clear that such solutions simply do not currently exist and don’t address the need for physical checks.

**Tony Lewis, Head of Policy at CIEH, said:**

“It is very disappointing to see the Government continuing with this misguided approach to the key issue of the Northern Irish border post-Brexit.

It has been made very clear to British negotiators that by solely pursuing technological solutions, they are ignoring the continuing need for physical inspection of food imported into the UK. Such inspections, by competent environmental health professionals, ensures that food is what it claims to be, comes from where it says it does and is safe.

The apparent inability to distinguish between customs checks and food safety measures is deeply concerning, and we strongly urge the Government to talk to food safety professionals to ensure that our food supply and safety systems are properly prepared for Brexit.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

1. The new paper from CIEH and the Food Research Collaboration, *Food, Brexit and Northern Ireland: Critical Issues*, can be downloaded here: <http://foodresearch.org.uk/publications/food-brexit-northern-ireland/>

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**About the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH):**

CIEH is the professional voice for environmental health representing more than 8,000 members working in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It ensures the highest standards of professional competence in its members, in the belief that through environmental health action people's health can be improved.

Environmental health has an important and unique contribution to make to improving public health and reducing health inequalities. CIEH campaigns to ensure that government policy addresses the needs of communities and business in achieving and maintaining improvements to health and health protection.

For more information visit [www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org/) and follow CIEH on Twitter [@The\_CIEH](https://twitter.com/The_CIEH).