



Generational change is underway in Ireland

- Uachtarán Shinn Féin, Mary Lou McDonald



Mary Lou McDonald told a gathering of the Left, Social Democrats and Greens in Athens “This European Forum meets at a time of great challenge right across Europe.

“Conflict in Ukraine and the biggest displacement of people since the second world war, an unprecedented cost of living fuelled by soaring energy prices, and the race against climate change merge to form a perfect storm.

“We are reminded that peace, stability, and prosperity can never be taken for granted,” she said. “They must be worked for, safeguarded and advanced always.

“There’s no doubt that the geopolitical landscape of Europe has changed for a generation. The sands of human life have shifted. This is why progressive left politics has never been more needed.

“Though we face a moment of real crisis, I remain ever optimistic that we can join together in solidarity to build a better Europe of equality and opportunity for all.

“By working together, ever closer, and ever harder, we can shape a brighter future. The peoples of Europe can emerge from this moment stronger and more determined to improve our lives.

“But it’s not inevitable. The achievement of a better, social Europe depends on the decisions made today. It depends on the choices and priorities of governments. It’s clear that the best way to make real and lasting change happen is by electing left progressive governments.

“In Ireland, generational change is underway.

“Our people are driving change. Sinn Féin is at the forefront of this unstoppable current of progress.

“Following May’s election in the North, we emerged as the largest party in the Assembly for the first time. Michelle O’Neill was elected as First Minister designate. It was a historic breakthrough moment. In the South, Sinn Féin continues to top the polls by some distance. The prospect of Sinn Féin leading the government north and south is now very real.”

In Ireland, generational change is underway.

Concluding the President of Sinn Féin said, “as we live through the end days of partition, we are on the cusp of something very special - a new and united Ireland in our time. A nation united in ambition, energy, and opportunity. A people coming

together in the spirit of equality, community, and hope for the future.

“It is an exciting and positive time. Sinn Féin will always stand with our European allies in championing a fair and equal society. For a Europe where workers and families always come first.

“We ask that you continue to stand with us as we walk the final length of the journey to full nationhood.

“By standing together and building the international relationships of Left Progressives, we can achieve a brighter, equal, and peaceful future. This is a time for belief, for leadership, for unity. This is a time for change.”



John
Brady TD

RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD TO PACK HIS BAGS - HE IS NO LONGER WELCOME IN IRELAND

John Brady said Russia's Embassy in Ireland and Ambassador Yuriy Filatov have acted as "unwavering and unapologetic propagandists for his country's illegal invasion of Ukraine".

"Ireland has heard the accounts of murders carried out by your soldiers reported from numerous credible sources.

"Ireland has seen the aerial photographs of human remains left scattered by the side of the road.

"Ireland has witnessed cars carrying white flags, to indicate civilian passengers, riddled with shrapnel."

The evidence of such atrocities condemns Russia and Ireland will not turn a blind eye.

Lithuania became the first European Union State to expel its Russian Ambassador.

"They did this as an action to uphold human rights and to uphold justice. I applaud them for it, and I believe Ireland should follow suit.

"The Kremlin has censured 52 Irish politicians which is another reprehensible attempt by Vladimir Putin to silence and intimidate those who have rightly called out his despicable invasion of Ukraine. We will not be silenced," said John Brady

The TD went on to say that "since February, States across the European Union and beyond have responded collectively to the humanitarian crisis brought about by Putin by imposing justified economic sanctions on the Russian government.

"The people of Ireland stand in solidarity with Ukraine, who will win-out over brutality and injustice. But we must use every available avenue to press for a complete Russian withdrawal and an end to this terrible war.

"I believe this would be a most powerful action, as a military neutral non-aligned state, as we too stand for human rights and justice, and I call on the Taoiseach and the Government to act now."

'I will work for all citizens, and for all communities as a First Minister for all'



– Michelle O'Neill, First Minister Designate Ard Fhéis speech

"In May 2022, the people of the North voted in huge numbers in the Assembly election.

"For the first time, the balance of power at Stormont shifted, and Sinn Féin emerged as the largest party, topping the poll with 27 seats.

"I campaigned to lead a new Executive as a 'First Minister for All', ready to work with other parties and to serve all communities.

"It is wrong that progress on the issues affecting the daily lives of people are being put on hold, because one party refuses to accept the democratic outcome of last May's Assembly election.

"As you all know the DUP are using the Brexit Protocol as cover not to enter power-sharing.

"And the real reason is because as an Irish nationalist, I will be at the helm as First Minister. And everybody knows it.

"The DUP and Tories offer only disruption, dysfunction and chaos in Belfast and London.

"In the meantime, we cannot allow the vacuum to be filled by threats of violence or intimidation from loyalists who want yesterday.

"Let's be clear, yesterday is not available to them!

"Together, we can all build for the future and do so, in a way that reflects the diversity of our different but equally legitimate, allegiances, identities and

aspirations.

"I am working to build a society not of Orange and Green, but a rainbow of colours and multi-culturalism which reflects who we are and what we stand for today.

"It is an irrefutable fact that the Protocol is working. Most working people, businesses and key sectors I meet want the British Government to urgently reach a negotiated settlement with the EU around the Protocol.

"They want certainty and stability so they can invest for the future taking full advantage of our access to the EU single market and the benefits this brings to our economy.

"We must defend and protect the gains of the Good Friday Agreement and the need to reach a negotiated agreement with the European Union. Neither the Assembly or the Executive has any mandate or role in these negotiations.

"So holding back power-sharing in the meantime is simply to punish the public. This is reckless and it needlessly polarises our society and politics.

"For the Stormont leaders, now is the time for renewed unity of purpose and determination to deliver a stable power-sharing coalition that works and delivers. The people want government, and we all want change. I am firmly committed to both."

The full speech can be found here
<https://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/64585>





Professor Colin Harvey, Mark Bassett BL, Chris MacManus MEP and Martina Anderson

MAKING THE CASE FOR IRISH UNITY IN THE EU

- Chris MacManus MEP

The independent report by Professor Colin Harvey and Mark Bassett BL explores the legal mechanisms outlined in the Good Friday Agreement and recognised under international law, for the entire island of Ireland to be re-united within the EU, and the steps the EU can take to provide for such an eventuality.

It was my pleasure to host the launch of the independent report 'Making the Case for Irish Unity in the EU' by Professor Colin Harvey and Mr Mark Bassett Barrister-at-Law.

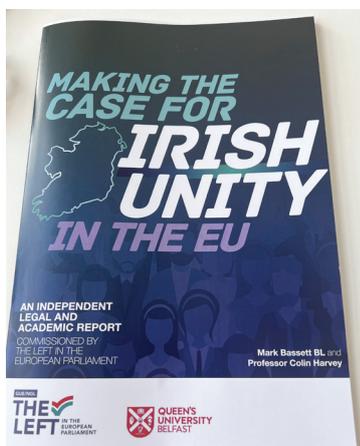
Their independent report explores the legal mechanisms outlined in the Good Friday Agreement and recognised under international law, for the entire island of Ireland to be re-united within the EU and the steps the EU can take in order to provide for such an eventuality.

As an MEP representing the border region in Ireland, I have made it a priority to protect the island of Ireland from the worst impacts of Brexit. It is now clear to me, and many others across the EU institutions, that reunification is the best way to do just that.

I believe that the EU needs to take an active role in preparing for constitutional change on the island



Mark Bassett BL and Professor Colin Harvey



of Ireland. There is no legal impediment preventing the EU from doing so.

Across Europe, people are engaging in this constitutional conversation whether it is diplomats, parliamentarians, or the general public. But to date, the EU has taken a back seat. We have witnessed the long-lasting repercussions of the Brexit disaster, when people voted on a referendum without the necessary planning put in place beforehand.

In their research paper, Colin Harvey and Mark Bassett set out the legal mechanisms of the Good Friday Agreement and international law which provides a democratic and legal platform for the European institutions to adopt a policy position of favouring Irish unity.

Ultimately, the right to self-determination belongs to the people of the island of Ireland alone and planning for Irish unity remains the responsibility of the Irish Government and it needs to establish a Citizens' Assembly. But Colin Harvey and Mark Bassett point out, and I agree, that the Good Friday Agreement has in some respects become part of EU law and given that a united

Ireland will impact on the competencies of the EU, it should be in the EU's best interest to plan and prepare for Irish Reunification.



José Manuel Albares

SPAIN MAKES PLANS FOR UNITED IRELAND

As Spain prepares to take on the EU Presidency role in 2023, its Foreign Affairs Minister, José Manuel Albares has indicated that the Spanish civil service is making contingency plans for a potential united Ireland scenario.

In an interview Mr Albares was asked about a united Ireland and said that while it is hypothetical, "the Spanish civil service would nevertheless be sketching out contingency plans for any such scenario".

In 2017, the European Council said if Ireland is reunited as set out in Good Friday Agreement, the whole territory of the island of Ireland would remain in the EU and no accession process would be required.

Sinn Féin Representative to Europe Martina Anderson said, "Member States should follow Spain's lead and put contingency plans in place to prepare for constitutional change in Ireland.

"European countries should assess what is in their best interest: encountering the ongoing protocol problems or supporting as the French President Macron said, 'the solution to the Brexit mess – which is Irish reunification'."

Sinn Féin Senator welcomes human right report on impact of Brexit

The report, endorsed by more than a two to one majority of members of the Assembly at its Autumn session, is highly critical of the British Government with regard to its stance on the Protocol, its so-called legacy bill and unilateral actions that could undermine the Good Friday Agreement.

Speaking after the adoption of the report Senator Gavan said: “The report is both timely and crucial – it sends a clear message from this Human Rights Assembly to the British Government regarding the absolute need to respect human rights, respect the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights, protect the Good Friday Agreement, and refrain from taking unilateral action.

“The people of the North of Ireland did not vote for Brexit. So, it is entirely appropriate that this report calls for the smooth and efficient implementation of the Protocol.

“The report also highlights that the British government’s attempts to pursue a unilateral policy to change core elements of the Protocol is a clear breach of international law.

“The report also cites ‘serious concerns’ regarding the compatibility of the British Government’s so-called Legacy Bill with the ECHR. This Bill of Shame, uniquely in the world and against all principles of domestic and international law, would close all routes to justice for people bereaved in the conflict. It should now be shelved without further delay.

“Not one political party in Ireland supports this appalling Bill which again constitutes a breach of the Good Friday Agreement.

“The report calls for the immediate re-establishment of the Assembly for the North and the delivery of long promised Irish Language rights legislation.”

Senator Gavan expressed disappointment at repeated attempts by the British Government to have the debate and vote



Sinn Féin Senator Paul Gavan

on this report postponed. “I understand that British Government delegates repeatedly asked for a postponement in the run-up to this debate and asked for the report to be sent back to the Political Affairs Committee rather than be voted on by the Assembly.

“The British Government should heed the clear calls from PACE and engage with a new focus on respecting the human rights of all the people of the North of Ireland.

“They should also recognise that a much bigger conversation is well under way about constitutional change and Irish Unity.

“In this regard I repeated Sinn Féin’s call on the Irish Government today to broaden and deepen this conversation by establishing a Citizens’ Assembly on Irish Unity.”

Ireland ranks lowest in the EU for supports for consumers during the cost-of-living crisis – TD Pearse Doherty

Sinn Féin Finance spokesperson Pearse Doherty TD highlighted statistics in the Dail which showed that Ireland had been the worst EU member state in terms of providing supports for households and businesses facing eye-watering energy bills.

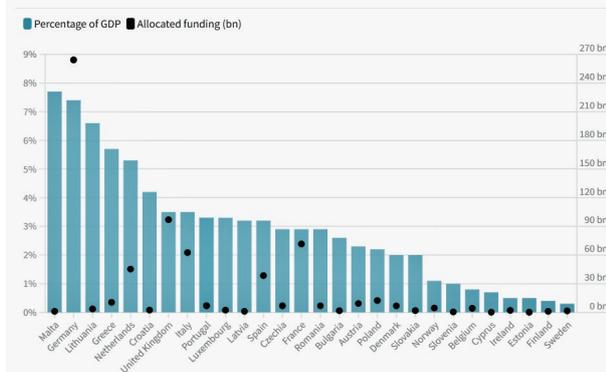
The TD told Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe “You are the finance minister who has the worst record in Europe... you are at the bottom of the class.”

Pearse Doherty TD



While the Irish finance minister claimed, “measures we have put in place are equivalent to around 1 per cent of our national income, not 0.5 per cent as in the study”, Sinn Féin TD Pearse

Governments earmarked and allocated funding (Sep 2021 - Oct 2022) to shield households and businesses from the energy crisis
Last update: 20.10.2022



Doherty said that even if they used the recommended method “you’d still be below

Czechia, Slovakia and other countries”.

Slovakia. You’d still be one of the worst in Europe.”

“You can dice and slice these statistics all you want, however we’re still way behind what other countries have done... and many were borrowing to support businesses and households... we need you to cut electricity prices back to where they were pre-crisis and cap them at that level.”

Pearse Doherty TD asked the finance minister to do “a U-turn, do the right thing and follow the trend in Europe where caps had been introduced in France, Poland, Austria, the Netherlands,

Slovakia and other countries”.

A time to manage and not deny change – real leadership is required



DECLAN
KEARNEY
MLA

Extracts from Declan Kearney's blog

Constitutional change in Ireland is now on the political horizon.

Some, like the DUP and right-wing Tories in Britain will seek to slow down, and even frustrate the need to plan and prepare for Irish reunification.

Since May 2022, opposition to the Protocol has been used as a pretext for the DUP's refusal to accept the democratic outcome of the Assembly election and appointment of a SF First Minister.

That opposition emanated at a time when Sinn Féin was leading in opinion polls and subsequently emerged as the largest political party in Ireland; leading the power sharing administration in the north and poised to become the lead party of government in the south of Ireland.

The Protocol has been weaponised to oppose the changing political landscape.

Political unionism and the British system are now confronted with realities which the partition of Ireland was meant to permanently prevent.

Instead of politically and pragmatically navigating these new circumstances, the DUP has become cheerleader for a negative backlash which carries within it, the ever-present potential for the law of unintended consequences which will deepen the political crisis.

The irresponsible and chaotic positions of the Tory government, with an absence of a clear plan to restore the power sharing Assembly in the north and stabilise the political process, runs the risk of opening a vacuum.

Republicans, nationalists, and other democrats need to think carefully about managing the short and longer-term future of our island.

We need to consider how to progress the conversation which has started about a new way forward.

There is a new future for Ireland to be authored. One which is positive, progressive, inclusive, anti-sectarian, and multi-

Those of us who will vote for Irish unity need to reach out and engage with the undecided, and indeed those who may vote against constitutional change in an Irish Unity referendum.



cultural.

The political transition from now until that point will be phased and incremental.

This is a time to manage, not to deny change.

It makes no sense for the Irish government to stall on the establishment of an all-island Citizens' Assembly which would consult upon and advise on the key milestones underpinning an orderly political transition towards Irish unity.

Those of us who will vote for Irish unity need to reach out and engage with the undecided, and indeed those who may vote against constitutional change in an Irish Unity referendum.

In the final phase of negotiations on new constitutional and democratic arrangements, there will have to be compromises and accommodations. We will all need to be flexible and generous with, and towards each other.

The full article can be found here

<http://anphoblacht.com/contents/28408>





Motivating ‘gallant allies in Europe’ to make the case for Irish reunification – Martina Anderson

Speaking at the Sinn Féin Ard Fhéis, I asked delegates and members to give recognition to the growing awareness across continental Europe of the changing political landscape and the constitutional conversation happening in Ireland.

I called on the Ard Fhéis to acknowledge the diplomats, parliamentarians, officials party representatives from European countries who were in attendance listening to all that was said about the need to prepare for the transition to the next phase of the peace process and to properly plan for self-determination, constitutional change,

reunification and national reconciliation.

As Sinn Féin Representative to Europe, I am tasked with stimulating the Irish unity debate, drumming up support and giving it due prominence across continental Europe because there is no doubt that the consequence of an Irish nation will resonate across the seven continents of the world. Irish unity will be global news.

BREXIT has made the partition of Ireland, Europe’s problem too. Therefore, it’s in Europe’s interest to adopt a positive position in support of Irish unity with the north of Ireland returning to full membership of the EU,

with MEPs from the north back in the EP: That would be much better for Europe, than facing the Protocol hostility from Britain which will be forever present in a partitioned Ireland – that must make Irish unity the preferable alternative.

Building a European wide alliance of parliamentarians and civic society organisations supporting the inclusive, democratic Irish unity referendum as set out in the GFA is necessary - and as SF Representative to Europe I am motivating our “Gallant Allies in Europe” to make the case for the transition to Irish reunification across Europe.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT IRELAND?



Micheál Mac Donncha

- For many centuries the island of Ireland was one political unit. The idea of Partition, dividing Ireland into two states, was a creation of the early 20th century.
- Partition was imposed by an act of the British Parliament - the Government of Ireland Act - in December 1920, for which not a single Irish member of parliament voted.
- The Partition Act created a sectarian state, directly under the British crown, with an inbuilt Unionist majority. From the beginning the nationalist minority were second-class citizens.
- From 1921 to 1972 the Unionist Party ran Northern Ireland as a one-party state. In that time they agreed to adopt only one piece of legislation proposed by the minority opposition.
- The state of Northern Ireland, also known as the Six Counties, which is still within the United Kingdom, covers six of Ireland’s 32 Counties, those in the North-East, while the North-West is in the independent state known as the Republic of Ireland - also known as the 26 Counties or ‘the South’ even though it includes Ireland’s most northerly point!
- The state of ‘Northern Ireland’ is the only part of the United Kingdom which may, by vote of its population, leave the UK. This is provided for in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement under which a referendum may be held to bring about the reunification of Ireland.



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