BORDERING BETWEEN UNIONS:
What does the UK Referendum on Europe mean for us?
Welcome to the 2016 Annual Conference of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. In June last year, after the Westminster election and the new Conservative Government’s public commitment to honour their manifesto pledge to proceed with the promised referendum on EU membership, the Centre decided that the referendum would be a priority area of work for 2015-2016. We recognised that not only would a referendum result that takes the UK out of the EU have enormous consequences for everyone living on this island, but that the negotiations that precede the Referendum would in themselves have serious consequences in many ways that are as yet not entirely predictable. While the majority of people on the island do not have a vote in the forthcoming referendum, it is essential that their concerns are heard as those in Northern Ireland prepare to make their decision as to whether the UK remains in or leaves the EU. It is also essential that the debate over the UK’s membership of the EU is informed by evidence and that the implications of withdrawal from the EU are understood and communicated in the weeks and months ahead.

Since June, the Centre has been actively engaged with other organisations on the island of Ireland, the UK and in Europe to ensure that the implications of ‘Brexit’ – and related issues around the proposed repeal of the Human Rights Act and withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights – are at the top of the agenda for those concerned with cross-border cooperation, in Ireland, Britain and Europe. We have already made presentations at both Stormont and Leinster House and organised, in partnership with the Local Authority-led cross-border groups, a seminar at the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels aimed at elected representatives and public officials attending the EU Open Days in October. We have addressed meetings organised by Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin, and submitted responses to the House of Lords’ and the Northern Ireland Select Committee’s enquiries and to the UK Government’s ‘Review of the Balance of Competences between the UK and the EU’ on Cohesion Policy. CCBS made representations to the Commission’s Brexit Taskforce about the need for the dissemination of relevant data to support the debate on the UK’s membership of the EU. We have published a briefing paper on the proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act. Our recently published briefing paper (with Cooperation Ireland) on the implications of ‘Brexit’ for Northern Ireland is the first in a series of seven on different topics that the Centre will publish between now and May.

As always, our conference represents a major investment of the Centre’s intellectual and material resources. We bring together experts, cross-border practitioners, and policy-makers over these two days to give time and space to some of the most important issues linked to the referendum that have so far been identified. The very positive response from all those who have accepted our invitation to be here as contributors and conference participants is an indication not only of the importance of these issues but is also, we believe, a validation of the leadership that the Centre has already demonstrated on this and other important public policy concerns over the past 16 years. Following the conference, both before and after the referendum, we will continue our commitment and efforts to ensure that the debate – not just regarding ‘Remain’ or ‘Leave’, but also ‘What Europe?’ – is both well informed by evidence and at the top of the agenda for cross-border practitioners and policy-makers on both sides of the border, in Britain and Europe.

Finally, the Centre would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance to support the conference from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Reconciliation Fund.

RUTH TAILLON
Director
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

9.00 Registration and refreshments
9.30 Welcome by Chair Dr Helen Johnston, Chair, Centre for Cross Border Studies
9.45 Keynote: How the European Union has changed Ireland: North and South
  Dáithí O’Ceallaigh, Former Irish Ambassador to the UK
10.15 Panel Discussion: How the European Union has changed Ireland: North and South
  (Chair) Dr Katy Hayward, Senior Lecturer at Queen’s University Belfast
  Dr Martin Mansergh, Former Minister of State at the Department of Finance
  Dr Mary C Murphy, Lecturer, University College Cork
10.45 Q&A
11.00 Refreshments
11.15 Keynote: Constitutional and Political Implications of Withdrawal from the EU
  Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for Europe and International Development, Scottish Government
11.45 Panel Discussion: Constitutional and Political Implications of Withdrawal from the EU
  (Chair) Andy Pollak, Former Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies
  Prof Adam Laszowski, Professor of Law, University of Westminster
  Dr Lee McGowan, Senior Lecturer, Queen’s University Belfast
  Paul Brannen MEP, Labour Party Member of the European Parliament
13.00 Table Discussions: Constitutional and Political Implications of Withdrawal from the EU
13.30 Lunch
14.30 Keynote: Free Movement of People
  Jeremy Harding, Author of Border Vigils and Refugees at the Rich Man’s Gate
15.00 Panel Discussion: Free Movement of People
  (Chair) Amnmarie O’Kane, Information Manager, Centre for Cross Border Studies
  Jerome Mullen, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Northern Ireland
  Yasan Georgiev, Executive Director, Economic Policy Institute, Bulgaria
  Bernadette McAliskey, Director, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
15.45 Table Discussions: Free Movement of People
16.15 End of Day 1 Summary
  Dr Anthony Soares, Deputy Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies
18.00 Reception
19.00 Dinner

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH

9.30 Keynote: What Europe Do We Want?
  Mairead McGuinness MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament
10.00 Panel Discussion: The Economic Reform Agenda
  (Chair) Philip McDonagh, Independent Economist
  Dr Edgar Morgenroth, Associate Research Professor, Economic and Social Research Institute
  Ross Martin, CEO, Scottish Council for Development and Industry
  Nigel Smyth, Director, CBI Northern Ireland
  Ivor Ferguson, Deputy President, Ulster Farmers Union
11.00 Table Discussions: The Economic Reform Agenda
11.30 Refreshments
12.00 Panel Discussion: The Institutional Reform Agenda
  (Chair) Jane Morrice, Former Vice President European Economic and Social Committee
  Prof Hugh Quigley, Visiting Professor on EU Regulatory Affairs, University of Ulster
  Pat Colgan, Former CEO, Special EU Programmes Body
  Colette Fitzgerald, Head of the EU Commission Regional Office in Northern Ireland
13.00 Table Discussions: The Institutional Reform Agenda
13.30 Lunch
14.30 Panel Discussion: The Political Reform Agenda
  (Chair) Dr Helen Johnston, Chair Centre for Cross Border Studies
  Stewart Dickson, MLA, Alliance Party
  Jennifer McCann, MLA, Junior Minister, Sinn Féin
  Jill Evans, MEP, Plaid Cymru
  Marian Harkin, MEP, Independent Member of the European Parliament
  Patsy McGlone, MLA, SDLP
  Mike Nesbitt, MLA, Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party
15.30 Table Discussions: The Political Reform Agenda
16.00 Closing Remarks
  Ruth Taillon, Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies
16.15 Conference Closes
head of research for Fianna Fáil. He is best known for his role
Reynolds and Bertie Ahern and during periods of opposition,
special advisor to the Taoiseach, serving Charles Haughey, Albert
between 1975 and 1977. From 1981 to 2002, he was alternately
Originally a diplomat, he served in the Irish Embassy in Bonn
of the Council of State during President McAleese’s second term.
Finance and the Arts. Up to 2008, he was a member of the British-
South) and a Minister of State for the Office of Public Works,
member of the Centre for Cross Border Studies since 2012. Katy has been a Board
Borders in Globalization project led by the University of Victoria,
and Niall Ó Dochartaigh). She is currently a partner on the
Making and Breaking Ireland (co-edited with Elizabeth Meehan
O’Donnell, 2011), The
Europeanization of Party Politics in
2013),
Territory, and Organized Violence
with Niall Ó Dochartaigh,
Nationalism,
and country planning, business administration and a doctorate
in governance.
DÁITHI O’CEALLAIGH
Dáithí O’Ceallaigh spent some years as a teacher, including three years as a volunteer in Zambia. He then entered the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, serving in Moscow, London, Belfast, New York, Helsinki and Geneva, as well as several periods at HQ in Dublin. On retirement from the foreign service he was for four years the Director General of the Institute for International and European Affairs in Dublin where he remains as Chair of the Institute’s UK programme. He is Chair of the Press Council of Ireland and a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

DR MARTIN MANSERGH
Dr Martin Mansergh is Vice-Chair of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations, and a columnist with the Irish Catholic. From 2002 to 2011, he was successively a Senator (elected on the Agricultural Panel) a TD (for Tipperary South) and a Minister of State for the Office of Public Works, Finance and the Arts. Up to 2008, he was a member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Body and between 2004 and 2011 a member of the Council of State during President McAleese’s second term. Originally a diplomat, he served in the Irish Embassy in Bonn between 1975 and 1977. From 1981 to 2002, he was alternately special advisor to the Taoiseach, serving Charles Haughey, Albert Reynolds and Bertie Ahern and during periods of opposition, head of research for Fianna Fáil. He is best known for his role as a back-channel to the Republican Movement and as part of the Irish Government negotiating team on the Downing Street Declaration and the Good Friday Agreement. He was co-winner of the 1994 Tipperary Peace Prize with Fr. Alex Reid and Rev. Roy Magee. He is the subject of a biography by Kevin Rafter (2002) and author of The Legacy of History for making peace in Ireland.

DR HELEN JOHNSTON
Helen is Chair of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. In her day job Helen is a Senior Social Policy Analyst at the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). At NESC Helen has worked on projects relating to well-being, quality and standards in human services the social dimensions of the economic crisis, jobless households, and urban and rural case studies of socio-economic disadvantage. Helen previously worked at the Combat Poverty Agency where she was Director for six years and Head of Research for eight years. During her time with the Combat Poverty Agency Helen was involved in implementation of the Peace Programme with Pobal in the border counties. A native of Northern Ireland, Helen worked in the Northern Ireland civil service in the early years of her career. She has qualifications in environmental science, town and country planning, business administration and a doctorate in governance.

DR KATY HAYWARD
Katy Hayward is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology in Queen’s University Belfast. Her teaching and research use political sociology to explore key issues of conflict and change on the island of Ireland, particularly in the context of European integration. Her recent publications include Nationalism, Territory, and Organized Violence (with Niall O’Dochartaigh, 2013), Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution (with Catherine O’Donnell, 2011), The Europeanization of Party Politics in Ireland (with Mary C. Murphy, 2010) and the forthcoming book Making and Breaking Ireland (co-edited with Elizabeth Meehan and Niall O’Dochartaigh). She is currently a partner on the Borders in Globalization project led by the University of Victoria, Canada http://www.biglobalization.org/. Katy has been a Board member of the Centre for Cross Border Studies since 2012.

DR MARY C. MURPHY
Dr Mary C. Murphy is a Lecturer in Politics and a Jean Monnet Professor in the Department of Government, University College Cork. She was previously a researcher with the Northern Ireland Centre in Europe, Belfast. Mary specialises in the study of the European Union and Northern Ireland politics. Her monograph Northern Ireland and the European Union: The Dynamics of a Changing Relationship was published by Manchester University Press in 2014. Her work has also been published in leading academic journals and she is a regular contributor to national and international conferences. In 2015, she was awarded a prestigious Fulbright-Schuman scholarship and was based at George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia. She is currently the President of the Irish Association for Contemporary European Studies (IACES).

HUMZA YOUSAF MSP
Humza was elected as an MSP for the Glasgow Region in May 2011. He has been involved in community work, from youth organisations to charity fundraising, for most of his life, including being media spokesperson for the international non-governmental organisation Islamic Relief. He also volunteered for community radio for 12 years and on a project providing food packages to homeless people and asylum seekers in Glasgow. After completing his degree in Politics at the University of Glasgow in 2007, he went to work in the Scottish Parliament as an aide to the late Bashir Ahmad MSP. On his election to Parliament in May 2011 he was appointed to the Justice Committee and the Public Audit Committee. He was appointed in September 2012 and as Minister for Europe and International Development in November 2014. Humza is an alumnus of the US State Department’s prestigious International Visitor Learning Programme. His interests include tackling mental health stigma, poverty, civil liberties and issues affecting young people.

ANDY POLLAK
Andy Pollak was the founding Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies (1999-2013). He was also Secretary of the all-island university presidents’ body, Universities Ireland, and the all-island teacher education body, SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South). Before that he was Belfast reporter, religious affairs correspondent, education correspondent and assistant news editor with the Irish Times (1981-1999). In 1992-1993 he was co-editor of the paper, a Citizens’ Inquiry; the Opshah Report on Northern Ireland (Lilliput, 1993). He was the co-author (with Ed Moloney) of Paisley (Poolbeg, 1986). He is a former editor of the Belfast periodical Fortnight. He blogs at www.2irelands2gether.com
BORDERING BETWEEN UNIONS:  
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PROF ADAM LAZOWSKI  
Adam Lazowski is Professor of EU Law at the Westminster Law School, University of Westminster (London). He obtained a Master’s Degree in 1999 and a PhD in 2001 from the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw. Between 1999 and 2003, he lectured at the University of Warsaw. During the next two years, he worked as a senior researcher in European law at the TMC Asser Institute (The Hague). His scientific interests include the law of the European Union as well as public international law. His research has so far led to a number of books, articles, contributions to edited volumes and conference papers. His monograph on legal parameters of EU withdrawal will be published shortly by Edward Elgar Publishing. Over the past years Prof. Lazowski delivered guest lectures at University of Sussex (UK), University of Surrey (UK), University of Warsaw (Poland), University of Tartu (Estonia), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), European Law Academy (ERA) in Trier (Germany), European Institute of Public Administration (Luxembourg), University of Zagreb (Croatia), University of Luxembourg and University of Rotterdam (the Netherlands).

DR LEE MCGOWAN  
Lee McGowan is a Senior Lecturer in European Studies within the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queen’s University Belfast. His interest in the rationale behind the creation and objectives of the European Union began as an undergraduate in the 1980s. He now has some twenty plus years of teaching (both undergraduates and postgraduates) and researching the politics of EU integration. His particular research interests centre firstly on the politics of EU antitrust policy and secondly, Northern Ireland’s relations with the EU. His extensive work on these areas has been published in leading international and peer reviewed journals. More recent research interest has explored the growing issues of euro scepticism and political populism in Europe and he is currently working on an initiative funded by the Economic and Social Research Council looking at the issue of Brexit with special reference to Northern Ireland.

PAUL BRANNEN MEP  
Paul Brannen is a Labour Member of the European Parliament for the North East of England and is a member of the EU Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. Paul studied theology and religious studies at Leeds University and it was here that he found his political feet. He became an active member of the Anti-Apartheid Society, the Labour Club and the Amnesty Group. After Leeds University he worked for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London where working highlights included disrupting the Mike Gatting rebel tour to South Africa and meeting Nelson Mandela shortly after his release from jail. Paul served five years on Newcastle City Council and twice stood for the Westminster Parliament. He was selected by Labour Party members in the North East to be their lead male candidate in the 2014 EU election. After a hard fought election campaign he was successfully elected to the European Parliament in May 2015, along with Jude Kirton-Darling, to represent the region for a five year term.

JEREMY HARDING  
Jeremy Harding is a contributing editor at the London Review of Books, where he first began writing 30 years ago. He has reported on southern Africa, the Middle East and the US for the LRB and several other newspapers and magazines, including the Financial Times and the New Yorker. The Uninvited, his book on asylum and undocumented migration, was published in 2000. An extended and updated version, Border Vigils, appeared in 2012. His research on refugees and borders has taken him to Mexico, the United States, Kosovo, Italy, Albania and the coast of North Africa.

ANNMARIE O’KANE  
As CCBS Information Manager, Annmarie manages the Border People project, which has provided practical information for people crossing the border to live, work, study or retire since 2007. This role also involves the provision of support and training for the advice sectors in both jurisdictions; monitoring cross-border obstacles and emerging trends, and engagement with policy and decision makers. Beyond delivery of the Border People information service Annmarie also has responsibility for implementation of CCBS’s communication strategy, including oversight of the Centre’s online presence. Prior to coming to CCBS in 2009, Annmarie provided support to SMEs in the border region as Business Development Executive with Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency. She has also managed projects, online resources and training initiatives while employed by Meath Leader, Wicklow Chamber of Commerce and the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland.

JEROME MULLEN  
Jerome Mullen is a highly successful entrepreneur and business man with over 45 years experience in various managerial roles across a wide range of industries and businesses. During his three year term as the President of the Newry Chamber of Commerce he re-organised and re-built the structure of the Chamber and amalgamated the Chamber of Commerce with the Chamber of Trade to create one Chamber organisation representing all businesses in Newry, making the third largest and most active Chamber in Northern Ireland. Jerome has been a Director of The Clannye Group since 1985 which is one of the largest community based training organisations in Northern Ireland, he has been Chairman of its Board of Directors for over 20 years. In 2008 he was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland and opened a Consulate office for Northern Ireland in the City Hall, Newry and was reappointed in 2013 for a further five years.

YASEN GEORGIEV  
Yasen Georgiev is Executive Director at the Economic Policy Institute, Sofia (EPI). He is also Coordinator for Bulgaria of the Marshall Memorial Fellowship, a leadership programme of the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States. Before starting at EPI as Research Fellow in 2006, Yasen worked at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria and Beiersdorf Bulgaria. In 2010-2011, he was selected to participate in the Carl Friedrich Goerdeler-Kolleg for Good Governance, a nine-month fellowship programme of the Robert Bosch Foundation (Germany) for young executives working in the public sector in Central and South Eastern Europe. Within this fellowship he worked as a Visiting Fellow at the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry – DIHK (Berlin) and at the European Policy DG of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology of Germany (Berlin). Yasen graduated in International Relations at the International Economics and Politics Faculty of the University of National and World Economy, Sofia and in Business Administration/Strategic Management at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.
BERNADETTE MICALISKY

Bernadette McAliskey is a lifelong human rights and social justice campaigner whose activities have ranged from neighbourhood organising, through to national protest movement and parliamentary representation. She currently co-ordinates the activities of STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Programme), established in 1997. STEP is a rights-based community development organisation based in Dungannon Co Tyrone that in 2001 rose to the challenge of equitable integration of new migrant workers into the local community. The STEP approach to building sustainable diverse communities has been recognised as a model of good practice at local and European level and provides leadership to the regional inter-ethnic network Stronger Together supporting all those working to eradicate racism and racial inequality in Northern Ireland.

DR ANTHONY SOARES

Anthony Soares is the Deputy Director at the Centre for Cross Border Studies, leading the Centre’s Research and Policy team. His role includes the development and advocacy of policies at regional, national and European levels that support sustainable cross-border and transnational cooperation. He represents CCBS on the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN), which brings together 14 universities and independent organisations from eight European border regions. He has also coordinated CCBS’s responses to several consultations and inquiries related to the UK and Northern Ireland’s relationship with the EU, including the OFMDFM Committee’s inquiry into the Barroso Task Force and the House of Lords’ inquiry into the UK Government’s vision for EU reform.

MAIREAD MCGUINNESS MEP

Mairead McGuinness MEP is Vice-President of the European Parliament with special responsibility for communications, research and innovation and children’s rights. She is a member of the Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Food Safety and Public Health Committees of Parliament. Her work includes negotiating a new medical device regulation, a report on fairness in the food supply chain and the impact of unfair trading practices and the recent reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy. She chaired the Parliament’s inquiry into the demise of Equitable Life and she has received wide acclaim for her role in reforming EU Structural Funds to ensure that no EU funding can be used to build inappropriate infrastructure for people with disabilities who instead should live in community settings with appropriate support. The first female graduate in agricultural economics at University College Dublin she recently received an Alumni Award in recognition of her achievements in agriculture and food science. Elected to the European Parliament for the third time in 2014, Mairead is a former journalist and editor working for the Irish Farmers Journal, the Irish independent and RTE.

PHILIP MCDONAGH

Philip McDonagh is an economist with extensive experience of researching and analysing cross border economic issues in Ireland/Northern Ireland as well as elsewhere in Europe. Up until 2009 he was Chief Economist at PwC in Belfast and during this time he was responsible for the development of the PwC European Evaluation Network, a network of professionals in the firm undertaking evaluation assignments across the European Union. He now works as a self-employed economist and as an Associate Strategic Adviser to the Strategic Investment Board for Northern Ireland. In 2013/14 he worked with colleagues on a study commissioned by the Centre for Cross Border Studies of the potential for establishing a cross border development zone for Ireland/Northern Ireland. Philip is also Chair of the Northern Ireland Statistics Advisory Committee and a member of the Advisory Panel for the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre.

DR EDGAR MORGENROTH

Dr Edgar Morgenroth is an Associate Research Professor and programme co-ordinator for research on communications and transport at the Economic and Social Research Institute where he also leads the macroeconomic modelling team. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Trinity College Dublin, and an independent member of the National Economic and Social Council. He is a Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and a Fellow of the Regional Studies Association having served as its vice chairman and treasurer. He received his Bachelor’s degree (Economics and Geography) and Master’s degree (Economics and Finance) from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and carried out his Doctoral research at Keele University in the UK. He is also an alumnus of Boston College, having been awarded a Diploma in Urban Economic Development. Dr Morgenroth has carried out research for a wide range of clients including the EU Commission, OECD, various Irish government departments, the German Federal Ministry of Finance, the Italian Ministry of Finance, the Estonian Ministry of Finance, the Strategic Investment Board of Northern Ireland, InterTradeIreland and various Irish regional and local authorities.

ROSS MARTIN

Ross Martin is the Scottish Council for Development and Industries eighth Chief Executive, with a wide and diverse background working across the Scottish economy in the public, private and social sectors. Ross has held a variety of senior posts, e.g. in the public, private and social sectors. Ross has been driving the development and diversification of Scotland’s economy for over a quarter of a century, through the transformation of public services, his support for a wide range of SMEs, or through his more recent policy work at the Centre for Scottish Public Policy helping to create the conditions for sustainable growth. Ross is also an occasionally practicing high school teacher, an adviser to Adopt an Intern, which he helped to create, and previously an adviser to BIDS Scotland, the national network for the country’s fastest growing local economic partnership, the Business Improvement District. Ross is a regular commentator on the politics of the economy in print, broadcast and of course social media, and has developed a reputation as an energetic and informative leader of mature and reflective policy debate.

NIGEL SMYTH

In pursuing the CBI’s objective of creating an environment for companies to compete and prosper, Nigel is involved in the development of a wide range of policy work with particular interests in economic development, education, energy, planning, transport issues and public sector reform issues. Nigel has helped develop CBI Northern Ireland into an effective and respected business representation organisation providing leadership and influence on key public policy matters in Northern Ireland. He has been involved in a wide variety of policy reviews covering energy, public procurement, transport
and economic development. He was chairman of Concordia (Northern Ireland’s social partnership) in 2005 and has been an active participant on the IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council since its initiation in 1991. Nigel was educated in Belfast, completed an Honours Degree in Geology at Bristol University and a Masters Degree at Leicester University. In the latter part of the 1980s Nigel was employed by the international engineering group AMEC Plc in project management, and was instrumental in designing and developing a major urban regeneration scheme in St Helens, Lancashire. He returned to Belfast in 1990 to join the CBI and in September 1991 was appointed Regional Director.

IVOR FERGUSON
Ivor Ferguson is a pig, sheep and cereal farmer from Markethill in Co Armagh. He is married with four children. While at school he was secretary of the Agrarian Society and an active member of Mountnorris YFC. He is a graduate from Harper Adams University with a HND in Agriculture and is a founder member and committee member of Armagh Quality Lamb Group. Ivor has always been a strong supporter of the Ulster Farmers Union and prior to becoming Deputy President he was Chair of the UFU Pork and Bacon policy committee and represented the Union at the Pork and Bacon Forum. He is also a member of the CAPRE Advisory Group, representing the intensive livestock sector.

JANE MORRICE
Born in Belfast, Jane has worked in many challenging fields throughout her career; Deputy Speaker of the first Northern Ireland Assembly set up after the Peace Agreement, Head of the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland, former BBC reporter and Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Equality Commission. She was elected Vice President of the European Economic and Social Committee in April 2013 until October 2015. In this capacity, she was also President of the EESC Communications Group. Throughout her career she has been actively involved in peace building and conflict resolution. As EC representative, she was a member of Delors task force, which established the first EU PEACE Programme and during her time in politics she worked on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. In her role as EESC Member she has written two reports on EU peace building and she continues to work to promote exchange of experience between Northern Ireland and people in conflict zones in other parts of the world.

PROF HUGH QUIGLEY
After graduating in Economics and Politics from Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin in 1974 Prof Quigley served in the Department of Agriculture in Dublin and then as Secretary of the National Economic and Social Council, before joining the European Commission in Brussels in 1980 where he spent most of his career. He worked in the Directorate General for Regional Policy, Employment and Social Policy, Information and Communications and in the Directorate General for Health as Deputy Director of the Commission’s European Food and Veterinary Office. He retired from the Commission in 2012. In 1983 he became the first Chief Executive of Cooperation Ireland on leave of absence from the Commission. Returning to Brussels in 1989, he took charge of setting up the EU INTERREG programme. He is a visiting Professor on EU regulatory affairs at Ulster University. He is also Chairman of Access Europe a special programme supported by Atlantic Philanthropies to help community and voluntary organisations in Ireland identify and apply for EU funds.

STEWART DICKSON MLA
Stewart is a native of Greenland, County Antrim, and has been representing East Antrim since the 1970s, first as a Councillor in Carrickfergus Borough Council for almost 35 years, and as an Alliance MLA for East Antrim, first elected in 2011. Before election to the Northern Ireland Assembly, Stewart previously worked for the Labour Relations Agency resolving disputes and encouraging cooperative and positive working environments. Stewart is a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly’s Justice and Social Development Committees, which lately have been overseeing the difficult issues of reform of both the justice and welfare systems in Northern Ireland. Further to this, Stewart also represents the Northern Ireland Assembly at the Chamber of the Region of the Council of Europe. As a Member of the Chamber of the Regions he has accompanied as well as led Council of Europe delegations for the purpose of observing elections in the former Soviet and Balkan states of Moldova, Ukraine, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

PAT COLGAN
From 2004 to 2015, Pat Colgan served as Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which was set up by the British and Irish Governments to manage the PEACE Programmes and INTERREG Programmes in Northern Ireland, Ireland and parts of Western Scotland. During that time he was the Accounting Officer for almost 3 billion in EU funding, distributed through over 23,000 projects. He is an expert in the design and delivery of EU Structural Funds programmes in cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation in areas as diverse as local and regional government, enterprise, environment, health and peace-building. Prior to joining the SEUPB, he worked in Vienna for the Austrian Institute for Spatial Planning and Regional Development, where he was involved in the creation of the INTERACT Programme, which was set up by the European Commission to provide technical assistance to EU Programmes in all Member States of the EU. He has worked with public and private organisations in most European countries and enjoys working in a number of different languages, including Spanish, Italian, French and German. He holds MA Degree in Philosophy and a MSc. Econ from Trinity College Dublin.

COLETTE FITZGERALD
Colette FitzGerald is from Belfast and studied at Queen’s University Belfast and the Institute of Public Administration in Dublin. Colette started her career in the Department of Finance in Dublin where she spent 10 years before joining the European Commission in 1991. She held several different posts in the Directorate-General for Regional Policy including management of the Structural Funds Programmes in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Sweden and Finland as well as the Special Preparatory Programmes for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Colette’s last post in DG Regional Policy was Deputy Head of unit for the Innovative Actions Programmes to promote innovation in regional development across the European Union. Since 2005, Colette was on secondment to the Northern Ireland Executive, firstly to assist with capacity-building on European matters and since 2007, as a Commission Advisor to both the Executive and the wider public and private sectors to facilitate the work of the special European Commission Task Force for Northern Ireland, set up by then EU Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, to encourage deeper engagement with the EU. On 1st September 2012, she was appointed as Head of the Regional Office of the European Commission in Belfast.
JENNIFER MCCANN MLA

Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA comes from the Twinbrook area of West Belfast and has represented West Belfast as a Sinn Féin MLA since 2007. She is a long time political and community activist who has worked on a number of projects in the West Belfast area including the development of the Sally Gardens Community Centre, and is on the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership Board which has overseen a number of strategic developments in the area. Jennifer was appointed to the position of Junior Minister in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in June 2012 before which she was the Sinn Féin Chief Whip. In her role as Junior Minister, Jennifer’s portfolio covers a wide and varied number of areas, including children and young people, older people, disability, gender, sexual orientation and European issues and she also co-chairs a number of Ministerial Groups. Jennifer has a keen interest in human rights and equality issues and, in particular, ‘Delivering Social Change,’ an initiative from the Executive to make real changes to those most deprived and in need across our community. She is a trained counsellor and has a BSc Honours Degree in Social Sciences. Jennifer is married with three teenage children and enjoys walking and reading.

JILL EVANS MEP

Jill Evans has represented Wales as a Plaid Cymru MEP since 1999 as part of the Greens-European Free Alliance. Jill was born in the Rhondda, where she still lives. She attended Aberystwyth University and then worked as a Research Assistant at the former Polytechnic of Wales, where she gained her MPhil degree. Jill has extensive experience working in the NGO sector. Prior to being elected as an MEP, Jill worked for the National Federation of Women’s Institutes for six years, before taking up a post as Wales Regional Organiser for CHILD - The National Infertility Support Network. She has also served as chair of CND Cymru and has long been active in the campaign to establish a Wales Peace Institute. In the European Parliament, Jill is Vice-President of the European Free Alliance, a full member of the Culture and Education Committee and a substitute member of the Transport and Tourism Committee. She has researched and written extensively on the benefits of EU membership to Wales.

MARIAN HARKIN MEP

Marian Harkin is an Independent MEP representing the 15 counties of the Midlands-North-West constituency in the European Parliament – Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, Roscommon, Galway, Mayo, Longford, Westmeath, Meath, Kildare, Louth, Laois and Offaly. She is now in her third European term following the 2014 European Election and previously represented Sligo/Leitrim as a TD in Dáil Éireann. Marian is a full member and ALDE Coordinator of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, a substitute member on the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee and the Petitions Committee. Marian has also recently been appointed to the newly established Tax Committee in the European Parliament. Her legislative work has included the EU Globalisation Fund where she was Parliament chief negotiator. Other recent dossiers she has actively worked on include the Social Fund, Food Aid for the Deprived, the assessment of the Troika from an employment and social perspective, employment and social aspects of the EU2020 strategy and the European Semester.

PATSY McGLONE MLA

Patsy McGlone has been an MLA for Mid Ulster since 2007 and served on Cookstown District Council from 1992-2009. Patsy was General Secretary of the SDLP from 1986-1991 and was a delegate in the multi-party talks which led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In this time he also served on the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, was chair Press Officer to John Hume MP MEP and chaired the SDLP Association of Councillors. He is currently the Chair of the Assembly’s Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the All Party Working Groups on Construction and Country Sports. Patsy also sits on the Justice Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee on Mental Capacity. Patsy has previously been Chairman of the Environment Committee and held the position of Chairman of Cookstown District Council in 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. From 2010-2011 he was Deputy Leader of the SDLP. Patsy is an Honours Graduate in Irish Studies and outside politics enjoys wildfowling, clay pigeon shooting and writing, and still has close links to the local Gaelic sporting community.

MIKE NESBITT MLA

Mike Nesbitt joined the Ulster Unionist Party in 2010, was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in the May 2011 Elections and was made Party Leader in March 2012. Since then, he has led the Party to success in European, local government and Westminster Elections, returning the Party to the House of Commons with two MPs. A former broadcast journalist with both the BBC and UTV, Mike has also worked as a Commissioner for Victims and Survivors and the Chief Executive of a local SME, so entered politics with significant experience in both the public and private sectors. Mike chairs the Committee of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister at Stormont, and is passionate about tackling Northern Ireland’s appalling levels of poor mental health and wellbeing, which alongside sectarianism is one of the most toxic legacies of the Troubles.

RUTH TAILLON

Ruth Taillon is Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Ruth has many years' experience working with a range of public and community-based organisations in both jurisdictions. Prior to joining the Centre, Ruth was Research Coordinator for Border Action, a partnership between Pobal and the Combat Poverty Agency, working on European funding programmes Peace and INTERREG. She was Director of the West Belfast Economic Forum and involved with the management of a number of community-based initiatives throughout the 1990s. She has also worked as an independent research and evaluation consultant, specialising in gender, equality, and peace and conflict issues. She is currently a member of the Irish Government’s Oversight Group for the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and an expert advisory group for a EU Commission study on obstacles to cross-border cooperation. Ruth also writes and lectures on Irish women's history, about which she has a strong personal interest.