



Sinn Féin leaders in Brussels:

PROTOCOL HERE TO STAY

Last week, a Sinn Féin leadership delegation travelled to Brussels to meet with European Union leaders and representatives, including Vice President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič.

As part of these discussions both Mary Lou McDonald TD and Michelle O'Neill MLA put forward the need for positive, constructive solutions to outstanding issues around the Irish Protocol; acknowledging that it is working but can be improved.

The Sinn Féin leadership delegation specifically thanked European Union leaders for their continued support and commitment to the Good Friday Agreement. But made it absolutely clear that people in the north, civic society and business, will not be held to ransom by continuous game-playing or political brinkmanship by Brexiteers.

First Minister Designate Michelle O'Neill MLA welcomed the European Union's ongoing support for the people of the north and their commitment to ensuring the Protocol works, for civic society and business. In working together collectively, through constructive dialogue, concerns about elements of the Protocol can be resolved to smooth its implementation.

Contrary to false claims that there is widespread opposition to the Protocol, the leadership delegation made it abundantly clear that a majority in the north, specifically business leaders and Assembly members - elected only last month, support the Protocol.

At the recent Assembly election, the electorate sent a clear message that they wanted to see their politicians getting back to work; but importantly, delivering for people hit by the cost of living crisis and by investing in health.



“People need to see delivery and leadership, not deadlock.”

“The Protocol mitigates against the worst impacts of Brexit by protecting the Good Friday Agreement, the all-Ireland economy, and preventing a hard border on our island.

“Indeed, it has benefitted business by giving continued access to the EU and British markets, a unique position in international trade.

“Issues can only be resolved through joint solutions with the EU and within the framework of the Protocol.

“Threats, unilateral action and breaches of international law helps no-one.

“The north must not become collateral damage to appease Tory backbenchers and the DUP.

“It is time for us all to have the courage to step forward, with unity of purpose and determination to deliver a stable power-sharing coalition that works, and delivers.

“The DUP's attempt to hold democracy to ransom should not last a moment longer: their stand-off is in reality with the public we serve, not the EU. It serves no-one.

“People want to see their politicians at Stormont working hard for them to deliver solutions to the challenges they face. That is Sinn Féin's focus and I am urging all other parties to make this their priority too.

“People need to see delivery and leadership, not deadlock.

“Sinn Féin is committed to working together with all parties to make progress, to ensure these issues are resolved.

“This message was at the heart of our discussions in Brussels and will continue to be our focus as we continue talks”.

Speaking after the visit, Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou McDonald TD said:
“There is not and never will be any ‘good’ Brexit for Ireland. Brexit is fundamentally incompatible with the Good Friday Agreement and has brought about huge uncertainty for communities and businesses here.



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Sinn Féin's 27
MLAs pictured
outside the
Assembly

The Assembly election is over, democracy must prevail – Kearney



Writing for the online edition of An Phoblacht, Sinn Féin National Chairperson, Declan Kearney MLA has said that in the aftermath of the northern Assembly election, the most serious political crisis in the post-GFA era is now taking place.

"The 5th May election has indeed proved to be the most important of a generation. It was a watershed.

"Brexit changed everything, and now the political and societal landscape has changed again.

"There can now be a First Minister for all – for the first time in 101 years.

"And there is now the potential for proper power sharing to be established.

"However, that positive democratic agenda is now being directly threatened with a refusal by the DUP to allow the power sharing and the north/south political institutions to be restored.

"The most serious and profound political crisis of the post-GFA era is currently unfolding in plain sight."

The South Antrim MLA stated:

"The entire basis of power sharing is being imperilled by the tactics of both the DUP and the Tory government; and in particular, a toxic alliance between the Tory Foreign Secretary, the Economic Research Group (ERG) and the DUP.

"International treaties and international law in the form of the Protocol and GFA are under direct attack.

"A wrecker's charter is being used to attempt to dismantle the GFA by stealth, alongside the use of a phoney war against the EU, ostensibly to dismantle the Protocol.

"But the fact is that the Tories' objective is all about shoring up its electoral coalition in England; while the DUP's objective is to try to reassert itself as the dominant force within political

unionism, and stem the hemorrhage of its political power and influence in the north.

"The current Tory administration has no investment in, or attachment to the Irish peace process. The Tory fat cats in Whitehall don't care about anyone in the north.

"This current leadership of the DUP is unable and unwilling to adapt to the changed political landscape.

"The Tories and the DUP are outliers in terms of respect for international treaties and all forms of democratic conventions, principles and values."

Calling for urgent action, he said:

"The Tories and DUP must not be allowed to drag us all into their race to the bottom.

"This is a defining moment.

"The EU, and the US administration, must hold firm on the GFA, and the primacy of international treaties and international law.

"There should be no renegotiation of either the Protocol or GFA.

"It is time for the Irish government to step firmly up to the mark, and adopt an unequivocal position against the destructive behaviour of both the DUP and the Tories.

"The united voice of wider civic society across the north must also be heard loudly."



The full article can be read here:

<https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/28310>

Sinn Féin President meets with US Congressional delegation

At the end of May, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD met with a delegation of US Congress members in Leinster House.

The bipartisan delegation was led by Rep. Richard Neal (Chair of the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee), comprising members of that Committee; including Rep. Kevin Brady, the Ranking Republican Member, and also members of the Congressional Friends of Ireland.

Speaking after the meeting, Teachta McDonald said:

"I thanked the members of the US Congress for their continued support of the Good Friday Agreement, for peace and for progress in Ireland.

"There would be no agreement without the US. The progress we have made since 1998 has been due to the diligence and commitment of US political leaders who have acted as guarantors of our agreements.

"These agreements face challenges from a British government that plays fast and loose with international law and

places narrow Tory party concerns above the needs of the people and economy of the north.

"We all agree the way forward is clear - the DUP need to get back to work and stop blocking the formation of an Executive.

"The British government must abide by international law.

"The resolution to the implementation of the Protocol will be found in negotiations between the EU and British government free from threats of unilateral action."



Michelle O'Neill with SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon, Edinburgh

O'NEILL AND STURGEON DISCUSS COST OF LIVING AND EXECUTIVE FORMATION

On 20th May, Sinn Féin First Minister Designate, Michelle O'Neill MLA travelled to Edinburgh to meet with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP at her Bute House residence.

Following the meeting, Michelle O'Neill MLA said:

"I was delighted to visit Scotland today to meet Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, to discuss a number of shared priorities and to update her on political developments at Stormont.

"This included the cost-of-living crisis which is bearing down hard on workers and families, and the need for action by our administrations.

"We also discussed the need to ensure the government in London protect people struggling with soaring costs where we don't have the powers to act.

"I updated the First Minister on our recent elections, and the overwhelming demand from the electorate who have given the parties a mandate to get the Assembly and Executive up and running without further delay.

"The public want us to unlock the £435 million sitting in the Executive's bank account to support households, and to agree a budget which will invest an extra £1 billion in our health service.

"Both Scotland and the island of Ireland held membership of the EEC and EU from 1973.

"We enjoyed the enormous benefits of our membership until the north of Ireland and Scotland were dragged out of the EU as a result of the Tory Brexit without our consent, and against the democratically expressed wishes of our people.

"Six years on from the referendum the implications are being felt acutely. I had the opportunity to update Nicola Sturgeon on the Protocol which gives us unique access to the EU single market and the world's biggest trading bloc and how this is yielding benefits for business and our local economy."

In conclusion, Michelle O'Neill said:

"The historic bonds between Scotland and the island of Ireland go back centuries.

"We enjoy a long and enduring affinity, as close neighbours and good friends.

"Moving forward I am determined to strengthen the bond that ties us - politically, culturally and economically - so that our administrations can work together in our shared interests through strong intergovernmental relations."



Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD with the US Ambassador to Ireland, Claire Cronin, members of the US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, and members of the Congressional Friends of Ireland outside Leinster House

Clear breach of international law by Russia cannot stand

IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S IMPERIALIST WAR IN UKRAINE, SINN FÉIN PRESIDENT MARY LOU MCDONALD TD UNEQUIVOCALLY CONDEMNED VLADIMIR PUTIN'S VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND UKRAINE'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

Teachta McDonald said:

"The world is looking on with increasing anxiety at the behaviour of Russia.

"The war in Ukraine, the horrific loss of life, the clear breach of international law by Russia cannot stand, and sanctions are appropriate and absolutely necessary.

"Sinn Féin supports the significant, targeted economic sanctions must be imposed on Russia. They must be directed not only at the Russian government, but at their oligarchs living in luxury in European capitals.

"However, sanctions alone will not resolve this crisis and help avoid further conflict. We need to see a redoubling of diplomacy to ensure a peaceful resolution.

"Ireland, through our military neutrality and our place on the UN Security Council, is uniquely placed in Europe to put the case for an intensification in dialogue to help bring this conflict to an end and find a peaceful way forward. That should be the focus of the government"

In response to the war, Chris Hazzard MP



President McDonald meeting with Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, Ms G Larysa

joined thousands of 'Stop the War' protestors in London demonstrating against Putin's raging war in Ukraine.

The South Down MP said:

"Invasion, occupation, weapons and wars should belong to the past; the future of Europe, and humanity, must be peace! Solidarity now, and always!"

Despite increased anti-war demonstrations, international governmental condemnations and targeted sanctions, Vladimir Putin still to



Stop the War protest, London

this day continues his imperialist crusade in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, with Putin's continued disregard and contempt for international law, Sinn Féin has supported the European Union's enhanced targeted sanctions against Putin and repeatedly called for the expulsion of Russia's Ambassador to Ireland.

Addressing the Dáil, Mary Lou McDonald said:

"Our solidarity with Ukraine must take the form of significantly strengthened sanctions against the regime of President Putin. We need sanctions which can end Russian aggression against Ukraine and force a complete withdrawal of Russian military forces.

"Russia has closed the door on dialogue and through its criminal actions it has thus far rejected avenues for diplomacy.

"Far from demonstrating a willingness to engage in peace negotiations, Russia has escalated its ferocious violence through the indiscriminate targeting of civilians.

"All the while, however, the Russian Embassy in Ireland and Ambassador Yury Filatov have acted as unwavering and unapologetic propagandists for his country's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

"On 5th April, Lithuania became the first EU member state to expel its Russian Ambassador. It did so as an action to uphold human rights and justice.

"I commend Lithuania on that and believe our country should follow suit. That would be a most powerful action for us to take as a militarily neutral, non-aligned State as we too stand for human rights and justice. I call on the Taoiseach and the Government to act now.

"The people of Ireland stand with Ukraine. We strongly support Ukraine's stated desire to

join the European Union.

"We must respond to the humanitarian crisis by providing refuge to those fleeing for their lives.

"As an elected member of the UN Security Council, we must use every available avenue to press for the de-escalation of conflict, for a ceasefire, for dialogue and for a Russian withdrawal and an end to this terrible war.

"Ireland supports economic sanctions against Russia. We must intensify those sanctions. We should not have to convince anybody of the need to hit the Russian elites and oligarchs in every possible way.

"The revelations of these war crimes and atrocities demand such an intensification of sanctions.

"The people of Ukraine will win-out over brutality and injustice.

"In that spirit of hope and standing on the foundation stones of our shared humanity, Ukraine will emerge once more into a new dawn of peace and freedom.

"Ireland stands with you now in your dark days and we will stand with you yet in the light of a victory of humanity over injustice, of light over dark, of life over death. Slava Ukraini."



President McDonald joining an End the War protest outside the Russian Embassy, Dublin

AN DREAM DEARG:

Tens of thousands march for Irish language rights in Belfast

On Saturday 21st May, tens of thousands of Irish language rights activists attended An Dream Dearg rally in Belfast, as part of their campaign for the delivery of an Irish Language Act - Acht Gaeilge.

Speaking at the rally, Sinn Féin National Chairperson, Declan Kearney MLA said:

“This is a brilliant day when you look around you and you see the thousands of people here in the streets of Belfast from every part of the island.

“Young children, young families, everybody here demonstrating ‘Dearg Le Fearg’ with such power, emotive, passion and positivity.

“This demonstrates, without any shadow or doubt, that the demand for an Acht Gaeilge, Irish language rights and official status for the Irish language in the north of Ireland is as powerful as ever it was”.

Following the announcement that legislation for an Irish Language Act was finally being tabled in Westminster, Sinn Féin First Minister Designate Michelle O’Neill welcomed the development:

“At the weekend almost 20,000 people took to the streets of Belfast as part of their campaign for respect and their language rights to be delivered.

“The determination, confidence and vibrancy of the Irish language community shone through. It was a pleasure to watch.

“I welcome confirmation that the British government will finally table legislation to deliver an Acht Gaeilge.

“This day belongs to those who never gave up, those that have campaigned for over 15 years.

“This now needs to be done before the summer recess and without any more delay.

“Gaelgeoirí have waited over 15 years for the British government to



An Dream Dearg marchers outside Belfast City Hall

live up to its promises and deliver Acht, they shouldn’t have to wait a day longer.

“It’s also good news that An Coiste Infheistíochta Gaeilge will receive £4 million of funding to continue to assist and develop Irish language communities and projects and create jobs.

“It’s important that we now see the Irish Language Act delivered to give official recognition of the Irish language in this state, appoint An Comisínéir Teanga, repeal draconian laws preventing the use of Irish in our courts and ensure that people can access public services through Irish.

“The language and cultural package agreed in New Decade, New Approach symbolises respect for diversity, tolerance and mutual understanding for each other’s identity, language and culture.”

Walking away from international obligations an appalling attack by Boris Johnson on the international rule of law

Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD has said that threats to breach an international treaty by the British government must be condemned by the international community.

Teachta McDonald said:

“The Irish Protocol gives the north access to both the EU and British markets; representing a market of more than 500 million people. It protects the Good Friday Agreement and prevents a hard border on the island of Ireland.

“It presents massive opportunities for the north, and does nothing to undermine the constitutional provisions of the Good Friday Agreement.

“While there are practical issues related to the operation of the Protocol to be addressed, joint solutions to these issues must be found through dialogue between the British government and the EU, not unilateral action.

“The EU has offered solutions, and this message has been echoed again today by the Vice President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič. I welcome his



Sinn Féin leadership addressing media outside Hillsborough Castle

statement.

“On the other hand, the British government is engaged in threats to breach international rule of law.

“If the British government follows through on these

threats to unilaterally denounce and disapply the Protocol, this would terminate the Withdrawal Agreement Treaty between the British government and the EU.

“Walking away from international obligations would represent an appalling attack on the international rule of law. Any such action, and the threat to do so, must be firmly condemned by the international community.

“The British government says that it wants to act responsibly and respect the Good Friday Agreement, yet their objectives are incompatible with the Good Friday Agreement. Unilateral action will deepen political instability and economic uncertainty.

“It amounts to an anti-Good Friday Agreement agenda disingenuously wrapped up in pro-Good Friday Agreement rhetoric.

“This strategy is actively supported by the DUP, who refuse to enter government in the north, despite the fact that the political institutions are not a party to the Withdrawal Agreement. It is denying democracy and punishing the public and this reckless boycott must end.”



Sinn Féin leadership speaking with New York Representative Gregory Meeks, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Capitol Hill



President McDonald meeting US President Biden in the White House

St. Patrick's Day: Sinn Féin leadership travel to the United States

Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou McDonald TD and Vice-President, Michelle O'Neill MLA, travelled to New York and Washington in March as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations.

During their visit they attended the St Patrick's Day reception in the White House, attended the Speakers Lunch on Capitol Hill, met with a range of senior political figures on Capitol Hill, while addressing the US Council for Foreign Relations in New York and an Irish unity event in Fordham University.

Following the visit, Michelle O'Neill MLA said:

"Throughout the week the US Administration and senior political leaders on Capitol Hill have been absolutely unequivocal in their support for the Good Friday Agreement and the Protocol.

"House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was very clear when she said if there is any hardening of the border there will be no US trade deal with Britain.

"The US has invested almost a quarter of a century in the agreement and understands that it is a cornerstone of the peace process and needs to be strongly

defended. There will be no renegotiation of the Good Friday Agreement before or after the Assembly elections, regardless of the attempts of the DUP and English Tories to undermine it.

"Those committed to democracy need to commit to working together in the Assembly, Executive, North South Ministerial Council and East West structures and this needs to happen regardless of the outcome of the elections. Nothing less is acceptable."

During the Sinn Féin leadership's visit to the United States, several leading Irish American Organisations placed an advert in the New York Times calling for the Taoiseach to convene a Citizens' Assembly for Irish Unity.

In the days following the New York Times advert on Irish Unity, the advert also appeared in the Washington Post, LA Times, San Jose Mercury News, the Sacramento Bee, Irish Voice, Irish Echo, Irish Examiner (USA) and Ohio Irish News.

Speaking at the time in New York, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD said:

"I welcome this initiative from several leading Irish American organisations, who

are joining voices from across Ireland calling for the convening of a Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity.

"Irish America has been central to advancing the peace process and defence of the Good Friday Agreement, including in recent months as the Tories sought to undermine the Irish Protocol, something key to avoiding a hard border on the island.

"The reality is that change is already underway, and we are in the endgame of partition.

"The Good Friday Agreement sets out the process for the referenda, north and south, the only question is when will they take place.

"Therefore, it critical that real preparations begin now and just as we did in other referenda the starting point should be the convening of a Citizens' Assembly.

"Over coming days, politicians from across Ireland will be engaging widely with Irish America and the US Administration and I'm sure that this will be a major point of discussion."

NAKBA DAY - Irish government should demand action from the international community over Israel human rights abuses

Marking the 74th anniversary of Nakba, Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Defence, John Brady TD called on the Irish government to use its position on the UN Security Council and in the EU to do more to hold Israel accountable for its gross abuse of human rights.

Nakba, which means catastrophe in Arabic, occurred when more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes, during the 1948 Palestine war. Nakba Day commemorates these events and raises awareness of the current plight that faces Palestinian refugees and their families.

The Wicklow TD said:

"I want to commend all those from all around the Island of Ireland, who will mark Nakba Day this year. Today, more than ever, it is important that we mark the plight of the Palestinian people. Since 1948, Israel has denied



John Brady TD

these Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homeland.

"Unfortunately, the policy of forced displacement of Palestinians continues today. Israel continues to flout international law with impunity.

"The Palestinian refugee and displaced population remains the largest in the world. Many are forced to live in exile while others are internally displaced because of actions of the Israeli military, which continues to occupy Palestine.

"The number of illegal Israeli settlers who continue to occupy Palestinian territories is now over

700,000 in over 200 illegal settlements.

"The Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people continues. This week we mourn the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh; the veteran reporter gunned down by Israeli forces in their latest attempt to suppress the truth of what is happening on the ground to Palestinians.

"I am calling on the Irish government to use Ireland's position on the UN Security Council, and its standing in the EU, to demand that the international community acts to bring an end to the awful catalogue of human rights abuses being perpetrated by Israel on the Palestinian people."

Also marking Nakba Day, Francie Molloy MP attended the 'End Apartheid – Free Palestine' demonstration in London. The Mid Ulster MP remarked:

"Apartheid was wrong in South Africa then; apartheid is wrong in Palestine today".



Seanadóir Paul Gavan speaking at the conference, featuring Jeremy Corbyn

Podemos - European Peace Conference

In April, Sinn Féin Seanadóir Paul Gavan attend a European Peace Conference in Madrid, organised by Podemos, to discuss the growing security concerns in Europe from Russia's imperial war in Ukraine.

As one of eighteen representatives from a variety of European left-wing political parties, Seanadóir Gavan reflected:

"It was a privilege to speak on behalf of Sinn Féin among many comrades of the European-Left to discuss pressing security concerns in Europe.

"The conference showed a clear consensus that the Left across Europe want to see a swift end to Putin's imperialist endeavours.

"A failure to deescalate this crisis will lead Europe once again to the brink of wholesale conflict, and will undoubtedly deliver more death; more destruction; and an even deeper humanitarian crisis.

"Every war must end at some point and diplomacy must restart. Rather than allow this war to continue to escalate and for positions to harden still further, it is vital that the guns fall silent and the discussions recommence.

"What is needed is a comprehensive, sustainable and an immediate ceasefire, an end to the aerial bombardment, the withdrawal of Russian troops, and a return to the negotiating table.

"To return to the Budapest, and Minsk agreements which accepted the legitimacy of Ukraine's independence, and created the basis for constructive dialogue and space for recognising the plurinational reality of the state of Ukraine.

"The thought of Europe sliding once again into the imperialist wars of the past is horrifying, and must be actively opposed".



Francie Molloy addressing the 'End Apartheid – Free Palestine' demonstration, London

British government acting with ‘indecent haste’ to rush through flawed legacy legislation

Sinn Féin Policing and Justice spokesperson, Gerry Kelly MLA has said the British government are acting with ‘indecent haste’ to rush through totally flawed legacy legislation against the wishes of victims and families and he called for the proposals to be scrapped.

Speaking ahead of demonstrations in Belfast and Derry on Tuesday 24th May, Gerry Kelly said:

“There is an indecent haste by the British government to rush through legacy legislation that the Human Rights Commission has described as totally flawed.

“Brandon Lewis and the Tories are ignoring the voices of victims right across the community, their families, political parties, the Irish government and human rights organisations who totally oppose these proposals.

“This is simply about protecting and giving an amnesty through the backdoor to British state forces, intelligences services and agents who murdered Irish citizens during the conflict and riding



Relatives for Justice protesting outside Downing Street, London

roughshod over the needs of victims and families.

“These proposals should be binned, and the agreement signed up to by the two governments and political parties

at Stormont House in 2014 must be fully implemented.

“Sinn Féin will continue to stand with the families in their campaigns for truth and justice.”

Ireland yet to receive a single euro from the EU’s Recovery Plan – Chris MacManus MEP



Chris MacManus MEP

Sinn Féin MEP Chris MacManus has said Ireland is one of a small number of countries yet to receive a single euro from the EU’s Recovery and Resilience Fund, describing the situation as “unacceptable during a cost of living crisis”.

MacManus pointed out that it is nearly one year since Ireland’s plan to spend our share was submitted and nine months since it was approved.

The Midlands Northwest MEP said:

“It is now nine months since the EU’s Council of Ministers agreed Ireland’s plan to spend the €990m Ireland is entitled to draw down. Yet Ireland is yet to receive even a single euro.

“For comparison, this month Italy received €21bn and Greece €3.6bn, whilst our country’s share is capped at €990m. it is clear we are running behind in drawing down our share.

“This is all the more disappointing as we are living through a cost of living crisis.

“A large part of Ireland’s plan is focused on bringing about the green revolution we need. The investments for example include a €155m plan for retrofitting of buildings including housing which would see working families and people save on their energy bills.

“Plans for extending a schools’ broadband programme and health projects are also dependent on this funding being drawn down.



“Ireland yet to receive a single euro from the EU’s Recovery Plan” – Chris MacManus MEP

Chris MacManus MEP

“It is unacceptable that almost a year after Ireland submitted its plan, which was itself later than scheduled, we are yet to receive or indeed apply for our share of the EU’s recovery package.

“Moreover, Ireland has failed to apply for pre-financing like other countries and seems to have decided not to apply for additional loans under the plan. As interest rates look set to rise that decision may need to be revisited.

“It is time for the government to get its act together and start drawing down what we are entitled to. Each day and month that passes means Ireland is missing out on sorely needed investment.”

Gatze Martxa: Ógra Shinn Féin - Ernai

At the invitation of Ernai, the youth wing of the Basque political Party Sortu, Ógra Shinn Féin representatives Róisín Nic Liam and Oisín Ó Síocháin visited the Basque Country to participate in the event 'Gatze Martxa'.

Gatze Martxa is an annual event organised by Ernai as part of their annual celebrations to mark Basque National Day, Aberrri Eguna; featuring international youth representatives from across Europe joining over three thousand Basque youth activists in a long march through the Basque Country.

Arriving back from the trip, Oisín Ó Síocháin said:

"The entire experience will last a lifetime.

"To witness the value and commitment Ernai carry out in community activism was remarkable and provided a great deal of inspiration to us.

"During our visit we were given a tour of the famous Basque youth houses in Bilbao, where we were shown the community work which takes place on a daily basis.

"As is true for members of Ógra, the members of Ernai are firmly rooted in their communities and dedicate a significant amount of their time to provide services and resources free of charge for the people around them".

Ógra's second delegate, Róisín Nic Liam also reflected:

"To witness the thousands of participants in Gatze Martxa was quite phenomenal, especially the spectacle of the colourful amount of Basque/ Navarre flags being flown alongside the flag of Catalonia and the Irish tricolours we had brought.

"But, the most particular observation we made as delegates during our trip,

was how important the Basque language is to Ernai.

"We heard very little Spanish, French and English throughout the trip, with Basque being the prominent lingua franca of all the events, both social and political.

"This is, of course, a reflection of the respect the Basque people have for their language, they see it as being an intrinsic part of their struggle and their identity. Basque is not only the working language of Ernai, but also the vernacular amongst activists in social settings."

Overall, both delegates were in awe of the experience on a whole and noted that they individually had learnt a lot regarding other international struggles from the other international delegates from Galicia, Catalonia, and as far as Kurdistan.



Ernai activists supporting Irish Unity

Concern expressed over Turkish assaults



John Brady TD

In April, Sinn Féin spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, John Brady TD expressed concern regarding reported Turkish incursions into northern Iraq in order to target Kurds.

Previous incursions by Turkey in the region have resulted in protests by the Iraqi government at the blatant disregard for the territorial integrity of Iraq.

The current assault has targeted Kurdish villages in the disputed region, with jet fighter planes, attack drones, helicopters, and artillery.

Teachta Brady said:

"It is important that the international community call Turkey to account over its assault of Iraqi Kurdistan, which began last week.

"It represents a further disregarding of the territorial integrity of a neighbouring state. Allegations that the civilian population are being targeted through the bombing of villages needs to be investigated.

"Kurdish leaders are accusing Turkey of taking advantage of the focus of US, NATO, and the EU on the war in Ukraine to launch their assault.

"It appears that Turkey has been successful in this regard, with the west remaining silent. This is only the latest incursion into northern Iraq by Turkey. Previous attacks have been strongly condemned by the Federal Government of Iraq.

"Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney needs to ensure that Ireland uses its influence both at an EU level and on the UN Security Council to bring an end to the Turkish assault, and to ensure that the current round of violence does not further destabilise the region."

JOHN BRADY TD WELCOMES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON ISRAEL'S POLICY OF APARTHEID AGAINST PALESTINIANS

Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, John Brady TD, welcomed the publication of a new Amnesty International report in May, Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity.

The Wicklow TD said:

"I welcome this new report from Amnesty International, which interrogates the record of the Israeli state on its treatment of the Palestinian people. It is a record of a continuing litany of crimes against humanity.

"What emerges is a damning indictment of an apartheid state, intent on the oppression and complete domination of the Palestinian people.

"As damning as the report is, sadly it comes as no surprise to those of us who watch what is happening on the ground in Palestine. The fragmentation of the Palestinian lands, the disposessions, the suppression of political and civic activity.

"Not since the world recoiled at the horrors of Apartheid South Africa, has such a systematic attempt to control a people been witnessed.

"I want to add my voice to the recommendations of the Amnesty International report.

"Israel needs to immediately end its apartheid policies against the Palestinian people. It needs to end the use of discriminatory legislation which targets Palestinians.

"The Israeli state must immediately end its annexation of Palestinian lands, as a prelude to the ending the building of illegal settlements on seized Palestinian lands.

"We need to see an end the collective punishment of the people of Gaza, by lifting the blockade and other restrictions on the movement of the population.

"I support the call by Amnesty International for the UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions against Israeli officials implicated in the crime of apartheid. The UN Special Assembly on Apartheid needs to be re-established.

"The international community also needs to repudiate the designation by Israel of the six Palestinian NGOs as terrorist organisations.

"This is a blatant attempt to suppress human rights organisations who are involved in essential work in highlighting the human rights abuses of the Palestinian people.

"I call on the Irish Government and Minister Coveney to add their support to the conclusions and recommendations contained within this report".

Amnesty International's declaration of apartheid has been echoed by United Nations Special Rapporteur, Prof. Michael Lynk and the 'Division for Palestinian rights, of the Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the UN Secretariat', in that Israel is institutionally carrying out a regime of apartheid.

Teachta Brady said:

"The time has come for action. The Irish government needs to step up its efforts both on the UN Security Council, and at the EU, to force the international community to act to protect the Palestinian people.

"We need to see the introduction of the Occupied Territories Bill here in Ireland, and the government need to formally recognise the state of Palestine."



Left to right: John Brady TD, Prof M Lynk, Palestinian Ambassador J W Abadalmajid, and Ruairi Ó Murchú TD



Sinn Féin Leas Ard Runai, Dáire Hughes

Party of the European Left Conference: ¡No Pasarán!

The European Left party, in association with the German Left party, Die Linke, and think tank transform!Europe, held their third iteration of the ¡No pasarán! conference in Berlin. The theme of the conference was stopping the far right and building the alternative.

Speaking at the event, Sinn Féin Leas Ard Runai, Dáire Hughes said:

"The title of this event, ¡No Pasarán! invokes an emotive response from Irish republicans, as it should for progressives and anti-fascists the world over. Our party is particularly proud of the response made by Irish republicans to the cries for help from the fledgling Spanish Republic in the mid-1930s.

"The looming spectre of the far-right, of fascism, of populist conservatism, stalks Europe to this day. Whilst the far-right in Ireland don't possess a significant mandate, there are issues on which they can bring influence to bear and we have to keep our guard up.

"The creation, promotion and delivery of credible, effective policy is the best long-term solution to counter the threat of the far-right. Policy based on standing up for workers and families, addressing real and immediate need, communicated in direct and unambiguous terms.

"Grassroots campaigning and legislative action on workers' rights, housing, community safety, calling out corruption in government, defending the rights of people moving to our countries, socio-economic rights and ensuring the cost of the environmental crisis isn't heaped on the poorest in society is crucial.

"Crucial too, in starving the far-right of what it needs, is the promotion of a vision for a better future. In our case, the vision of a new and united Ireland, based on the principle of equality, in which the full potential of our people can be unleashed."

Irish Passport Applications: Soaring numbers highlight clear need for passport office in the north



Seanadóir Niall Ó Donnghaile

Sinn Féin Leader in the Seanad, Seanadóir Niall Ó Donnghaile, has called again for an Irish passport office to be opened in the north.

Seanadóir Ó Donnghaile's comments follow the release of new figures under Freedom of Information legislation to the Irish Times which revealed for the first time, that more people in the north of Ireland have applied for an Irish passport than a British passport.

Speaking on the 3rd May, Seanadóir Ó Donnghaile said:

"It has been clear for many years now that there is a real need for an Irish passport office in the north.

"This need has been made clear yet again with the publication of these figures which reveal that in 2020 the number of people in the north who have applied for an Irish passport has surpassed the number who have applied for a British passport.

"The government must accept the clear need for people living in the north to have access to infrastructure locally during their application.

"This is simply common sense.

"I will raise this issue with Minister Coveney once again, to highlight to him the importance of delivering on this issue as a matter of priority".



Plaid Ifanc activists supporting – Acht Gaeilge Anois!

Plaid Ifanc - National Conference

In April, Ógra Shinn Féin representative, Cormac Begley attended Plaid Ifanc's (Plaid Cymru Youth) National Conference in Wrecsam, Wales.

Commenting on his visit, Cormac said:

"As an international delegate I was invited to address Plaid Ifanc's National Conference.

"In my speech I spoke about the upcoming May Assembly election, Brexit, Acht Gaeilge, Irish Unity, and the growing movement for progressive political change across Ireland.

"I was most impressed by how already well informed the Plaid Ifanc members were in engaging with contemporary Irish politics, particularly in relation to prominent campaigns around Irish Unity and Irish languages rights, An Dream Dearg.

"Plaid Ifanc's support for language rights is complementary to that of Ógra Shinn Féin's campaigns, making our delegation visit to Wrecsam most worthwhile.

"On this basis, Ógra Shinn Féin will continue to maintain a fraternal relationship with our Plaid Ifanc comrades.

Post-Assembly Election: Sinn Féin engagement meetings

Following the May Assembly Election results, Sinn Féin’s leadership have met with political representatives from the United States and Britain, business representatives, and held Embassy briefings with diplomatic missions in both Dublin and London.



London Embassy Briefing



Dublin Embassy Briefing



President McDonald interviewed on Good Morning Britain, London



Mary Lou and Michelle O'Neill with Jeremy Corbyn MP



Sinn Féin leadership meeting with Labour Party leader Keir Starmer MP



Sinn Féin leadership meeting with the SNP, Westminster



MLAs Michelle O'Neill and Conor Murphy meeting with the US Congressional delegation in Dublin



Mary Lou and Michelle O'Neill meeting Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Director-General, Tony Danker



Sinn Féin MLAs meeting with Business Alliance representatives



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Mary Lou McDonald TD
@MaryLouMcDonald



Michelle O'Neill MLA
@moneillsf



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