Activist Guide to the





Introduction

In November 2020 Sinn Fein published a discussion paper entitled: 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland.'

It is an important milestone in the party's contribution to the growing debate about securing a referendum on Irish Unity and winning that referendum. The paper addresses the critical issue of the economy in the context of the failure of partition and the benefits that would accrue to citizens in a United Ireland and an all-island economy.

The 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland' paper was widely distributed and discussed within Sinn Féin and with some in the business community. It also received significant media attention.

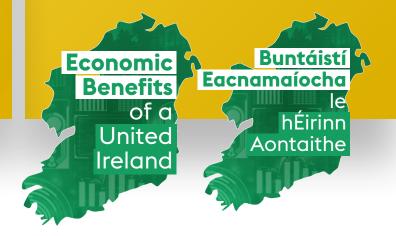
It addresses many of the economic issues that concern citizens in a partitioned Ireland and begins to chart a way forward.

Context

2021 marks 100 years of partition –which created an apartheid state in the six north eastern counties of Ireland. The pandemic and the outworking of Brexit have together underlined the damage caused to Ireland by partition.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement is a roadmap to the future. It sets out a way forward through the power sharing institutions; the all-island bodies; the current 156 areas of co-operation.

It also contains provision for a referendum on the constitutional future of the island, this is the pathway to a United Ireland.



PUBLISHED BY THE SINN FÉIN UNITED IRELAND COMMITTEE

- Activist Guide to a United Ireland
- lreland the Handbook
- Activist Guide on the British Subvention to the North
- Economic Benefits of a United Ireland
- Activist Guide to the Economic Benefits to a United Ireland
- Unity News

Leaflets, including Uniting Ireland Activism For Elected Representatives

For further information:

- https://www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity

Economic Benefitsof a United Ireland

In November 2020 Sinn Féin published its discussion paper - 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland.' The paper examines the adverse economic impact of partition. In the North and the border region partition has had a detrimental effect on all aspects of life, including wages, housing, the economy, health provision, poverty, and has reduced the six counties and the southern border counties to the status of a peripheral economic region. This has limited the economic potential of this region and of the whole island economy.

The political institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement are denied access to economic power by successive London governments. They retain that control in Downing Street.

The North is the slowest growing economy on these islands. The labour market is characterised by jobs that are lower paid and less secure than in the Irish state or in Britain. Some 20% of workers earn less than a basic living wage. There are also tax and economic inefficiencies resulting from partition.

The 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland' also tackles the issue of the alleged £10 billion British subvention for the North and the affordability of Irish Unity. It punctures the myths around this issue and reveals that the subvention is at most £6bn and is potentially closer to less than half that.

The document points to the benefits of a United Ireland; including meaningful and accountable economic decision-making powers in the hands of locally elected representatives; coordinated economic development; opportunities for greater investment; and better employment; and higher potential tax revenues.

Crucially, a United Ireland is the route back into the EU.

The document also examines public finance and expenditure statistics demonstrating that we can afford to Unite Ireland. And it considers the role the EU can play in successfully reuniting Ireland.

It is about agreeing how we will organise and share our future. It's about recognising that Ireland is home to many traditions and people from differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In particular it is home to the unionist people of the North.

We want a new Ireland, a shared Ireland, in which the civil and religious liberties of everyone are protected; and, where all traditions and identities, including those who are British, Irish, or from other places are protected under the law.

The Irish Government has a duty and a constitutional obligation to make preparations for Unity; to examine the economic arguments; the cultural and social dimensions; the political dynamics. The debacle arising from Brexit is evidence that you need to plan for the future.





An Activist Guide to 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland'

This paper is intended as a guide for activists. It summarises the main points contained in the 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland'.

It is also about providing summary points and graphics on key aspects of the 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland' which elected representatives and the party can use to promote the United Ireland objective and agenda.



Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
CONTEXT	2
IRISH UNITY MAKES SENSE	6
COST OF PARTITION - A DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT	7
COST OF PARTITION - A PERIPHERAL BORDER REGION	9
COST OF PARTITION - BREXIT AND ROAD BACK TO EU MEMBERSHIP	11
COST OF PARTITION - DEVELOPING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE GREEN ECONOMY	13
WE CAN AFFORD A UNITY IRELAND	15
HEALTH CARE IN A UNITED IRELAND	17
WE CAN UNITE IRELAND	18
CONLUSION	. 20
WHAT ACTIVISTS CAN DO TO PROMTE A UNITED IRELAND	22



Activist Guide TO THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF A UNITED IRELAND



Irish Unity makes sense

Brexit, the economic consequences of the Covid I9 pandemic, and the climate and bio-diversity crisis, are best faced with a United Ireland economy operating at its full potential.

- The all-island economy is growing
- Total value of cross border trade was over €7 billion in 2018
- And a greater number of businesses traded North to South in that year, than to anywhere else including Britain.
- Constitutional change threatens no one.
- British identity will be protected in a United Ireland
- The new decade is a decade of opportunity a chance for a more prosperous and fairer future for everyone on this island.

Cost of Partition – a democratic deficit

PARTITION DENIES

- self-governance and national self-determination
- local control of finances
 - Collection of Rates is the Executive's only fiscal tool
- Future planning
 - Westminster only permits annual budget cycles
- the development of localised bespoke financial interventions
- This results in poor economic performance in the North

Finance Minister Conor Murphy has proposed a Commission to transfer additional fiscal powers to the north. This will probably be rejected by Westminster.

The London government retains control over economic policy in the North. It exercises this power in its own self-interest and not that of citizens in the North.

One result of this is that the North is the slowest growing economy on these islands.

- GDP (gross national product) per head in the North is just 80% of British output per citizen.
- There is a greater number of low paid jobs in the North than in the South of Ireland or any region in Britain.
- Wages in these jobs are also the lowest of any region.
- The labour market in the North is characterised by low paid jobs and less secure employment.
- Some 20% of workers earn less than a basic living wage.

OUTPUT PER CAPITA IN IRELAND AND BRITAIN, 2018

£32,857

Scotland **£29,660**

Wales **£23,866**

North of Ireland £25,981

South of Ireland (GNI*) €40,637



Sources:

https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/in/nie/in-mgnicp/ - 2018 GNI*

2018 population in Ireland - https://www.-cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2018/#:~:text=The%20combined%20effect%20of%20natural,4.86%20million%20in%20April%202018.

https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/regionaleconomicactivitybygrossdomesticproductuk/1998to2018 - 2018 GDP per capita Britain & North

In a united Ireland the political representatives directly elected by the people will have full access to borrowing, taxation, and investment powers. Evidence indicates that these powers are more effective when they are in the hands of rooted and accountable policy makers.

This would allow for the development of custom built localised economic strategies that could target high value-added industries to deliver more and better jobs.

Economists have pointed towards a growth in good jobs with higher wages that can be delivered through Irish reunification.

A united Ireland can create better quality, more secure jobs that pay more; it can improve living standards and create more demand in the economy. Where demand rises, so too does employment as a general rule.

The potential additional tax revenues can then be used for better public services, including health and education.

Cost of Partitiona peripheral border region

PARTITION HAS RESULTED IN:

- Periphery status particularly for the border region
- Two different currencies, two sets of bureaucracy, back to back development
- Competition between Economic Development agencies
- Effects in terms of infrastructure roads and broadband
- Limited the attraction of the region for FDI companies
- Challenges for border dwellers who live in one jurisdiction but work in another



Since partition the border corridor has effectively been consigned to 'periphery' status limiting the economic potential of a significant section of our island and therefore of the whole island economy.

Over one million citizens live along the border corridor.

In the Irish State, the border region covers Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim, across to Louth through Cavan and Monaghan.

In the North the border region takes in Derry and Strabane Council; Fermanagh and Omagh Council; Mid Ulster Council; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down Council.

Logically, communities and local economies along the border corridor should be heavily integrated and coordinated for their largest economic sectors; including agriculture, construction, hospitality and tourism.

Instead partition has broken up these historically integrated economies and has imposed divisions such as two different currencies, substandard road and broadband infrastructure and two states competing for investment and economic activity.

The result is an incoherent and unfulfilled economic development.

The adverse economic impact of partition is clearly evident in the charts on page 10 which expose the weakness of the North's economy and especially of the border corridor in comparison with the Southern state.

Gross Value Added per Capita by ROI and NI Sub-region 2014 as % of EU

Source: CSO (2018a) & ONS (2017b)

Region/State	% of EU15 Average
Dublin	208.6
South-West	156.8
Belfast	136.8
ROI	128.0
Mid-West	97.9
Mid-East	91.3
West	90.6
South-East	85.0
NI	75.0
East of NI	70.0
Midland	63.8
West and South of NI	63.4
Outer Belfast	61.1
Border	60.5
North of NI	58.2

Gross Value Added per Capita by ROI and NI Sub-region 2014 as % of All-Island Regional Average

Source: CSO (2018a) & ONS (2017b)

185	Dublin
139	South-West
121	Belfast
87	Mid-West
80	West
75	South-East
62	East of NI
57	Midland
56	West and South of NI
54	Outer Belfast
54	Border
54	North of NI

The inefficiency of partition is also illustrated in the problems faced by the 25,000 -30,000 people who live on one side of the border but routinely work on the other side. Through their work these citizens pay tax in the system within which they work but then use the public services and infrastructure where they live. Irish unity would end this anomaly and manage the tax revenue generated in a more efficient way.

Partition has trapped the border corridor region in a vicious cycle. Peripheral areas require public investment to improve infrastructure, which in turn improves productivity and stimulates more investment and economic activity. Without this public investment, this development doesn't occur.

Irish reunification would allow for more coordinated and strategic economic development across the island and especially within the border region, attracting more investment, improved productivity, and with it enhanced essential infrastructure. This offers significant economic benefits by way of public revenue returns, overall increases in output, and boosts in higher-skilled employment.

By unlocking the full economic potential of all regions on the island, Irish unity can also improve the overall tax revenues available to the state and therefore shore-up the finances available for public investment.

Cost of Partition -Brexit and road back to EU membership



BREXIT JEOPARDISES THE ALL ISLAND ECONOMY

- ✓ It is already having an impact in the north reduction in range of products and in the south – exorbitant tariffs on goods from Britain
- Hauliers affected
- Reversing the negative effects of Brexit is now an economic necessity

The Good Friday Agreement created the conditions in which most people living in the border corridor could largely ignore the border as they went about their lives. North South co-operation and integration as a consequence of the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement was supported by the EU.

The Withdrawal Agreement and Irish Protocol – including the Irish Sea border - which came into effect on 31 December have changed the economic landscape on these islands.

Many aspects of Britain's withdrawal from the EU remain to be resolved.

However, at this time goods moving from the north to the south are covered by the EU's customs code and some single market rules will also apply to avoid a hard border.

This is important. In 2018 cross border trade amongst Small and Medium Enterprises was at an all-time high and was valued at £6.5bn. Overall in that year all cross border trade was valued at €7.384bn

Figures also show that a greater number of businesses in the north trade from north to south than to anywhere else including Britain - 8,631 businesses trade from north to south compared to 8,147 businesses trading from the North to Britain. This is despite all the difficulties associated by the border, imagine the potential if all those obstacles were removed.

This is evidence that people now recognise the unique potential of the All-Ireland economy. It is also a recognition of the scale of disruption imposed by Brexit.

STATISTIC ON CROSS-BORDER GOODS & SERVICES TRADE ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

Total cross Border Trade

€7.384bn

All data 2018



In April 2017 the EU announced that in the event of Irish Unity the island of Ireland would not have to renegotiate membership. A United Ireland will automatically become a member state of the EU. While Sinn Féin is critical of aspects of European Union policy, we welcome the commitment that Unity provides an automatic route back.

Irish unity will allow the North to enjoy full benefits of EU membership including access to the European market and to substantial funding and investment opportunities offered through EU programmes and institutions.

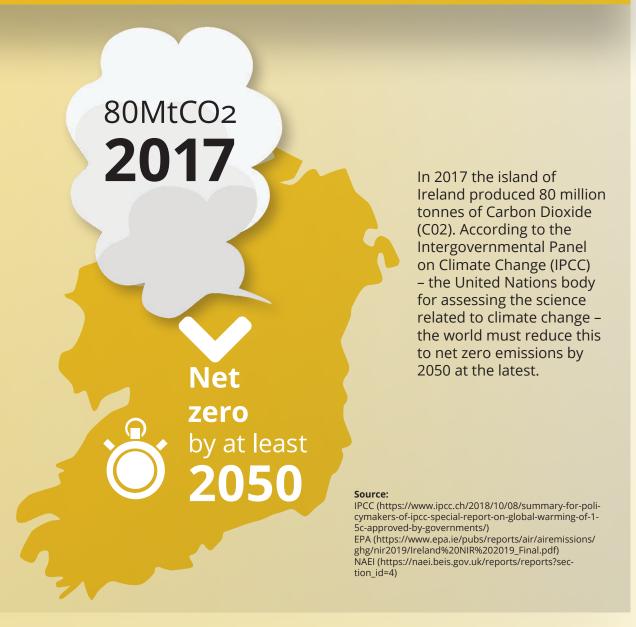


In April 2017

"European Council statement acknowledges that the Good Friday Agreement expressly provides for an agreed mechanism whereby a united Ireland may be brought about through peaceful and democratic means; and in this regard, the European Council acknowledges that, in accordance with international law, the entire territory of such a united Ireland would thus be part of the EU."

Cost of Partition

Developing the full potential of the green economy



Climate change is the single biggest threat to humanity today.

Globally we are currently living through the sixth mass extinction event in world history, with one million unique species at risk.

Some argue that we have potentially breached several of the earth's fragile ecological limits, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and the nitrogen cycle.

Scientists agree that we are currently on track for catastrophic levels of global warming which could render parts of our planet uninhabitable.

In short, to preserve our planetary home for future generations, we need radical action to combat climate breakdown, and we need it fast.

All of this will require unprecedented levels of investment and systemic change.

However, partition means that the island of Ireland has been unable to co-ordinate its approach to tackling this crisis.

In fact, the basic capacities available to any state to mobilise resources to combat climate breakdown, namely fiscal powers, are not in the hands of elected representatives in the North.

The Irish state is one of the few within the EU to miss its 2020 emission reductions targets. This resulted in the state having to pay substantial fines.

Partition means that the benefits of a transition to a zero-carbon economy will be dampened significantly, as our two economies operate different green economic agendas and compete for private renewables investment.

Sinn Féin is committed to climate justice and a just transition for the island of Ireland to a zero carbon economy.

Irish unity is the route through which the economic benefits of transitioning to the green economy can best be realised.

To meet climate obligations and achieve a net-zero carbon society by 2050, as is demanded by the climate science, we need a vast array of, and rapid increase in, high-skilled green collar jobs, in construction, public transport, retrofitting, research δ development of new technologies, nature restoration and conservation, environmental resilience, and policy development, among other things.

A United Ireland is best placed to deliver these.

We can afford a United Ireland

- The subvention or block grant is often a conversation stopper in this debate
- ▼ The claim is often made that the subvention is £10bn



- ✓ In reality, based on British Government official stats, the true value is somewhere between £2.5 £6 billion
- ▼ The economic payoff from uniting the two economies on the island would more than compensate for the loss of the subvention
- Economists such as Kurt Hubner and David McWilliams agree.

It is claimed that the British 'subvention' – that is the difference between the revenue raised and the money spent in the North – is £10 bn. This is a myth.

Total expenditure in the North in 2018-19 was £27.9 bn.

Total revenue raised in that year was £18.5 bn.

Revenue from corporation tax which was not counted amounted to £500 million.

This means that the total revenue raised in the North in that year was £19 bn.

The so-called subvention is therefore around £9 bn. However, these are only headline statistics and must be explored further.

If we withdraw from this figure spending on British military and defence, servicing British debtand overseas spending, the subvention falls to £6 billion.

In addition the pension bill amounts to £3.5 bn. These are entitlements which people have already accrued by way of their national insurance contributions.

During the debate on Scottish Independence in 2014 the then British Pensions Minister Steve Webb (7 May 2014) accepted that Scottish citizens paying national insurance "have accumulated rights into the UK system".

This means that the final subvention figure could be as low as £2.5 bn.

Of course, all of this will be determined by negotiation.

(For a more detailed examination see Appendix 1 in Economic Benefits of a United Ireland)



WE SHOULD ALSO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE ECONOMIC POSITIVES ARISING FROM A UNITED IRELAND.



Support for the argument that unity will benefit the economy of the island and all its people is contained in the peer reviewed paper published in November 2015 by Professor Kurt Huebner of Vancouver University which is titled 'Modeling Irish Unification'. It concluded that Irish unity would likely result in a sizeable boost in economic outcomes and incomes North and South, with the most aggressive unification scenario estimating a boost in all island GDP of €35.6 billion over eight years. That's an increase in each of those years of €5,500 per person North and South.



In a further report published in November 2018, Kurt Huebner and Renger Herman Van Nieuwkoop, looked at the economic impact of Brexit and of Irish unity

The report - 'The Costs of Non-Unification: Brexit and the Unification of Ireland' - concluded that between now and 2025 Irish reunification could benefit the North by almost €18 billion and the South by €5-6 billion.

It concludes that unification "is the only option with positive net effects". It is the only long term sustainable solution to the decades long crisis created by partition, and the current crisis created by Brexit.

Dr Huebner believes that unfication will provide the necessary "dynamic" that will lead to greater productivity, higher output and increased investment making the economics of unity for the people of this island entirely viable.



In July 2018 a report researched by Gunther Thurmann, who worked in the German Desk for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during German reunification, along with Senator Mark Daly of the Oireachtas Good Friday Implementation Committee, entitled 'Northern Ireland's Income and Expenditure in a Reunification scenario' concluded that the North would cease to be a financial dependency in the event of a united Ireland. It said that the six counties would save £8.5bn a year by leaving the British state and uniting with the rest of Ireland. This has the potential to transform the economy in the north of Ireland.



In David McWilliams' book, 'Renaissance Nation', he states: "There is much talk about the UK's subvention to Northern Ireland and how the Republic could not afford the North. When you look at the numbers it becomes clear that this is just that - talk."

McWilliams points out that between 1008 and 2014 American

McWIlliams points out that between 1998 and 2014 American corporations alone invested over €310bn in the South. This is "equivalent to 38 years of the British government's annual subvention to keep the North afloat."

He added: "When expressed as a percentage of national income, which is the normal way financial markets access whether national expenditure is sustainable or not, Northern Ireland would cost less than 4% of the Irish Republic's GDP annually."

This would be reduced further when you combine the North and South's respective GDP.

His conclusion is: "In short, in pure budgetary terms, there is little doubt that the Republic's economy could absorb the North, even before the commercial dynamism of unification kicks in."

Health Care in a United Ireland



One issue that has been raised as a consequence of the growing debate around a United Ireland is what will happen to the Health Service.

Currently, two health services exist on the island:

- The Health Service in the South is a mix of private and public with many users having to pay for access to GPs and Emergency departments through insurance cover or in cash.
- In the North the NHS is underfunded and under-resourced. Cuts in funding by the Tory government in recent years have hallowed out the NHS.
- Despite this and because of the dedication of the staff the NHS still provides a good quality health care service free at the point of delivery.
- The pandemic has highlighted the difficulties of having two health services on an island as small as Ireland.
- Over one million people live along the border corridor and they are all too familiar with the difficulties accessing the nearest health care, especially if their nearest hospital or ambulance is a short distance away on either side of the border.
- Consequently, the provision of a public health service is a priority for people in the North and would be welcomed by citizens in the South.
- Cross border co-operation on health is already taking place. For example, there is health co-operation and sharing in radiotherapy and paediatric cardiac services, health promotion focussing on alcohol, tobacco and obesity, cancer research, mental health and suicide prevention
- Bengoa and Sláintecare, supported by all of the political parties in their jurisdictions, propose substantial health reform over a ten year period which would facilitate future integration of both systems.
- Healthcare spending per capita in the South is greater than in the north with political will the development of an All Island public health service is possible
- The 'Economic Benefits of a United Ireland' and the current activist guide are evidence that a United Ireland can afford a public health service.
- This would be a priority for a Sinn Féin led government.

WE CAN UNITE IRELAND



There was a time when a United Ireland was perceived as pie-in-the-sky.

The Northern State was established with what was believed to be a permanent in-built unionist majority.

Demographic and political changes have revised this.

The 2011 census in the north was a watershed moment in the North's political journey.

For the first time citizens were asked about their political identity. Less than half – (48%) identified as British.

In 2016 56% of voters in the North voted to stay within the EU.

In the last five elections unionism has lost the electoral majority it held since 1921.

In 2019 John Finucane was elected MP for North Belfast - a safe Unionist seat since 1921.

In Belfast there is one unionist MP out of four.

In Westminster there are now 9 republican/ nationalist seats and 8 unionist seats.

Unionism is now a minority in the Assembly at Stormont.





Conclusion

The issue of Irish Unity is now a main topic of discussion in Ireland and internationally.

Our aim in publishing this document is to inform that discussion on relevant facts about the economic benefits that will accrue from a reunited Ireland and add to the call for the Referendum promised in the Good Friday Agreement.

It is not a question about whether we can afford Irish Unity - the fact is we cannot afford partition.

Irish Unity and an all-island economy is the best way to build a prosperous Ireland.

A united Ireland economy could enjoy significant benefits by way of infrastructure, investment, taxation, and employment.

Brexit, the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate and biodiversity crisis, are best faced with a united Ireland economy operating to its full potential.

We are at a crossroads. It is time to fundamentally consider the future direction and shape of the island. We must end partition and unlock our social and economic potential.

The time to begin planning to realise these economic benefits, and the broader benefits of reunification, is now.

That means planning for the referendum on Unity provided for in the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Féin is not alone in stating that.

In recent months several important papers have been published by influential academic institutions and by Ireland's Future. All of them highlight the need to plan for a referendum and to plan for Unity and that this needs to commence now.

The Ulster University published 'Deliberating Constitutional Futures' which examines the arguments around possible constitutional futures, including a unity referendum.

The Constitution Unit of University College London published an interim report from its 'Working Group on Unification Referendums on the Island of Ireland.'

The report addresses the issue of what will constitute a winning vote. It states that the threshold for "the unification referendum in the North is 'a majority of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll'. It would breach the Agreement to require a higher threshold than 50% + 1. In the South, approval of constitutional referendums likewise requires a simple majority."

Critically the report authors highlight the danger of any failure to plan for a unity referendum.

They state: "The years of acrimony following the UK's vote on EU membership in 2016 illustrate the dangers of a vote called without adequate planning." As part of this process of pre-planning the report calls for Citizens' Assemblies to be established to help identify peoples' views on what choices should be on offer in any referendum.

It adds: "All these criteria point towards the importance of advance planning: of the referendum processes; and about the shape of a united Ireland, or a continued Union."

In December 2020 Ireland's Future – an influential group of civic nationalists –published a discussion document entitled: 'The Conversation on Ireland's Future. A Principled Framework for Change.' The paper deals with a series of key questions regarding the unity referendum process.

There have also been contributions from others including former DUP leader Peter Robinson, DUP MP Gavin Robinson, former Alliance MLA Trevor Lunn and commentator Alex Kane, which recognise that the Referendum will happen and that Unionism should begin preparations. We welcome these interventions.

So, planning for a unity referendum and planning the shape of the new Ireland that will emerge out of this process has to begin now.

As Ireland's Future say: "There is no contradiction between making the (Good Friday) Agreement work, in all its parts, and planning for the referendums that will determine the future of Ireland. Those who continue to label this process 'divisive' and 'dangerous' are simply encouraging the spread of fear and anxiety."

WHAT ACTIVISTS CAN DO TO PROMOTE A UNITED IRELAND

Inform yourself about the key points and details on Irish Unity so that you can explain as well as possible why Irish Unity Makes Sense.

Have the conversation with your family, friends, and work colleagues about Irish Unity.

Talk to other party activists about holding a public/online meeting in your community. (The UI Committee can help provide speakers)

Reach out to others in your local sporting/business/arts/ community sectors who see unity as the best future for Ireland and discuss how together you can promote the unity referendum and Irish Unity.

WHAT ACTIVISTS CAN DO TO PROMOTE A

UNITED IRELAND

Join in the debates on Irish Unity that are already being held online and in social media, e.g. groups like Ireland's Future.

Use social media to promote unity as the best future for Ireland

Write letters to your local media and national outlets in support of Irish Unity.

Take an ad in your regional paper

Lobby those elected representatives who do not have a public position on Unity and persuade them to support it.

Support the call for a Citizens' Assembly to discuss and debate a new and agreed, united Ireland.



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

