

# UNITY NEWS

#TIME4UNITY  
#AM LE HAONTACHT

NUACHT NA HAONTACHTA

DECEMBER NOLLAIG 2021

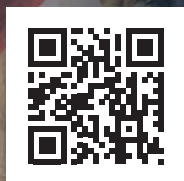
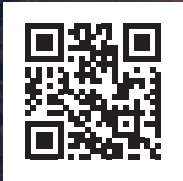
## Nollaig Shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise agus faoi shíocháin

Unity News wish Sinn Féin activists everywhere a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous and revolutionary New Year. Nollaig shona do gach duine agus bliain úr faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.

This Christmas the Uniting Ireland group is producing a series of United Ireland Christmas presents for friends and family and to promote our UI objective.

Next week 500 piece jigsaws will arrive from the Basque country. The theme is 'Building a United Ireland piece by piece.' There are also Santa hats and stockings with the slogan 'All I want for Christmas is a United Ireland.' And there are baubles for the Christmas tree and there are Christmas cards.

All of these are available through The Sinn Féin Bookshop, 58 Parnell Square; [www.sinnfeinbookshop.com](http://www.sinnfeinbookshop.com) and An Fhuisseog, 55 Falls Road; [www.thelarkstore.ie](http://www.thelarkstore.ie)



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht





**“In early 2022, Sinn Féin will begin to convene People’s Assemblies, inviting citizens and civic sectors to have their say on the new Ireland. This initiative will be a key contribution from our party to help grow the political momentum for Irish unity.”**

**DECLAN KEARNEY**



The momentum for constitutional change has never been stronger. A hugely important conversation about Ireland’s future is taking place.

A defining watershed in British, Irish and European relations has opened up. Some from a British identity and unionist tradition have begun to reassess what this means. Significantly, others within civic unionism are refusing to have their horizons limited by sectarianism and right wing politics.

Next year Sinn Féin will formally launch our ‘Have your Say; The New Ireland is for Everyone’ initiative. The party will convene the first of the People’s Assemblies, inviting citizens and civic sectors to have their say on the political and constitutional future of the island of Ireland.

Our intention is to organise these People’s Assemblies in Ireland, and also internationally to give the global Irish diaspora a voice on shaping the future of our island.

Our 18-month long process of engagement, culminating in a published report, is not a substitute for the Citizens’ Assembly, which the Irish government must convene, but it will assist in encouraging dialogue, developing new ideas and concepts and planning for and building the necessary momentum for the unity referendum and to win that referendum.

The challenge of securing Irish unity will be immense, but like our peace process, it too can be achieved.

There is no justification for the Fine Gael/Fianna Fáil/Green Party coalition government’s failure to establish the Citizen’s Assembly. A Sinn Féin government in Dublin will immediately redress that democratic deficit.

Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil created Ireland as it has been.

Sinn Féin looks beyond Ireland as it is... towards what it can become.

**THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE** **ÉIRE NUA DON UILE DHUINE**



# Unity in our Time DAY OF ACTION

On Saturday 13 November Belfast and Dublin held a Day of Action to promote the party’s campaign for a referendum on Irish Unity. Activists in all parts of Belfast and Dublin took to the streets and roundabouts with banners, posters and loudhailers calling for support for Irish Unity.

There were white line pickets across Belfast and Dublin City, as well as on the Ha’penny Bridge on the Liffey. Every area should organise your own Day of Action.

Paul Maskey MP thanked all of those who took part in Belfast and Dublin events. He said: “We had a great response. The roads were busy but the drivers took the time to beep their horns in solidarity with the demand for a unity referendum and ‘A United Ireland is for everyone.’”

Paul Maskey said:

“Hardly a week passes without new polls or opinion pieces and articles in the mainstream media calling for Irish Unity. In particular the demand for a Citizens Assembly to be established by the Irish government is now widely recognised as the way forward. Irish Unity won’t happen because we want it or are wishing for it but only if we plan for it. People North and South must have a say in the shape of the New Ireland. It can’t be the old Ireland. It can’t be the North simply joining the South. It must a New Ireland - inclusive, open and democratic, in which all of our citizens are embraced as equals.”

The Day of Action also saw the new Bobby Sands mural being officially unveiled on the International Wall in Divis Street. It is based on a photo of Bobby taken at the first major political status march in August 1976 in which he participated as part of the colour party. His image is set against the backdrop of the Black Mountain.

Not to be outdone the Liam Lynch Cumann in Fermoy/Mitchelstown in East Cork also held their Day of Action.

**When your local Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair holds a similar event make sure your regional secretary gets a report and photograph to pass on to Unity News.**

**#Time4Unity Am d’Aontacht**



# Unity in our Time DAY OF ACTION



# GAELS CALL FOR CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

12,000 Ulster Gaels are appealing to their fellow Gaels in Munster, Leinster and Connaught to sign and endorse a letter to An Taoiseach Micheál Martin asking the Irish government to take the lead in planning for Irish Unity by establishing an All-Island Citizens' Assembly "reflecting the views of citizens North and South to achieve maximum consensus on a way forward" toward an "agreed shared Ireland."

The letter states: "It is the responsibility of the Irish government to ensure that the democratic rights of all citizens are respected and protected, regardless of where they live on the island ... "

The letter to Micheál Martin was an idea that first emerged in Antrim earlier this year. Since then it has spread across the nine counties of Ulster and has gathered over 12,000 signatures. The campaign has also gained substantial support in the other three provinces.

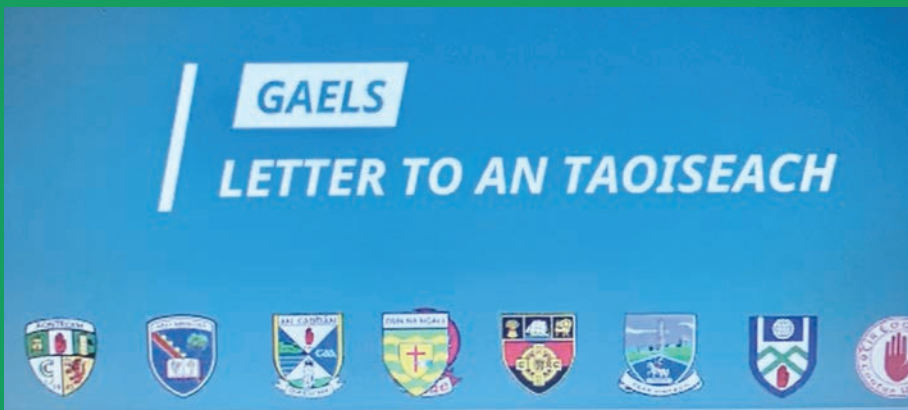
Paul Gibbons who coaches Cremartin Shamrocks GAA in told his local paper the Northern Standard: "The purpose of the letter is to highlight the growing conversation taking place in communities the length and breadth of our island about the future constitutional direction of this island and to provide a platform for Gaels throughout the county to engage in that conversation."

He added: "Our letter articulates three main asks of the Irish government – to take the lead in the planning for a future border poll and start the planning for the future re-unification of this island; to establish a Citizens' Assembly and to protect the rights of all citizens."

Thus far An Taoiseach Micheál Martin has refused to comment on the initiative or respond to the letter which he first received in May. But as it says in the video – Ní neart go cur le chéile. There is strength in Unity.

Pádraig Hampsey is captain of the All Ireland Champions Tyrone. He has appealed to fellow Gaels to join in this effort, and to sign up to the letter at: [www.gaellettertotaoiseach.ie](http://www.gaellettertotaoiseach.ie)

If you have a minute click on to #gaelletter and watch the amazing video of GAA greats asking you for your help and support in building a better future for all of our people.



## #Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



# UNITING IRELAND LEAFLET AVAILABLE

In response to requests from the party the Ard Chomhairle sub-committee on Uniting Ireland has produced an A5 leaflet – **A United Ireland is For Everyone/ Éire Aontaithe Don Uile Dhuine** - which can be used by party members as an engagement tool.

The leaflet outlines the key issues in progressing and planning for the referendum on Irish Unity and what is needed to win that referendum.

- The Irish government must establish a national Citizen's Assembly to discuss the future of Ireland.
- The British and Irish governments need to set a date for the Referendum on Irish Unity.

This leaflet is ideal for street stalls, days of action, or door to door leaflet drops and any area that wants to get the leaflet should contact their local regional secretary.

ALL CAMPAIGNING MUST BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN COVID RESTRICTIONS.



**A UNITED IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE**

ÉIRE AONTAITHE DON UILE DHUINE  
(Pléimís é, Déanaimís le chéile é)

MARY LOU McDONALD TD  
Uachtarán Shinn Féin

MICHELLE O'NEILL M.L.A.  
Leas Uachtarán Shinn Féin

Let's talk about it  
Déanaimís le chéile é

**Aontacht na hÉireann**

IS THE BIG IDEA OF OUR TIME

The time has come to prepare for the change that is coming

The New United Ireland that Sinn Féin want to build WILL HAVE CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AT ITS CORE

CEARTA NA SAORÁNACH

The Irish Government must establish a national Citizen's Assembly to discuss the future of Ireland

The British and Irish governments need to set a date for the Referendum on Irish Unity

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

To find out more about the Uniting Ireland campaign please visit [www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity](http://www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity) or [irish-unity@sinnfein.ie](mailto:irish-unity@sinnfein.ie)

# Crann na Saoirse

In October Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald planted a Crann na Saoirse – a Unity Tree – as part of the party's campaign of building momentum and conversation around this key republican objective.  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1086096352134100>

Since then many other areas have begun planting their Unity Tree. In Belfast Gerry Kelly and Carál Ní Chuilín planted their trees. Carál planted hers in the Memorial Garden in the New Lodge. Danny Baker, who was just selected to stand in next year's Assembly election for west Belfast, planted his Crann na Saoirse on the Michael Ferguson Roundabout at Poleglass. In Derry Cllr Conor Heaney, Pádraig Delargy MLA and Ciara Ferguson MLA were joined by Martina Anderson for the planting of their Crann na Saoirse.

In Fermanagh, in Cork and in Ennis trees have been planted. The tree, at Upper Aubane just outside Millstreet Co Cork, was planted at the monument to Seán Riobáird O Suilleabháin after whom the local Cumann is named.

If your local Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair has planted a Crann na Saoirse make sure your regional secretary forwards photo and details to the UI Committee.

The Crann na Saoirse symbolizes our republican commitment to a united Ireland. Danny Baker said: "Our Unity Trees will grow big and strong in a United Ireland. As we continue to build political strength and grow support for a United Ireland so too will these trees grow in size and stand tall."







# BREXIT BORDER PROTESTS

On Saturday 20 November many hundreds of people took part in a series of protests against Brexit along the border. The 'Border Communities Against Brexit'(BCAB) has been very effective in raising awareness around the threat to the Good Friday Agreement, to the economy of the island of Ireland and especially to the border communities, posed by Brexit.

'Protect the Protocol' and 'Back off Boris' were the two main themes for the five protests that took place at Carrickcarnon; Belcoo/Blacklion; Aughnacloy; Lifford Bridge and Bridgend, Derry. The message from all of the speakers was the same. Firstly, a warning to Boris Johnson not to trigger Article 16. Secondly, a demand that every effort must be made by the EU and the Irish government to defend the Protocol and the Good Friday Agreement.

Colin Harvey, who is professor of Human

Rights Law at Queen's University told the crowd at Carrickcarnon: "The Protocol mitigates the damage that the British Brexiteers want to impose on this island ... what is scandalous is the lack of discussion about the opportunities that the Protocol provides for all the people of the North."

The Chair of BCAB Damian McGenity reminded those at the protest that the majority of citizens in the North voted to remain in the EU and that a majority of their political representatives support the Protocol. He pointed too to the benefits of the Protocol. Evidence of this emerged last week in the latest statistics on trade from the Central Statistics Office in Dublin which showed that the value and amount of trade between the North and the South has increased dramatically.

In the first nine months of this year trade North to South has increased by 60 per cent and from South

to North by 48 per cent in the same period. In money terms exports from the North to the South have so far increased in 2021 by €1,061m (£897m) to €2,822m (£2,385m). Trade South to North has jumped by €835m (£706m) to €2,577m (£2,178m).

In addition, the advantage for the North of having open access to the EU and to the British market has seen several important new job announcements. Ardagh Metal Packaging announced its intention to invest \$200m and create 170 jobs in a new beverage can plant near Belfast. The pharmaceuticals group, Almac, also announced that it is going to create 1,000 jobs over the next three years.

The all-island economy is growing stronger by the month. The positive effect of this for jobs and investment and prosperity across the island of Ireland is self-evident.



# THE RED C POLL ON UNITY



BY GERRY ADAMS

Opinion polls are no more than a glimpse into the public mood at a given moment. They can change dramatically and for those who are doing well in party political opinion polls they are no guarantee of success in a future election. That's why I rarely pay too much

heed to them.

Last weekend a Red C poll for the Sunday Business Post looked at public attitudes in the South to the issue of a United Ireland, a Citizen's Assembly and other matters. For those campaigning for Irish Unity the poll confirms that the debate on unity has increased and is a priority issue for many people.

Despite the refusal of An Taoiseach Micheál Martin to plan for or organise a considered discussion on the issue of unity 60% of people polled are ready to vote in favour of a united Ireland today. 62% also believe that the Irish government should start planning for a united Ireland now. I am not surprised by this. It has consistently been my view that the majority of people in the South are for unity. The details and conditions are a different matter. But most favour an end to partition and self government for the people of the island. That has been my experience.

Micheál Martin has point blank refused to hold a Citizen's Assembly to discuss the entire myriad of issues that must inevitably be part of any discussion on unity. 65% of those polled believe that it should be established. Other matters such as the flag, the anthem, the place of unionists in a cabinet, the continuation of power sharing in the North in the new Ireland, all point to some of the matters about which there is no clear view.

This is entirely reasonable. Reunification is a big step. Merging two economies; tax systems; health systems; education systems; planning for the environment in the midst of a climate crisis; accommodating the many different views of what the new Ireland should look like and in particular the warm place for unionists within it, are all huge issues that point to the need for dialogue and a willingness to compromise. Only a planned conversation, involving all of those who wish to participate, can hope to find solutions to these issues. One thing is for sure. We republicans are not about the south taking over the north or vice versa. We are about self determination and a new society, citizen centred and rights based. A genuinely new Ireland based on equality. The Red C Poll is more evidence that the issue of Irish unity is now front and centre and the Irish government cannot continue to hide from it.

# Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht



# An Irish National Health Service

Last month the British House of Commons passed the Health and Care Bill. Its impact on the NHS in England will be profound and far reaching. Essentially this is the Tory government in London entrenching even further the process of privatisation of the health system that has been their goal of years. The threat to the NHS in the North is enormous.

A report in September recorded that 348,867 people in the six counties are waiting for a first consultant appointment – an increase of almost 40,000 over last year. The crisis there is exacerbated by the fact that the purse strings are held by London and the Tories are hell bent on privatisation. But so too is the FFG coalition in Dublin. Recent statistics in that part of our island reveal that over 900,000 people are on a hospital waiting list. At the current rate the number will soon top one million.

There are lots of reasons for these appalling stats across our island. Mostly it's as a result of under-investment and under capacity within the health systems and in the South by decisions taken by successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael governments. In the last 20 years, since Micheál Martin was Minister for Health in 2000, there



David Cullinane TD

one result of which is that patients urgently needing treatment for life threatening illnesses such as cancer are waiting longer than advisable for appointments and treatment.

David Cullinane TD, Sinn Féin's Oireachtas spokesperson on Health, on a visit to Derry in November made it abundantly clear that republicans are for a public health system free at the point of delivery across the island of Ireland.

He told the local media in Derry that one of his ambitions is to 'align and integrate health

have been eight Health Ministers from these two parties. All have promised an end to the crisis in the health service. They have all failed.

Covid has added to this very real crisis

services across the island, increase the sharing of resources and capacity, and to ensure the best of both systems becomes the norm.'

Teachta Cullinane said: 'My message for people in the north is that if we are in government we will build towards an Irish national health service in the south. My message to people who would have that concern - which is also a concern of ours - is that we will work to take the best of both health care systems and have an Irish national health service that we can all be proud of - whether you are from a unionist background in the north or someone living in Waterford or Kerry, Derry or Belfast.'

The Sinn Féin representative insisted that this vision is both achievable and affordable. He said: 'The provision of radiotherapy services and primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) (balloon and stent treatment) to patients from Donegal at Altnagelvin in Derry is an example of the kind of cross-border cooperation we want to see accelerated in other areas of health care.'

An Irish National Health Service isn't pie in the sky. It is a realizable, achievable objective. It just needs political will.



## Business Breakfast for Unity

In November Belfast Sinn Féin held a very successful business breakfast in the Titanic building. It was attended by 190 civic and business leaders from across Belfast and beyond. Those in the room represented a wide cross section of business including hospitality, construction, tourism, culture, arts, legal services, financial services, technology, life sciences, publicity, health and SMEs.

The main theme of the event was building a new and united Ireland in our time. The Sinn Féin panel included; Conor Murphy Minister for Finance; Deirdre Hargey Minister for Communities, John Finucane MP and Caoimhe Archibald Chair of the Stormont Dept for Economy committee.

The panel addressed many of the issues of concern to business, in particular the ongoing impact of Brexit; the controversy around the implementation of the Protocol and the importance of building toward an all-island economy and a united Ireland. Conor Murphy reminded the audience that through the Executive Sinn Féin has delivered almost £1bn of support to businesses; £440million through a variety of business support grants; and reduced the non-domestic regional rate by 18%.

He set out his intention to increase health spending and investment as well as undertaking the biggest shake-up of the North's housing system in 50 years. Central to this plan is to build more social and affordable homes. At a time when the cost of living is hurting families with increases in energy bills and national insurance contributions, the Executive carved out £600m annually to protect people from Tory policies, including a ban on the bedroom tax.

Conor Murphy said: 'Sinn Féin is ready for Government North and South. We are determined to build a new and united Ireland. The cynics and critics say it can't be done. They're wrong. Irish Unity is the way forward. Forward into EU membership. Forward in maximising our economic potential in the interests of all citizens.'

The Finance Minister urged Sinn Féin leaders and activists in other areas to follow the example of Sinn Féin in Belfast by reaching out to those in business, in the hospitality sector, in construction and tourism, and in all economic sectors and to engage with them on the economic benefits of Irish Unity. The Sinn Féin team of MLAs, Ministers and MPs stands ready to help.

# Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht





Martina Anderson Sinn...  
 @GerryAdamsSF &  
 @DeclanKearneySF meeting with  
 supports of Irish Unity across  
 Europe tonight

Excellent exchange of views

Irish Unity is a European issue

The solution to BREXIT is Irish Unity

There's going to be an Irish Unity  
 Referendum; it's not a matter of if,  
 it's when



# TALKING WITH THE DIASPORA

In an online conversation former Uachtarán Shinn Féin Gerry Adams and National Party Chair Declan Kearney engaged with a group of European supporters of Irish Unity to discuss current developments and future opportunities for advancing the united Ireland agenda in Europe. The meeting was arranged by former MEP Martina Anderson who recently took up the role of Sinn Féin's representative in Europe. Martina's formidable task is to raise awareness across Europe of the need for constitutional change in Ireland and the important role that Europe can play to support and assist the full implementation of the GFA.

The Sinn Féin message will be clear; the partition of Ireland is not only a problem in Ireland or between Ireland and Britain, but BREXIT has made it a European problem too. Martina has already begun the task of establishing connections across Europe to assist her in promoting unity. She said: 'In every part of Europe there are Irish people living and working. I'm asking them to get involved in this exciting project and to be part of the winning team that will achieve a united Ireland. Our recent conversation involving Gerry Adams and Declan Kearney is evidence of how seriously Sinn Féin is committed to winning allies and advocates for unity.

The conversation examined the best methods of encouraging momentum around the unity objective, as well as securing the most accurate up-to-date information to assist in our efforts to reach out to governments and others in Europe.

The constitutional conversation underway in Ireland is being heard across Europe. The crisis created by Brexit has assisted our efforts as it has encouraged European states to understand the importance of the Good Friday Agreement.

Declan Kearney, who answered many of the questions raised informed the online group that 'next year Sinn Féin will convene People's Assemblies across Ireland and will engage internationally with the diaspora as part of our strategy to build support for unity.'

# McWilliams addresses Ireland's Future event

The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Belfast was the venue on 27 November for the most recent Ireland's Future event. In the previous 8 weeks the group has held very successful events in Dublin, Galway, Online and in Cork. Interest was enormous and the resulting conversations attracted widespread interest.

The Crowne Plaza Gala Lunch was a packed out event with 500 people and was addressed by well known economist David McWilliams. Ireland's Future described the event as a 'multi-cultural and cross denominational audience' which included 'leading figures from the business community, cultural and sporting life, elected representatives from the northern Assembly, Dáil Éireann and numerous local Councils, and representatives of trade and industry bodies.'

McWilliams told his audience that the North has everything to gain and almost zero to lose economically from a united Ireland. He pointed out that citizens in the South now have a real average income of almost double that of citizens in the North. The economist also said that an all-island economy would attract foreign direct investment and that there would be substantial gains from an integrated economy.

Patricia McBride and the Revered Karen Sethuraman also spoke at the lunch. Rev Sethuraman said: 'We are all in agreement that the border poll is going to come, whether that be five or ten or more years from now. We need to recognise that we are bigger than the two communities of Catholic and Protestant and we need to move away from that.'

Ireland's Future has events planned for Armagh on 1 December and for Derry and for other venues into the New Year.





# IBEC and ESRI announce major All Island Economic Research Project

Further evidence of the growing interest by business and by economists in the shape and form of the all-island economy emerged last month in the announcement in Dublin of a major research project by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the employers group Ibec. The research programme is expected to last for three years and has links with the British based National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

The objective is to produce economic forecasts and analysis on a range of public policies. Alan Barrett, the CEO of the ESRI, said that the project is to create a data based, statistical, all island macro-economic model.

This type of economic model has existed in the 26 counties for some years and helps predict how key events and policy measures might affect the economy. Currently this type of modelling does not exist for the North. This new project will address this and build an all island macro-economic model.

It will also examine the affect Brexit is having on cross border trade. Those behind the project have stated that building the model will permit an in depth analysis of the northern economy and help tailor policy measures which could address its deficiencies.



## BRINGING THE MESSAGE OF UNITY

A unique and innovative initiative that will bring the message of Unity to towns and cities across the island of Ireland will take place this month.

A series of graphics in support of Irish Unity will be displayed on buildings and large screens in the coming weeks.

The January edition of Unity News will carry photos and a report.

## Good progress in Derry/Strabane's Irish Unity Working Group

Six months ago Cllr Conor Heaney proposed that Derry and Strabane Council establish a Working Group on Irish Unity. This was accepted by the Council and at the end of November the group met for the fourth time. Good progress is being made in the discussions and attendance at the meetings has been very good with even some in the unionist parties beginning to take part.

To date the Working Group has established an extensive and growing library of research on the potential impacts economically and in wider society of Irish reunification. It is expected that a new website established on this issue.

The main focus of the Working Group has been on which model the Council should use to 'Begin the Conversation' on Irish Unity with ratepayers and other stakeholders in the Council area. The main models currently being examined are the Shared island dialogue which is an online consultation exercise, the Citizens Assembly approach or a hybrid bespoke model that we will design ourselves.

The Working Group will meet again in the New Year to settle on which model it will use and scope out the likely budget required with our consultation exercise being conducted during the course of 2022.

Cllr Heaney said: "This is an initiative that I hope more Councils, North and South, will adopt in the time ahead. Currently there are four other similar working groups in existence. Planning and preparing for Irish Unity makes sense. Increasing in the short term the all-island agenda and connections also makes sense. This is particularly relevant in the North-West where our economic potential has been so badly stunted by partition. In Derry and Donegal, where so many people live and work on either sides of the border, it is ludicrous to maintain two currencies, two health systems, two education systems and two tax systems.

A United Ireland offers the best opportunity to tackle these issues in a way that can economically advantage all the people of Ireland as well as providing our route back to full membership of the EU."



Cllr Conor Heaney



## RESOURCE FOR ACTIVISTS

All of the recent articles and significant contributions on the United Ireland theme are available on the Sinn Féin website. Log in to [www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity](http://www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity) for all of the news on uniting Ireland.



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