Writing for Unity News Úachtaran Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald said:
“There is a growing conversation throughout Ireland about the constitutional future of the island. It is an exciting and dynamic discussion about an opportunity few have in the modern world; to build a new society shaped from the ground up by the people.
The debate on Irish unity is now at the heart of the political agenda in a way not seen since partition was imposed a century ago. Partition was a disaster for Ireland, North and South. It divided our land, our people and our economy. The imposition of Brexit against the democratically expressed wishes of the people of the North has brought partition once again into sharp relief. The British government’s disregard of the majority vote against Brexit in 2016 is encouraging a rethink by many about the potential for a new Ireland, a shared Ireland. More and more people believe a new Ireland is possible.
Independent economic studies have shown that a United Ireland would bring economic and employment benefits. Civic society groups are campaigning and holding online events discussing Irish unity. Recently groups of trade unionists have joined together to play their part in the conversation and to advocate for Irish unity in the interest of workers’ rights. Irish America too, which played a key role in the peace process, is joining in the conversation. Successive opinion polls have also shown increasing numbers of people wanting Irish unity.
Sinn Féin is not calling for a referendum to be held tomorrow or next week. There is a need for preparation and for a proper debate and discussion. It is also important to note that many unionists are already taking part in this conversation.
So, the Irish government needs to lead the way. It should bring forward a white paper on Irish unity and convene a Citizens’ Assembly/Convention inclusive of the entire island to address the many issues arising from the process of constitutional change. One thing we can be certain of – the referendum on Irish unity will take place. Sinn Féin members need to prepare now for it. That means being fully informed on all the issues involved and persuading others in your circle of friends, family, work place and community of the merits of Unity. It means making alliances with others of like mind so that an unstoppable momentum is created. That cannot happen without you.”

Mary Lou McDonald, TD

Ag scríobh do Unity News dúirt Úachtaran Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald:
"Tá an comhrá ar fud na hÉireann faoi thu thodhcháil bunreachtúil ar an oileán ag dul i mhead. Plé corrataethch dínnimicilé is an taoif dhíthin ag bhréan in i sáol an lae inniu; sochaí nua a churthú ón talamh anois ag na daoine.
Tá an dispoipóireacht ar aontacht na hÉireann anois i gcróil an chlár oibre pholaitiúil ar an bhfeidhmiú le feincas a tháirgeadh an chónchartheacht céad bliain ó shin. Tubaiste d’Éirinn, Thuisdágh agus Theas ba ea an chónchartheacht.
Rinnean tòir, an mhuintir agus an geilleagar a roinnt.
Toisc gur cuireadh an Breatimeacht i bhfeidhm i gcoinne thoil mhuintir an Tuaisceart Léiriothadh tódh fhéin mhór arís ar an mbreataimeacht. Tá naomhaidh rialtas na Breataine ar vóta an tromlaigh i gcoinne an Bhréatimeachta in 2016 ag spreagadh athenachtaíochtaí go go leor daoine bhífidh dearthacht chun mbeadh Eire nua ann, Éire chomhoireadaithe.
Creideann níos mó agus níos mó daoine gur féidir Éire a chruthú.
Taispeáann sláidéachtaí eacnamaíochta neamhspleáchach go mbeadh buntáistí eacnamaíochta agus fosfaíochtaí ann ach Éire Aontaithe a bheith ann. Tá grúpaí de shaoránaidh i mbun feachtas agus ag reáchtáil imeachtaí ar an t-áit ag plé aontacht na hÉireann.
Le deinethin tháinig grúpaí ceartchumhachtach an chlár chun páirt a ghlacadh sa chomhrá agus chun aontacht na hÉireann a mhalaí in aonarthacht an tseicrta oibrithe. Tá Éire Mheiriceá freisin, a raibh ról lárnach aige i bhpríosnaíochtaí na sléacht, ag glacadh páirt sa chomhrá.
Taispeánn an phobal tráchteachtaí rothaithe lú mheadadaitheach aonad atá ag iarraidh aontacht na hÉireann.
Nil Sinn Féin ag éileamh go réadachtaír reifreann amraíoch nó an tseachtain seachasann. Tá gá le hulmhú agus le haghaidh dispoipóireacht agus plé ceart. Tá sé tábhachtach a thabhairt faoi deara go bhfuil go leor aontachtaithe ag glacadh páirt sa chomhrá seo cheana féin.
Mar sin, caithfadh rialtas na hÉireann an bealach a theorú. Ba cheart dó páipéar bár an aontacht na hÉireann a thabhairt ar aghaidh agus Tionól / Coinbhinsiuí Saoránach a thionól a chúimsíonn an t-oileán ar fad chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar an iliomad saincheisteanna a éiríonn as an bhpríosnaíochta a bhréiftear bunreachtúil.
Rud amháin a féidir linn a bheith cíntse de - beidh reifreann an. Tá sé de dhualgas ar Pholáistínaigh, mar aon le daoine éile ar aon intinn, ullamh dom reifreann sin chun a chinnithiú mbíonn an lár linn.

Mary Lou McDonald, TD
Republicans believe that society must reflect and include the entirety of its people, not part of them. People have rights and entitlements. Their human dignity must be acknowledged and upheld. Inclusivity is vital. Equality is vital.

In the North political and religious sectarianism poses a significant challenge to this. As part of our desire for a greater understanding of the issues involved and of the measures needed to confront sectarianism and hate Sinn Féin this month commenced an internal dialogue on inclusion and reconciliation. A new policy document will be published shortly on these vital matters.

A number of online meetings have been held by Declan Kearney and others in our leadership. These have been very well attended and the conversations have been engaged, positive and grounded in our republican philosophy. It is important that these discussions are brought into every Cumann and Comhairle Ceantair.

To that end, Sinn Féin welcomes the establishment of Plé32. It has been acknowledged and upheld. Inclusivity is vital. Equality is vital.

Among the proposals that will be contained in the paper: ‘Inclusion and Reconciliation in a New Ireland’ will be the provision of an all-island Charter of Rights to protect the status, rights and aspirations of all citizens. It will reflect the commitments in the Good Friday Agreement to the right to equal opportunity, the right of women to full and equal political participation and the right to freedom from sectarian harassment, and much more.

Proposals will also call for an anti-sectarian charter to be included in the pledge of Office for Ministers, MLAs TDs and local Councillors and an all island reconciliation strategy under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council.

So, as the discussion on the unity referendum and a united Ireland increases; as new ideas and proposals emerge with increasing momentum around the shape and form of that new Ireland republicans need the most informed debate possible. Everything should be on the table for discussion. That’s the way forward.

IRISH AMERICA AND IRISH UNITY

While no one was able to travel to the USA this St. Patrick’s Day because of the pandemic restrictions it was still nonetheless a good couple of weeks for the peace process, the Good Friday Agreement, the demand for the referendum on unity and for the campaign for a United Ireland.

Friends of Sinn Féin successfully fund-raised the money to pay for major adverts in the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Irish American papers.

Under the banner headline: ‘A United Ireland: Let the People have their say’, the message was clear. “The Good Friday Agreement has changed Ireland for the better. Challenges remain but twenty-three years on Ireland continues to seek the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Unionist electoral majority in the North is gone. Their rights, and the rights of all, are guaranteed in a United Ireland.

It will be a welcoming home for all… As Americans, we call upon our government and public representatives to urge the British Government to set the date for the referendum on Ireland.

The debate surrounding the reunification of Ireland has begun across a wide range of sectors. However, to date there has been a lack of debate through the medium of Irish on the future of the Irish Language in an all-Ireland state.

To that end, Sinn Féin welcomes the establishment of Plé32. It has been set up as a social media based campaign that seeks to promote the Irish Language through the medium of Irish for the ever-growing number of Irish speakers.

Plé32 will also seek to engage with all the various parts of the Irish Language Sector in the coming period.

How will Irish Unity affect the growth of Irish Medium Education? How will the Gaeltacht Regions be better served in a 32 county state? What role will the language have in ongoing reconciliation work?

Cónall Ó Corra, Sinn Féin Irish Language Officer, said, “This is an exciting opportunity for Pobal na Gaeilge to become involved in the mainstream discussion on the creation of a New Ireland and the role our language will play in that. I would encourage everyone to become involved with it.”

Plé32 can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

#Time4Unity Am d’Aontacht

Tá Plé32 ar Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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The initiative was supported by the Ancient Order of Hibernians; the Brehon Law Society; Friends of Sinn Fein, USA; Irish American Unity Conference; James Connolly Irish American Labor Coalition; Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. The ads also had the effect of generating significant interest in the Irish media.

In addition a cross party group of Senators introduced a resolution in the Senate reaffirming bipartisan support for the Good Friday Agreement and for the Irish Protocol. Subsequently Úachtarán Shín Féin Mary Lou McDonald and Joint First Minister Michelle O’Neill briefed the Congressional Friends of Ireland Caucus on Capitol Hill. And later still Michelle joined with DUP leader and Joint First Minister Arlene Foster in a conference call with President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Once again the US administration made clear its support for the Good Friday Agreement. That would not happen without the endeavours of United Ireland activists in North America. Thank you. Keep up the good work.
Almost 200 trade union activists from across the island attended the launch in March of a new discussion paper produced by Trade Unionists for a New and United Ireland (TUNUI). The paper entitled Uniting Ireland – Uniting Workers’ sets out TUNUI’s vision of the constitutional change needed. The event was chaired by ICTU President Gerry Murphy and heard contributions in a personal capacity from notable trade unionists such as CWU general secretary Stevie Fitzpatrick; Fórsa’s Siobhán Curran and Ethel Buckley.

Artist Robert Ballagh told the audience that trade unionists; “need to be ambitious and visionary about Irish unity. We cannot stitch together the two states. We have to be open to exciting and new suggestions …Our vision for a new Ireland must leave behind the mistakes of the past and ensure it is not a cold house for anyone.”

TUNUI’s ambitious objectives for a United Ireland include:

- An All-Ireland National Health Service
- A Bill of Rights
- Decent pay and strong workers’ legislation
- All-Ireland Climate Action
- A Constitutional Right to housing
- Fair and Progressive taxation

‘Uniting Ireland – Uniting Workers’ also identifies ways trade unionists can engage with this initiative and promote a United Ireland.

- Put forward motions in favour of Irish Unity or an Irish Unity referendum to your union conference.
- If you are a member of your local Trades Council, ask them to support the work of TUNUI.
- Share this document with others in your union.
- Hold debates and discussions on Irish Unity in your union branches and national executive.
- Get involved in Trade Unionists for a New and United Ireland.
- Invite TUNUI to give a talk to your union branch or local trades council.
- Add your name to the list of sponsors supporting TUNUI.

For those who wish to get involved, the group have a website www.tu4ui.com where you can sign up to the initiative. TUNUI are also looking for trade union branches to put motions in support of Irish Unity to their union conferences.

Representatives of the group are planning to engage with any trade union branch, executive or trades council to encourage them to play an active role in the Irish Unity debate.

For United Irelanders the month of March was a busy time. In the USA friends of Sinn Féin and a range of other Irish American organisations placed St. Patrick’s Day adverts in major newspapers on the issue of Irish Unity.

The Claire Byrne programme was widely watched for its debate on Unity and the conversation between Uachtaran Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald TD and Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD. Fianna Fáil TD Jim O’Callaghan’s entry into the debate the night after the RTE programme in his speech in Cambridge on ‘The political, economic and legal consequences of Irish reunification’ generated lots of interest. In the same week eight Councils – four in the North and four in the South came together to pool their resources and co-ordinate their efforts to enhance the Belfast to Dublin economic corridor. And Ireland’s Future published – Planning for a Strong Economy in a New Ireland.

https://irelandsfuture.com/publications/planning-strong-economy-new-ireland/

So, there is a lot going on around the campaign for a United Ireland. The focus of Republicans must be on increasing that momentum.

- That means finding new and innovative ways in which to encourage discussions;
- Persuade local Councils to examine their role in this process;
- Encouraging conversations with the local Trades Councils;
- or Chamber of Commerce; or in your workplace or within your sporting organisations.

As Bobby Sands reminded us all: “Everyone, Republican or otherwise has their own particular part to play. No part is too great or too small, no one is too old or too young to do something.”
At the beginning of March Sinn Féin MEP for Midlands Northwest Chris MacManus organised a very successful briefing with MEPs and their staffers on the Economic Benefits of a United Ireland and the role of the European Union in this process. The meeting was attended by over 20 European Parliamentarians and their staff and was addressed by Úachtaran Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald TD, the party’s finance spokesperson Pearse Doherty TD and Chris MacManus MEP.

Pearse Doherty TD presented the party’s publication The Economic Benefits of a United Ireland which was published last November. He told his audience that: “Irish Unity makes sense. It will create new opportunities and new prosperity for all people across the island. Our paper reveals an island economy capable of expanding its economic potential, creating new jobs, better paid jobs, building a better standard of living of all its citizens and first class public services, including a health service for everyone.”

Speaking after the event Chris MacManus said: “This briefing was the first of many similar events. There is a growing confidence in Europe that reunification is now a very achievable target and the support we’ve seen today really confirms that. Events like this are an important building block in the conversation of Unity.”

Unity is solution to Protocol

Simon Coveney, Dublin’s Minister for Foreign Affairs said the UK is a negotiating partner the EU ‘simply can’t trust’. Something Irish republicans have known for quite some time.

This comes after Britain decided unilaterally to extend grace periods for supermarkets and not implement other elements of the Irish Sea Protocol. Europe has announced it will launch legal challenges to this move.

The Irish Protocol in the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement was a complicated solution to some of the worst elements of Brexit for the North of Ireland and a way of preventing a land border on the island of Ireland whilst also protecting the integrity of the EU’s internal market.

But within months of its existence Britain is now picking and choosing which parts the Protocol it will implement, and unionism is pushing for the Protocol in its entirety to be scrapped. The obvious solution to this problem is Irish reunification. The unity referendum provided for in the Good Friday Agreement and the EU’s commitment to automatic membership of the EU of a United Ireland provides a clear path forward.

United Ireland car stickers for Cork

Recently Cork City Comhairle Ceantair embarked on an initiative to raise awareness around Irish Unity. The Comhairle Ceantair undertook a Uniting Ireland car sticker campaign.

The initial print run of 300 car stickers were gone in a few hours following promotion through social media. These stickers are inexpensive to produce and are in such demand in Cork that the initiative is going to be replicated across the Munster Cuige. The campaign for Irish Unity needs public expression. A visible, vibrant and simple campaign like this demonstrates one way of raising the profile of the demand for Unity. Other areas should consider replicating this initiative and developing some of their own.

Bronntanais Mala Na Casca

The recent United Ireland Easter Egg - an Bronntanais Mala Na Casca - was a great success. The problem was there were not enough of them. We knew that from the start. This was always going to be a tester and a teaser for next Easter. On the basis of the current and ongoing interest it is a success. Getting a United Ireland Easter Egg is like the search for All Ireland tickets in the past.

Le cuidiú De next year we will do a big United Ireland Easter Egg extravaganza. And intensify our Uniting Ireland activism in the meantime.