

UNITY



NEWS

NUAHT NA HAONTACHTA

JANUARY Eanáir 2022

Bliain úr faoi mhaise Daoibh go léir

A NEW IRELAND A NEW FUTURE

100 years ago on 7 January 1922 The Treaty was narrowly agreed by 64 votes to 57 by the Dáil. It had been signed by the Irish plenipotentiaries, led by Arthur Griffith and including Erskine Childers, Michael Collins, George Gavin Duffy, Robert Barton, Eamonn Duggan and John Charles on 6th December 1921.

The Irish delegation was outmanoeuvred by a more experienced and ruthless British government. Lloyd George ratcheted up the pressure throughout the negotiations. He set short deadlines for responses, played on the political and personality differences within the delegation, and threatened 'war - and war within three days' if the Treaty was not signed.

The Treaty and partition created two conservative states on the island of Ireland. The broken politics that emerged gave us an apartheid state in the North; across the island the Magdalene Laundries and the Mother and Baby Homes; and in the South the sexual abuse and brutality of the industrial schools and mass emigration.

Brexit and the rejection by the British and the unionist parties of the democratic vote by citizens in the North in 2016 to remain within the EU has created a crisis which threatens the Good Friday Agreement and political institutions in the North.

Despite this Sinn Féin is looking forward with confidence to the year ahead. Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald TD said:

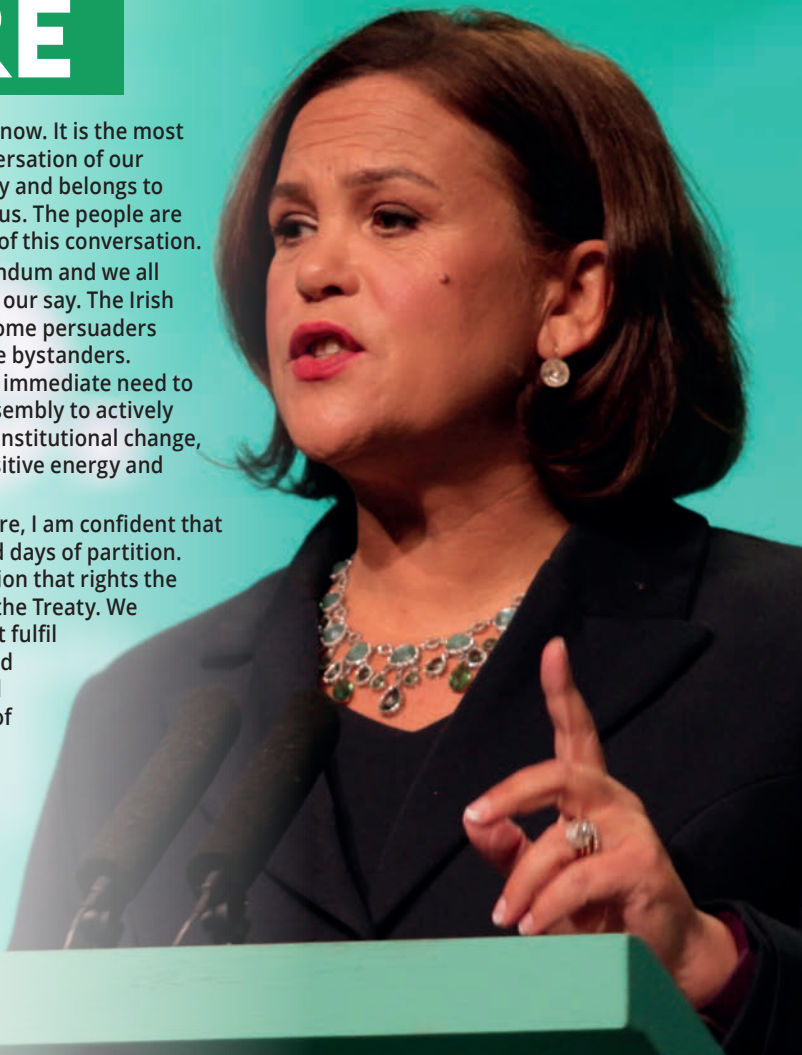
"Today, people want better. A new generation brimming with talent, with energy and with courage is stepping forward to shape a new Ireland. The Ireland denied to our parents and grandparents before them. We are fired up with big ideas for the next chapter of Ireland's history. More and more, Irish Unity is seen as the vehicle to achieve a fairer, stronger and better Ireland.

"The discussion and debates on a United

Ireland are happening now. It is the most important public conversation of our lifetimes. It is live today and belongs to each and every one of us. The people are ready for a deepening of this conversation.

"There will be a referendum and we all get the chance to have our say. The Irish government must become persuaders for unity instead of idle bystanders. There is an urgent and immediate need to convene a Citizens' Assembly to actively discuss and plan for constitutional change, and to harness the positive energy and momentum.

"As we look to the future, I am confident that we are living in the end days of partition. We can be the generation that rights the wrongs set in train by the Treaty. We are the generation that fulfil the promise of 1916 and build a new and united Ireland. A home to all of our people regardless of background or identity. Unity offers all of our people a new beginning. Let's seize it together and for each other."



"The discussion and debates on a United Ireland are happening now. It is the most important public conversation of our lifetimes. It is live today and belongs to each and every one of us."

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

CRANN NA SAOIRSE

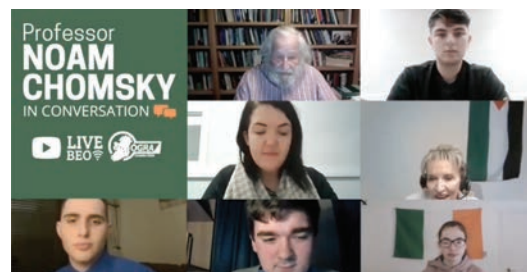
Well done to all those over the Christmas and the New Year period who took the time from decorating their Christmas Trees and preparing for Santa by planting their Crann na Saoirse – Unity Tree - as part of our campaign to raise awareness around Irish Unity.

Comhgairdeas also to activists in west Tyrone who held their Day of Action in Omagh.

The pandemic has thwarted some of the planned activities around the Uniting Ireland campaign, including the Get Walking for Irish Unity that was due to take place on Saturday 8th January.

If your Cumann, Chomhairle Ceantair has planted their tree or engaged in other Uniting Ireland activity make sure you forward the details to the United Ireland Committee and to Unity News.

The Crann na Saoirse symbolises our commitment to a United Ireland. The trees we plant will grow bring and strong in a United Ireland.



CHOMSKY TALKS IRISH UNITY

On Thursday the 9th December 2021, Ógra Shinn Féin Dhoire activists were joined in conversation by the widely renowned political analyst, theorist and activist Professor Noam Chomsky. The event was live streamed on the Derry Sinn Féin YouTube Channel. A plethora of topics were discussed: climate change; Brexit; British Imperialism; class struggle and more. The main topic, however, was Irish Unity.

Noam Chomsky, who celebrated his 93 birthday in December, is widely regarded as one of the most important minds of our time, and is one of the most cited authors in human history. His time in the sphere of political activism has been in large part dedicated to insightful and brilliant critiques of imperial powers and in support of the class struggle. Ógra Derry's conversation with Professor Chomsky was his premier outing on the topic of Irish Re-Unification.

In adding his voice to the growing chorus of support for a New and United Ireland, Chomsky opined, 'Unification is part of the forward march of history. A long time coming in the case of Ireland.'

More than this, it is Chomsky's view, vis-à-vis social relations, that; 'Once these conflicts are overcome, people find their common interests, which overwhelm the interests that divide them.'

Brexit has had a huge impact on Irish affairs in the last half decade, which Chomsky views as, '...both another form of imperial domination and an opportunity for an anti-imperial struggle.' England's hubris turned problem, is Ireland's opportunity to forge a better future. In recent weeks a succession of unionist leaders have claimed that Irish Unity is no closer than it was 20 years ago and that the conversation currently taking place is meaningless. The contribution by Noam Chomsky to the debate with Ógra Shinn Fein Dhoire and his assessment that a United Ireland is 'part of the forward march of history' is evidence of the depth and breadth of the unity conversation. As Chomsky himself said; 'A United Ireland, sooner or later, will come. The signs are there – these artificial divisions can't survive.'



Ballymagroarty



Creggan, Derry



Derry



Camlough Centenary Garden



West Belfast



Omagh Day of Action



Shantallow, Derry



Omagh Day of Action



Eabha McLaughlin Derry activist

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**

Planning for a New Ireland

NATIONAL UNITING IRELAND
MEMBERS YOUTH CONFERENCE



ONLINE
MEETING

Wednesday
2nd February
7.30pm
Bígfí Linn



#Time4Unity
Am d'Aontacht

Zoom details to be circulated
in advance of the meeting

NATIONAL YOUTH MEMBERS CONFERENCE

A National Youth Members Conference is due to take place via zoom on Wednesday 2nd February at 7.30pm. This meeting is open to all party members under the age of 30.

This is a follow up to engagements which took place between the Uniting Ireland Project Team and young party members throughout 2021.

Our young people have an important part to play in the Uniting Ireland campaign. We would encourage all members under 30 to mobilise for this important event. Leadership figures and a guest speaker will be in attendance.

It's time to talk.
It's time to plan.
It's time for Irish unity!
Bunaigh Tionól na Saoránach.

It's time for a
Citizens' Assembly
to plan our future.



#Time4Unity
Am d'Aontacht

TIONÓL
SAORÁNACH

AG PLEANÁIL
FAOI CHOINNE
AN TODHCHAÍ

Tabharfaidh Tionól Saoránach grúpa ionadaíoch de dhaoine as achan chearn d'Éirinn le pleananna a phlé ar thodhchaí oileán s'againne.



MARY LOU McDONALD TD
Uachtarán Shinn Féin
MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA
Leas Uachtarán Shinn Féin

Tá am na pleanála linn!



#Time4Unity
Am d'Aontacht

It's time for a Citizens' Assembly

There is a unique onus on the Irish government to take the lead in actively planning for constitutional change. At a time when the issue of a united Ireland is at the top of the political agenda the establishment of an all-island Citizens' Assembly in 2022 should be the centrepiece of the Irish government's preparations for Irish Unity. That is if it is serious about wanting a united Ireland.

An Taoiseach Micheál Martin should drop his opposition to the setting up of a Citizens' Assembly. In the last decade Irish governments have established Conventions/Assemblies on three occasions to discuss matters of significance and public importance. A Constitutional Convention was held between 2012-14, which included representation from the North; a Citizens' Assembly ran between 2016-18; and a Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality was established in July 2019. Its report was given to the Oireachtas in June of last year.

A Citizens' Assembly can be a forum for the debating of competing ideas and differing

perspectives on unity, facilitating debate on the shape of the future constitutional arrangements and allowing participants to tease-out the social, economic and political challenges.

Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald TD has described the creation of a Citizens' Assembly as an opportunity to create a space in which everyone is welcome, 'a warm house for every citizen, a place where everyone can air ideas, apprehensions, and receive constructive responses in a spirit of generosity, respect and common-purpose.

The conversation on unity must move beyond the jaded, repetitious collision between green and orange. A Citizens' Assembly would see the mapping out of an inclusive vision of the future built on equal citizenship for all. It would also be the right setting for a proper debate on a referendum.

It would be an opportunity to talk about what an Irish National Health Service would look like, a modern education system that gives our young people the best chance in life, what support business to innovate and prosper

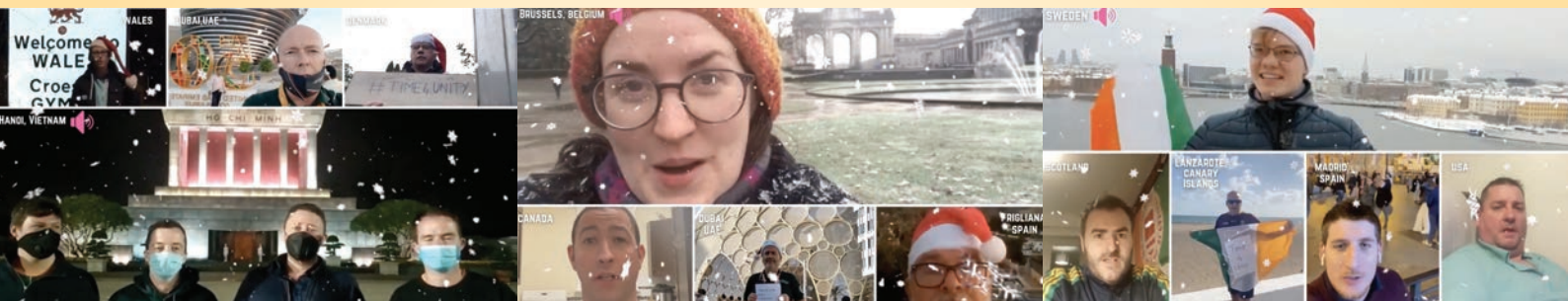
to create well paid jobs, how we deliver infrastructure in a joined up way.'

Mary Lou McDonald added: 'A Citizens' Assembly is the best place to debate and discuss how social and economic justice can be hardwired into the work of unifying Ireland in the truest sense. Unity can represent a point of departure from the failures of the past, a once in a generation chance to realise the Ireland denied to our parents and grandparents before them.'

A Citizens' Assembly makes sense. It pays to plan for the future. Sinn Féin is for an intelligent, calm conversation for constitutional change that is orderly, peaceful, and democratic.

Sensible people want space and time to talk these issues through. Had we all stuck to our respective positions – politicians and people alike – there would have been no Good Friday Agreement. Dialogue and negotiations dramatically changed that. It can do so again. That's why An Taoiseach's New Year Resolution should be to set up a Citizens' Assembly.

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



A UNITY CHRISTMAS WISH FROM THE IRISH ABROAD

'All we want for Christmas is a united Ireland. Watch and share these messages for support for Irish Unity from across the world.'

From Brussels to Dubai, from Washington to Hanoi, Perth to Sweden; the Irish diaspora came out in force

this Christmas to raise their voices for Unity.

Dozens of United Irelanders from across the world sent video greetings home urging activists to get out and get active on the campaign for Irish unity in 2022.

You can watch the video in full on the Sinn Féin social media pages

<https://twitter.com/sinnfeinireland/status/1473594168479862788>



**#Time4Unity #UnitedIreland]
#ÉireAontaithe #IrishUnity**

IRISH UNITY UP IN LIGHTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

A unique and innovative initiative in December saw a series of light displays take place across the 32 counties as part of Sinn Féin's winter campaigning on Irish Unity.

Activists chose prominent landmarks to project calls for a United Ireland using county colours and iconic republican imagery including the GPO, the 1916 leaders and Moore Street. Among the messages projected was a call for a Citizens' Assembly on Unity, a key campaigning priority for the party for the time ahead. Watch the video and see if you can identify the landmarks.

<https://twitter.com/sinnfeinireland/status/1475421200314605569>



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

AN IRISH NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE IS A PRIORITY

The Proclamation of 1916 states that the Republic guarantees ... "equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation ... cherishing all the children of the nation equally ..." It doesn't say except for those who have a disability, or are sick, or who have mental health issues, or who need an operation. Recent statistics reveal that over 900,000 people in the South are on a hospital waiting list. At the current rate this number will soon top one million. In the North a recent report noted that 348,867 people are waiting for a first consultant appointment – an increase of almost 40,000 over last year.

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

In the North the crisis in the Health Service is exacerbated by the fact that the purse strings are held by London and the Tories have been hell bent on privatisation for years. So too is the FFFG coalition in Dublin.

The Covid pandemic has added to this very real crisis. One result of which has been that patients urgently needing treatment for life threatening illnesses such as cancer are waiting longer than advisable for appointments and treatment. The answer in the short term is for as much all-island cooperation and coordination as practicable to make best use of available limited resources. In the longer term the only viable solution that can end the perpetual crisis in health provision is an Irish National Health Service delivered within a united Ireland.

Every recent opinion poll on the merits of a United Ireland has highlighted the importance attached by citizens to the provision of a health service for the island of Ireland that is free at the point of delivery, on the basis of need alone and funded from fair and progressive taxation.

Currently significant areas of co-operation already exist between the two health systems on the island. These include; the Cross Border Percutaneous Coronary Intervention Services, the Human Donor Breast Milk Bank, and the All-Island Congenital Heart Disease Network.

In addition, under the North/South Ministerial Council there is a sectoral area covering health and a range of other all-island health projects and groups covering the provision of cancer services in Altnagelvin Hospital for the North West, major emergencies and emergency services cooperation, a controlled drugs licensing group, the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIHPC) a cross-border GP out of hours service and disability Services (aids, appliances, training, cross-border residential placements).

Sinn Féin is focussed on expanding these common sense areas of co-operation and developing an all-Ireland health service that meets the needs of citizens. In Leinster House David Cullinane TD and in the Assembly Colm Gildernew MLA are working to making this goal a reality.

In December the two Sinn Féin health spokespersons visited hospitals in Dublin, as part of a series of engagements with healthcare staff about their experiences. They visited St James' Hospital and Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, and also met with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation and the all-island cancer research institute working group.

Speaking after their day of meetings Colm Gildernew said: 'Our



David Cullinane TD and Colm Gildernew MLA visit Dublin hospitals

visits provided an opportunity to hear at first hand the experience of healthcare staff and to thank them for their courage and diligence in these extraordinary times.

'We discussed a range of important issues, including the need for better all-island co-operation on key issues to ensure that patients get the best possible care. It is clear that an all-island national health service is the best option for delivering high quality care for patients and fair treatment for staff. Through better sharing of knowledge and resources, services can be improved for all.'

Teachta David Cullinane said:

'A number of strides have been made in recent years when it comes to all-island co-operation on healthcare, but much more can still be done. There are very successful examples of all-island cooperation in cancer research and congenital heart disease care which can be built on. Sinn Féin is committed to delivering an all-island national health service which works for all.'

“SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING AN ALL-ISLAND NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE WHICH WORKS FOR ALL.”

END OF YEAR POLLS

If you take as read the normal health warning that accompanies opinion polls there is little doubt that the polls published toward the end of 2021 reaffirm the public interest in the potential for Irish Unity. They also confirm the public desire for a dialogue to commence in which we can discuss those many issues that arise from such a transformative change.

It says much about the disaster that is partition that in the year of its centenary there were more people talking about its failures and the need for an all-island replacement than ever before.

The Red C poll for the Sunday Business Post at the end of November looked at public attitudes in the South to the issue of a United Ireland, a Citizens' Assembly and other matters. Despite the refusal of An Taoiseach Micheál Martin to plan for or organise a discussion on the issue of unity a convincing majority of 60% of people polled are ready to vote today in favour of a united Ireland. 62% also believe that the Irish government should start planning for a united Ireland now.

An Ipsos MRBI poll for the Irish Times in December reported that a large majority of citizens in the South supported a united Ireland. It concluded that 62% of voters would back Irish Unity with just 16% opposed.

In the same week polling by the Lord Ashcroft polling agency concluded that while 54 per cent of people in the North wanted to remain within the UK system at this time a significant percentage – 46% – were against. However two thirds of those polled took the view that a unity referendum held 10 years from now would succeed.

Whatever the accuracy or otherwise of opinion polls it is clear that the issue of Irish Unity is now a mainstream topic of conversation. It's not going away. On the contrary the growth in support for a united Ireland and the popular interest in it means that 2022 will see the debate on a United Ireland only grow further. And republicans must be in the vanguard of this discussion.



Ag leigheas na scoilteanna

Tá drochthionchar ag beartas stáit na Breataine i dtreo na hÉireann ar fhorbairt pholaitíocht agus shochaí na hÉireann.

D'athraigh próiseas síochána na hÉireann agus an t-ollstruchtúr polaitiúil a chuaigh leis i bhfoirm Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta (GFA) (1998) gach rud. D'oscail sé bealaí nua síochána agus seasmhachta; deiseanna nua polaitiúla agus eacnamaíocha; chomh maith leis an seans go mbeadh claochlú agus athrú daonlathach leanúnach don oileán iomlán, Thuaidh agus Theas.

Tá athrú suntasach tagtha ar an timpeallacht pholaitiúil ar ár n-oileán ó bhí an reifreann ar an mBreataimeacht I mí an Mheithimh 2016.

Gan dabht, chuir dinimic an Bhreataimeachta dlús leis na hionchais a bhaineann le hathrú bunreachtúil bunúsach.

Chuir an Breataimeacht deireadh leis na tuairimí uile a bhí ann roimhe seo faoin status quo bunreachtúil, polaitiúil agus eacnamaíoch agus chuir sé i gcroílár na díospóireachta polaitiúla nádúr neamhdhaonlathach chríochdheighilt na hÉireann ag an mBreatain agus na hiarmhairtí diúltacha ar bheartas na Breataine in Éirinn a bhfuil coinbhleacht pholaitiúil ann i gcónaí in Éirinn.

Ach, in ainneoin go bhfuil go leor ag smaoineamh anois ar thodhchaí nach bhfuil sainithe de réir nach críochdheighilte, tá na deighilt agus lochtanna a cruthaíodh mar gheall ar imeachtaí san am atá thart gan réiteach, tá na rannáin agus lochtanna a cruthaíodh mar gheall ar imeachtaí san am atá thart gan réiteach.

Tá seicteachas agus deighilt sheicteach fós ina mbacainní móra ar thodhchaí níos fearr a thógáil.

Is ionann iad agus constaicí suntasacha maidir le todhchaí a bhaint amach sainithe ag meas, cuimsiú agus comhionannas.

Fad a theipeann orainn aghaidh a thabhairt go rathúil ar sheicteachas agus ar dheighilt, leanfaidh éadulaingt, biogóideacht agus eagla: Beidh an poitéinseal éagobhsaíochta agus coimhlinte ann i gcónaí.

Tá Sinn Féin tiomanta go hiomlán do dhúshlán a thabhairt don seicteachas ina cuid léirithe uile agus forbairt chultúr meas ar gach féiniúlacht, cultúr agus traidisiún a chinntiú.

Níl aon cheist ann go bhfuil gá le próiseas athmhuintearais in Éirinn.

Ní féidir talamh slán a dhéanamh de go mbainfear amach é. Beidh gá le céim nua de phróiseas Síochána na hÉireann chun é sin a chur i gcrích.

Tá gá le comhrialtas pobail a chumhachtú chun tionscnaimh agus straitéisí nua a spreagadh, a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm chun dul i ngleic le seicteachas agus le biogóideacht, agus chun athmhuintearas agus leigheas a chur chun cinn.

Creideann Sinn Féin go bhfuil leigheas na scoilteanna i sochaí na hÉireann doscartha ón móiminteam nua agus an tógáil atá ann chun daonlathas bunreachtúil nua comhhaontaithe a bhaint amach in Éirinn.

Is í an fhís atá againn d'Éirinn Nua agus Chomhaontaithe todhchaí a mhúnlóidh agus a chinnfidh muintir na hÉireann amháin; Éire a thacaíonn, a ráthaíonn agus a chosnaíonn cearta gach saoránach; a dhearbhaíonn, a luachálann agus a chosnaíonn éagsúlacht agus difríocht agus a mhúnláíonn agus a chinneann toiliú gach saoránach.



Sinn Féin team talk Irish Unity in Europe

Engaging with the EU Institutions about Irish Unity is a key role of Sinn Féin's EU team in the European Parliament led by MEP Chris MacManus. Allied to this is the work of former MEP Martina Anderson who now has a brief of securing support within continental Europe for a United Ireland.

Prior to Christmas Chris MacManus and Martina Anderson took part in an exhaustive round of meetings with senior leadership figures within the European Parliament representing most of the Parliament's political groups. These included the two largest groups – the European Peoples Party (EPP) and the Socialist and Democrats group (S&D).

Martina also addressed a conference on self-determination held in Brussels. She told her audience: “The starting point in Ireland is clear: the people of Ireland, north and south, have a guaranteed legal right to determine our own constitutional future.

“The Good Friday Agreement – our peace agreement – leaves no room for doubt. It is the constitutional promise at the heart of our arrangements. It is reflected in international law, and within the domestic legal orders of both the Irish and British states.

“Much of the current growing debate Irish Unity is focussed on proper planning and preparation. We believe that the EU - and other international friends of Ireland - have a vital supportive role to play.”

In the course of their meetings Chris and Martina met Manfred Weber, the President of the EPP group in the Parliament; Pedro Silva Pereira the Vice President of the European Parliament and a member of the Socialist Party in Portugal and Martin Schirdewan the President of the Left Group in the Parliament.

Addressing the Left Group Martina Anderson said: “Chris and I are working across Europe to secure support the unity referendum contained in the Good Friday Agreement.”

Chris MacManus said:

“Brexit has been a catalyst for many MEPs and senior officials in Brussels who now have a greater understanding of the Good Friday Agreement, our Peace Process and the cavalier attitude of the British Establishment. Knowing that the North will automatically re-join the EU after a positive referendum on Unity, many now agree that the long-term and logical solution is Irish Unity. Sinn Féin's focus in the time ahead is to raise the issue of Irish Unity at every opportunity and to seek support for it. We are also encouraging the EU's institutions to begin preparing for the seamless re-integration of the north.”



Chris MacManus MEP and Martina Anderson pictured with Manfred Weber, president of the EPP in the European Parliament.



Chris MacManus MEP and Martina Anderson pictured with the vice president of European Parliament, Pedro Silva Pereira MEP.



Uachtarán Shinn Féin in America

Planning for a United Ireland, as well as reconnecting with US political leaders and the Irish/American community, were top of the agenda for a hectic four day visit by Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald on her visit to the USA in December.

Speaking at the New York Bar Association the Sinn Féin leader told her audience, 'We are living in the end days of partition in Ireland.' She praised the important role that Irish/America has played, especially in support of the peace process and in defence of the Good Friday Agreement, and she told it that it will have an equally important role to play in the time ahead in ensuring that we end partition and achieve Irish Unity.

In the course of her time in Washington and New York Mary Lou McDonald met Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer, Congress member Richie Neal, who Chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, Senator

Robert Menendez, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Because of the impact of the Covid pandemic and restrictions on travel this was the Sinn Féin leaders first face to face meeting with representatives of the Biden Administration.

As well as the issue of Irish Unity, other important areas of discussion centred on the British government's unacceptable legacy proposals and Brexit. The US administration as well as Congressional representatives, have been publicly very critical of the British government's policies on both of these matters, as well as in defence of the Good Friday Agreement.

In New York Mary Lou McDonald met with community representatives, the Emerald Isle Immigration Centre, as well as Friends of Sinn Féin. Planning has already begun for the St. Patrick's Day events in the USA in March which is an important date in the US and Irish/America calendar.



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 for all of the news on uniting Ireland.



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