



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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January 8, 2016 Friday

Ireland will not hold EU, ballot, says Taoiseach

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has said Ireland would not hold a referendum on EU membership if Britain votes to leave.

He said the Irish people had committed to Europe through the fiscal stability treaty referendum in 2012.

Ireland would remain a member of the EU regardless of the outcome of the British referendum. He was speaking during a trade mission to the Netherlands.

"In the middle of the recession Ireland was the only country to have a referendum on the fiscal stability treaty. The people voted 60:40 in favour of that, thereby linking our future to the euro, the euro zone and the European Union."

Mr Kenny said on Tuesday that border controls may be brought back between the **North and South** of Ireland if the United Kingdom votes to exit the EU.

Mr Kenny said yesterday he was not contemplating the impact of Brexit on the Irish economy yet. "If you go down that road you would have to have a series of complicated negotiations and have pointed out the difficulties in a practical sense.

"I don't contemplate that because the referendum hasn't been held, the date hasn't been fixed yet, and a decision has not been made."

He said Ireland would support British prime minister David Cameron "so far as the country can".

Very grateful

Mr Cameron said on Tuesday he would be "forever very grateful" to Mr Kenny for the support he offered when the British leader outlined his demands to fellow EU leaders.

Mr Kenny said: "We want Britain to continue to be a strong and central member of the EU. We will support that in as far as we can.

"A 500 million [population] union is easier to do business and makes greater impact than if it is beginning to break up."

Source: The Irish Times

DUP veteran appointed to **cross-border** body

A veteran DUP MLA who stood down from the assembly due to ill-health has joined the board of a **cross-border** business body.

Jimmy Spratt (64), who up until September was a Stormont representative for South Belfast, is the latest appointment to the Newry-headquartered InterTradeIreland.

The former RUC man will be paid £5,235 and is expected to attend at least nine of the business body's board meetings each year.

Mr Spratt, was replaced in the assembly by Emma Pengelly, a former special adviser to Peter Robinson.

The veteran DUP man has replaced Ray Hayden, a former UTV journalist turned PR man who was among a handful of Ulster Unionist nominees to **cross-border** bodies which the party claimed had been "unceremoniously dumped" before Christmas.

The move came three months after Mike Nesbitt led his party out of the executive amid the fall-out from the Kevin McGuigan murder in Belfast's Short Strand.

Last week, The Irish News reported how four board members of **north-south** bodies whose names had been put forward by the UUP had not had their terms renewed.

In addition to Mr Hayden, a one-time special adviser to Lord Empey, those whose tenures ended included Belfast PR practitioner Jane Wells, who was not reappointed to SafeFood; former UUP general secretary Jim Wilson, who did not rejoin the board of the Loughs Agency; and Cookstown councillor Trevor Wilson, who previously sat on the board of the Ulster Scots Agency.

As reported last week, the latter's seat was taken by former Belfast DUP councillor Lee Reynolds and it has now emerged that the other vacancies have also been filled by DUP nominees, including Mr Spratt.

The vacant seat on the Loughs Agency will be taken by Terry McWilliams, a DUP council candidate in Portadown in 2013, while the party's former Ards deputy mayor Mervyn Oswald will join SafeFood.

Former SDLP leader Margaret Ritchie described the removal of UUP nominees from **north-south** bodies as "opportunistic and deeply worrying".

The Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister said the UUP was no longer part of the executive and was not involved in the nomination process.

Source: The Irish News

January 12, 2016 Tuesday

Bridging the gap on Ireland's increasing divide;
Since the Good Friday Agreement **North and South** have moved even further apart in all aspects of life and will continue to do so unless someone comes

up with a workable vision for the whole of the island, argues Malachi O'Doherty

As a child before the Troubles I had a strong sense that the Irish Republic was a different place. From a nationalist family, I would never have conceded that it was a different country. It was the real Ireland and the North, or the Six Counties as I'd have called my home State then, was the part that was estranged, flawed, ill-fitting.

During the Troubles the crossing of the border was more arduous and worrying. Usually there were police or Army checkpoints and every prospect of being searched and held for questioning. And during much of this time the Republic was changing in character. It was becoming more prosperous.

Here we had the stress of the Troubles and it made us different, harder and more wary.

And distance from the Troubles made the people of the Republic naive or indifferent.

Once summer in the mid-Eighties when I cycled to Kerry it seemed to me that the further south I went the more smug and detached people sounded in their ordinary conversation.

The guy in the pub would say: "Awful about the Troubles; do you think they will ever sort it out?" He didn't even notice how his language signalled his washing of his hands of someone else's problem.

In a discussion on The Late Late Show on RTE on Friday the journalist Martina Devlin from Omagh said she thought that since the Good Friday Agreement the cultures of the different sides of the border had not shifted closer together but had actually moved apart.

One of the surprising ways in which the cultures of **North and South** have diverged is that the South has liberalised and secularised faster. Previous generations feared Irish unity on the grounds that it would put us under the undue influence of the Catholic Church. But now it is the North that is more moralistic in its law-making.

Culturally, the two States on the island are separate. Go to the big arts festivals and you see different audiences. The people who go to the John Hewitt Summer School are rarely if ever seen at, say, the Mountains to the Sea Festival in Dun Laoghaire, and vice versa.

I have had four of my books published in the Republic yet I have done more readings in North America than south of the border, which isn't many.

Watch RTE's current affairs programme Primetime and you will rarely see northerners in the heat of their discussions about events down there. You will see instead a parade of pundits and political figures who almost never feature on discussion programmes in the North.

A few pundits and critics from the North are noticed in the South: Eamonn McCann, Susan McKay, Devlin. Almost none from there are regular guests on programmes here.

UTV tried to **cross the border** with new channel UTV Ireland, investing in the prospect of the emergence of a one island consciousness, and it failed miserably. The people of both jurisdictions are settled comfortably with a sense of their parameters.

There are exceptions in sport and religion. Northern rugby players often play for Ireland and Northern supporters travel to Dublin to cheer. But there is little chance of this being matched in football.

Even in Gaelic sports, Northern teams like Tyrone getting into the All-Ireland final is talked of as something different, unusual, as an invasion of the barbarians from one perspective, an injection of raw genius from another, but either way, until very recently, a surprise, a break in the natural order.

The churches are mostly all-Ireland bodies, including the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. But the synods and assemblies don't feel national; they feel regional.

Even the Catholic Church feels partitioned with two figurehead archbishops, Diarmuid Martin in Dublin and Eamon Martin in Armagh.

The one political party making efforts to close the gap is Sinn Fein, though in doing so it comes to look like two parties, too.

Gerry Adams (left) moved from West Belfast to take a seat for Louth in the Dail and re-energise the party down there, and has had massive success on the back of the economic collapse.

Yet he attracts disdain not just for his radical politics and his routine support for the IRA, but quite simply for being an interloper and for pushing the argument for Irish unity when interest in the idea has almost died out.

The other parties are supposed to say they want a united Ireland but they aren't expected to go on and on about it.

The South did not expect to have Sinn Fein in its face after the Good Friday Agreement.

Essentially, many saw the settlement here as a means of keeping the North out of the politics of the Republic.

Provoism reminds the other brands of republicanism that the vision of Pearse and Connolly has been shortchanged while the people are not equal and the island is mortgaged to pay the gambling debts of the rich.

And yet this becomes a north-ern story only when it has a strong northern connection, like the claim - which has never been substantiated - that some of our politicians tried to cream millions out of the fire sale for themselves.

Maybe partition has gone on too long, that is, so long that it cannot be reversed, and the best that can be hoped for is that the two States in Ireland can be good neighbours.

If we are to be dissuaded of that then somebody will really have to come up with a comprehensive vision of a whole Ireland, one that works in this decade of centenaries.

And what might that be? You certainly can't expect Northern unionists to provide the ideas, so it falls to the all-Ireland institutions, that is the churches and the sporting organisations and the trade unions and other parts of civic society which already seem organically divided.

Or it falls to the Irish Government to frame its vision of the past more inclusively, having already lost the chance to have the Northern Ireland First Minister or a British royal at the 1916 commemorations.

One element of it could be focus on those parts of the legacy of that disruptive period that we are all now glad of, like votes for women, the growth of trade unions, the survival of democracy.

Another faint hope would be for some of the constitutional nationalists to reconsider more realistically what the Easter Rising did to them. Britain wasn't the only enemy in Pearse's sights. He wanted to usurp the Irish Parliamentary Party, the guys who wanted participation in British politics (the SDLP/ Fine Gael types of their day) and he did it. Maybe someone from that camp standing up and saying plainly "we wuz robbed" would take the shine of the myth of the rebels as men of destiny.

The trajectory begun in that decade of turmoil a hundred years ago has taken us to where we are now. In that the revolutionaries wanted a different Ireland they have failed. Has no one the gumption to say we should be glad of that?

'Maybe the best that can be hoped for is that the two States in Ireland can be good neighbours'

Source: Belfast Telegraph