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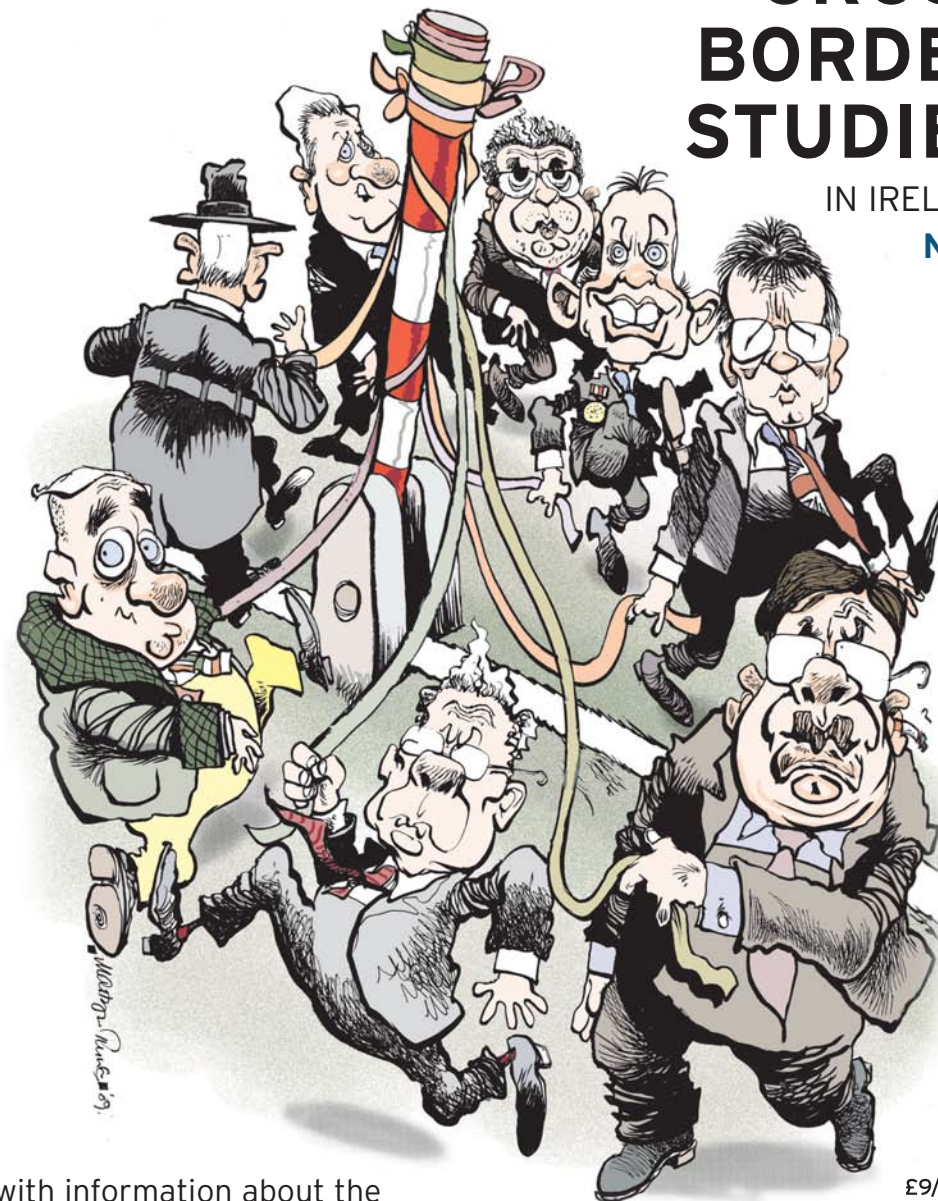
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THE JOURNAL OF  
**CROSS  
BORDER  
STUDIES**  
IN IRELAND  
No. 4



with information about the  
**CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES**  
(including 2008 annual report)

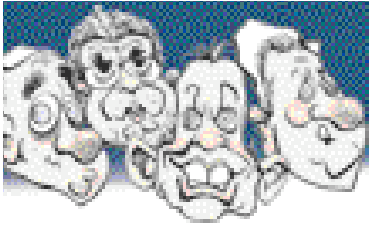
**Spring 2009 - Year 10**

featuring an interview with Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson

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The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies



# THE JOURNAL OF CROSS BORDER STUDIES IN IRELAND



*Cartoon by Martyn Turner*

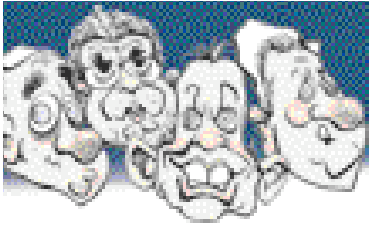
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**Editor: Andy Pollak**

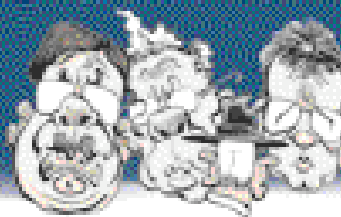
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*The Minister for Education and Science, Ms Mary Hanafin TD, launches the 2008 'Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland'. From left to right: Mr Niall Holohan, Southern Deputy Joint Secretary, North/South Ministerial Council; Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, President, Dublin City University; Ms Hanafin; HE David Reddaway, British Ambassador to Ireland; Ms Mary Bunting, Northern Joint Secretary, North/South Ministerial Council; Dr Chris Gibson, CCBS Chairman; Mr Michael Kelly, Chairman, Higher Education Authority.*

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## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Chris Gibson OBE

March 2009



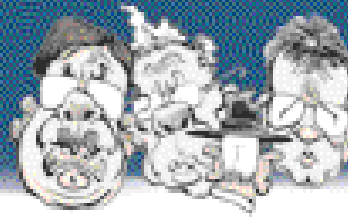
*Chris Gibson*

This September the Centre for Cross Border Studies will be 10 years old. Anyone who compares the four page introductory leaflet produced in 1999 with this 156 page *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland* in 2009, with its wide range of research articles – from politics, the economy and banking to spatial planning, opinion polls and sex offenders – will testify to the great success of this pioneering initiative over the past decade. The tributes to its work for peacebuilding through practical cross-border cooperation from leaders in both Irish jurisdictions are also testament to its achievements: from First Minister

**Peter Robinson (see *interview in this issue*), Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and successive Secretaries of State in Northern Ireland to President Mary McAleese and taoisigh Bertie Ahern and Brian Cowen in the South; along with heads of government departments, business chiefs, trade union leaders, university presidents and community and voluntary sector leaders in both jurisdictions.**

Since its foundation in September 1999, the Centre has seen three broad phases. The first, from 1999 to 2002, largely funded by the EU Peace Programme through the Special EU Programmes Body, was based on the delivery of a number of cross-border research projects, selected after open competition by the Centre's research committees, in telecommunications, health (and mental health), education, local government, animal health, local history societies, sustainable development and EU funding programmes.

This phase also saw the beginning of the Centre's now well-established expertise in organising North-South conferences, seminars and study days: more than 50 of these have been held in the past decade by the Centre and its associated organisations, bringing together over 4,000 people involved in health, education (including pre-school, primary, secondary, third level, teacher and citizenship education), the economy, technology, planning, agriculture, tourism, ICT, local government, European cooperation, community development,

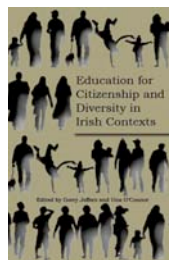


ageing, waste management, housing, sustainable development, banking and other practical areas. Many of these people – specialists in these subjects in their own jurisdictions – had never even met their counterparts in the other Irish jurisdiction before coming to one of these CCBS-organised events.

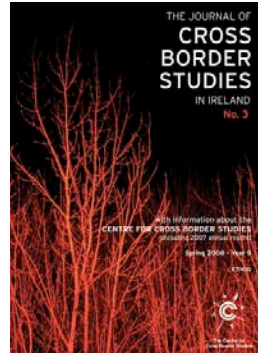
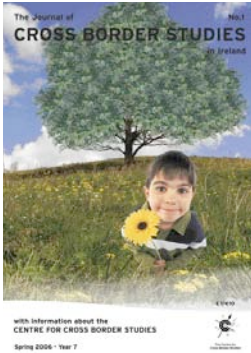
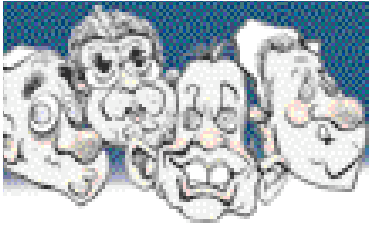
In its second phase, from 2002 to the present, the Centre moved away from this concentration on research into a more entrepreneurial mode: creating and managing cross-border and all-island networks, putting on training courses, and setting up information websites. During this period it was instrumental, with partners in the relevant sectors, in setting up and running Universities Ireland, which brought together the island's nine universities; the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS), which networked the island's nine colleges of education and nearly 30 other teacher education providers; the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), which brought together spatial planning specialists from five research institutes in the USA, Ireland and Northern Ireland; the North/South Public Sector Training Programme, which trained over 140 civil and public servants in practical cross-border cooperation; the Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building, which linked the nine Irish universities with universities in Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi to support research in development, health, education, gender and ICT; and two major online information systems: Border Ireland

([www.borderireland.info](http://www.borderireland.info)) and Border People ([www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)).

At the same time it carried on doing commissioned research projects in more specialised cross-border areas like early years education, citizenship and science education, postgraduate flows, service delivery to minority ethnic groups, trade union cooperation, out-of-hours GP services and hospital services. Its sister organisations also support significant research programmes: for example, SCoTENS has seed-funded over 40 research and conference projects in six years, one of which, on citizenship and diversity education, was the subject of a book (by Dr Gerry Jeffers of NUI Maynooth and Dr Una O'Connor of University of Ulster) launched by Mary Robinson in February 2009.



Now in early 2009, the Centre is moving into an exciting new phase. It has been commissioned by the EU's cross-border INTERREG IV programme to undertake five major research, development, training and information projects over the next three years. These new projects comprise the following: a programme of 'action research' projects, training courses, workshops and conferences in spatial planning for local planners, officials, councillors and community leaders in Northern Ireland and the Southern border region (in partnership with the International Centre for Local



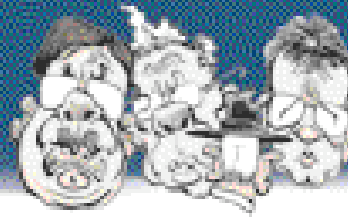
and Regional Development); a study of how to revive the border region economy in a new era of peace and reconciliation but also of recession (with *InterTradelreland*); a study of the feasibility of planning hospital services in the Irish border region on a cross-border basis (with the Institute of Public Health in Ireland); a pilot Impact Assessment Toolkit, an innovative way of beginning to measure the impact and effectiveness of cross-border cooperation in Ireland; and a second phase of the successful Border People mobility information website, which provides practical information for people wishing to move across the Irish border to live, work, study or retire (with the North/South Ministerial Council).

This renewed emphasis on research will go alongside the Centre's continuing work on all-Ireland networks in higher education, teacher education, spatial planning and cooperation with African universities. The Centre's cross-border management, networking and administrative expertise is always

available to institutions, organisations and companies in each jurisdiction wishing to work jointly with counterpart bodies across the border. And not just across the Irish border: in the past 15 months the Centre has hosted fact-finding visits from local and central government officials, diplomats and academics from Norway, Sweden, France, Spain, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Hong Kong. Closer to home, in October 2008 Andy Pollak and Patricia Clarke addressed a visiting delegation from the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee seeking to learn about cross-border cooperation in Ireland to help them formulate policy on such cooperation, particularly in health, along the English-Welsh border.

The Centre will be planning more seminars and conferences, including another international conference on Irish and European cross-border cooperation in 2011. This will build on the experience of the highly successful conference entitled 'Cross-Border Cooperation as part of the Northern Irish Peace Process: Some





Lessons for Europe' which was held in Dundalk in June 2008, with speakers and attenders from Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Kosovo, China and the USA.

Mention should also be made of the first two seminars organised in Dublin (in April 2008) and Entebbe, Uganda (in November) under the auspices of the Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (IAPRCB). Few of those who gathered for the first board meeting of the Centre nearly 10 years ago would have imagined that one day it would lead a consortium of all the universities on the island of Ireland to work on development cooperation in health and education in Africa. The IAPRCB is an excellent example of how highly skilled people from both Irish jurisdictions can work together for the 'common good' by looking beyond the island and its insular difficulties to help much poorer countries to overcome crippling problems of poverty, disease and educational under-achievement. As the Provost of Trinity College Dublin, Professor John Hegarty, told the Entebbe workshop in November, this was the first time in their history that the nine Irish universities had ever joined together in a significant collaborative project. He could have added that such a breakthrough in collaboration had been largely achieved through the efforts of a small group of people working out of the Centre for Cross Border Studies.

The 2009-2011 period will also see the Centre joining the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee as a

partner in a new phase of the Education for Reconciliation project, whose innovative work over the past 10 years in furthering the cause of peace and reconciliation through citizenship education has seen over 60 second-level schools, North and South, taking advantage of the professional development, cross-border networking and teaching and learning resources it has provided.

This 2009 *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland* features a range of research and opinion articles by key actors in and authorities on cross-border cooperation in their respective fields. It opens with an interview with the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Peter Robinson MP MLA, articulating his vision of practical North-South cooperation in Ireland. Four leading business figures and two senior economists in both jurisdictions then give their views on how that cooperation might work in this new, very difficult period of international recession. Other articles cover cross-border personal banking in Ireland in this new situation (by CCBS research manager Dr Patricia Clarke and UCD banking specialist Professor Ray Kinsella) and the innovative ways in which the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Garda Síochána are dealing with the problem of cross-border sex offenders (by the prominent author and journalist Susan McKay). In a new departure, the journal also carries two articles on political issues: one by UCD political scientist Professor John Coakley on the complexities revealed by opinion polls in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland

and Britain on the issue of the Irish border; the other by Northern journalist and academic Robin Wilson on how a new 'cosmopolitan' Irish identity might look in the 21st century. It should be stressed that by publishing these two articles on politics the Centre is trying to provoke new cross-border thinking on issues important to the island – it is not agreeing with or endorsing the opinions expressed.

Once again, the Centre must express its gratitude to the wide range of EU programmes, government agencies and other organisations which have funded its

activities in the past year. The Special EU Programmes Body, having supported several of the Centre's projects in the past year through the EU Peace Two (Extension) programme, will in the next three years support its five commissioned research projects as outlined above through the INTERREG IVA programme. Another major funder has again been the Irish Department of Education and Science. The Centre has also been active in bidding competitively for research projects from government departments and cross-border agencies like Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT). Financial support for the Centre's associated organisations –

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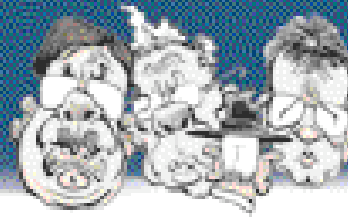
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**Loughs Agency**  
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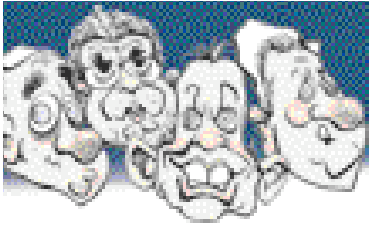
Universities Ireland, the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) – has come from the Northern Ireland Departments of Education and Employment and Learning, the Irish Department of Education and Science, the Irish Higher Education Authority, InterTradeIreland, the Northern Ireland Department for Regional Development, the Irish Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and the International Fund for Ireland.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the various other organisations which have partnered the Centre over the past 12 months: notably the North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, the Chartered Institute of

Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the Association of European Border Regions, the nine universities, the nine colleges of education and 29 other institutional subscribers to SCoTENS, and the institutions which make up the International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

We must also genuinely thank our advertisers, most of them cross-border bodies or companies themselves, which have faithfully supported this *Journal* in recent years, and have advertised again this year despite the very considerable financial constraints imposed on them by the recession. They are Safefood, Tourism Ireland, InterTradeIreland, Weber Shandwick, Cooperation Ireland, the Loughs Agency, the Institute of Public Health in Ireland, and FPM Chartered Accountants.





## **“BUSINESS TO BE DONE AND BENEFITS TO BE GAINED”: INTERVIEW ON NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION WITH FIRST MINISTER PETER ROBINSON**



*Peter Robinson*

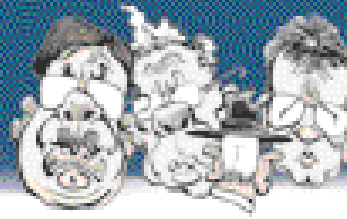
**Q. In September 2004, Dr Ian Paisley said following a meeting with the then Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern: “We are working towards a settlement for all the people of Northern Ireland, and in doing so we wish to build a relationship with our neighbour that is practically based rather than politically motivated. No one has anything to fear from such an accountable North-South relationship of equal partnerships.” Was this a significant change of view by the DUP leadership? What do you understand Dr Paisley as meaning by “an accountable North-South relationship of equal partnerships”?**

This was very consistent with the DUP position and policy which has always been based on having practical cooperation rather than the often unnecessary structural and politically motivated relationship that has been preferred by others. As for as being an accountable relationship of equal partnerships, Dr Paisley would have been saying there that prior to the St Andrew's Agreement the North-South relationship was not accountable. It is now accountable under the new arrangements. So again this is consistent with the DUP position. We do things where they are to mutual benefit rather than being done so that someone achieves a political goal. That's the difference between the two: when it's

about practical cooperation as good neighbours that's something we're all for, but if somebody's trying to make us move down a road to a united Ireland, then you'll find us resisting.

**Q. As the Unionist First Minister of Northern Ireland, what do you think Northern Ireland has to gain from economic and other practical cooperation with the Republic of Ireland? Does it have anything to lose?**

I think both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have something to gain by cooperation. I'll not tread on tender toes at the present time but it's very clear that the more open and



friendly our society is in Northern Ireland, the more attractive it becomes for people from the Republic to come here for holidays or indeed for shopping day trips. That's an immediate advantage particularly for the towns closest to the border.

In terms of financial services I considered it very much a 'win-win' when Brian Cowen agreed to open up the restricted practice that had existed where all companies were required to base themselves entirely within the Republic for their financial services sector. He removed, in real terms, the minimum activities rule which allowed companies based in the Republic to have mid and back office jobs in Northern Ireland. That meant that they weren't tempted to go to far flung parts of the world but could have a base in Dublin and still be able to benefit from skilled people coming out of universities in Northern Ireland by having an outreach somewhere in Northern Ireland – preferably in East Belfast, as I would say as its constituency MP.

**Q. Does the onset of the international economic recession – and with it recession in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland – mean there is less to gain for Northern Ireland from such cooperation?**

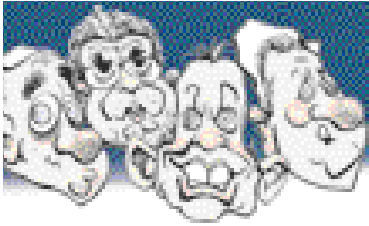
I don't want to be seem to be touting for business at this time, but the cost of doing business in Northern Ireland – the operational cost – would be very significantly cheaper than it is in the Irish Republic. So in many ways it will be a greater temptation for companies based

in the Irish Republic when there are hard times in an economic downturn to look at their cost base and see that they can actually get things done a lot cheaper in Northern Ireland with very skilled people available.

I should add that I don't think any politician should be looking at this issue solely on what the position is today. I think we have to have a bit more vision than that. The benefits from cooperation and working together in the long term are significant, and I don't think it helps the Irish Republic if Northern Ireland is unstable. I'm not sure that people in the United States or India or the Far East will particularly distinguish which side of the border on the island they're on. So the more stable and inviting the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are, the better for both of us.

**Q. In recent years a cash-rich Irish Government has funded North-South infrastructure, including roads and innovation. Given that's not likely to happen again in the near future, would you see your support for such cooperation diminishing?**

No, I don't think the people of Northern Ireland and their politicians are bought by a few hundred million euro. That is a very small amount when set beside the £13 billion per year that comes from the UK exchequer for both our block grant and for annually managed expenditure. So this small amount of money isn't the motivating issue. There should always be a presumption that people want to have a good relationship with their neighbour.



There are some areas where clearly it is advantageous to the Republic of Ireland to improve infrastructure in Northern Ireland because their citizens pass through it as the shortest way between two parts of the Republic. Thus people from Donegal will pass through Northern Ireland if they're heading to Dublin in many cases. Londonderry will be seen as the major town in the North West. There are advantages here for the Republic as well – so again it's a 'win-win' situation.

**Q. Is the concept of good neighbourliness a useful one in North-South cooperation in Ireland and how should it manifest itself?**

Yes it is. A big issue for the party and for me had always been the fact that there was a territorial claim being made by the Republic of Ireland on Northern Ireland. I think the removal of that claim – not just in terms of the constitutional change that took place in the 1998 referendum, but more importantly through the words and actions of the leading figures in the Republic – made the big difference to unionists in Northern Ireland. Perhaps more than any other, Bertie Ahern was the one to start that process – the more significant change came during his time – now very helpfully being carried through with Brian Cowen.

It's no secret that we've gone through a bumpy patch in Northern Ireland recently. If that had happened 5-10 years ago, you would have had leading politicians from the South coming in very heavily on the side of the nationalist party in the

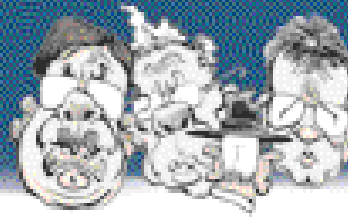
dispute. However they very properly kept out of it and let us solve our own problems. I think that recognition that they shouldn't be seen as the prop for nationalists in Northern Ireland – they should move to a position that is much more neutral – has helped as well.

**Q. Would you say the sense of threat surrounding practical cross-border cooperation with the Republic of Ireland is much less in unionist eyes than for many decades? If so, why is this?**

I've consistently said that I don't think the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic has ever been better than it is at the present time. That doesn't say that there won't be occasions where there will be competition, particularly on the economic front. But there's a world of difference between competition and enmity.

**Q. Do you see practical North-South cooperation going beyond economic cooperation into areas, for example, like energy, the environment, health or higher education?**

My antenna go up if people start talking about that kind of cooperation having to be at a structural and formal level. When people want to formalise it in that way it speaks to me of an attempt to change the constitutional relationship between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic – that it is part of a process to lead you towards a united Ireland. But if people say there are many areas where we can cooperate, and that cooperation means a



Minister lifting up a phone, writing a letter or having a meeting, I don't see any difficulty with that. Even if there isn't a benefit from the cooperation itself, there are benefits from talking about how we do things and about how they're done in the Irish Republic, and you can learn from everybody else's experiences in these matters. That happens much better in a more *ad hoc* or informal way than if you structure it.

I could go into some stories about the manner of the structural contact that there is, which I think is entirely false and which I think we are beginning to break down a little. If I go to a North-South meeting it's almost like amateur dramatics, where you're given your lines to say – and when I say this, he will say that. That's not how mature politicians should be structuring their meetings. I'm happy that at more recent meetings I've been involved in, the speaking notes have been set aside and the politicians have engaged. I think that's been welcomed by Brian Cowen and by others in the South, and it's certainly much more informative and you can understand people's positions much better than through the carefully crafted words that the civil servants provide for you.

**Q. To go back to my question about expanding areas of cooperation, would energy be one, or spatial planning?**

If you're talking about structured contact, we have already got agreements in terms of structures. There may well be a time in the future when people may decide

that the structured arrangements that we have don't require us to have a body dealing with a particular subject and that it might be better to have it in another subject. Those are the kind of discussions that will be ongoing, but I go back to the point that if there is no threat involved, then those kind of arrangements can be much more informal and *ad hoc*.

**Q. To be specific, are there any areas, apart from the economy, where you think there might be scope for greater cooperation?**

Clearly there are things not defined by borders, some of which are covered already, issues relating to the environment, animal health, all those kind of issues where whether there is a border or not makes no difference to the impact they will have on one side or the other. As a general rule, it is sensible to have cooperation in the handling of issues that relate to these kind of areas. I don't see there's any reluctance on the part of Northern Ireland Ministers if they think that it is of benefit to have cooperation on any area to proceed to have that cooperation. There certainly wouldn't be any foot-dragging on my part if I felt it was beneficial to the people of Northern Ireland.

**Q. Would environmental sustainability and climate change be an obvious area that doesn't recognise borders?**

Climate change might be more of a national issue, and our lead on climate change would be on a UK-wide basis. But



*Deputy First Minister Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA, Taoiseach Mr Brian Cowen TD and First Minister Mr Peter Robinson MP MLA at the plenary meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council, Derry/Londonderry, 23 January 2009*

certainly whatever we do will impact on the Irish Republic and vice versa in terms of climate change.

**Q. Would you agree that there is a particularly strong case for cross-border regional cooperation in the North-West (Londonderry and Donegal) given that region's geographical peripherality?**

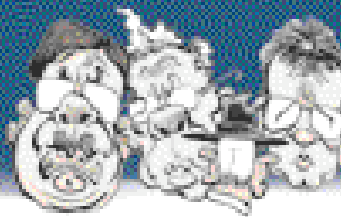
I think there is a remoteness from the centre of power for people in Donegal relating to Dublin and for people in Londonderry relating to Belfast, and if there is to be a vibrant North-West then the stronger the activity can be in that area the better. I think the case is good and there are initiatives already in those areas. It is obviously a matter for local politicians on the councils in those areas

the extent to which they want to cooperate one with the other. But as a general rule I'm very much in favour of cooperation, networking and building up relationships.

**Q. Are there any areas of government (including local government) and/or business which you would see as being particularly useful to cooperate on in the North-West?**

We have seen cooperation in the North-West in terms of the the transport links – the roads are an obvious area where there is benefit. When I was the Minister responsible for the Department for Regional Development I wasn't slow in speaking on the phone to my counterpart in Dublin when it came to issues relating





to the City of Derry airport, all of which were beneficial to both the people of Donegal and the people of Londonderry. So there are many areas where cooperation just makes sound sense.

**Q. What is your view of the very significant growth in cross-border cooperation at community and grass-roots level, much of it funded by EU programmes?**

I think that if there is better cooperation at political leadership level, it makes people more relaxed and freed up to have that contact at a community level, so in many ways the example does come from the top. There are examples I could also give of where perhaps the ground level moved faster than the politicians: plenty of examples where people have been ahead of the politicians not least in terms of the changes that we've seen within Northern Ireland, where people were perhaps faster than the politicians in wanting to move on.

I encourage these contacts, particularly as we've lived in a society where there has been to some extent a belief that the people on one or other side of the border were ogres, and we didn't want to have anything to do with those people, they were our enemy. I think the more you can break that down the better, and obviously community contact is a way of doing that.

**Q. Could you ever envisage the North/South Ministerial Council's remit being extended to include areas of North-South cooperation**

**other than those agreed in the Belfast and St Andrew's Agreements?**

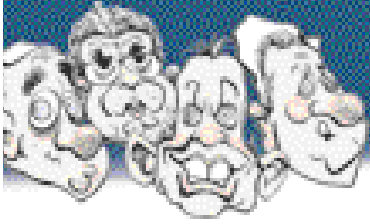
I think I've touched on that to the extent that there may be some areas presently covered by the Belfast Agreement that may not be as valid now as they were thought to be then. Therefore there may be a wish to look at other matters which would be more relevant today – that will always happen.

**Q. Would these be areas other than those currently covered by the six North/South Implementation Bodies? Might there be some bodies you might want to drop and other bodies you might want to add on?**

I don't think I'll ever find myself in the position where I'm enthusiastic about adding on. Because again we come back to the issue of why are we doing this? This having to fit everybody into some kind of framework is in my view politically driven, and it would be much better if there was a more relaxed and normal kind of cooperation rather than having to do everything very officially and formally.

**Q. What do you hope to see coming out of the current review of the North/South bodies?**

I hope that there will be a move away from some of the formality that is around them, so that it becomes much more natural and normal for meetings to take place rather than it being the big occasion. I think that would serve people



better – certainly it would serve them better if we got away from some of the stiffness that’s associated with that kind of structure.

**Q. Would you like to see the establishment of a stronger parallel East-West structure?**

We do have an East-West structure: the British-Irish Council meets and there are also sectoral meetings taking place. It has been agreed at a BIC meeting that we set up a secretariat in the way that we have for the North/South Ministerial Council. I think that step will significantly change the nature of the East-West

structures – when you have officials who are driving the issue forward, it is more likely to move forward. Again I find those meetings very useful, and I believe colleagues do as well. The last one we had in Edinburgh came in the teeth of the ‘credit crunch’ and we were able to have a very detailed discussion, which was not bound by the speaking notes, in terms of what each of the administrations was doing, and what the UK and Irish governments were doing – that again was helpful in terms of the decision-making process each administration has.

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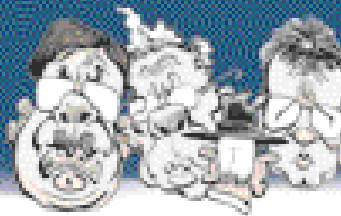
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**Q. What would you say to encourage a business person from the Republic of Ireland to invest in Northern Ireland in the current economic climate?**

I think in the current economic climate all the advantages lie with Northern Ireland. I understand that operating costs – both of labour and premises – would probably be somewhere around a third cheaper in Northern Ireland than they would be in the Republic, and in some cases almost 50% cheaper. So from the point of view of costs, which in the present economic climate are a key factor, there are significant advantages in people setting up in Northern Ireland. Beyond that the educational standards in Northern Ireland are higher than anywhere else in the British Isles – we’ve a 10% higher pass rate in exams in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK – so you’re getting a well-educated workforce who speak the same language, so there are no difficulties there. It’s close by in terms of being able to manage businesses on both sides of the border and now you’ve got a political environment which is stable. We are now as peaceful a society as you’ll find probably anywhere in Europe, and more peaceful than in some places.

**Q. What about the higher rate of Corporation Tax in the UK?**

When it comes to tax levels there are swings and roundabouts. There are other tax incentives that are available in Northern Ireland, and if people come and live in Northern Ireland they’ll be pleased

to have a VAT rate that is significantly less than the Irish Republic’s. The flocking of shoppers across the border for about 30% savings on their weekly food bill again indicates that living in Northern Ireland can be a very viable option for people in the Irish Republic.

**Q. What do you think of the idea – put forward, among others, by Ulster Bank chairman Alan Gillespie – of a joint agency to promote the island of Ireland as a destination for Foreign Direct Investment?**

I don’t think that was his best moment. Anybody knows that when it comes to investment there is always going to be competition. How on earth would such an organisation determine the placing of any new project? The competition is there – it’s not a realistic proposition in the circumstances that we have. I think he should perhaps think that one through again.

**Q. Lastly, do you see North-South cooperation playing a significant role in helping to make Northern Ireland a more prosperous place?**

It’s bound to, not least because there is a very significant market in the Irish Republic and it’s one I don’t believe we’ve tapped into sufficiently in the past, maybe for historical reasons. But there’s business to be done and benefits to be gained.

*The interviewer was Andy Pollak and the interview took place on 16 December 2008.*

## WHAT ROLE FOR NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN A TIME OF RECESSION? INTERVIEWS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS AND ECONOMISTS

Andy Pollak and Michael D'Arcy

Since the early 1990s coming together of the business confederations North and South, and Sir George Quigley's mould-breaking speech about the need for a Belfast-Dublin 'economic corridor' within a broader 'island economy', economic and business cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has been on the rise.

Sir George's vision was subsequently supported by leading economic policy makers and business people.<sup>1</sup> The 1998 Belfast Agreement, with its establishment of *InterTradelreland* as a government agency to promote North-South trade and business development, saw this process accelerating.



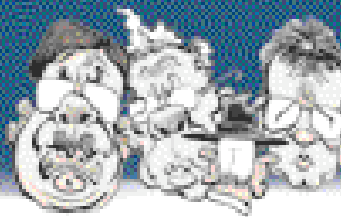
*Michael D'Arcy*



*Andy Pollak*

In the past decade every indicator of economic interaction between the two jurisdictions has been strongly positive: cross-border trade has increased by over 70%; investment by Southern companies in Northern Ireland has expanded dramatically; a cash-rich Irish government pledged nearly €600 million to improve the North's infrastructure; and the case for an 'island economy', put by influential business-led bodies like the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council and the North/South Roundtable Group 'think tank', has been argued and largely won.

However these developments took place against a background of unprecedented domestic and international economic growth. One could argue that the 'island economy' – and greatly increased North-South cooperation to achieve it – was simply benefiting from the phenomenon of 'a rising tide lifting all boats'. The worldwide economic recession that started to hit Ireland hard in the middle of 2008 has changed everything. The Republic of Ireland's economy, in particular, is facing a dramatic downturn, with the public finances deteriorating at a speed rarely seen in any advanced



country in recent times and the major banks' shares plummeting to frightening lows. For its part, the Northern Ireland Executive were not talking to each other for the first five months of the crisis due to age-old disputes about justice, policing, language and education. Anything but the economy! During this time the British government's main response to the 'credit crunch' and its impact on the UK economy was to borrow to a massive and unprecedented degree and so incur debt levels that will have significant medium-term implications for the country's tax and public expenditure policies.

The Centre for Cross Border Studies decided that in this situation it would be a useful and insightful exercise to interview a group of business leaders who had been closely involved in North-South economic cooperation and economists who had closely watched and researched its development. Those interviewed in late November and December 2008 were **Stephen Kingon**, Chairman of Invest Northern Ireland, co-Chair of the North/South Roundtable Group, and formerly Managing Partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup>; **David Dobbins**, Chairman of InterTradelreland, former Chairman of the Confederation of British Industry (NI) and Group Chief Executive of United Dairy Farmers, the largest dairy company in the North<sup>3</sup>; **Laurence Crowley**, co-Chair of the North/South Roundtable Group and former Governor of the Bank of Ireland<sup>4</sup>; **Maurice Healy**, former Chairman of the Irish Business and Employers

Confederation (IBEC) and Chief Executive of the Dublin-based Healy Group, a major supplier of pharmaceutical and food ingredient products<sup>5</sup>; **Professor John Bradley**, an independent economic consultant and former research professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, who advises governments in Central and Eastern Europe on their medium term economic and industrial strategies<sup>6</sup>; and **Dr Michael Smyth**, Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Ulster, a prominent Northern Ireland economist who specialises in regional economics and regional policy<sup>7</sup>.

It should be borne in mind that the views of those interviewed were recorded in late November-December 2008, three months before this *Journal* was published in March 2009, so may have been particularly influenced by financial factors – such as the collapse in the value of Sterling against the euro – dominating discussion at that time.

Another vital point, implicit in all the contributions but articulated by John Bradley, is that the projections outlined in this article – and particularly those looking forward 15 or 20 years – are premised on the assumption that there will be no change in Northern Ireland's constitutional position during that time. "If you want to talk about things like a future industrial strategy, you have to have a political configuration in mind," stresses Bradley. "And mine is that for as long as we can see it, it would be the present situation with Northern



*Stephen Kingon*



*David Dobbin*



*John Bradley*

Ireland continuing effectively to be a region of the UK, perhaps with slightly more devolved powers.”

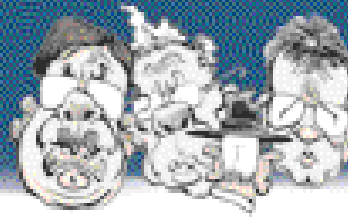
### **Starting from a strong base**

All interviewed agreed that North-South economic and business cooperation over the past decade and a half had been an unqualified success for Northern Ireland and for relations between the governments and people of the two Irish jurisdictions. “It has helped to foster a more stable economic climate and has seen the unionist community in the North – and the population at large – feel much more comfortable about where they sit in a special relationship both with the United Kingdom and Ireland,” says David Dobbin. Michael Smyth points to “research done by PricewaterhouseCoopers in the 1980s which had detected a lack of trust between business in the two jurisdictions. Actually doing the cooperation in the decades since has definitely broken down the misconceptions and overcome the mistrust, and the confidence-building that resulted has spilled over into the

wider community here in the North.”

“It’s difficult to build up any great hatred for somebody you know, have regularly spoken to, and have done good business with,” stresses Laurence Crowley.

It is worth remembering that in the mid-1970s the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in Northern Ireland and the Federated Union of Employers (IBEC’s predecessor) in the Republic hardly dared to have even informal conversations, so dangerous was the climate of political and sectarian violence in the North at the time. Stephen Kingon emphasises the key role of business leaders in the process of rapprochement and normalisation of relations of more recent times, singling out for particular mention the Joint Business Council of the CBI and IBEC, formed in 1991, and the North/South Roundtable Group (NSRG), which dates from 2002. He points to the NSRG’s role as a “catalyst” in helping to bring together the most senior officials of the two economic departments, DETE in the South and DETI in the North; in facilitating real engagement between Invest Northern Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland; and in helping to



develop cross-border conversations between some of the most important business leaders on the island, men like Dermot Desmond, Gerry Robinson, Denis O'Brien, Michael Smurfit and Howard Hastings.

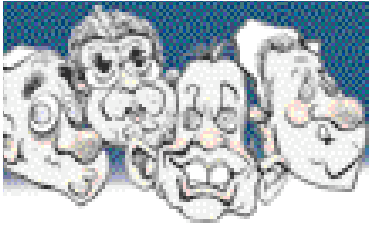
There is also agreement that Ireland, North and South, is going into the current recession on a stronger base – including a strong new North-South cooperation dimension – than during previous economic downturns in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. “Ireland, North and South, is a much wealthier place, with much better infrastructure, a stronger business and skills base, and historically low unemployment levels,” notes David Dobbin. “So while we’re seeing a significant deterioration, our absolute position is still well ahead of other regions of the world. We’ve got to understand that this correction-cum-downturn isn’t going to last forever. We’ve got to keep our nerve and focus on the same crucial things that are key to long-term economic success – competitiveness, innovation and international marketing – so that we are prepared for the upturn when it comes.”

On the other hand, several of those interviewed warned against the complacency that has taken hold in the South in particular after more than a decade of the Celtic Tiger. “They have walked on water for so long. There’s a whole generation in the Republic who have experienced nothing except benign conditions. It’s going to take a culture change for them to face up to the severity of the recession. In addition, the

Irish government will have to be really creative to devise fiscal measures and economic development policies to deal with this difficult new situation,” says Stephen Kingon. A leading Southern businessman, Maurice Healy, agrees with him, noting that too many business people in the Republic think “we’ve made our money now” and don’t have to work again. As somebody who has good past experience of working with Northerners, he says he would now prefer a Northern partner if he wanted to expand his business because of their “reliability and preparedness to work really hard to gain success.”

### **The Private Sector: Realities and Opportunities**

There is also agreement that both jurisdictions are going to suffer badly from the recession. In the short-term the Northern economy – with its large subvention from the UK Exchequer, its dominant public sector, and its lower cost base emphasised by the slump in Sterling – would appear to be in a stronger position than its Southern counterpart, one of the world’s most open economies and one that is heavily dependent on US multinationals in two sectors: pharmaceuticals and ICT. “Getting American multinationals to set up branches here and putting all our money into that has worked wonderfully, but now we’re going through a shake-out period, and there are going to be big shake-outs. We have gone for a very polar economy, with most of the value added generated by these two sectors – it was a choice that worked spectacularly



well for a time, but in the next few years, as the recession bites, it won't work any more and we now have to find a new industrial strategy model," says economist John Bradley.

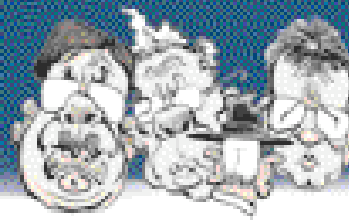
He is not confident that the kind of people in the IDA who thought so innovatively about such matters in the 1960s and 1970s are there any more to help develop that new strategy. For him it would involve not only supporting indigenous Irish firms in the high-tech sectors – which Enterprise Ireland has been doing – but also breaking strongly with the past by encouraging them to move back into more traditional manufacturing sectors such as specialised food products, high quality footwear and clothing, furniture and so on. These are the kinds of areas other small European countries like Denmark and Slovenia have made a success of – and there is potentially an important all-island dimension to it. "My point is that in a period of serious world recession you're not going to get anything in the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) pipeline – nothing very significant anyway, nothing that will replace the outflow of jobs to lower labour cost areas abroad – so you have to turn to these neglected areas. And these are precisely the areas that will operate best on an all-island basis because they're usually run by small, level-headed, entrepreneurial business people who are desperately looking to survive at the moment. Northern Ireland might be a little bit behind the South currently because the true horror of the recession has not dawned on them yet. But they must have many such small

entrepreneurs – the North traditionally has had more SMEs in manufacturing – who will be driven by the need to survive to seek partners across the border."

From a business viewpoint, David Dobbin agrees. He sees his company's area of operation – food products – as one that might be relatively recession-proof. But he too believes that in many areas – he instances electronics and healthcare – there are strong arguments for smaller companies to overcome the recession by linking with partners across the Irish border to develop and market new products. "Having the technology is not enough – you have to have critical mass to be able to compete globally. Both our economies are still very small in world terms, so by exploiting some of your neighbour's capability you may be able to compete with mainland Europe or the US where the scale is much larger because of their much larger domestic markets." He says *InterTradelreland* will be continuing its "brokering service to encourage that to happen. It's likely we are going to see consolidation in business, and that consolidation can be on an all-Ireland basis as well as within each jurisdiction."

Firms naturally become cautious during a recession and turn inwards to concentrate on their core business, which will do little or nothing for North-South trade or business cooperation. Reducing costs becomes the key to survival and eventual recovery. However there are also cross-border opportunities here. "Because of the strength of the euro against the pound, there are now opportunities for





Maurice Healy



Laurence Crowley



Michael Smyth

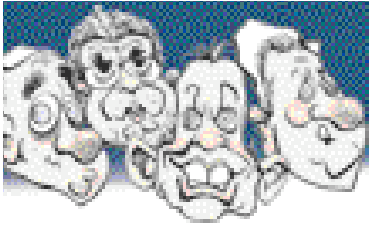
Southern Irish firms to look to the North as a low-cost supplier of raw materials, services, components and sub-assembly," says Dobbin. "I'd be saying to them that rather than get nervous about cheaper consumer products in the North, they should look to the benefits there might be for business to use the North to source goods and services that until now they have sourced elsewhere in Europe, and thus to improve their competitiveness. We've got to keep focussed on the trade opportunities from North-South economic cooperation. We need to use the fact that there are two jurisdictions on the island as a competitive strength rather than a threat."

Dobbin believes there are North-South trade opportunities even in the middle of a serious recession. For example, InterTradelreland has commissioned a study to examine "areas of under-trading" between the two jurisdictions, which will compare trade across the Irish border with other dynamic cross-border regions in Europe and further afield. "We will be doing everything we can to publicise opportunities and gaps in the relevant sectors."

He also emphasises the importance of the various development agencies, and their sponsoring government departments, North and South, working more closely together through the next few difficult years in order to ensure the most cost-effective and affordable programmes for companies with much less cash to spend – "so that we can deliver the maximum bang for our buck and make sure we don't overlap and duplicate what we're doing."

Stephen Kingon agrees that with Sterling now spectacularly undervalued compared to the euro – and labour and property costs making Belfast 30% cheaper than Dublin and 50% cheaper than London – "there are real opportunities for Northern firms who look South." However he worries at the "introspection" of many firms, their reluctance to "dip their toes" into this attractive export market right on their doorstep.

Southern shoppers flooding North to do their Christmas shopping were making the headlines at the time of these interviews rather than export opportunities for Northern businesses.



Most of those interviewed saw this as a temporary phenomenon, with the low Sterling rate eventually causing higher prices for imported inputs in the North and Southern retailers being forced to lower their prices to compete. They had little sympathy with the cries of pain from Southern politicians and retail interests. "I have no problem with Southern retailers getting a good kicking," says Maurice Healy. "Look at border regions between France and Germany, and Holland and Germany, where people adjust their spending habits literally every week. What we need is an 'equalised' market – we say we want such an equalised market in Europe, but we don't have one on this island yet."

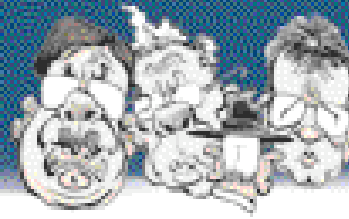
### **The Public Sector: Realities and Opportunities**

The public finance situation currently looks far worse in the South than the North. But Dobbin warns against complacency north of the border. Here he sees the heavy dependency on the public sector – currently a cushion against the worst effects of the recession on employment – as a continuing problem: "It's likely that the current level of public expenditure will come under threat, particularly in Northern Ireland, when the recession ends, and the UK Government has to pay for its present, very large Keynesian spend." Bradley agrees, noting that its strategy of boosting the UK economy through massive public spending and foreign borrowing, coupled with the very large amounts of money needed to capitalise the banks, will "lead to a drastic squeeze on expenditure

down the line in places like Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland will initially react to this by saying 'of course, we're a special case and the British will take care of us'. But that's not going to happen this time."

However Bradley sees opportunities here too, with the recession forcing new thinking on cost-conscious governments. The Republic's swingeing budget cuts have been well-documented. However it won't be too long before Northern government departments and public agencies too will have to look for ways to cut costs in a major way by eliminating inefficiencies in public services, as the Southern system had to do under Finance Minister Ray McSharry in the late 1980s and Brian Lenihan is currently having to do again now. Some of those inefficiencies may be in duplicated services across the border that might be able to be integrated, in the way that the influential *InterTradeIreland* report, the *Comprehensive Study on the All-Island Economy*, recommended in 2006<sup>5</sup>.

More integrated cross-border health services was an example cited by several of those interviewed (and by the *Comprehensive Study*). "We've got to define the area of public sector cooperation as something that is manifestly in our mutual interest now. The seriousness of the recession can precipitate new thinking in that sector", says Bradley. "In health, for example, it won't be enough for Northerners to say – 'we've got a National Health Service and you've got a third world health service.'



Up to now that would have been the end of the conversation. Now it's only the beginning. As intelligent people, we're going to have to start to find ways of working around our separate health systems, which provide no integrated provision in border regions or even any integrated emergency provision. Financial cutbacks will mean a serious reduction in the level of public services in this crucial area at the same time as there are major inefficiencies, some of which we may be able to tackle on a cross-border basis, and tackle them in ways that are in our mutual interest. This will be about saving money and desperately trying to hold onto the present level of services. It will be a huge change from recent years when nobody wanted to save money because we had money coming out of our ears."

More broadly, Stephen Kingon says that given Ireland's small size and the fact that "externally investors just see one island", it is particularly crucial that there should be continued close cooperation between the governments on infrastructure. "You can't solve the problems of Derry without Donegal and vice versa. How do you package the north western region for Foreign Direct Investment without taking in the whole region from Coleraine to Letterkenny? The same thing, to a lesser extent, goes for the Fermanagh-Sligo-Mayo region. We need to package the whole island if we are going to tackle the regional disparities. The peripherality of the west has to be dealt with on a cross-border basis if you're going to counter the accusation that we're only interested in the big conurbations: Belfast and Dublin."

Kingon cites other areas where Northern Ireland can continue to gain from such cooperation. Energy cooperation on a small island, with the cross-border interconnector and the Single Electricity Market up and running, is an obvious area where it makes eminent good sense to tackle the major problems of energy security and finding alternative renewable energy sources together. The regulators should be working more closely together to eliminate distortions like the continuing mobile roaming charges in border areas. He also praises the opening of Irish government trade missions to Northern businesses, giving them access to a wide range of embassies and offices abroad and to the considerable influence of the Irish diaspora worldwide.

Michael Smyth sees unfettered labour mobility as the principal avenue towards an internationally competitive island economy. "I still believe that if you want genuine cross-border economic cooperation, the island's labour markets have to become more integrated through integrating the currency, tax and social insurance systems. Even if such integration is viewed by some unionists as some kind of code for takeover, the benefits of being part of a single market both on the island of Ireland and more broadly in Europe should override such petty territorial issues."

### **Training and Higher Education**

Training is another area under the control of the Northern Ireland Executive where David Dobbin would like to see increased inter-governmental cooperation. "We're going to see a very slack labour market,

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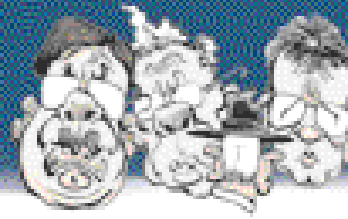
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with levels of unemployment we haven't seen for some time. But we don't want people to emigrate from the island again because of lack of opportunities at home. Both governments are going to have to ensure in particular that the output of graduates is supported by state-sponsored training. Currently we're seeing a big reduction in both graduate recruitment and training in companies of all sizes. My big fear would be that we would see a two-three year period where there would be high graduate unemployment and probably graduate emigration. What we need to do is to learn the lessons of the past and make sure we don't lose our brightest and best young people. State investment in training is needed to do that, and it would be very modest indeed when compared to the money governments are putting into the banking sector." He stresses that here, as in so many economy-related areas, it is vital that "both governments should be coordinating what they are doing to ensure that there is a consistent approach and that separate government policies don't lead to further distortions on the island."

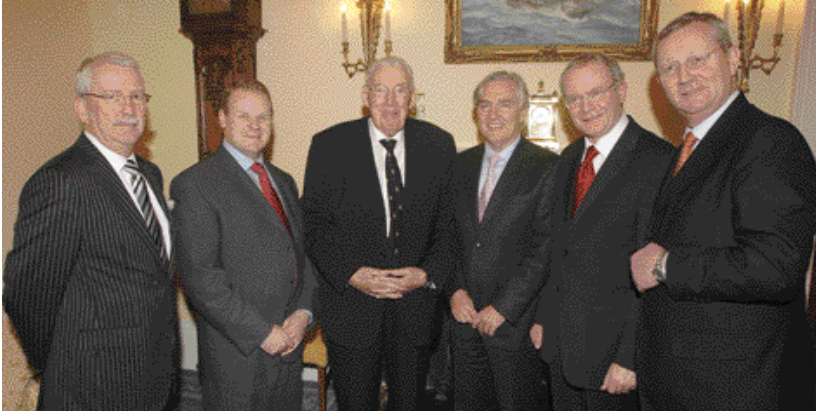
One area where Dobbin would be keen to see much more North-South cooperation is in university-business collaboration. "With a very weak job market, more graduates are choosing to stay in university and get postgraduate qualifications like MBAs and PhDs. This is a sensible move, based on the hope that when they eventually emerge from higher education there will be a better economic landscape. If this trend is

mirrored in the South, I'd be saying that here is an opportunity for universities throughout the island to take on more research and product development activity."

He noted that *InterTradelreland* last year issued a report on research and technological development centres on the island of Ireland<sup>9</sup>. "Let's build on that to create a pipeline of research and development projects which could be harvestable as innovative new products in two-three years when we come out of the recession. Universities are going to have to do more economically relevant research. Let's use this period for increasing collaboration between universities and business, and indeed between the universities themselves, on an all-island basis with the aim of trying to create some intellectual property leading to competitive benefits. Because the lead time to create such research-based products is measured in years, hopefully if we can get our bright young people staying on in areas such as nanotechnology, electronics and healthcare, they are going eventually increase the island's exploitable output."

### Future visions

All of those interviewed were asked to look beyond the present recession to how the 'island of Ireland' economy might look in 2025. Their ideas ranged from immediate, hard-headed, practical measures to visionary versions of enormously enhanced cooperation. All stressed the long-term nature of the cross-border cooperation process in

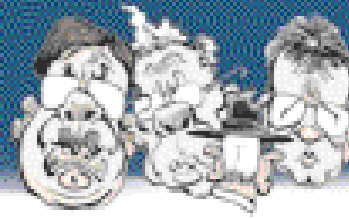


*Business and political leaders at the spring 2008 meeting in Belfast of the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council. From left to right: Mr Tom Noonan, incoming IBEC President; Mr Brian Ambrose, Chairman, CBI Northern Ireland; First Minister Dr Ian Paisley; Mr Len O'Hagan, Chairman, Belfast Harbour Commissioners; Deputy First Minister Mr Martin McGuinness, and Mr Maurice Healy, outgoing IBEC President.*

Ireland. "Now that the political ice has melted, we should have the confidence to say that it makes all kinds of social and economic sense to begin to share where that sharing is to the benefit of both societies," says Michael Smyth. "But that's not going to happen in the short term. There will be powerful distractions in the short term, like the present recession, but that must be the long-term goal."

David Dobbin says he would like to see an island where "North-South trade would happen as if it were a single jurisdiction" and public utilities and transport would display the kind of "seamless arrangement where the visitor would travel across the island and would see different regional characteristics but one very joined-up arrangement."

By 2025 he would like to see Northern Ireland as part of a United Kingdom which had joined the euro at a competitive rate which would benefit its trading economy. And he hopes that by that time *InterTradelreland*, as a government agency dedicated to promoting cross-border trade and business development, would no longer be necessary: "We would have optimum trade flows and business cooperation on the island without having to consciously make them happen. North-South business cooperation would be so normal that we wouldn't need a body to support it." This would be in the wider context of the UK and Ireland continuing the mutually beneficial process of recent years of becoming aligned more closely to become "important allies on the European and global scene."



Stephen Kingon would like to see a small number of truly world class all-island centres of excellence up and thriving well before 2025. "Given the talent pool we are producing on the island, North and South, such knowledge-based industries must the way forward, and perhaps by working together we can make one and one equal three." He suggests a Global Biometrics Centre and a Renewables and Green Energy Centre. He also wants more support to be given to entrepreneurs trying to 'productivise' ICT ideas, such as the products to manage business risk in the financial services sector currently being developed by the highly successful Newry-based company, First Derivatives.

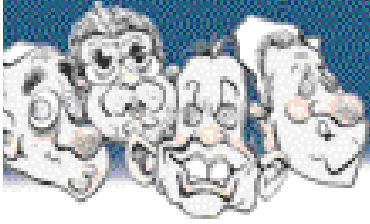
He would also like Ireland to have become the European base for "a whole raft of what I call 'mid-tier' US medical devices companies with billion dollar turnovers whose worlds end currently on the east or west coasts of America". He also gives the example of middle-sized pharmaceutical firms which now have to wait for up to 10 years to get Food and Drugs Administration approval for new drugs in the US, whereas if they had a research and development centre in Ireland they could 'parallel track' their product approvals and get a European Union CE mark in two-four years.

Michael Smyth would like to see the two jurisdictions' social insurance and tax systems more closely integrated to encourage labour mobility. "Greater coordination between the two higher and further education systems would be pivotal – the coordination of the two

labour markets almost starts with the coordination of higher and vocational education." More immediately, he would like to see the Belfast-Dublin rail link upgraded again – "there must be a serious threat to the long-term viability of the already loss-making Enterprise when the completion of the new road around Newry further reduces the driving time between the two cities. If it takes less time to drive between the island's two main cities than to go by train, there is something radically wrong."

John Bradley hopes that by 2025 the UK will be using the euro and be inside the Schengen area. "By then we will either have filled out our indigenous manufacturing sector so that it looks more like Denmark than Singapore – and we'll be doing that in the context of an island economy, with Northern Ireland still a constitutional region of the UK – or else we'll have fallen down the ladder massively and will be looking for aid from countries like Poland and Slovenia." In the shorter-term, he would like to see Northern Ireland embracing a truly innovative and pioneering proposal such as marketing itself as "the only part of the UK in the euro zone" in order to encourage foreign investment and tourism, thus blazing the trail for the rest of the UK – "when you're dealing with people like the DUP and you do it incrementally, they will fight you incrementally, whereas if you lob in a really imaginative proposal, who knows, they might buy it."

Maurice Healy has an ambitious shopping list of what he'd like to see by 2025.

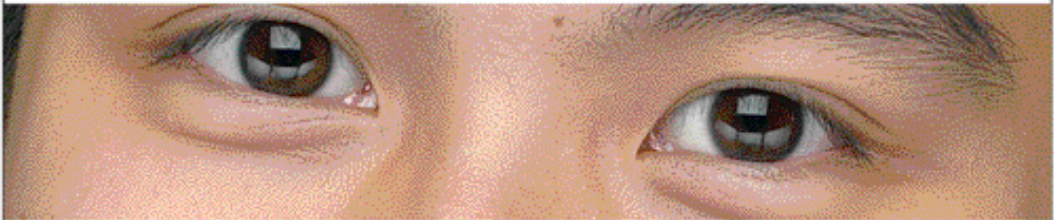


These include a unified VAT and Corporation Tax regime; a merger of IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland to produce one all-island industrial promotion body; a fully integrated higher education system, aiming to make the island one of the world's leading destinations for overseas students; an all-island skills development agency; an all-island ports logistics development plan; a Single Energy Policy that uses a mixture of renewables and nuclear energy; a common employment law regime; an agreed all-island infrastructural development plan which would have been implemented as the island emerged from the 2008-2011 recession; and a single merged business

and employers organisation on the island. Finally, he would like to see Ireland, North and South, setting up an agency to learn from the great success of family-run SME businesses in the US, and how such businesses can evolve into philanthropic concerns.

Laurence Crowley's main hopes are for a "virtually if not totally identical regulatory system" in the two parts of the island for utilities and business, "so that the free movement of goods and services is really a fact of life"; "a place where the personal tax system is harmonised to the extent that it wouldn't matter whether you were working in Armagh or Athy in terms of where and how you paid your

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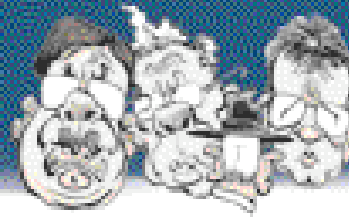
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taxes”; the rationalisation of health and higher education on an all-island basis; and overall “a change in mindsets so that whatever you call this island of two jurisdictions, we will be able to think of it all as one – not politically, but economically.”

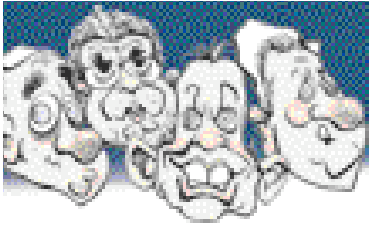
### Conclusion

All those interviewed agreed that both Irish jurisdictions are going to suffer badly during the recession. The South as a more open economy with seriously deteriorating public finances would suffer more in the short-term. But the North should not be complacent given that in the medium-term the British government will be seeking to pay back its present very large borrowings by raising taxes and squeezing public expenditure, and this time Northern Ireland is unlikely to be viewed as a special case.

However despite the encroaching gloom of serious economic downturn, the tone of the interviews was largely positive and upbeat: the consensus was that a fully functioning ‘island economy’ across two political jurisdictions in Ireland would continue to make sound business and economic sense. None of the six interviewees saw the recession as reversing this necessary development in the medium or long-term. On the contrary, there was a belief that there were real cross-border opportunities for business people in the midst of the current difficulties. Businesses in the South should look to the cheaper North to help enhance their competitiveness.

Cost-conscious governments might be able to deliver services – for example, in health – more effectively in the border region through greater cross-border cooperation. Higher education and training are areas where joint opportunities and mutual learning should be capitalised on during the period of high unemployment facing both parts of the island.

It was pointed out that at a time of international recession the Foreign Direct Investment pipeline largely freezes, so there are very few large scale investors coming in to replace the outflow of jobs to lower cost locations. A high-cost but low-tax Republic of Ireland might be able to offset some of its current competitive disadvantages by joining a lower-cost Northern Ireland to attract investors who want different things from different places, and might still be tempted by finding them on the same small English-speaking island inside the European Union. Several of those interviewed stressed the importance of the development agencies in the two Irish jurisdictions working more closely in the immediate future, overcoming the understandable tendency to see the other as ‘the enemy’ in order to maximise the limited inward investment flows to the island. However there are also opportunities for indigenous companies with good ideas led by hard-headed entrepreneurs, whether in high tech areas like ICT and healthcare or more traditional areas like high class food, clothing and furniture products. In both jurisdictions “exploiting some of your



neighbour's capability" – in David Dobbin's words – could help smaller firms compete internationally.

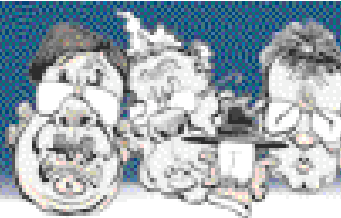
Those interviewed were particularly hopeful when they looked forward to 2025. They foresaw both parts of Ireland in the Euro; seamless infrastructure across the island; genuine all-Ireland labour markets assisted by more integrated tax and social insurance systems; higher and vocational education and training being truly coordinated; state support for North-South economic cooperation being no longer necessary as optimum trade flows and business cooperation happened by themselves; and – in Laurence Crowley's pithy summing up – "a change in mindsets so that whatever you call this island of two jurisdictions, we will be able to think of it all as one – not politically, but economically."

It is accepted wisdom that forward-looking sentiment and confidence in the future play a key role in engendering dynamism in national economies. At a time when few of our leaders or commentators seem to have much idea about how Ireland will look the other side of the current recession (and there is even alarming talk of collapse and calamity), it is cheering to find a group of level-headed business leaders and economists on both sides of the border who are optimistic that further moves towards an 'island economy' can play a significant role in moving Ireland out of its present predicament and on to the next stage of economic enterprise,

competitiveness and prosperity.

**Andy Pollak is director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. He was formerly a senior journalist with *The Irish Times*.**

**Michael D'Arcy is a Dublin-based economic and business consultant with a strong interest in cross-border cooperation with Northern Ireland. Since the early 1990s he has provided independent advice and analysis on the challenges presented by North-South business development. He is the Joint Facilitator of the North/South Roundtable Group and was co-editor of *Border Crossings: Developing Ireland's island economy* (Gill and MacMillan, 1995).**



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## CROSS-BORDER BANKING IN AN ERA OF FINANCIAL CRISIS: EU RULES NEED NOT APPLY

Patricia Clarke and Ray Kinsella

A well-functioning financial services industry, incorporating the banking sector, is vital for the competitiveness of any economy<sup>1</sup>. The integration of Europe's financial services has been a major objective of EU policies for many years. As a result of the introduction of the euro, technological innovation and the reduction of regulatory barriers to cross-border activities, cross-border banking in the EU now accounts for over 24% of banking activity<sup>2</sup>. This paper looks at cross-border co-operation in banking from two perspectives: firstly at the high-level EU and cross-border issues that have surfaced in response to the current global financial crisis, and secondly at the bottom-up practicalities of customers living on the island of Ireland who need to bank in both jurisdictions. These perspectives, while seemingly miles apart, are closely intertwined, since the development of cross-border banking services on the island, to the extent that they have happened at all, have been driven largely by EU policies.



Patricia Clarke

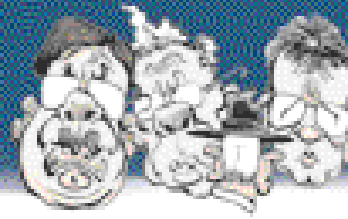


Ray Kinsella

In Ireland the UK and Irish banking systems operate side by side. There are significant differences in banking, north and south of the border, including two different currency regimes, different management systems and regulatory regimes encompassing financial stability and consumer protection. Despite these differences there are compelling reasons why cross-border banking services on the island should be feasible. Northern Ireland is unique relative to the other regions of the UK in that it shares a land

border with another EU state, and its prosperity in the global economy is increasingly impacted by its interactions with the Republic of Ireland.

The four big banks in the Republic of Ireland (Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Bank, Ulster Bank and National Irish Bank) all have sister companies in Northern Ireland (Bank of Ireland, First Trust Bank, Ulster Bank and Northern Bank). The last two of these in each jurisdiction are owned by international banking groups, Royal Bank



of Scotland (RBS) and Danske Bank respectively. Discussions with senior bank and consumer organisation officials who have extensive experience of working on both sides of the Irish border have highlighted the huge potential for delivering better and more competitive cross-border services by these banks, all of which have “a knowledge of the North-South economy written in their DNA, with the added benefit of being owned by very large international groups that bring different models and ideas to the table”<sup>3</sup>.

### **Cross-border banking: top down**

Since the implementation of the Single European Act in 1986, the EU banking industry has been subject to a gradual process of deregulation and harmonisation in order to achieve a single European banking market. This has opened up domestic banking sectors and created more cross-border activity as well as greater competition, with the aim of achieving a more efficient banking sector across the continent.

EU directives were agreed to guarantee equal regulatory treatment of foreign banks by national authorities, provision of financial services across borders by financial intermediaries, home country control of banking supervision and home country implementation of bank solvency requirements. The EU Council also passed regulations to liberalise cross-border capital flows and harmonise regulations across member countries that cover capital adequacy, credit exposure and banks’ participation in non-finance

activities. Most of these directives had been implemented by the mid-1990s.

At the Lisbon summit in March 2000 EU heads of government signed up to an ambitious programme designed to achieve a single market in financial services by 2005. The Financial Services Action Plan 1995-2005 (FSAP) appeared to lay strong foundations by putting in place a largely harmonised set of financial regulations with a complementary implementation structure<sup>4</sup>. This brings together all European banking supervisors and relevant agencies within the Committee of European Banking Supervisors (CEBS), a body established in 2004 to advise the European Commission on banking policy and to promote cooperation and convergence of supervisory practice across the European Union.

However the CEBS is merely an advisory body with no decision-making powers. It fronts a complex voluntary arrangement of interlocking national authorities, at least nine EU-level committees and over 80 bilateral agreements. It is estimated that the extent of this continent-wide fragmentation adds 15% to the cost of Europe’s banking supervision.<sup>5</sup> The EU White Paper on Financial Services 2005-2010 outlines the extensive efforts that are still needed to achieve a true EU single European banking market.

A key indicator of the importance of cross-border banking activity in the EU is the emergence of large cross-border banking groups. Such financial integration can be a major driver of



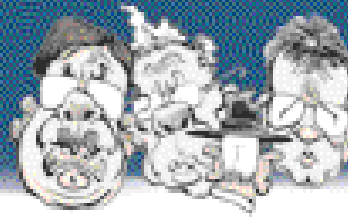
*Irish Minister of Finance, Mr Brian Lenihan TD pursued by the media in the middle of the financial crisis. Photo by Brenda Fitzsimons, Irish Times*

economic development, permitting economies of scale in information technology, risk management systems, marketing and branding, greater risk-sharing between countries, and allowing capital to be moved across borders to the most productive users<sup>6</sup>. However financial integration also brings with it the downside risk of vulnerability to volatility in capital markets. The vigorous defence by the EU Courts of a competitive internal market in successive legal cases involving Portugal (1999), Germany (2004), Italy (2005) and Poland (2006) has incentivised banks to centrally manage operations that take place in different countries.

The most significant of these cross-border deals have been Banco Santander of Spain buying Abbey National of Britain

in 2004, Unicredit of Italy buying HVB of Germany in 2005 and a consortium of Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), Banco Santander and Fortis of the Netherlands buying ABN AMRO of the Netherlands in 2007. The European Central Bank has calculated that just 16 bank groups account for one third of EU bank assets, with each holding on average 38% of their EU assets outside their home countries<sup>7</sup>. This consolidation has also reached Ireland. In 2005 Danske Bank Group, the largest bank in Denmark and a leading player in Scandinavian financial markets, acquired the National Irish Bank in the Republic and the Northern Bank in Northern Ireland.

Ten years have passed since 11 of the EU's member-states swapped their national currencies for the euro, which



quickly became the world's second currency behind the dollar. At the end of 2008, the currency was trading at an all-time high on foreign exchange markets against the US dollar and the pound Sterling. The eurozone has now embraced 16 member states, with Slovakia the most recent to join on 1st January 2009. While Ireland is in the eurozone, the UK held fast to Sterling, thus imposing a currency barrier between the two parts of the island. As arguably the world's most important financial centre, the City of London – and the UK Government on its behalf – have always bristled when other countries have tried to impose EU-wide norms and controls on its activities.

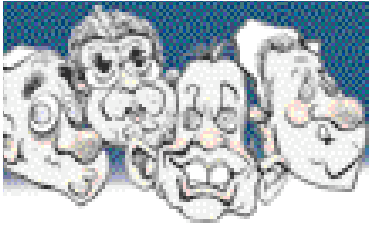
All these EU achievements happened during a period of remarkable stability in Europe's financial markets, a stability that has disappeared dramatically in the past 12 months. Despite all the painstaking work of harmonisation and consolidation of the past 20 years and more, it has been striking how totally the EU's leaders

have failed to produce an EU-wide plan in the face of the international banking collapse.

### The Credit Crunch

The financial crisis of 2007-2009, initially referred to in the media as the 'Credit Crunch', first became evident in July 2007 when a loss of confidence by investors in the value of securitised<sup>8</sup> mortgages in the US resulted in a liquidity crisis that prompted a substantial injection of capital into financial markets by the US Federal Reserve, the Bank of England and the European Central Bank. Banks lend more money than they hold in deposits and they rely on a steady supply of loans from the financial markets to run their daily business and maintain their liquidity. Nowhere is this truer than in the Republic of Ireland, where consumer debt currently stands at 180% of disposable income (the figure is 172% for the island as a whole), compared to 140% in the US and 101% in Germany. Simply put, people in Ireland have been living well beyond their means.

This huge indebtedness – leading to very severe liquidity problems – found its first victim in these islands in Northern Rock, a major British bank with branches on both sides of the Irish border. In September 2007 the bank sought and received a liquidity support facility (an injection of cash) from the Bank of England, following problems in the credit markets. News of this led to investor panic, with thousands of customers queuing outside branches to withdraw



their savings. Eventually, in February 2008, the British Government took the bank into state ownership, pledging to reimburse depositors in full if it went bankrupt. The cross-border aspect was very much to the fore with Brian Cowen, then the Irish Finance Minister, reassuring Northern Rock's customers in the Republic of Ireland that the British Government's pledge to guarantee all deposits included them. However there was always the possibility that in the case of the guarantee being called in, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer would fail to reimburse the bank's €2.4 billion deposits in the Republic and the Irish taxpayer would end up contributing to bailing out the UK bank. Northern Rock's problems proved to be an early indication of the troubles that would soon befall other banks and financial institutions.

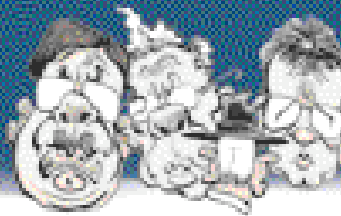
In September 2008, exactly one year to the day after the Northern Rock collapse, the free flow of capital that underpins the world economy came to a shuddering stop with the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, a major US financial institution, and the crumbling of several European banks that relied on it for funding. Banks wavered in Britain, Ireland, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Iceland and within a one week period five banks in seven countries had been bailed out or culled. By mid October the US's Emergency Economic Stabilisation Act had approved a \$700 billion plan to remove bad debts from the American banking system by "creating a dumping ground for banks to hive off toxic assets", while EU governments had

committed €1,873 billion, or about 15% of the GDP of the EU15 (the EU countries before its 2004 enlargement), to national bail-out plans in one form or another.

In particular, coordinated inter-governmental action was urgently needed to shore up two big cross-border banks, Fortis and Dexia in the Benelux countries and France. In this case, fears that cross-border action would not be mobilised fast enough to be effective proved unfounded. On 28 September 2008 Fortis, the first of Europe's big cross-border banks to founder, was rescued when the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – the three countries where it had its main business – came together, partially nationalised the bank, and shored up its balance sheet with a capital injection of €11.2 billion. However rather than working out a cross-border solution, the three countries essentially carved up the bank into their national chunks and each dealt with their own part. Two days later Belgium and France (with a bit of help from Luxembourg) injected €6.4 billion into Dexia bank, one of the world's largest lenders to local governments.

There were no agreed EU rules on early intervention and remedial action if a major problem like this emerged across the European banking sector. There had been no building of cooperative regulatory infrastructure that would intervene in a coordinated manner in the event of an EU banking system collapse. This failure to match moves towards a single EU banking market with an





accompanying single EU regulatory institution became painfully apparent as the continent faced into the international financial crisis. The debates about what to do to tackle that crisis remained overwhelmingly national.

### **UK versus Irish bank rescue plans**

The problem of individual countries taking uncoordinated national action in the face of the growing emergency also affected Ireland. On 30 September 2008 the Republic of Ireland was one of the first European countries to react to the collapse of the US Lehman Brothers with a radical €485 billion scheme to guarantee the liabilities of its six largest financial institutions. This action, representing an underwriting of more than twice the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP), was extended two days later to cover foreign-owned banks with significant operations in Ireland, mainly British banks. The Irish plan angered the UK and other EU countries who feared that cash would drain out of their financial institutions and into banks and building societies in Ireland. However the EU Commission gave its approval to the Irish plan as being proportionate and necessary, and liaised with the Irish and UK Governments to minimise any uncompetitive effects.

Ireland's action could be seen as rational in some regard: the Irish Government realised that it could not count on collective action by the EU and took pre-emptive measures. Immediately before the Irish decision, the EU had discussed a

proposal to create a pool of money to 'undergrid' all the banks in EU member countries. Germany vetoed the idea for fear that German taxpayers would be left paying for other countries' failures. Instead countries were left to deal with the crisis on their own. Some analysts<sup>9</sup> have suggested that Ireland led the way for Europe by "just getting on with it and intervening without too many questions." Subsequently each country acted in its own perceived self-interest, and in doing so threatened to exacerbate the crisis in other countries. On 1 October 2008 the European Commission proposed tightening the rules governing how much capital banks should hold and improving co-operation between national banking regulators. Belated calls for the creation of a single European financial regulator who would watch over the continent's biggest banks, and a pan-European bail-out fund to rescue them, grew louder.

On 8 October 2008 the British Government announced a rescue package totalling £500 billion which was designed to restore confidence in the UK banking system. This plan went much further than the earlier Irish announcement which had sought to restore confidence in the Irish banking system without injecting state capital. The UK Government agreed to inject £50 billion into the major banks in exchange for large equity stakes which it aimed to use to put pressure on them to ease lending to businesses and consumers.

Some coordinated EU action was eventually achieved. On 12 October French President Nicolas Sarkozy, in his

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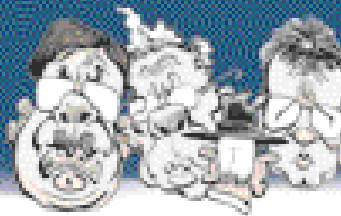
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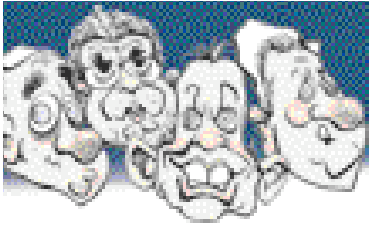
role as head of the EU Presidency, brokered a deal for EU governments to pay into a €2,000 billion bank rescue package involving interbank guarantees and recapitalisation worth €360 billion in France, €480 billion in Germany and €382 billion in the UK. Because of the poor state of Ireland's public finances, it was unable to contribute to this EU package. During the previous week the European Central Bank had joined with the UK, the US and other central banks in a coordinated reduction of interest rates. In the following week the European Commission introduced legislation to raise bank guarantees for depositors throughout the EU to a minimum of €50,000 immediately, rising to €100,000 within a year.

In the initial aftermath of the Irish bank guarantee Irish share prices rallied. However the Irish Government may have missed the opportunity to reap the benefits of this early intervention by failing to recapitalise its banks immediately. Instead it watched other countries recapitalising their banks, and waited until 21 December 2008 to announce a €5.5 billion Irish rescue package for its own 'big three': Bank of Ireland, AIB and Anglo-Irish Bank. The terms of this package were considered to be substantially better for the banks and their shareholders than the equivalent UK rescue deal<sup>10</sup>, but more costly for the Irish taxpayer who will ultimately foot the bill. In return the Government sought greater commitments that they would increase their lending to consumers, homebuyers and small businesses. However sharp falls in the share prices of Bank of Ireland and

AIB – caused by the emergency nationalisation of Anglo-Irish Bank in January 2009 after its chairman resigned over €122 million in hidden personal loans – have restricted their ability to raise additional capital on the open market. At time of writing (10th February), the Irish Government is still involved in difficult negotiations with AIB and Bank of Ireland on a new plan to inject a total of €7 billion in state capital into the two banks.

The nationalisation of Anglo-Irish came amid reports that the British Government may move to create a 'bad bank' to manage toxic debt held by the British banks, a development that would put the Irish Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan under pressure to follow suit. This concept of a 'bad bank' is based on the Swedish experience of the early 1990s. Banks would be forced to identify their 'toxic' or largely non-repayable loans, which would then be siphoned off into a new government-owned 'bad bank'. The cleansed commercial banks could then recapitalise themselves while the 'bad bank' gradually disposes of the problematic loans. In mid-January the UK Government's second attempt to bolster the UK's banks with an insurance scheme to cover bad debts and a £50 billion fund to allow the Bank of England to lend money directly to businesses, led only to another plunge in UK share prices.

The Irish plan focussed on reassuring depositors and shareholders while the initial UK plan prioritised capitalisation. The existence of these two divergent approaches on the island has created



friction. A third, later approach of the European Central Bank and the Bank of England focussed on improving liquidity.

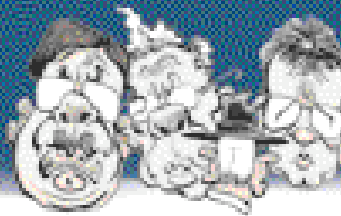
### **A new bank for a new age?**

Recent events have revealed a huge gap between the EU's highly developed single market, single currency and interest rate regimes and its lack of any common financial regulatory authority for cross-border banking, or common capacity to address European banks' massive liquidity and recapitalisation problems. Although the EU's banks operate almost uninhibited by national boundaries, their regulation is still a matter for national governments. Regulators in a country hosting the operations of a bank from another member state may have little idea of its health. Those in its home country may have little interest in what happens abroad if its foreign operations fail.

The lack of any pan-European mechanism to deal with the insolvency of financial institutions has been recognised by the European Commission. Laws governing failed banks differ markedly from country to country, no common definition of insolvency exists and there is no common rule to determine when a bank should be closed. In April 2008 European finance ministers had taken a tentative first step by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that bound national authorities to favour private sector rescues where possible, and urged them to decide in advance who would foot the bill for banks that operate in more than one country if national bail-

outs were required. The document, which came into effect in June 2008, called on countries to consider creating "cross-border stability groups" building on existing supervisory networks such as those that operate between Belgium and the Netherlands to monitor cross-border banks. However this MOU proved worthless as a tool to deal with the emerging crisis.

In Ireland, the co-author of this article, Professor Ray Kinsella, has put forward a plan to harvest something positive from the ashes of the banking disaster<sup>11</sup>. In December 2008 the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, launched the Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal<sup>12</sup> outlining government actions that will drive the restructuring of the economy in the longer term. It aims to develop the island of Ireland as the world's leading location for business innovation by investing heavily in research and development. One weakness of this approach is the glaring need for a bank which understands R&D and provides the medium term sustained support for innovation that is not available through the venture capital route. No government would envisage building its own bank, but one potentially positive by-product of the financial crisis is that the Irish government now owns one: Anglo-Irish Bank. This bank, believes Professor Kinsella, could now be refocussed as a specialist provider supporting a diversified portfolio of high technology products. A financial institution which is currently seen as a metaphor for failed and even corrupt banking practices could be reinvented to provide the tailored



access to credit and capital markets on which a sustainable knowledge economy in the whole island could be built.

### **Cross-border banking: bottom-up**

Border areas are key places to examine the manifestation, good or bad, of EU policy for ordinary citizens. Reviewing retail cross-border banking – where banks interact directly with their customers – across the UK-Irish border provides clear examples of how the EU Single Market exerts its influence at a local level.

The EU has secured only limited integration within the retail financial sector. In theory existing EU legislation, such as the second Banking Directive which came into force in 1993, should permit banks to compete across borders. However substantial obstacles remain and the EU banking landscape remains enormously inefficient. Banks find it difficult to offer similar products, such as personal bank accounts or mortgages, in different countries because of incompatible national laws or consumer protection rules. The tax treatment of financial products also varies widely. In practice subsidiaries of banks are consolidated only on the balance sheet, and although there is organisation-wide risk management, the benefits do not

trickle down to individual customers. There is no bank which offers a truly cross-border personal banking service and there are few incentives to develop such services in the foreseeable future.

Documentation on the actual practice of individuals banking across a national border is hard to find. In 2001 the North/South Ministerial Council commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers and Indecon Economic Consultants to carry out a comprehensive study of obstacles to mobility between the two parts of Ireland. This study looked at a broad range of obstacles, including financial practices, which hinder or constrain people from moving across the border in either direction to live and work. The report outlined the significantly higher bank charges for cross-border transactions than for transactions within the same jurisdiction. It also described the practice of frontier workers (people who live in one jurisdiction and commute to work in the other jurisdiction on a regular basis) who operate dual bank accounts, preferring to access their money through cash machines in the other jurisdiction rather than formally transferring funds. It portrayed the difficulties in accessing mortgage or other types of loans from their 'home' bank, because a regular employment income kept in an account in the sister bank in the other jurisdiction was not regarded as providing adequate security. Eight years later very little seems to have changed, with the majority of that report's banking recommendations remaining unimplemented.

In June 2007 the Centre for Cross Border

Studies organised a study day on cross-border personal banking which further illuminated the experience of individuals who bank in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. At this event banking issues were presented by representatives of Ulster Bank and National Irish Bank and consumer experiences by officials of the General Consumer Council of Northern Ireland and the Consumers Association of Ireland. Follow-on discussions included representatives from all the main banks (except the Bank of Ireland), the Irish Banking Federation, citizens advice bodies, the European Consumer Centre (Dublin), the North/South Ministerial Council and people from business and community organisations in the border region.

The general consensus was that the practicalities of banking across the Irish border are still onerous. There are some examples of EU policies on the creation of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) and the competitiveness of the EU internal market improving cross-border banking for citizens of the island. However the difficulties of arranging mortgages, and regulations concerned with identifying clients prior to doing business with them (i.e. the EU 'Know Your Own Customer' regulation), could be much better applied to serve the mobile island population. These issues are examined below.

### **Single Euro Payments Area**

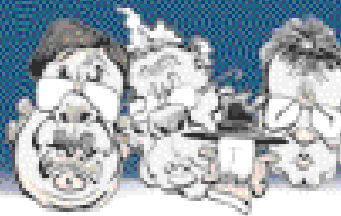
Creating a Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) where making payments, collecting on invoices or running a

business in euros is as easy across European borders as within a single country has been on the EU agenda since the introduction of the euro in January 1999. The European Commission has already forced a certain level of harmonisation by requiring banks, from January 2002, to charge no more for fund transfers of up to €12,500 across the Eurozone than they do for domestic transfers. Since January 2006 this rule has been applied for payments of up to €50,000.

This regulation had a dramatic effect on cross-border charges, bringing down the average cost for transferring €100 from €17.37 in 2001 to €2.46 in 2003<sup>14</sup>. But it failed to create a true SEPA with the banks simply absorbing the cost of compliance.

By the end of 2010 the European Commission wants domestic payment procedures to be phased out, leaving only a fully harmonised Europe-wide version. The intended final phase is the establishment by 2012 of a legal framework for the provision of direct debit services across borders, allowing a company or utility in one country to draw funds directly from a bank account of a customer in another jurisdiction. Given that the credit crisis has focussed attention far more on achieving a new EU cross-border regulatory framework, we can expect to see these timescales for creating SEPA postponed.

In October 2008 the North/South Ministerial Council sought to publish comparative fees for transferring small



amounts of money across the Irish border. The variation in fees and the opaque nature of responses from the seven banks on the island are available for viewing on Border People website ([www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)). While the SEPA policy does little to facilitate banking between the euro system in the South and the Sterling system in the North, it is nevertheless hoped that a fully functioning SEPA within the present Eurozone would act as a catalyst for accelerated economic integration and thus put additional pressure on the UK to join the euro.

Furthermore the financial crisis has demonstrated the 'safe haven' advantages of euro membership<sup>15</sup>. There is little doubt that Ireland would have been like Iceland in suffering a catastrophic foreign exchange crisis in 2008 if it had retained its national currency. This has fuelled further suggestions that the steep fall in the value of the pound could help overcome the British public's hostility to euro membership. The Danish and Swedish governments have begun preparing the ground for referendums on joining the euro, as part of a huge reversal of political opinion across Europe's northern periphery in favour of the single currency.

### **Welcome to Scandinavia**

During the 2007 CCBS study day discussions the two consumer associations attributed any improvement in cross-border customers' situation vis-à-vis the Irish banks to the injection of fresh competition. One obvious example

is that of the Danske Bank Group<sup>16</sup>, which moved into both Irish jurisdictions in 2005 when it acquired the National Irish Bank in the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Bank in Northern Ireland. It remains the only bank on the island to proactively target the cross-border population.

Over the past 17 years Danske Bank has gone from being a Scandinavian bank operating in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, to a northern European 'regional champion' with retail banking services and holdings in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the Baltic countries. During 2004 Danske Bank sought to develop an exportable strategy that could be implemented in all of the companies that it acquired. A common set of financial practices, policies and human resource strategies was developed that could transfer across borders.

The Scandinavian banks are at the forefront of developing Internet banking, and in April 2006 National Irish Bank (NIB) and the Northern Bank migrated to the Danske Group's single technology platform which services all the group's banks. This core system holds everything to do with the customer accounts – the payment system, the credit approval system, the risk system, the audit system – on one central IT platform. The advantages of this approach are that any changes to the core system are automatically made available to all banks within the group at the same time. For instance, in 2008, when the Danske Group upgraded its technology platform

to incorporate the services of its newly acquired Sampo Bank, NIB and Northern Bank customers had access to the benefits enjoyed by customers in Finland. This 'one group/one platform' philosophy is cited as a particular strength of Danske Bank and one of particular relevance to cross-border banking.

In Ireland the Danske Group placed a strategic focus on staff development and began an extensive programme of investment in training and technology. In the first three years following the merger there have been 6,000 training days for National Irish Bank staff alone, supplemented by mandatory e-learning modules to be completed from home on the laptops brought for staff by the bank. Approximately a third of the bank staff have been sent to Denmark to develop a better understanding of the operations there. Changes initiated for customers include sophisticated and secure Internet banking facilities with new functions for personal customers, including trading access to stock exchanges around the world, SMS text alerts, 4-in-1 Maestro debit cards which can be used in euro or Sterling zones, and telephone advice supplied by a contact centre staffed by trained bank employees.

The Danske Group used technology first developed to facilitate free electronic transfers between Sweden and Norway to enable Irish customers to move their money freely across the border. The previous charges were £12 for North to South transfers (Northern Bank to NIB) and €10 for South to North transfers (NIB



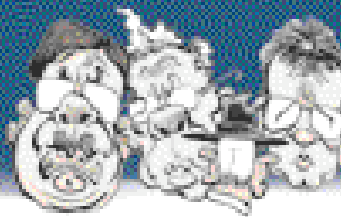
to Northern Bank). Customers now only pay the currency exchange rates. In the past prohibitive pricing of cross-border electronic transfers and drafts meant that people who worked in one jurisdiction and lived in the other had to withdraw cash from their salaried account, carry it across the border and manually lodge it to an account in their 'home' jurisdiction to pay household bills. People who could not access a bank in their 'home' jurisdiction during working hours tended to post a cheque to a named banking official in their 'home' bank to lodge money in their account. The Danske Group's free online service represents a large advance in providing banking services for the mobile population on the island.

However one issue raised at the Study Day was the poor broadband penetration in Southern border counties and very low Internet banking take-up in Northern Ireland, which is attributed to fears about online security<sup>17</sup>.

### **Mortgages and regulations**

There are also examples of EU policies that have either failed to consider cross-border populations or have made cross-border personal banking more difficult across the Irish border. In its 2005 proposal on harmonising consumer





finance, the European Commission excluded the development of pan-European mortgages from the package. Banks have objected that harmonising mortgage practices across Europe may be counterproductive, given that national housing markets have different characteristics, including financing and taxation. For example, the Irish tax system promotes ownership of housing. Households are allowed a tax deduction on mortgage interest payments, while there is no tax on property and only limited taxation of capital gains on residential property. The 2008 Irish Budget reduced stamp duty on houses and increased mortgage interest relief. Generous tax provisions in the recent past have certainly encouraged the dangerously unsustainable spiral in Irish house prices in recent years.

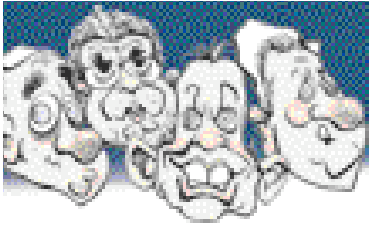
Similarly the UK approach to the housing market is also geared towards home ownership, where most other European markets have much greater levels of long term rental. Even the development of a European personal loan, a basic credit arrangement which should have easy-to-understand repayment terms and transparent costs, has proved difficult when subjected to the consumer protection laws of each member state. These difficulties are reflected in the services offered to customers on the island. For instance, UK banks are unable to provide euro mortgages for houses in Northern Ireland. In order to provide a euro mortgage for a house in Northern Ireland, a Mortgage Conduct of Business (MCOB) compliant system would have to be established in the South, along the

lines of a code introduced by the UK Financial Services Authority in 2004.

Under the EU-wide 'Know Your Customer' anti-money laundering initiative, bankers are required to demand photographic proof of identity and proof of address before any customer opens a new bank account. A customer who lives in one jurisdiction and works in the other must produce this documentation each time she or he wants to open an account. Currently, as a matter of good practice, banks within the same sister group provide informal introductions by telephone to 'smooth' the process of opening an account in the other jurisdiction.

### **Consumer protection**

There are key differences in consumer protection approaches, North and South. For example, consumers in the North have strongly embedded regulations and policies. The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland can refer a 'market place' to the UK Office of Fair Trading, which in turn has the ability to call on the UK Competition Commission to investigate with the power to bind decisions legally. This is in contrast to consumers south of the border, where the Irish Competition Authority can only deal with individual and not 'market place' complaints and is restricted to making recommendations for change. Moves towards an all-island complementarity of regulatory regimes in consumer protection would serve the cross-border consumer well. Until the recent crisis, UK banks had



been hailed as the most successful in the EU, but their growth and profits are partly the result of insufficient competition. In October 2006, in response to a 'super complaint' led by the Northern Ireland Consumer Council, the UK's Competition Commission ordered major improvements to personal banking in Northern Ireland. Lack of clarity on charges and unduly complex charging structures, combined with a reluctance among customers to switch providers, were found to be restricting competition in the market for personal current accounts in the region. These features made it likely that customers were incurring higher charges and receiving lower interest than they might expect in a more competitive market.

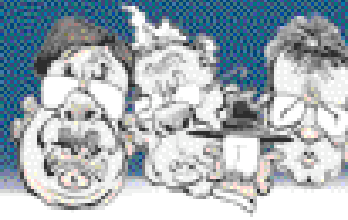
The Competition Commission put in place a legally binding remedy which stated that charges should be explained in plain English; 14 days notice should be given of charges on accounts; switching should be made easier; a free overdraft 'buffer' should be put in place, and an annual statement of the cost of accounts should be provided. The findings are applicable to virtually all banks operating in Northern Ireland including the 'big four' – Bank of Ireland, First Trust (owned by AIB), Ulster Bank (owned by RBS) and Northern Bank (owned by Danske Bank) - which together control about 75% of the personal account market.

These banks all have sister operations in the Republic, and one could fairly assume that similar improvements are needed south of the border. An idealist might suggest that there appears to be an

opportunity here for the banks in the Republic voluntarily to adopt the remedies imposed on their sister banks in the North, but there is little or no possibility of this happening. In any case an equivalent investigation of these issues by the consumer authorities would be justified south of the border.

In Northern Ireland research by the General Consumer Council has shown that many people are paralysed by the complexity of banking procedures and are unable to compare banks or products within their own jurisdiction, let alone across the border. These are customer information issues that need to be tackled by the banks on both sides of the border, with information provided by the banks needing to be 'decluttered' and repackaged as a simple yet comprehensible glossary of terms.

The UK Financial Services Authority is leading a National Strategy for Financial Capability to find ways to improve the nation's knowledge and understanding of personal finance. Under this strategy the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland is bringing together interested parties from the banks, advice centres and the education sector to work in partnership to examine financial capability issues and to encourage the teaching of financial issues in primary and secondary schools. This work should be extended to the Republic of Ireland so as to combine efforts to develop better informed and more confident 'island of Ireland' bank customers, who are able to take greater responsibility for their financial affairs and play a more active



role in the market for financial services.

### Conclusion

The EU has played a key role in facilitating cross-border banking for people on the island of Ireland. The current banking crisis may act as a stimulus to encourage greater banking integration. However much remains to be done to develop better banking practices for the island's mobile population. While the euro-Sterling currency differential erects an added barrier to banking across the Irish border, it should not prohibit researching and developing innovative cross-border solutions which are largely absent from the market at the moment. In an ideal scenario the bank customers, North and South, would be able to select a number of key products such as current accounts, debit cards or credit cards and use them inter-changeably across the border. However there remains no immediate incentive for banks to develop any cross-border solutions, and in the absence of a strong consumer push it seems likely that little will change in banking across the Irish border for the foreseeable future. The immediate concern for the banking sector on the island is to survive.

The major lesson of the current financial crisis is the need for EU-wide regulation. The lack of alignment of the EU central banks highlights a vulnerability in global 24-hour markets which requires an EU-wide (if not worldwide) financial regulator who would have virtually unlimited resources in order to keep ahead of the markets. Nowhere is this

need more evident than on the island of Ireland, where the two sovereign governments have been accused of reacting in an *ad hoc* way to emergencies as they have arisen over the recent period of crisis.

The island of Ireland – and particularly its border region – could act as a unique laboratory for Europe to research the impact of *ad hoc* policy interventions which otherwise might be difficult to see across the entire EU. It has two financial systems – one within the Eurozone and one outside – operating side by side across a common land border but providing services to a relatively homogenous six million population. As a very open economy, it has been particularly susceptible to the impact of different interest rates and indirect tax rates on and off the island and between its two parts. For example, the 2.5% cut in the UK VAT rate in autumn 2008 (when combined with an 0.5% increase in the Republic of Ireland) played a part, along with the collapse of Sterling and the falling competitiveness of the South, in the northbound shopping exodus which had such a dramatic and damaging impact on the Southern retail sector before Christmas. The time is overdue for governments within these islands, and in Europe as a whole, to start engaging seriously again in financial cooperation to avoid such distortions in the future.

**Dr Patricia Clarke is research manager of the Centre for Cross Border Studies.**

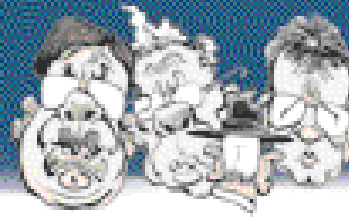
**Professor Ray Kinsella is Director of**

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**edited books and numerous journal articles. He was previously an economist at the Central Bank of Ireland and economic advisor to the Irish Minister for Trade.**

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## BECOMING GOOD NEIGHBOURS: THE ROLE OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN IRELAND

Francois Vigier



*Francois Vigier*

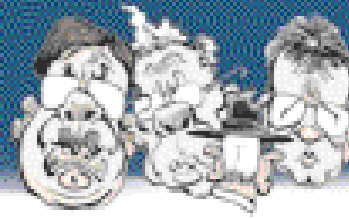
**A remarkable transformation is under way on the island of Ireland. The years of political conflict have been replaced by a new climate of increasing cooperation between North and South and the gradual spread of prosperity beyond Belfast and Dublin to border cities like Newry and Derry that have emerged from economic stagnation. The lessons to be learned from this experience provide a model to societies emerging from conflict situations that will enable them to improve the standard of life of their citizens through joint actions that leverage their human, economic and natural assets.**

Becoming good neighbours is neither easy nor quick. Overcoming the prejudices and mistrust brought about by political conflict can best be achieved through a thoughtful and gradual process, often with the assistance of a third party perceived as neutral, in order to identify areas of cooperation whose mutual benefits are clear and are not seen as threatening the sovereignty of the former protagonists.

In Ireland the initial framework for cooperation agreed upon in 1998 created the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), an intergovernmental forum responsible for the oversight of North-South 'bodies' responsible for specific activities of interest to the island as a whole: navigable inland waterways

and fisheries; food safety awareness; the promotion of cross-border trade and business; European Union programmes; and minority languages. In addition, the NSMC assumed oversight of specific areas of cooperation to be implemented by each jurisdiction separately that would benefit the island as a whole: agriculture, education, health, tourism, environmental protection, and transport.

New organisations emerged to develop areas for cross-border co-operation. On the inter-governmental side, one of the most significant was *InterTradeIreland*, which is responsible for promoting North-South trade and business development. On the NGO side, the Centre for Cross Border Studies carried out research to foster co-operation across



the Irish border in the fields of education, health, the economy, public administration, communications, agriculture, the environment and a range of other practical areas.

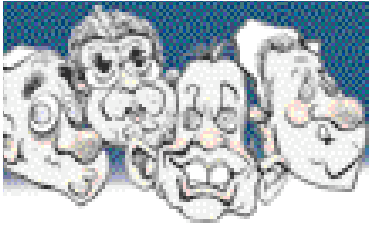
These two initiatives were highly successful: according to the *InterTradeIreland* web site, over 1,300 businesses have benefited from its programmes for an added value of over €147 million, illustrating the readiness of the private sector to take advantage of the opportunities created by the disappearance of artificial trade barriers. The Centre for Cross Border Studies has an expanding portfolio of projects relating to the border region economy, spatial planning, health services, citizens information and impact assessment.

### Harmonising planning policies

Expanding North-South collaboration to harmonise physical planning policies in the two jurisdictions took longer. In 2001 the Northern Ireland administration published *Shaping our Future – Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025*, and a similar document, *The National Spatial Strategy, 2002-2020*, was published by the Irish Government in the following year. Both presented 'broad brush' visions of future regional and urban development and provided a framework for infrastructure investments. Developed independently, both documents showed the parts of the island beyond their mutual border as a blank space, although it was crossed by arrows symbolising unspecified cross-border relationships.

In spite of the growing collaboration between the two jurisdictions on specific projects, it was not an easy task, conceptually or politically, to initiate a dialogue to promote the harmonisation of two key policy documents intended to programme future public investments, and little was said in them about the future of the border areas. This omission underlined the argument of the European Union's *Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions* that border areas are often unable to realize their full development potential because of their peripheral location relative to the capital city and other national development poles.

The challenge to better harmonise North-South spatial planning was taken up in late 2004 by a recently created association that brought together planning academics from the University of Ulster, the National University of Ireland Maynooth, Athlone Institute of Technology, the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts: the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). The first step taken by this independent NGO was to document the cross-border spatial issues that needed to be addressed by the two jurisdictions. An ICLRDR report published in late 2005, *Cross-border Transportation Planning for Strategic Roads*, examined the potential for improving the regional transport infrastructure to facilitate the coordinated development of the Irish Central Border Region (with the Irish Central Border Region Network).



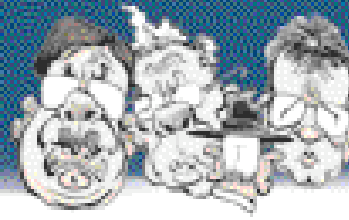
This report was well received and was followed by a more ambitious study to better align the spatial planning policies of Northern Ireland and the Republic, including infrastructure and cross-border projects, to support the long-term economic competitiveness of the island. *Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland: Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action* (2006) was commissioned by InterTradeIreland on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in Dublin and the Department for Regional Development in Belfast.

For the first time since partition comparable statistical data was presented for the island as a whole. The report introduced the concept of 'voluntary' or 'non-statutory' collaboration in order to maximise the impact of the €100 billion estimated for infrastructural investment by the two governments over the coming decade, and its findings were endorsed by a joint communiqué of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference in May 2006. Both administrations in Dublin and Belfast have now committed themselves to develop a framework for collaborative action between the two existing spatial strategies on the island, a major step in the reconciliation process. A follow-up joint study by ICLRD and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NUI Maynooth), *The Atlas of the Island of Ireland* (2007), provided the first detailed information of socio-economic indicators for the island as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these initial technical studies, the role of ICLRD as an independent third party devoted to promoting inter-jurisdictional interventions in spatial planning was recognised by central and local governments in both jurisdictions. Over the past 18 months, the ICLRD has worked with the local authorities and the chambers of commerce in Newry and Dundalk to promote an integrated spatial planning and development framework focussed on the benefits resulting from enhanced cooperation between the two cities. A complex range of themes was identified, including alternative energy sources, sustainable economic development, urban regeneration, infrastructure improvements, skills and education programmes and potential cross-border strategic projects designed to yield mutual benefits. The concept of a 'twin city region' is now well established in Newry-Dundalk and both public and private stakeholders are considering specific interventions for joint action.

Progress has been slower in fostering cooperation in the less urbanised parts of the border region where the decline of such traditional economic activities as farming, furniture-making and textiles has resulted in high unemployment, while low educational attainment and inadequate infrastructure have hampered economic development. Fostering cooperation in the border region is also complicated by the fact that, until a few years ago, it was a militarily contested area and tensions from that era are still present. While Newry and Dundalk share the economic potential of a strategic





location on the Belfast-Dublin corridor, reversing the economic disadvantages of isolated rural localities that are steadily losing population poses daunting challenges. A successful intervention will require the coordinated action of the two national governments as well as support at the local level.

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development's efforts to promote cross-border cooperation have yielded a number of interesting lessons. Achieving the European Union's objective of "balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union" presupposes cooperation among all levels of government – national, regional and local. As part of the political reconciliation process, the Dublin and Belfast governments have become more open to joint interventions that facilitate economic interchanges, including the spatial and temporal coordination of infrastructure investments.

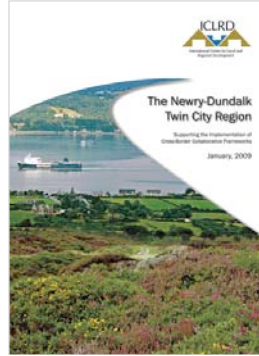
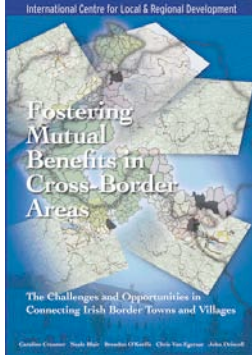
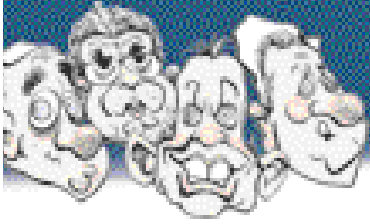
This may not, however, improve local conditions, since localities that are part of a regional sub-system are more often than not competing with each other to capture a share of an existing or future development potential. This is particularly so during a period of recession. The definition and implementation of a coherent regional strategic vision, especially on a cross-border basis, requires reaching a consensus among the localities involved that there are advantages in collaborating in a regional development strategy of which they will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

### Promoting voluntary cooperation

The need for 'larger than local' planning usually arises out of the recognition of a 'problem' whose spatial dimension transcends the boundaries of individual jurisdictions: managing common environmental assets, reducing the inefficiencies of urban sprawl, or responding to a perceived threat to economic competitiveness by jointly capturing an economic development opportunity. While countries with a strong regional planning tradition have often been able to develop coherent large-scale growth management strategies, cooperation among adjoining municipalities is infrequent and requires overcoming administrative and institutional obstacles. Experience in the United States has shown that *voluntary cooperation* among adjoining municipalities can best be achieved when there is a need to respond to a commonly perceived threat to their quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Successful regional partnerships depend on the ability of local leadership, representing both the public and private sectors, to:

- Identify common themes to be addressed;
- Build coalitions of stakeholders;
- Document and diagnose common problems and interventions;
- Marshal civic support; and
- Secure financing for joint actions.

Selecting specific projects with relatively short-term benefits is a required first step in building the parties' confidence and encouraging them to address the more complex issues of the long term



management of a region through cross-border collaboration.

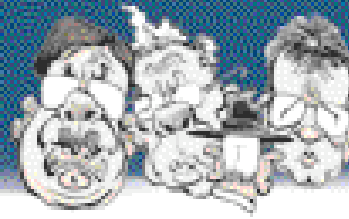
### Newry-Dundalk study

The new climate of cooperation that has developed over the past few years between Newry and Dundalk has laid the groundwork for further cooperation. Although neither town has the critical mass to meet the criteria of a 'gateway' in the Republic of Ireland's National Spatial Strategy or a 'main hub and inter-regional gateway' in Northern Ireland's Regional Development Strategy, taken together they have the potential to become a major growth pole as defined in the two spatial strategies.

This potential is now recognized by the three concerned local authorities: Newry and Mourne District Council, Dundalk Town Council, and Louth County Council. Council executives and their senior managers have started meeting on a regular basis to discuss joint projects. A similar spirit is evident in the private sector and both chambers of commerce

have taken a proactive role in developing a regional identity. The Dundalk Chamber's annual conference in November 2007, entitled *Border Vision Gateway*, offered an opportunity for speakers from both jurisdictions to discuss opportunities for cooperation, while the 2006 *Strategic Vision for the Greater Newry Area* also spoke of cross-border cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Officials from both sides of the border became actively involved in identifying the five joint interventions proposed by a new ICLRD study, *The Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region: Supporting the Implementation of Cross-Border Collaboration Frameworks*, which was launched in February 2009<sup>4</sup>. These interventions were:

1. Building a twin city centre of excellence in sustainable energy based on the existing work of Sustainable Energy Ireland and the Dundalk 2020/EU Concerto programme and positioning the region as an island exemplar in this field;



2. Exploring the concept of a Geo-Tourism initiative linked to the outstanding geological features of the Mourne, the Cooley Mountains, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford Lough;
3. Marketing the Newry-Dundalk region as a centre for international service operations based at the midpoint of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor;
4. A joint town centre regeneration strategy for Newry and Dundalk to promote both towns as places where people want to visit, settle and work.
5. Programmes that will identify common data sets to support joined-up planning and innovation across the border region; coordinate Dundalk Institute of Technology and Southern Regional College courses to develop a diversified and qualified labour force; promote joined up planning and resource management; and build infrastructure connectivity using the M1/A1 corridor.

These initiatives have potentially laid the foundations for further cooperation and represent a new level of public sector leadership by the three local councils. The next step is to identify and agree on priorities for Newry and Dundalk in order jointly to formulate a comprehensive development strategy to create an urban region capable of realizing the advantages of its location on the Belfast-Dublin corridor.

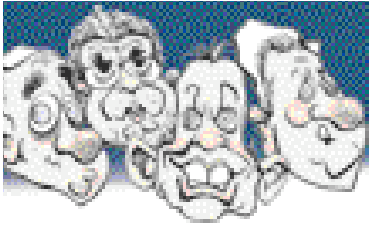
To do so, the twin cities will have to programme the necessary infrastructure investments and public services and adopt coordinated land development policies to ensure the harmonious growth

of the region and harness its development potential. New development should be directed to the most appropriate locations, regardless of the border. Simultaneously, the delivery of high quality public services, the protection of the natural environment and the development of cultural and commercial activities that enhance the quality of life of residents are important components to ensure the attractiveness of the area for new investment. Cooperation can achieve economies of scale since many of these activities do not have to be replicated in each locality but can be programmed jointly.

Moving forward to develop and implement a joint development strategy will require overcoming more difficult obstacles posed by the need to harmonise legal and institutional differences that commonly occur across national borders. Ideally, a cross-border region should have an integrated institutional framework to minimise the differences between its two components, and create a model that does not favour one side or the other for the location of new economic activities. The main issues that need to be resolved to ensure full cross-border cooperation include:

- Identifying the legal and administrative procedures that facilitate or hinder cooperation;
- Quantifying the impact of differences in fiscal regimes;
- Proposing solutions to institutional obstacles.

While the local authorities are best



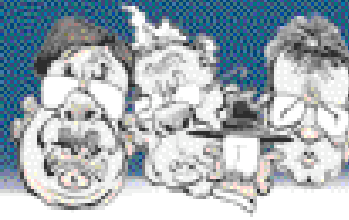
*The Mourne Mountains, an area of outstanding natural beauty in the Newry and Mourne District Council area*

situated to identify institutional obstacles and propose ways to overcome them, bringing them into closer harmony requires high level decisions by central governments that support the desire of local governments and other key stakeholders to coordinate development strategies for their cross-border area. Only Belfast and Dublin have the authority to adopt the necessary reforms.

For example, recent locational trends show that retail stores have taken advantage of the lower VAT in Northern Ireland while non-retail economic development may tend to prefer locations south of the border where the fiscal climate is more advantageous. Attracting new activities north of the border may require the Northern system to provide counterbalancing incentives similar to

those provided by the UK Enterprise Zone programme. This model might be worth re-visiting as an evaluation of its positive impact has identified rates relief, enhanced capital depreciation allowances, and the relaxation of statutory planning requirements as the main reason for its success in attracting new economic activities.<sup>5</sup>

The voluntary sharing of the fiscal benefits of new development among local governments may also be worth considering. This approach has been used successfully in the Minneapolis-St. Paul (Minnesota) metropolitan region in the US. In 1971, 192 municipalities in a seven county region with a total population of 2.7 million established a Regional Revenue Sharing Fund as part of a compact to prepare a comprehensive



regional development plan that would select the most appropriate locations for new economic activities rather than have individual municipalities compete with each other. The Fund is financed by a 40% allocation of the local property tax revenue levied on new commercial and industrial uses; this amount is redistributed to localities with lower tax revenues or concentrations of lower income households. The sharing of regional revenues has reduced inter-jurisdictional competition for land uses paying a high property tax and increased social equity as regional fiscal disparities have been reduced from 50:1 to 12:1.<sup>6</sup>

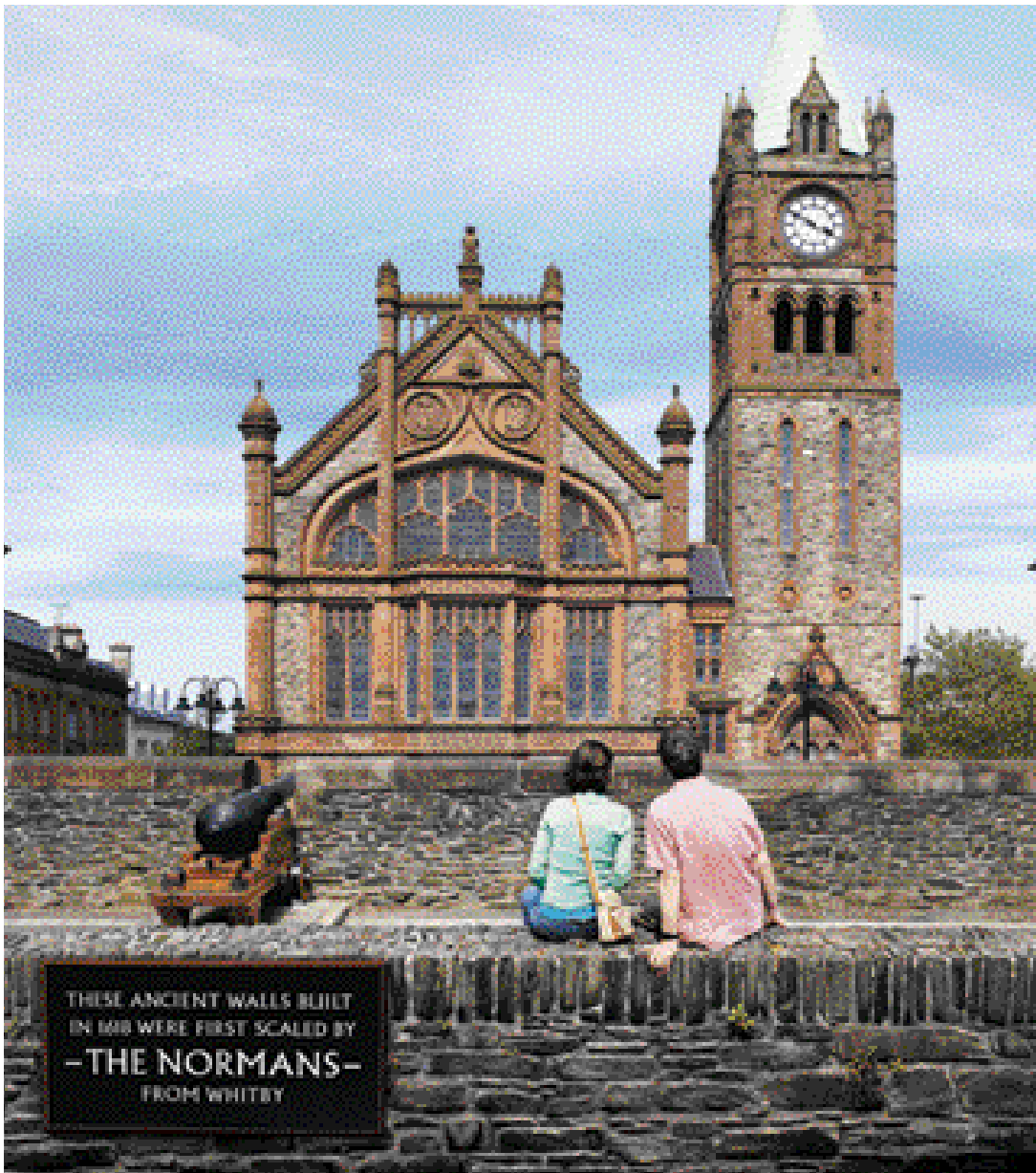
### Rural development

Furthering the economic competitiveness of a cross-border urban region is largely based on exploiting and enhancing its existing assets. The experience of the European Union, although impressive, has tended to focus largely on border regions where economic activities were already present or where the preservation of natural assets (and the development of tourism) presented clear benefits for cross-border interventions, rather than on lagging areas. In the first of these cases, the standardisation of regulatory measures led to more efficient development patterns, while improvements in public transport allowed the labour force on either side of the border to benefit from new job opportunities; in some instances, shared public services also led to significant cost savings. In the second, it became possible to protect large ecosystems while taking advantage of their economic value.

Replicating the approach in more isolated rural and economically depressed cross-border areas requires a somewhat different approach. A 2008 ICLRD study – *Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas: The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages* – focussed on smaller towns and villages of varying sizes in five cross-border areas in the Irish border region.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the study was to assess the feasibility of enabling cross-border cooperation by coordinating their development strategies and capital improvements in order to overcome the disadvantages of their peripheral location, promote their competitiveness and improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. Over 100 key stakeholders participated in ICLRD's analysis of current conditions and future trends and the discussion of areas where joined-up action would be beneficial to all parties.

The study concluded that, in spite of the difficulties they faced as a result of their isolation from the main development foci in the two jurisdictions, a culture of collaboration was present among stakeholders in each of the five micro-regions.<sup>8</sup> Local political leaders were talking to each other and were keenly aware that the likelihood of reversing the continuing demographic decline of their areas would be enhanced by sharing resources. Two principal themes emerged in the study:

- The inadequacy of cross-border transport infrastructure;
- The paucity of services, ranging from education, public safety, and health

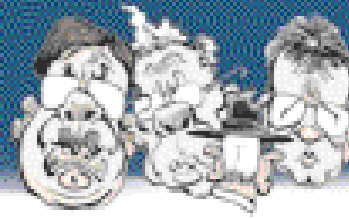


THESE ANCIENT WALLS BUILT  
IN 1688 WERE FIRST SCALED BY  
-THE NORMANS-  
FROM WHITEY

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to business services, and the inability in many cases to access the closest service because of its location on the other side of the border.

Improving the quality of life in these rural cross-border areas depends largely on the coordinated interventions of statutory agencies at central government level. In spite of the willingness of the local population to participate in cross-border initiatives, the local authorities simply lack the necessary resources to undertake needed improvements. Poverty in the cross-border rural region is largely due to its fringe location relative to the main development trends occurring on the Island. Focussed and complementary interventions by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in the South and the Department for Regional Development in the North are required to address the underlying problems of these 'special cases' whose emergence from poverty requires improved accessibility and public services. The creation of employment nodes accessible to the inhabitants of the cross-border region and improved access to health and educational facilities are key to improving the conditions of its population.

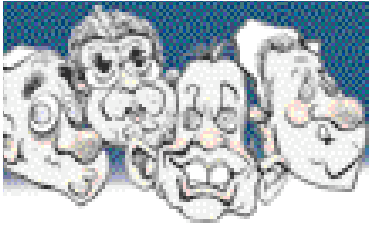
### **Franco-Belgian example**

In this respect, a recent example of such a special case of bi-national cooperation in the predominantly rural border region of the French Ardennes and Belgian Wallonia is of considerable interest. With a total population of about 150,000 people, most of the area consists of

isolated villages whose health needs were served by a limited number of relatively distant urban facilities. Starting in 2004, the inhabitants of two French cantons were given access to the nearby Belgian regional hospital in Dinant, less than one-fifth the distance of its closest French equivalent in Charleville-Mézières; costs were covered by the French national health system.

The results of this modest experiment were sufficiently positive for the two governments to sign an agreement that, from 1 February 2007, extended cross-national health coverage to the six health facilities on the French side and the seven on the Belgian side, allowing the inhabitants of the region to freely choose where to seek health care.<sup>9</sup> It is expected that, as a result of this agreement, the region's inhabitants' access to health care will be improved and significant savings will be realised in the public cost of delivering health services. A more ambitious project in a mountainous area on the French-Spanish border, initiated in 2003, led to the creation of a new cross-border regional health centre. Managed by a bi-national private foundation, the Hôpital Commun Transfrontalier de la Cerdagne serves the isolated north-eastern part of Catalonia and the south-western localities of the Roussillon region. The applicability of these two health care initiatives to the Irish border area is well worth considering by the two governments.

In addition to the improved delivery of healthcare, future North-South collaboration in the border region is



necessary to achieve a proper balance between providing the inhabitants with better paying job opportunities and preserving its unique environment. The stakeholders interviewed as part of the ICLRD study were well aware that the issue was not one of competing urban centres but the need to retain the region's unique character, much of whose economic potential is primarily in tourism. Maintaining the border region's environmental quality requires the formulation of a comprehensive land development strategy to simultaneously protect natural assets and provide its inhabitants with jobs in selected growth nodes accessible to the region as a whole.

### Lessons learned

The lessons learned from these two ICLRD cross-border studies are quite simple. As political barriers become weaker, a dialogue is likely to start between abutting jurisdictions to better address common problems, first among individuals and, somewhat later, between public institutions. The better informed the dialogue, the greater the willingness to discuss complex issues and try to find solutions to shared practical problems. Thanks to intermediaries such as the North/South Ministerial Council, *InterTradelreland*, the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, information has been gathered, analysed and disseminated to broaden the discussion and encourage the definition of common interventions that are to the advantage of

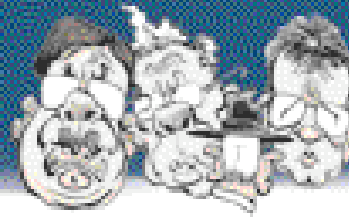
both sides of the border. The identification by the ICLRD of relatively short-term projects for potential joint action and potential mutual benefit – that were not seen as threatening the longer-term interests of either side – has started to build a climate of cooperation. The time is now ripe for expanding and formalising the scope of cross-border cooperation by both jurisdictional and local authorities.

As the parties become more familiar with each other and develop mutual trust, they are likely to explore more ambitious joint actions, some of which may require the involvement of national and jurisdictional agencies. For example, managing a cross-border region defined primarily on economic and social grounds requires a harmonisation of policies at the jurisdictional as well as the local level, and agreeing on the nature and timing of specific projects, undertaken either separately by each municipality or jointly, to ensure the competitive advantages of the sub-region.

The findings of a major conference on European cross-border cooperation in Lille, France, in 2007, described the evolution of bi-national cooperation as “a long-haul process [that enables] the various actors involved to progress successfully from the stage of ignorance to that of knowledge, consistency, joint production and finally to the organisation of cross-border governance.”<sup>10</sup> It identified the following topics for cooperation:

- Transport and mobility;





- The integrated management of services;
- Economic development and employment;
- Land management and the supply of affordable housing; and
- Culture.

The conference's review of past European experience concluded that successful cross-border cooperation has depended on the willingness of national governments to address the institutional and legal inconsistencies on either side of the border, usually by agreeing on the spatial definition of a cross-border area with a 'special status' that enables the local authorities to develop and implement a common spatial strategy. It further concluded that the process is dependent upon the creation of "a dedicated technical structure with its own budget", responsible for documenting the needs of the cross-border region, defining the public interventions required to successfully address its future development, and harmonising the legal and institutional frameworks. A key element is the participation of elected officials and the consultation of the inhabitants on both sides of the border in order to develop agreement on common interventions.

The European experience demonstrates that one major impetus for cross-border co-operation has been the desire to safeguard fragile natural environments while developing their tourism potential. Safeguarding natural resources depends on the thoughtful management of whole ecosystems and, to this end, spatial

regulations must be coherent across the jurisdictions spanned by the ecosystem. This is best achieved by delegating to a special purpose body the preparation of the cross-border conservation plan, and of the detailed regulations applicable to the ecosystem that will be enforced by the local governments on either side of the border. The Cape Cod Commission in Massachusetts is a good example of such a special purpose body whose authority overlays those of local governments. Composed of representatives of the state, county and local governments, its responsibilities include:

- The preparation of a *regional policy plan* for an environmentally fragile area whose economy depends on tourism;
- The review and approval of *local plans* to ensure their compatibility with regional policies; and
- The mandatory review of their *potential environmental impact* before a permit can be granted by the local authority.

This relatively simple organisational structure ensures the consideration of regional issues while preserving the authority of local governments.

## Conclusion

Ensuring the successful economic development of urban and rural areas along the Irish border will depend on the increased coordination of jurisdictional policies to take into account their special needs as part of the current revisions of the Regional Development Strategy in

Northern Ireland and the National Spatial Strategy in the Republic of Ireland. Rather than fringe locations distant from the major conurbations in Belfast and Dublin, they should be thought of by the two national governments as special areas sharing a common cross-border landscape.

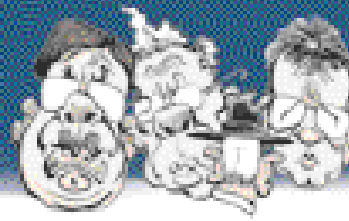
Sharing the benefits of future cross-border cooperation depends on the willingness of local authorities to jointly manage growth in their jurisdictions and to find an equitable way to share the public costs of the needed infrastructure and related development. An ongoing dialogue among the parties is critical at both the executive and technical level. The scope of the dialogue should be broad, ranging from monitoring the trends affecting the region to agreeing on the nature and timing of required interventions and identifying local and external funding sources for the joint implementation of projects. Cooperation should allow the planning and scheduling of complementary transport investments, the harmonisation of development regulations and a more efficient delivery of public services. When the localities on both sides of the border become good

neighbours as they benefit jointly from these improvements, historical rivalries can progressively be set aside.

**Francois Vigier founded the Institute for International Urban Development in Boston, Massachusetts with colleagues in 2005 as a not-for-profit research group specialising in urban development in developing and transitional economies. A member of the Harvard University faculty since 1962 and Chairman of its Department of Urban Planning and Design from 1992 to 1998, he is the Charles Dyer Norton Professor of Regional Planning emeritus at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he directed the School's Center for Urban Development Studies from 1987 to 2005. He has been responsible for numerous planning and design projects in the US, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. He is a founding board member of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD).**

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## DEALING WITH CROSS-BORDER SEX OFFENDERS: LEARNING FROM THE NORTH'S MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH

Susan McKay



*Susan McKay*

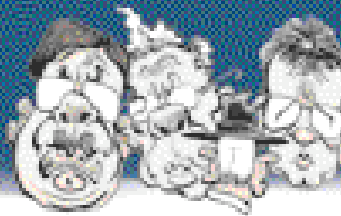
**On 17 November last year, the Irish Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern, met the North's Minister of State in charge of criminal justice, Paul Goggins, at Hillsborough Castle, Co Down. The pair had already met at Leinster House in Dublin the previous month, when they announced that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Republic's An Garda Síochána had signed an agreement on the sharing of information in relation to investigating and monitoring sex offenders on both sides of the Irish border.**

Goggins said at the October meeting that the British and Irish Governments were committed to looking at further ways in which they could harmonise their systems "to tackle the threat from sex offenders to all the people of Ireland." At their meeting a month later, Ahern said: "We are determined that sex offenders cannot use the border to flee justice and we have been looking at how we can change our systems and legislation to ensure that that the border isn't used. We have moved on this issue and the North has moved as well."

He said they had agreed to align IT systems and databases, and that exchanges of staff were under consideration so that common knowledge could be built. "We are both

agreed that the whole issue of sex offenders on the island would be a top priority."<sup>1</sup> A spokesman for Mr Ahern said the new deal between the two police forces had "so far been very successful."<sup>2</sup>

On the same day, newspapers north and south of the border carried photographs and descriptions of a man called Ernest George Finlay, along with warnings to the public that he was extremely dangerous - and at large. Finlay is a serial rapist. From the border village of Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone, he had been sent to jail for 14 years in 1997 for a series of brutal rapes of prostitutes in Belfast and for unlawful imprisonment. He also had a conviction for indecently assaulting a child.



In common with other prisoners in Northern Ireland, he had been able to avail of 50% remission on his sentence, and had been released after seven years in 2004. He was designated as a Category 3 offender, meaning that he was considered at high risk of reoffending, and he was being 'risk managed' under 'public protection arrangements'. He was being monitored by a multi agency group including the probation service, social services and the police. He was forbidden to leave his home area of south Tyrone without the permission of a PSNI Commander, but soon after his release he had crossed the border and gone on the run in the Republic.

The PSNI had alerted the Garda Síochána, and he was stopped by them and told to return to the North, where he was arrested, prosecuted and returned to jail for three years. On his release in April 2008 he was subject to the same restrictions, but he had once again fled – presumably to the Republic. The PSNI issued a Public Disclosure Notice warning the public not to approach Finlay but to contact the police if they saw him. A PSNI spokesman said that the decision to issue such a notice was "not taken lightly". However he said it was "an important risk management tool" and that in this case it was appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

### Case 1: Brendan Smyth

In February 1990 a young woman revealed to a social worker in Belfast that she had been sexually abused on numerous occasions as a child by a Catholic priest called Father Brendan Smyth. The disclosure marked the beginning of the end of Smyth's career as a child abuser. It also brought about the fall of an Irish government and the beginning of a sea change in the way sex offenders were dealt with on the island of Ireland.

The social worker was legally required to inform the RUC, and did so. The RUC investigated, and in 1991 interviewed Smyth, who admitted sexually abusing more than one child. He was charged and released on bail. He promptly returned to his abbey in County Cavan across the border and resumed work as a chaplain. He, his abbot and others in the Catholic hierarchy ignored numerous letters and phone calls requesting his return to Belfast for trial, and in 1993 the RUC delivered warrants for his extradition to the offices of the Attorney General in Dublin.

There they lay unprocessed for seven months, a matter which, when it emerged, led the Labour Party to withdraw from its coalition with Fianna Fáil and bring about the collapse of the Irish Government in November 1994. Smyth eventually returned to Belfast voluntarily, pleaded guilty to 17 charges of abusing boys and girls dating back to the 1960s, and was sent to Magilligan jail for four years.



### Embarrassing coincidences

It was an embarrassing coincidence. Finlay had exploited the border just weeks after the new agreement was signed. He had also circumvented the North's new public protection procedures, introduced with a fanfare by the Northern Ireland Minister around the same time as the North-South policing agreement.

A similar coincidence had overshadowed the signing in November 2006 by the Irish and British Governments of a Memorandum of Understanding on the sharing of information on sex offenders between the Gardai and British police forces, including the PSNI. This was the

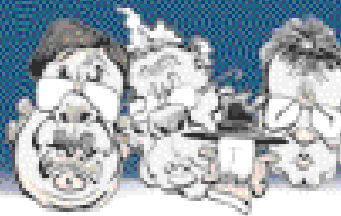
precursor of the 2008 agreement, and itself arose from the Intergovernmental Agreement on North/South Criminal Justice Cooperation which was signed in 2005. Most of the relevant initiatives date back to the period after the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. An initial inter-governmental agreement in that year had set up a Public Protection Advisory Board with joint North-South chairing arrangements.

In October 2006 another child sex offender, Paul Hunter Redpath, failed to return to the accommodation in Northern Ireland where he was obliged to stay under the terms of his probation. The 35 year old former chef from Scotland had

Once Smyth was in the public eye, his victims started to come forward. It would soon emerge that the Norbertine priest had been abusing children since the 1950s, and that his superiors had been aware back in 1945 that he had what they euphemistically called "a problem with children."<sup>9</sup> The journalist Chris Moore investigated Smyth and wrote an excellent book about his ravages. He had raped children in Ireland, North and South, Scotland, Wales and the US.

The Catholic authorities had received many complaints from anguished parents and victims. Their response was to move the abusive priest around, sending him from parish to parish, country to country, never revealing the reason, and often with breathtaking irresponsibility – for example, he was sent to several children's hospitals as a chaplain. As Moore notes, "in blunt terms, instead of caring for the abused, they chose to shelter this criminal."<sup>10</sup>

On his release from Magilligan in 1997, Smyth was tried in Dublin on 74 charges of child abuse between 1958 and 1993. Sentencing him to 12 years in jail, the trial judge said he had "no doubt but that Smyth was still a risk to children." Smyth's lawyers said he had "made his peace with God." He died a month later.<sup>11</sup>



served a prison sentence in the North for sexual offences against two young girls in 2005, and was on a three year probation term for indecently assaulting and raping a 13 year old.

After he disappeared, the PSNI issued a public safety warning. Redpath was described as being a “high risk” to the community, a “serious threat” to children, and particularly dangerous when he had been drinking. Gardai and police in Scotland circulated his photograph. The ferry port at Stranraer was monitored.

He was quickly traced to an address in the Republic. However it then emerged

that whereas if he had been captured in Northern Ireland he could have been sent to prison for up to five years, in the Republic the crime of breaching his probation conditions in the North might not be sufficient for a European arrest warrant or an application for extradition to be successful. Redpath agreed to sign the Republic’s sex offenders register and to notify gardai if he changed address.

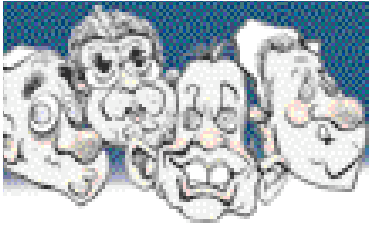
Child welfare organisations were appalled. Norah Gibbons, director of advocacy at Barnardo’s in Dublin, said the situation was “deeply worrying” adding that the system for tracking offenders in the Republic was “woefully inadequate” and that it was putting

### Case 2: Robert Howard

In August 1994 fifteen year old Arlene Arkinson went out for the night with Robert Howard and others. He drove from her home town of Castleterg in County Tyrone across the border to Bundoran. She has never been seen since.

She is believed to have been murdered, and Howard is the only suspect, but her body has never been found. In 2005 Howard was tried and acquitted in Belfast. He was, however, returned to prison in England, where he was serving a life sentence for the murder in 2001 of another teenage girl, Hannah Williams. Arlene’s family, as well as one of her friends, who had been raped by Howard and almost strangled, had given evidence at that murder trial, and gave significant “similar fact evidence”. Howard had well established patterns of finding and grooming vulnerable girls before using extreme violence on them. Controversially, such evidence was not called in Belfast.

Howard had been a highly mobile sex offender since at least the 1960s. Born in the Republic, his first conviction was for the attempted rape of a six year old girl in England, after breaking into her home. His punishment was nine days in a borstal, after which he was sent back to Ireland – a type of informal deportation which was common at that time. In 1969, back in England, he attempted to rape a young woman after breaking into her home in Durham. He was sentenced to six years in prison, served three, and was again sent back to Ireland.



children at risk. She pointed out that there was nothing to stop an opportunistic sex offender registering with their local gardai, and then getting employment in another part of the country. "There are still thousands of people working with children and vulnerable adults in this country who have never been vetted," she said.<sup>4</sup>

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) warned that following the introduction of more stringent vetting procedures in the UK in the aftermath of the Soham murders of two young girls, high risk sex offenders might regard Ireland as a safe haven. Irish laws on vetting were "dangerously weak", said ISPCC chief executive Paul

Gilligan. "In the UK, even if you were suspected of sex offences against children, your potential employer has the right to check your details and vet you. That doesn't exist in Ireland," he said. "We are light years behind Britain and Northern Ireland here."<sup>5</sup>

A year after he absconded, Redpath was located in Scotland and returned to the North, where he was charged with breaking his probation conditions and returned to prison.

#### **'Most wanted' website**

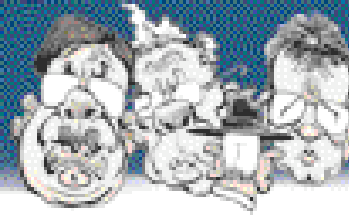
November 2006 also saw the launch by the UK authorities of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection 'most

Using a false name, he got a job in County Cork. In 1973 he broke into the home of a middle-aged woman, violently raped her and made off in her car. Relatives found her and alerted gardai. Howard was arrested at Dublin Airport. A psychiatrist told the court that he believed Howard to be an "explosive psychopath" and "highly dangerous" to women.

He was jailed in Dublin for 10 years, got out in 1981, married and abused a vulnerable young woman, and later moved north of the border to Castledearg. One of his victims there reported him to the RUC, and a trial followed in the North. By this stage, he was also suspected of murdering Arlene Arkinson. A psychiatrist, who was not shown the earlier psychiatric report from the Republic, referred to his "desire to dominate teenage girls" and warned of a "propensity...to escalate his offending behaviour."<sup>12</sup>

He moved to Scotland, claiming the IRA was after him, but was 'outed' by a newspaper, and fled south to London. The authorities attempted to keep track of him, but he kept disappearing, returning on occasion to Ireland, where he is suspected of having committed further offences. He met and groomed Hannah Williams, and she disappeared in 2001. Her body was found a year later. Convicting Howard, a judge said, "it is clear you are a danger to teenage girls and other women and have been for a long time."<sup>13</sup>





wanted' website [www.crimestoppers-uk.org/ceop]. This published the names and photographs of convicted sex offenders who were missing. This was welcomed by the Northern Ireland-based Survivors for Justice group which said it was a "major step forward."<sup>6</sup> A year later one of the UK's most wanted sex offenders, John Richard Murrell, was captured in the Republic as a result of a tip off from someone who had seen his details on the website. UK police contacted gardai, who used a European warrant to arrest Murrell, who had absconded from a probation hostel in England in 2000.

Some saw Murrell's arrest primarily as a sign that new systems were indeed

working for Ireland and the UK, while others saw it as a sign that Ireland was becoming a haven for UK sex offenders. According to William McAuley, the PSNI's Strategy and Policy Co-ordinator for the MASRAM system – the UK-wide multi-agency procedure for the assessment and management of sex offenders – absconders from the system were the exception rather than the rule. Speaking during the controversy over Redpath, he said that there were 618 offenders in Northern Ireland and 85 in prison who were being risk managed by the agencies, and there was a compliance rate of 95%. There would always, he said, be individuals who "buck the system".<sup>7</sup>

### Case 3: Billy Adams

According to his sister, Sonia Erwin, Billy Adams is "a master at manipulating the system."<sup>14</sup> She was speaking from her home in Northern Ireland after her brother was found guilty of the multiple rape of a 12 year old girl in England during 2005. Adams was sentenced to life imprisonment with a recommendation that he spend at least seven and a half years in jail.

Evidence of his ability as a manipulator is not hard to find. In 1997 he was in jail for theft in Northern Ireland and was extradited to the Republic for trial on a charge of indecent assault, for which he got a 10 month sentence. While in jail in Dublin in 1998, he was convicted of the rape of an eight year old Northern Irish girl at his flat in the Republic's capital. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison, but applied to serve his sentence in Northern Ireland, where he was able to avail of 50% remission. The Irish DPP had decided not to pursue him for alleged offences committed in the North, as they would not result in him serving a longer sentence.

Although Sonia Erwin warned the authorities that her brother was a dangerous predator who would strike again, he was duly released in 2004. On his release he came under the multi-agency procedures for assessment and management of sex offenders known as MASRAM. It was reported that he boasted he was a "free man"

The MASRAM arrangements have just been upgraded and extended through the Criminal Justice NI Order of 2008. The availability of 50% remission for all offenders has been ended. Among others, the family of Attracta Harron had campaigned for this change after she was murdered in 2003 by Trevor Hamilton. He was a dangerous serial sex offender. He was under MASRAM risk management in the North when he picked Mrs Harron up on the border road between Lifford in the Republic and Strabane. She had been to mass and was walking home across the border.

The Harrons, as well as families of victims of Robert Howard and Billy Adams [**see cases 2 and 3**], are among those who

have campaigned for dangerous offenders to be kept in jail if they are still deemed to pose a high risk of re-offending. Under the new law, indeterminate sentencing has been introduced so that an offender can be kept in prison, particularly if prison authorities consider that he has made no effort to reduce that risk, such as taking part in programmes in jail.

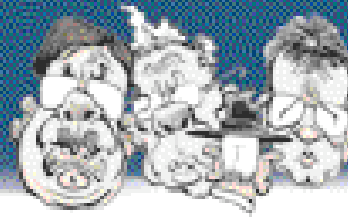
The PSNI's William McAuley delivers an optimistic assessment of the harmonisation of systems between the North and the Republic. "The Brendan Smyth case [**see case 1**] was a catalyst for a range of changes in cross border co-operation," he says.<sup>8</sup> "Before that there was very little. It was pre the Good

and told police he was going to Liverpool in England. It is understood the PSNI informally warned their counterparts in Merseyside Constabulary.<sup>15</sup>

Father Jeremiah McGrath, who had befriended Adams at a homeless shelter in Dublin, and had stood bail for him and visited him in prison, then sheltered him at his parochial house in Roslea in County Fermanagh, just on the northern side of the border. The pair were lovers. Local people were not told about the visitor's violent background. In 2005 Adams went to Liverpool. He signed the sex offenders register there. Then, bankrolled and abetted by McGrath, he ostentatiously groomed and repeatedly raped the 12 year old girl.

Her family say that it was six months after the rape that social services warned them about Adams. A relative found the details of his previous crimes on the Internet. Adams made a further attempt to abduct the child. He was arrested back in Northern Ireland at McGrath's parochial house. Sonia Erwin believes he and McGrath were about to flee to the US.

Adams admitted multiple rapes and in 2007 got a life sentence with a recommendation that he serve 15 years. McGrath got five years for his role. He had been suspended from ministry during the proceedings, and his bishop said his future as a priest would be considered. This would involve a "complex process under Canon Law."<sup>16</sup>



Friday Agreement, pre the change in the Irish Constitution" (this had claimed jurisdiction over the North and made some legal cooperation with Northern Ireland difficult).

During the conflict, offenders could oppose extradition on political grounds. One offender who tried to play the political card was Vincent McKenna, the self-styled human rights activist from the southern border county of Cavan, who had moved north to Belfast. He claimed that persistent rumours that he had sexually abused his daughter were politically motivated in order to discredit him. However in 2000 he was convicted in the Republic on 31 counts of abuse against her. His daughter Sorcha waived her right to anonymity to expose him.

"The 1997 Sex Offenders Act was the first piece of UK legislation and it was followed three years later by the Sex Offenders Bill in the Republic. That law built on lessons learned from the UK Act. For example under the British law offenders had seven days to notify the authorities if they moved to another jurisdiction. The Irish law gave them three days, and that is now the same for Britain," says McAuley.

The fact that all citizens of the island of Ireland are entitled to both Irish and a British passport is also problematic when it comes to tracking offenders on the move, as is the fact that a passport is not required when travelling from the UK to Ireland. However problems of information sharing between the two jurisdictions have now largely been resolved,

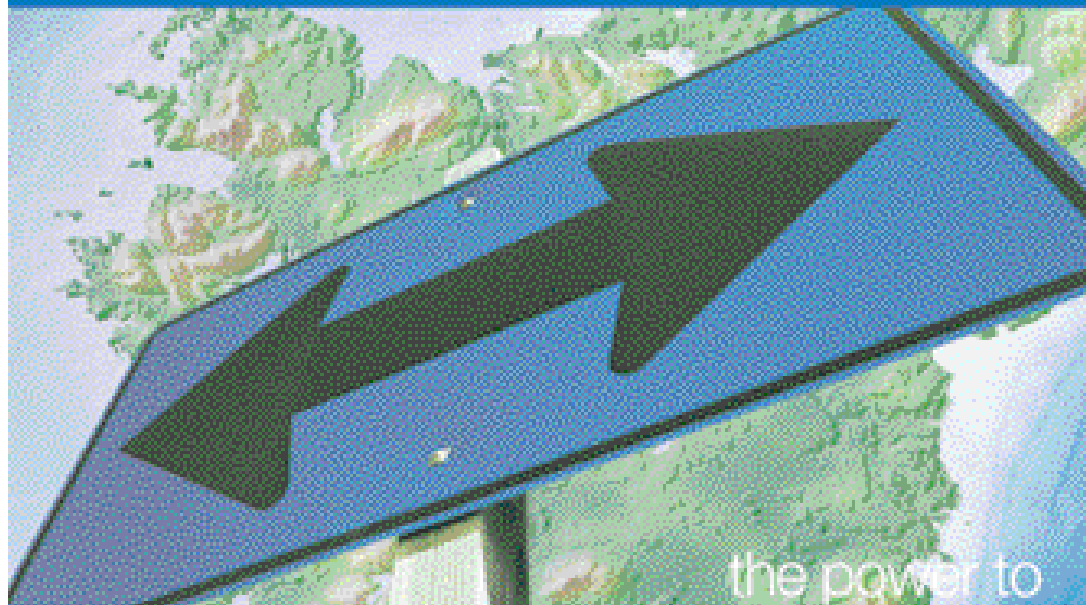
McAuley says. The two police forces along with the probation services from both Irish jurisdictions now work closely together, and the decision in the Republic several years ago to split the probation and welfare services, as in the North, made things easier. "In the case of offenders who live in border counties, we would often see individuals from the relevant authorities on either side of the border now coming together for meetings," he says.

### **No MASRAM in the South**

The Republic still does not have a formalised system along the lines of MASRAM and this remains a significant barrier to harmonisation. Things are more streamlined in Northern Ireland. "The UK's Violent and Sexual Offenders Register (VISOR) is accessible all over the UK. They don't have an equivalent in the Republic, where arrangements are local. However, the Garda Intelligence Unit is working on putting the sex offenders register on a computerised central system. In the North, if someone breaches the terms of their probation, they can be arrested, since the offence is serious and carries a potential sentence of five years. In the Republic, gardai have to go to court to get the right to arrest," McAuley says. The Republic did not have any sex offenders register until 2001.

"Under public protection arrangements in the North, if someone has concerns about a convicted person in the community and they express these to the police, that person can be referred for risk assessment," says McAuley. "There

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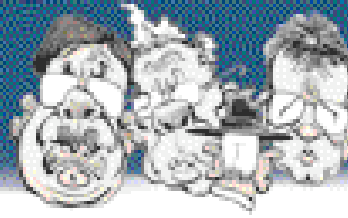
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isn't an equivalent system in the Republic, but it is being worked on. They are increasingly referring to the risk assessment tools we use. Northern Ireland has moved to an integrated criminal justice model. There's an inter-departmental strategy on sexual violence. Sexual violence isn't just an issue for the criminal justice system."

Under the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Act it is a crime not to vet potential employees in the UK. The Republic does not have such a stringent law.

Both jurisdictions face considerable challenges in dealing with offenders who come to Ireland from other countries to work. Many East European and African countries do not have centralised records, computerised systems or vetting systems. Some do not have extradition arrangements with Ireland or the UK. McAuley recalls one extradition from Japan which took 13 years. Ireland is also used as a 'transfer station' for the trafficking of women and children to other countries like Italy, the main EU consumer of such victims, McAuley says. However there is longstanding good cooperation between the authorities on these issues.

McAuley is concerned that harmonisation will suffer setbacks because of the current difficult economic climate on both sides of the border. Indeterminate sentencing, for example, might be challenged by an offender who claims that there was no suitable programme available in prison to enable him to

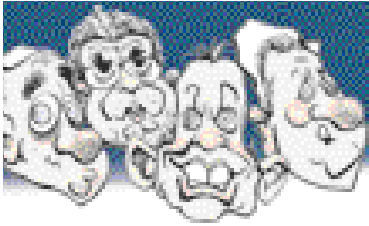


*Brendan Smyth leaving a Belfast court in 1994*

lessen his risk level. "In the Republic, the funding for the sex offenders treatment programme has to be reapplied for every year, and in the North there is also a big pull back on funds," he says. "However, if the PSNI has to start prioritising, public protection is always going to be top of the list."

### **North-South initiatives**

"The North is a fair bit ahead of us in both structure and management of systems," says Mark Wilson, assistant principal officer in the Probation Service in the Republic. "We don't have a coordinated multi-agency approach like their's yet, but we are embryonically moving in the same direction. It is absolutely clear that it is the best approach." In the Republic, he says, the Probation Service is taking the lead role.



Like McAuley, he is enthusiastic about the levels of cross-border cooperation which have been developed to deal with sex offenders. He thinks the EU context will help overcome some of the problems.

"For example, it is difficult for us in the Republic to get someone back to court for a breach of a court order," he says. "But there is a European order well developed to overcome this."

He points to new initiatives that are being established on a North-South basis, like the multi-agency approach to an integrated strategy on managing homeless sex offenders. "It is like MASRAM at grass roots level," he says.

A new sexual offences law is currently under preparation in the Republic and is, according to the Department of Justice in Dublin, at an advanced stage. It will include, a spokesman says, "measures arising" from ongoing North-South deliberations on harmonisation. In a statement prepared in response to a series of questions from the *Journal of Cross Border Studies*, the Department says that closer alignment of systems in

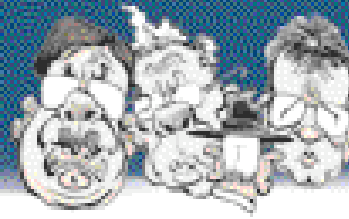
the two jurisdictions would ensure that sex offenders "do not gain any advantage by being resident on one side of the border or the other."

The Department of Justice is chairing a high level group including the gardai, the prison service, the probation service and Cosc [the national office for the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence set up in 2007]. This group is charged with establishing "an integrated multi-agency approach to assessing the risk posed by sex offenders and how to manage that risk." It is, the statement says, drawing up proposals "to ensure that our administrative and legal arrangements will match the best practice found in other countries." Its report is due "early in the new year."

**Susan McKay is an award-winning journalist and author of several books, including *Bear in Mind these Dead* (2008), a study of the aftermath of the Northern Ireland conflict for those bereaved in it, and *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* (2000).**

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## VOTING FOR UNITY OR UNION? THE COMPLEXITIES OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE BORDER ISSUE

John Coakley



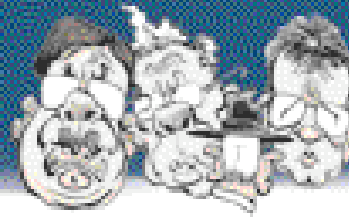
*John Coakley*

**In the closing months of 2008, as pressure on the retail sector and on the public finances in the Republic of Ireland intensified, much was made of a new use of the term ‘patriotism’. Senior government ministers, the Lord Mayor of Dublin and other public figures called on shoppers to concentrate their spending on the southern side of the border, and a prominent economist criticised those shopping in Northern Ireland as committing “the ultimate act of political sabotage”.<sup>1</sup> This invocation of ‘patriotism’, with its reference to a much narrower definition of *patria* than the traditional nationalist one, invites speculation as to the extent to which the Irish border may have acquired a new reality in popular consciousness.**

There is nothing surprising in a government wishing to maximise revenue, or in businesses seeking to protect profits, especially in the context of an economic downturn. But in this case the admonition to stay south of the border clashed strongly with the stated position of the government just two years earlier, when economic integration of the two parts of the island was placed firmly on the agenda.<sup>2</sup> Was this rhetorical shift simply a hard-headed response to changed economic realities, or did it expose a hidden layer of pro-partition sentiment that reflected an increasing convergence between Southern nationalist and Northern unionist perspectives on the border?

This is not an easy question to answer, since public opinion polls offer incomplete, inconclusive and sometimes unreliable evidence on the subject. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring data of this kind in an effort to assess the character of Northern and especially Southern attitudes towards the partition of Ireland and the future of the border. The present article does so by proceeding through several stages. It looks in turn at the positions adopted by the major parties, the more explicitly pro-partition perspective of certain smaller groups, the attitudes of party supporters, and differences in public opinion between the Republic, Great Britain and the two communities in Northern Ireland. The





concluding sections speculate on what this evidence tells us about the probable future of the Irish border and the significance of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

### Party politics and the border

The shift in the positions of Southern parties may be measured relatively easily by considering how fundamental party documents, such as party constitutions, have been amended. All major parties in the Dáil once subscribed to a broad nationalist consensus. In 1926, for instance, Fianna Fáil adopted as its first aim “to secure the unity and independence of Ireland as a Republic”. Fine Gael was actually founded as the ‘United Ireland Party’ in 1933, and was more commonly known as the ‘UIP’ than as Fine Gael in its early years. In 1934 the Labour Party, too, endorsed the idea of unqualified Irish unity more decisively than it had earlier. This consensus, with its rejection of the notion that the views of Northern unionists mattered, was summarised most succinctly in the publications of the all-party Anti-Partition Conference, established in 1949 and surviving until the early 1970s. In its eyes, partition represented a British-imposed instrument that amounted to the “denial of the right to self-determination”.<sup>3</sup>

While this perspective, like Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution as they appeared in 1937, paid lip service to the notion of an island-wide community whose unity was ruptured by the border, it has been argued persuasively that de

Valera regarded unity as “inevitable but postponable”, and that, like many Southern nationalists, he saw it as a long-term aspiration rather than an urgent goal.<sup>4</sup> The outbreak of civil unrest in Northern Ireland after 1968, however, forced Southern party leaders to reconsider the position. The prospect of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland – a longstanding, strident demand of Irish politicians – lost its attractiveness precisely as it became a realistic possibility in the 1970s. Instead, Irish governments began to pursue an accommodation that would accept partition and leave responsibility for management of the Northern conflict with the British. This was accompanied by a fundamental reorientation of the thinking of party leaders, one which took two forms: an attenuation of traditional nationalism, and an increasing acceptance of the border as an appropriate international frontier.

The first perspective was commonly hidden behind traditional nationalist rhetoric, but was nevertheless unmistakable. Thus the inter-party New Ireland Forum, which produced its report in 1984, went further than even the traditional strategy of Fianna Fáil in endorsing a unitary state on the island as its ideal constitutional solution (earlier leaders such as de Valera and Lemass had envisaged Northern Ireland’s autonomy continuing even in circumstances of Irish unity). But, unlike earlier prescriptions, this would not be imposed: any solution would have to be “freely negotiated and agreed to by the people of the North and by the people of the South” – a



*From 'postponable' unity, through unity by consent, to 'two nations':  
Eamon de Valera, Garret Fitzgerald and Conor Cruise O'Brien.*

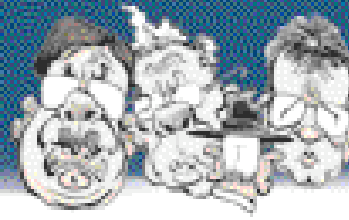
recognition, in effect, of a Northern veto. This was accompanied by change in the positions of the various parties. Fine Gael policy was recast to rest on the principle of consent under the leadership of Garret Fitzgerald (1977-87), who had a longstanding interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland. In 1991 the Labour Party amended its constitution, embracing the principle of unity only by agreement. In 1995 Fianna Fáil also amended its constitution, so that its first objective was now "to secure in peace and agreement the unity of Ireland and its people". By the 1990s, then, all three parties had formally endorsed a principle which had been emerging gradually within each of them since the 1970s: Irish unity was still held out as a goal, but it was now made conditional on agreement on the part of Northern Ireland.

### **'Two nations' thesis**

The view that Irish unity, while desirable, was also unattainable because of political realities in Northern Ireland, might be seen as representing simply a softening

in nationalist attitudes. But an alternative perspective – that Irish unity was not in fact desirable, and that the reality of partition should be fully accepted – also began to be expressed with increasing frequency in the Republic. Already in the early 1970s one small organisation, the Irish (later British and Irish) Communist Organisation, produced a set of highly original but rarely cited studies which explored the nature of the relationship between North and South and presented a 'two nations' interpretation of the problem. A similar position was adopted by leading public figures such as Conor Cruise O'Brien.<sup>5</sup>

The 'two nations' analysis was not just of academic significance. It clearly implied an acceptance of the right of unionists to remain outside the Republic of Ireland, but it was easy to extend this to a rejection of the right of Northern nationalists to join the Republic. As later articulated by Democratic Left (founded in 1992 by activists who had migrated from Sinn Féin through the Workers Party, and who eventually ended up in Labour), this offered a fuller



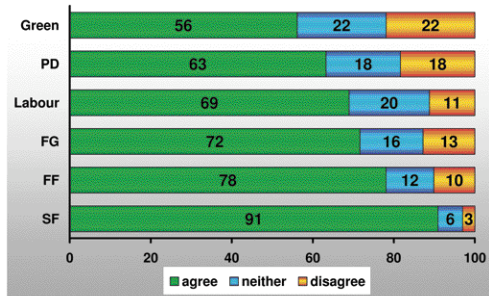
justification of partition than had earlier been offered by any significant political party:

The 70 years of separation from the South, the development of the welfare state, divergent social development North and South, and 25 years of terrorism have made Northern nationalists a people apart. They have potentially more in common with their fellow Northern Irish people than with their Southern neighbours. The primary objective of an agreement should be to unite the people of Northern Ireland on the basis of peaceful co-existence by putting in place structures which will help develop a pluralist democracy.<sup>6</sup>

In many respects, this may be seen as an expression of a new form of 'civic' nationalism: one based not on any conception of loyalty to an 'ethnic' community, but rather focussed on the population of the state. This perspective should not be seen as in any way 'non-nationalist': it is simply based on a different (and, from the standpoint of traditional Irish nationalism, narrower) conception of the 'imagined community' with which people identify.

Linked to this is a new visualisation of the word 'Ireland'. Irish officials struggled for decades to secure acceptance of 'Ireland' as the name of the state. By the 1970s they had succeeded, with a

vengeance. Not only do such bodies as the EU use 'Ireland' to refer to the 26 counties (to the exclusion of Northern Ireland); increasingly, in popular usage, the word refers to the Republic only. Already in 1983, for instance, 34% of survey respondents in the Republic saw the Irish nation as constituting 26 counties (63% saw it as comprising 32); and only 41% saw the people of Northern Ireland as 'Irish'.<sup>7</sup> In the quarter century since then, this view is likely to have gained even wider acceptance, as the generation born in a 32-county Ireland has gradually disappeared.



**Figure 1. Support for Irish unity by party, 2002**

Note: Bars refer to percentages within the various categories (those identifying with particular parties).  
Source: Irish National Election Study, 2002.

## Parties and polls

Of course parties and party leaders reflect many of the values of their followers as well as influencing them. It is not, therefore, surprising that the kinds of change already described have made inroads among supporters of the main parties. Figure 1 presents responses to a question on attitudes towards Irish unity in 2002, broken down by party.

Respondents were asked: 'Please tell me



to what extent you disagree or agree with [this] statement: 'the long term policy for Northern Ireland should be to reunify with the rest of Ireland'.

Respondents who indicated their views are broken down in the figure by party.<sup>8</sup> The outcome is not very surprising: Sinn Féin supporters emerge as those most committed to the ideal of Irish unity (as measured by the huge percentage agreeing with the proposition). Green supporters are to be found at the opposite end, with a large minority disagreeing with the unity option, though even there a majority supported Irish unity. Fianna Fáil lies close to the Sinn Féin position, with the Progressive Democrats and Labour closer to the Greens, and Fine Gael in the middle.

That support for Irish unity is substantially aspirational is clear. Surveys consistently show that the Northern Ireland issue is of little interest to voters at election time. In the 2002 survey just cited only 21% thought this issue 'very important'. Among party identifiers, the corresponding figure was by far the highest among Sinn Féin supporters (65% rated Northern Ireland very important); other parties ranged from 25% (Fianna Fáil) to 18% (Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats).

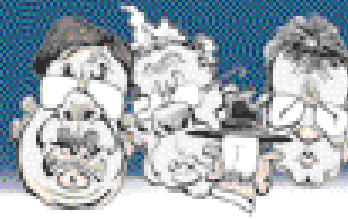
Perhaps because of the modest level of public interest in the issue of the border, political leaders have been relatively free to formulate policy as they have thought fit, and have been able to rely on a large measure of public support for their decisions. One such reformulation was given expression in a significant but little-

noticed component in the 1993 Downing Street Declaration (which paved the way for the IRA ceasefire of 1994 and, ultimately, for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 1998). One clause in the declaration made a settlement dependent on endorsement by referendum not only in the North (in line with what was to emerge as the 'principle of consent') but also in the South. This was carried over into the Good Friday Agreement. Crucially, following the Southern referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in May 1998 (held to coincide with the Northern referendum on the Agreement on the same day), this need for Southern endorsement was written into the Irish Constitution, which now requires a united Ireland to have "the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed" in the Republic as well as in Northern Ireland.

Given what has already been said about public opinion regarding the border, this may well seem like a harmless provision. But can it be taken for granted that a pro-unity outcome would be forthcoming in any future referendum in the Republic on the issue of Irish unity? Opinion poll data suggest that the result would depend on the nature of the question being asked, and on the context in which it was asked. We now turn to look in greater detail at the extent to which public opinion supports or threatens the current status of the Irish border.

### **Analysing the poll data**

There was a time when certain stark generalisations about attitudes towards



the border could easily be made: hostility in the Republic and among Northern Catholics, support among the British and among Northern Protestants. In the early 20th century, it may well have been the case that these judgements represented something close to reality, though it was undoubtedly the case that partition was regarded by many unionists not as an ideal solution but as a necessary evil.

After many decades of partition, however, and in particular under the impact of civil unrest and political violence in Northern Ireland, there appears to have been a re-assessment of this position. An important survey in 1991 carried out in the two Irish jurisdictions and in Great Britain pointed to sharp contrasts.<sup>9</sup> The most widely supported of seven constitutional options for Northern Ireland, the integration of Northern Ireland into the Republic, was supported by only 41% of people from the Republic, 33% of Northern Catholics, 21% of British respondents and 2% of Northern Protestants. For the last group, full integration within the UK was the favoured option, supported by 61%; but this was supported by only 13% in Great Britain, 8% of Northern Catholics and 7% in the Republic. The absence of consensus on the appropriate constitutional pathway was clear.

The perspectives of the principal groups involved in the conflict are summarised in figure 2, which uses opinion

poll data from 2001-02 (the most recent date for which comparable data are available) to assess attitudes. It reports responses to the question 'Do you think the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be for it to remain part of the United Kingdom or to reunify with the rest of Ireland?' in Northern Ireland (separately for Catholics and Protestants) and in England, and responses to a slightly different question (the one already discussed on pages 82-83) in the Republic. In the UK, the question explicitly identified an alternative to unity (Northern Ireland remaining part of the UK), and many respondents also volunteered other options, such as independence for Northern Ireland. In the Republic, by contrast, respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the unity proposition, and were also allowed to say that they neither agreed nor disagreed. Comparison between the bar referring to the Republic and the other three bars needs to bear this important difference in mind. The data are nevertheless broadly

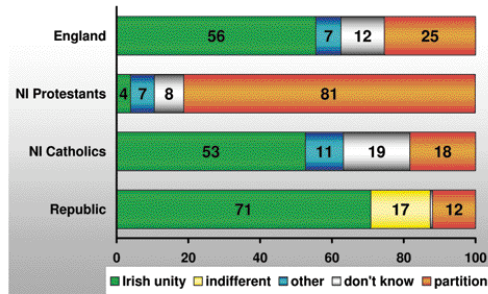


Figure 2. Options supported by selected groups, 2001-02

Note: Bars refer to percentages opting for the respective outcomes. The question was different in the Republic from the other three groups.  
 Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times surveys, 2001 and 2002; British Social Attitudes survey, 2001; Irish National Election Study, 2002.

comparable, and permit us to generalise about the attitudes of the four groups.

First, the reaction of English respondents may seem surprising: most favour Irish unity rather than retention of the current constitutional arrangements. The 2001 data reported here are typical of the position in recent years: although the actual size of the segments in the bar vary a little from survey to survey and from year to year, the broad trends are stable. There has been sizeable support for Irish unity in all British surveys since the early 1970s, and there has never been majority support in a major survey for continuation of the union (other options, such as independence for Northern Ireland, have drawn considerable support, especially in the past). This is consistent with another general finding of British surveys over time: there has been long-term majority support, again dating back to the 1970s, for military withdrawal from Northern Ireland. This led two leading analysts to conclude in the 1990s that

British opinion towards Northern Ireland is characterised by high levels of ambivalence and negativity. Although a majority exists in favour of troop withdrawal, this does not translate into widespread support for Irish unity. Rather, it would appear that British opinion is more likely to support any option other than the current constitutional arrangement – continued union with Britain.<sup>10</sup>

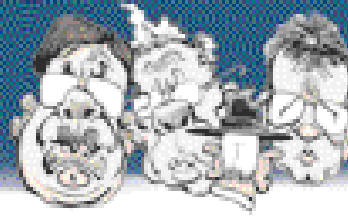
Since then, British support for Irish unity has increased, and from the late 1990s

onwards majorities have supported this option, following the pattern illustrated in figure 2.

In contrast, Northern Protestant support for the union has been unwavering over time. As figure 2 shows, 81% of Protestants supported the union in 2001-02, with only 4% opting for Irish unity. This pattern has been consistent since 1968, and Protestant responses to other questions make it clear that commitment to the union is profoundly held, with a sizeable minority of Protestants indicating that they would never be able to live with Irish unity (31% of Protestants supporting the union in 2001-02 indicated that they would find it 'almost impossible to accept' Irish unity).<sup>11</sup> In many respects, the fact that even a small proportion of Protestants support Irish unity may also appear surprising, but this figure, too, is consistent over time: it normally lies within the 3-5% band.

The third bar in figure 2, focusing on the position of Northern Ireland Catholics, may well represent something of a surprise. Here the pattern is of considerable political importance. Although most Catholics indicate support for Irish unity, this is a bare majority, and a significant minority (18%) supports the union. Three features of this pattern need to be emphasised.

First, it has been consistent over time. Catholic support for the union was very substantial in early surveys, and in nine annual 'Life and Times' surveys from 1998 to 2006 the proportion of Catholics supporting the union (excluding



'don't knows') ranged from 18% to 29%.

Second, Catholic support for Irish unity is 'softer' than Protestant support for the union. Unlike the Protestant pro-union position, only 4% of Catholics supporting Irish unity would find it 'almost impossible to accept a position in which Irish unity would never come about'.

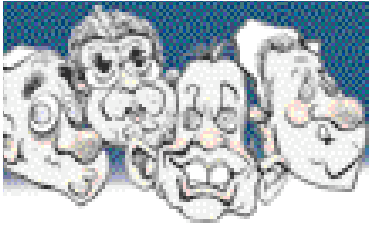
Third, it should be emphasised that although many Catholics support the union, very few describe themselves as 'unionist', or vote for unionist parties. In the pro-union segment in the Northern Ireland Catholic bar in figure 2, for instance, only 3% of pro-union Catholics described themselves as 'unionist' (47% opted for 'nationalist', and 49% for 'neither', excluding 'don't knows'). In respect of party support, 75% of the same group supported the SDLP, 10% Sinn Féin, 9% the Alliance Party, 5% the Ulster Unionist Party and 1% the DUP.

The final bar in figure 2, relating to the Republic of Ireland, is the most challenging one. The absence of symmetry between Northern Catholics and Protestants in their attitudes towards the union (with Protestant support for the union much stronger than Catholic support for Irish unity) is reflected in the respective attitudes of the Southern Irish and the British. Instead of anti-partition Irish and pro-union British, we find in effect anti-partition majorities in both states. This is, however, particularly difficult to measure on the Irish side, as no standard question on attitudes towards Northern Ireland has been asked

consistently in surveys. Instead, a whole range of different questions has been used since the late 1960s, a practice that has done little to facilitate comparison over time.

Thus it has been possible for newspapers to come up with sharply conflicting headlines describing public opinion in the Republic on the issue of Irish unity. For example, on 18 September 2005, the *Sunday Independent* ran a story headlined 'Almost half of us would reject united Ireland', which reported that 45% would not vote for a united Ireland, and of the 55% who were 'open' to supporting it, half indicated that they would not be prepared to pay higher taxes to support unity. Less than six months later, though, on 2 April 2006, a *Sunday Business Post* news item entitled 'Majority want a nation once again' reported that almost 80% 'would like to see a united Ireland', and that 22% believed that this should be the government's first priority.

While the difference between these perspectives might be dismissed as a dispute over whether the glass of territorial nationalism is half full or half empty, it does suggest that responses are highly sensitive to political context and, of course, to question wording. In the event of a referendum in the Republic on the issue of Irish unity, then, the electorate's response would depend on the kind of package of which unity was a part, on the manner in which this package was presented, and on cues from political leaders. It is unlikely that any such package would be presented to



the voters unless political leaders felt they could deliver – and wanted to deliver.

### **The future of the border**

If we are to assess the prospects for the future constitutional relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic, it is important to bear in mind the perspectives of the major groups involved. The most important interest by far is the British, dwarfing the population of both parts of the island, and retaining ultimate political control over Northern Ireland. It seems clear that British public opinion substantially supports Irish unity, and this is reflected in the formal policy of the British Government. Already in 1985 the British Government joined the Irish Government in solemnly declaring that “if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, they will introduce and support in the respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish”. Unlike its position in respect of Scotland and Wales, then, the British Government has made clear its willingness to disengage from Northern Ireland should a majority there so wish, and to facilitate unity with the Republic.

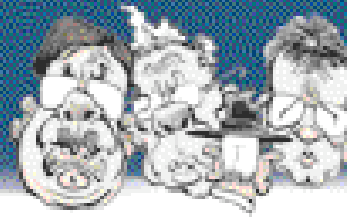
Within Northern Ireland itself, the position is more complex. Among Protestants, support for the union is monolithic, but among Catholics support for Irish unity is much less wholehearted. This means that it is particularly dangerous to make political predictions on the basis of demographic data. The results of the 2001 census showed that

the proportion of Protestants continues to decline steadily among older age cohorts, that the overall proportion of Catholics has been increasing gradually since 1971, and that Catholics already outnumber Protestants among those aged less than 25. It seems probable that in due course Catholics will outnumber Protestants in the overall population, though there are other demographic considerations which may thwart or delay this process – or, alternatively, hasten it.

However, even if a stage is reached when Catholics constitute a majority among those of voting age, stark political conclusions should not be drawn. For at least the past four decades, there has been a solid, stable group of pro-union Catholics, and unless the attachment of this group to the union is weakened it will act as a permanent impediment to Irish unity. Should Northern Ireland change its mind on the issue of Irish unity, this is less likely to be a consequence of crude demographic shift than of a change in attitude of a sizeable section of the pro-union population, Catholic and Protestant – a change of which up to now there have been few signs.

If the British Government has handed its key to the cross-border gateway back to the people of Northern Ireland, this key is no longer sufficient to open the lock. A second key is required, and this is now vested in the people of the Republic, whose assent to Irish unity has been a formal requirement since the Good Friday Agreement took effect. Is this assent likely to be forthcoming? The complexity





of Southern opinion on Northern Ireland has been discussed already, and the impact of partition in prompting a redefinition of nationalist values has been noted. As one observer put it, "while national unity has been prominent within twentieth century Irish political discourse, the physical border created between the North and South has slowly been incorporated into conceptions of Irish national identity."<sup>12</sup>

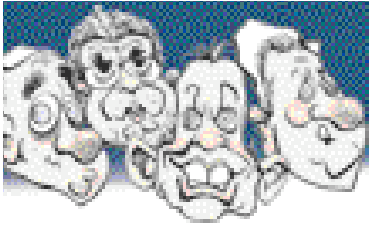
The extent to which the border has contributed to a redefinition of attitudes in the Republic may be illustrated further. There appears to have been a significant convergence between the attitudes of Southern Protestants and Catholics – populations once as remote from each other politically as their Northern counterparts. A survey in 1999-2000 showed that Southern Protestants were almost as supportive of Irish unity as Southern Catholics.<sup>13</sup> But if formerly mutually antagonistic communities in the South have grown together, they have also grown apart from their Northern counterparts. In a major 1988-89 survey in the Republic, for instance, most respondents agreed that 'Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic are two separate nations', and that 'Catholics in Northern Ireland have more in common with Northern Protestants than they have with Catholics in the Republic'.<sup>14</sup> The position has been summarised accurately in one thoughtful study of attitudes in the Republic:

The vast bulk of Irish voters are not interested in Northern Ireland, and are not interested in pursuing Irish

unity – regardless of the means being advocated. There are no votes in 32-county nationalism. Thus any real move to press for Irish unity, be it from within the Republic itself, from Northern Ireland, or from Britain, is unlikely to be welcomed by the average citizen in the Republic. Unity would be nice. But if it's going to cost money, or result in violence, or disrupt the moral and social equilibrium, then it's not worth it. Certainly, politics in the Republic is about nationalism, but for much of the post-war epoch the vision of that nationalism has extended only to the 26 counties.<sup>15</sup>

### Reconsidering the Belfast Agreement

If this judgement is valid, then the meaning of the Good Friday Agreement needs to be reconsidered. It is true that it did open the door to Irish unity, by charting a constitutional route to it for the first time. But it also placed some formidable obstacles on that route, and embedded these in the Irish Constitution, which now offers Northern unionists a much more secure guarantee than any legal provision within their own state. Indeed, it may be that Southern politicians will raise further the threshold required for Irish unity. Even the main Southern architect of the 1998 Agreement, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, has suggested that mechanical pro-unity majorities in the two jurisdictions would be insufficient. Interviewed shortly after standing down as Taoiseach, he expressed the view that "a united Ireland could not be achieved



by a simple majority poll in favour of constitutional change"; instead, he hinted towards a more consensual approach, suggesting that support from a "sizeable amount of people" North and South would be required.<sup>16</sup>

If, then, traditional nationalists have no reason to welcome the Good Friday Agreement as a device by which Northern Ireland may be enticed into the Republic, its very role in guaranteeing the constitutional *status quo* may, by undermining unionist insecurity, help to build bridges in the longer term. Even the forms of cross-border economic competition that have been portrayed as having a negative effect on the Southern economy may play a role in making the border more permeable. If the border is indeed one day to disappear, this is more likely to arise from the impact of a network of small social bridges, rather than being a consequence of the constitutional highway that is so visible a feature of the Good Friday Agreement.

When political leaders call on the people of the Republic to shop south of the

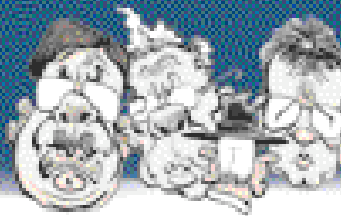
border, they may indeed be seen as reflecting a form of local patriotism. But the unselfconscious manner in which many of these proposals have been made suggests that the border has a profound reality that transcends politics and arises from a strong sense of 26-county identity. If this is the case, then cross-border metaphorical bridges acquire a double significance: they are needed not just to expose Southern society to Northern Ireland, but also to generate empathy with *both* communities in Northern Ireland on the part of the people of the Republic.

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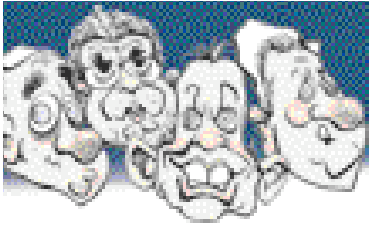
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## TOWARDS COSMOPOLITANISM? RENEWING IRISHNESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Robin Wilson



Robin Wilson

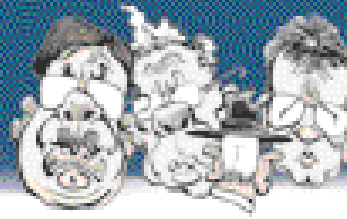
**The annual obeisance by nationalist parties at the grave of the revolutionary republican Wolfe Tone, like all such affirmations, ‘forges’ a relationship with the past in both senses of the word. It establishes a line of apostolic succession in the same moment as it re-presents the historical record to suit a contemporary concern. It makes two statements: however unsettlingly Ireland may have changed over the centuries, ‘Irishness’ remains a rock of certainty to which to cling; and, however much nationalism in Europe has, in the wake of the wars of the Yugoslav succession, acquired a negative connotation, its Irish variant still drinks from the pure spring of a civic republican source.**

In his survey of contemporary debates on nationalism, Umut Özkırmılı urges a critical stance towards the first of these claims. Nationalism does work on pre-modern cultural materials but it selects and appropriates these according to contemporary concerns: nationalism precedes, and constitutes, the nation, yet it covers its tracks, so to speak, presenting the latter as if it were eternal.<sup>1</sup> And in his discussion of the migrations and meldings of populations in medieval Europe – in which any notion of an undiluted ‘Celtic’ past dissolves – Patrick Geary contends: “Congruence between early medieval and contemporary ‘peoples’ is a myth ... The past, as has

often been said, is a foreign country, and we will never find ourselves there.”<sup>2</sup>

As to the second assertion, republicanism is a philosophy of popular sovereignty rather than territorial demarcation.<sup>3</sup> And the idea that a ‘civic’ nationalism can be distilled from any ‘ethnic’ source fails to recognise that any variety of nationalism, in privileging a particular ‘imagined community’, contradicts the principle of equality.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Miley has shown, for example, how in Spain ‘good’ Catalan nationalism cannot be demarcated from ‘bad’ Basque nationalism in this way.<sup>5</sup>

Laying the foundation stone of a



monument in Wexford to the 1798 rising on its centenary, the historian of the rising Father Kavanagh – who wanted to impose a boycott on Protestant businesses in the town – illustrated the difficulty. He said the monument would be “proof to future generations that we were imbued with the spirit of the men of ‘98”, who had “died for a persecuted creed as well as an oppressed country”. Retelling this story over a century later, the contemporary historian Roy Foster acidly comments: “The creed mentioned was clearly not that of the French revolution.”<sup>6</sup>

### Periods of nationalism

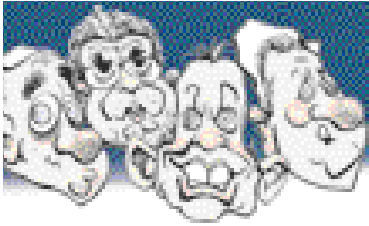
Gerard Delanty and Patrick O’Mahony establish a useful periodisation of nationalism: broadly ‘liberal’ until 1870, then principally ‘integral’ or ‘authoritarian reactionary’ up to the Second World War, with ‘state patriotism’ post-war and then the ethno-nationalism that took hold in Northern Ireland after 1969 and in post-Communist Europe after 1989.<sup>7</sup> Hence the paradox that the formation of the Irish State in 1922 saw a socially conservative society emerge all the while protesting that it stemmed from an ‘emancipatory struggle’.<sup>8</sup> The strong farmer class which had prevailed in the land war,<sup>9</sup> with its urban *petit bourgeois* allies, assumed control of the new state.<sup>10</sup> As Kevin O’Higgins remarked: “We were probably the most conservative revolutionaries that ever put across a successful revolution”.<sup>11</sup>

The ‘men of 1916’ were of course to enter the nationalist pantheon – cast as

selfless, David-against-Goliath fighters for an Ireland which their proclamation implied, in the classic language of nationalist awakening, lay fully formed under the carapace of British rule. This dramatic literary device obscured what was in effect an attempted *putsch* by a small minority of the original Irish Volunteers.

At the end of the first decade of the 20th century, with the country “in its broad culture, more and more deeply absorbed into the United Kingdom”, it had appeared “that Ireland would have, before 1920, an autonomous government, led by John Redmond, putting in place a final settlement that would make the country a settled and contented part of His Majesty’s dominions”.<sup>12</sup> Unsurprisingly, when the revolution and civil war followed, “little of this affected more than the brass plates on the doors, and the heart of the machine continued to beat to the rhythms of Whitehall”.<sup>13</sup>

By the time of the 90th commemoration of the rising in 2006, it had been forgotten in the official Irish story<sup>14</sup> that what had disrupted the Home Rule scenario, uncomfortably, was the anti-democratic revolt of Ulster loyalism. As Charles Townshend noted in a text published in the run-up to the anniversary: “It was this armed threat that transformed and militarised the language of Irish politics as the Home Rule crisis unfolded”.<sup>15</sup> In his 1913 article ‘The north began’, widely seen as seminal in the formation of the Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill had welcomed



the emergence of the Ulster Volunteer Force, while days later Patrick Pearse had described himself similarly “glad that the Orangemen have armed, because it is a goodly thing to see arms in Irish hands”.<sup>16</sup>

What unfolded in Ireland in the context of an imperialist European war was a security dilemma much like that occasioned by the collapse of the Yugoslav state in the 1990s, in which paramilitarism provided the illusion of security amid ethnic polarisation.<sup>17</sup> Any idealistic, republican aspirations manifested in the Easter Rising were as often as not lost in the subsequent cycle of violent repression and reprisal – so well captured in Roddy Doyle’s *A Star Called Henry* – of subsequent years.

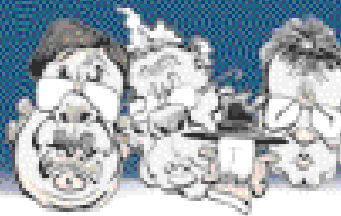
It was no basis on which to found a modern state legitimised in the only way that a modern state should be – by adherence to the universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Cultural nationalism filled the gap. As O’Mahony and Delanty contend:

The modern notion of the Republic tended to express the communitarian idea of a society defined by the unity of tradition along confessional lines: a civic idea thus became transformed into a culturally specific identity, with perpetually latent primordial elements, emphasising that only certain categories of the population would belong, being added later. Thus both the liberal notion of the state – as expressed in the Whig ideology of the Ascendancy – and

the revolutionary notion of the modern republic – as expressed in the Enlightenment notion of popular sovereignty – were rejected in favour of a cultural notion of the Republic defined by reference to a communitarian sense of nationhood.<sup>18</sup>

This exclusive nationalism, of which key elements were Eamon de Valera’s claim that Ireland had been “a nation from the dawn of history”<sup>19</sup> and William Butler Yeats’ rejection of modernity in favour of a return to the mythic Gaelic past,<sup>20</sup> succeeded in establishing an external frontier. It was one, however, that inevitably fell well short of the island as a whole, being incompatible with the industrialised and exporting north— epitomised by the world’s then largest spinning mill in York Street, Belfast, with its 55,000 spindles and 1,000 looms.<sup>21</sup> Despite the transformation of economic fortunes in recent decades, the suggestion by the Minister of Finance, Brian Lenihan, that ‘patriotic’ shoppers should stop before Newry indicates the frontier is still well embedded in the official mind.

The ideal scenario advanced by some during the second decade of the 20th century had been ‘home rule all round’, which would have preserved the unity of Ireland but which failed due to British state conservatism. It envisaged a wider decentralisation of governance, including devolution to Scotland and Wales, that was foreign to the state centralism which was vaunted by tradition in London. Its tantalising potential became



retrospectively evident as the 20th century closed, when unionist resistance to accommodation was eased by wider devolution alongside cooperation between London and Dublin. O'Mahony and Delanty argue that home rule all round represented "the great missed opportunity in Anglo-Irish relations".<sup>22</sup>

Instead, the frontier of partition was to be closed 'on the inside'.<sup>23</sup> Ireland was defined as agrarian and pious, against a materialist and degenerate England, and decades of clerical authoritarianism, censorship and a quixotically coercive language policy ensued.<sup>24</sup>

'Being Irish', the title of an article by Ciarán O'Kelly, meant in this context subscribing to a collectivised communitarian ideal, in contradiction to liberal-individualist values.<sup>25</sup> Independence had been claimed on cultural grounds rather than those of justice, and such claims were inherently intolerant of individual dissent, jeopardising as this did the essentialised representation of 'Irish Ireland'.<sup>26</sup> Within this world, Europe was to represent the perceived threat that "any loss of sovereignty will lead to a loss of cultural homogeneity".<sup>27</sup>

### Reconstructing Irishness

This is not, of course, the only possible way of being Irish. Pietra Costa stresses that "'nation' is not a given reality that only awaits the right name to emerge on the scene, as if there already existed a French, German or Italian ethnicity, a homogeneous class of individuals, to

which the term could be fitted like a glove to a hand".<sup>28</sup>

Indeed the political scientist Markus Kornprobst has shown how Irishness was subject to a 20th century reconstruction. He demonstrates, on the basis of Dáil debates and associated newspaper editorials, a shift from an Irishness conceived in terms of the colonial paradigm, characterised by a conservative Anglophobia and pre-eminently associated with de Valera, to a modern European version developed by Garret FitzGerald and Conor Cruise O'Brien but now widely accepted across the party spectrum.<sup>29</sup> The latter has been more conducive than the former to fostering reconciliation across the island as a whole.

In 2000 Tom Garvin was to detect a transition towards "a general Irish civic patriotism which does not need to attach itself to a religious or tribal identity".<sup>30</sup> This is in line with the wider notion of 'constitutional patriotism' advanced by Jürgen Habermas, where civic allegiance is given to democratic institutions, rather than to the nation<sup>31</sup> – Habermas is all too aware of where that led in his native Germany. In such a conception, Irishness can be affirmed positively, rather than being defined in opposition to a stereotyped 'other', while at the same time not suggesting that one's nation has a special providential mission distinguishing it from lesser mortals.

Constitutional patriotism is a notion as applicable at the transnational level of the European Union as the nation state. It is



*'No' campaigners celebrate victory in the Republic's June 2008 Lisbon Treaty referendum*

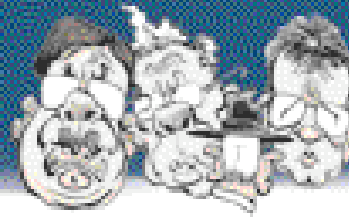
essential for multi-ethnic societies such as the Republic has become, with over 10% of the population 'non-Irish' according to the 2006 Census. Indeed, for all the travails of power-sharing in Northern Ireland,<sup>32</sup> even this shows how allegiance to (in this case regional) democratic institutions can be constructed in a divided society – in the sense that all parties, whatever their nationalistic predilections on either side, now at least have to pay lip-service to power-sharing devolution.

Clearly, in recent decades the Catholic leg of the Catholic nationalist stool on which Irishness conventionally rested has been severely weakened. In her comparative assessment of Irish and Greek nationalisms, Daphne Halikiopoulou has shown how in Greece the historic subordination of the Orthodox Church to the state and the continued presence of a perceived external enemy have made

religion central to nationalist mobilisation. By contrast, she argues, in the Republic of Ireland the historic supremacy of the Catholic Church over the state and the erosion of British-Irish antagonism have been associated with the secularisation of Irish national identity in the context of the loss of church authority associated in particular with the clerical child abuse scandals.<sup>33</sup>

The 'no' vote on the Lisbon treaty showed, however, the limits of this transition. The referendum vote in June 2008 came shortly before Ireland was hit by the full force of the implosion of global capital markets. It represented the worst possible time to dip into the isolationist discourse which had been so decisively rejected by Seán Lemass in his break with protectionist stagnation nearly half a century earlier. The Irish Government's response to the credit crisis the following September was a beggar-





my-neighbour guarantee to Irish banks, giving them an unfair comparative advantage, rather than following the wider European approach of recapitalisation (although it was eventually forced to take this route too).

A respected French commentator, Dominique Moïsi, linked the two events in a manner highlighting the severity of the loss of European goodwill on which so much of the Republic's last two decades of success have been based. He wrote: "The gold medal for selfishness may once more be given to the Irish, who have followed the ingratitude of their 'no' vote on the Lisbon treaty with absolute contempt towards the search for a collective solution to the financial crisis."<sup>34</sup>

While at home the government suggested that post-referendum options were open, that Europe needed to help and that haste should be made slowly, it quickly became clear from the reaction of foreign ministers in France and Germany that the Republic would have to endure a 'humiliating' Lisbon referendum rerun or face the other 26 member states moving on without it.<sup>35</sup> Oireachtas members heard from the (Irish) Secretary General of the European Commission, Catherine Day, that the Republic's reputation in Europe had been "tarnished", and from RTE's Brussels correspondent, Seán Whelan that the predominant reaction there to the Irish 'no' had been "incomprehension, incredulity, anger and cynicism".<sup>36</sup>

The Lisbon vote dramatically bore out the

earlier claim by Catherine Frost that the Republic had not yet entered a 'post-nationalist' phase.<sup>37</sup> For that to have been the case, she argued, the state would now be characterised by three features embodied in the civic republican and cosmopolitan variants of post-nationalism:

- relaxed citizenship membership,
- address of systemic inequalities, and
- increased public engagement.<sup>38</sup>

Frost suggested that the 2004 citizenship referendum rolling back the more open access to Irish citizenship signalled in the Belfast Agreement, the sustained inequalities associated with the Celtic Tiger and the ineffectiveness of the little known Democracy Commission in 2005<sup>39</sup> indicated that none of these three features had become embedded. That the state still had difficulty dealing with diversity was shown by its decision to abolish the independent National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), ostensibly on financial grounds.

Analysis by Richard Sinnott of the Lisbon 'no' found that, apart from lack of confident knowledge of the issues, a second major factor, as detected in *Irish Times* polling, was a desire "to keep Ireland's power and identity". He linked this with evidence from the spring 2007 Eurobarometer survey, which had asked: "In the near future do you see yourself as Irish only, Irish and European, European and Irish, or European only?" 59% opted for an exclusively Irish identity – a nationalist stance only trumped in its insularity by UK respondents.<sup>40</sup>

### Limits of republicanism

So is the way ahead beyond nationalism to reinvest in civic republicanism or to look to the cosmopolitan alternative? The re-interment in Dublin in 2001 of the bones of 10 republicans who died during the war of independence and the restoration of the military parade in O'Connell Street for the 2006 Easter commemoration suggested the civic republican route was being pursued by the state. A more reflective approach to 1916 might consider that, like a sepia image of the event, it should be allowed to fade into history—though not be airbrushed from it.

Republicanism may have exhausted its political repertoire. With its origins in the American and French revolutions, in principle it trumpets freedom and equality, giving it the long shelf life it has enjoyed. In an Irish context, and internationally, it has held the moral high ground over unionism, which has tended to manifest itself in the integralist-nationalist, conservative form epitomised by the former South Down MP Enoch Powell<sup>41</sup> or the Protestant fundamentalism embodied by Rev Ian Paisley.

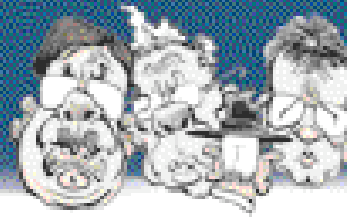
Yet the contemporary US (and in this the Republic, like the UK, is close behind) is one of the most unequal states in the developed world, and one in which—until the dramatic election as president of Barack Obama—swathes of its largely black and Hispanic poor did not or could not exercise the basic right to vote. France, meanwhile, has found itself unable to resolve the challenge of its

ghettoised *banlieus* within an official discourse which refuses to recognise ethnic minority affiliations coming between *le citoyen* and *l'état*. And Ireland, North as well as South, has had to come to terms within only the last decade or so with the substantial inward migration associated with the recent phase of globalisation.

Insofar as it treats all citizens in a manner philosophically abstracted from their individual diversity, as homogeneous 'political man', the discourse of republicanism has been stretched to the limit as that diversity has expanded in reality. All will assimilate, republicanism assumes, into 'one nation under God'; all will come to respect the 'values of the Republic'. And this can readily acquire an authoritarian ring. As Iseult Holohan explains the republican view: "The primacy of the public means that duties come before rights."<sup>42</sup> And as Garvin argues, "a certain exclusiveness has always run through traditional republican political thought".<sup>43</sup>

Republicanism, implying as it does that the views of the disengaged can be discarded, can even come to justify an elitism of the politically engaged. And it can fail to see how a genuine equality of citizens is only compatible with a perspective of integration, not assimilation, in which dialogue resolves the challenge of diversity and the state arbitrates impartially between the competing claims made upon it.

Such impartiality is impossible, for example, where the principal public



services of education and secondary health care are controlled by or imbued with the ethos of a particular church. Hence the crisis in Balbriggan in north county Dublin in September 2007, when the equation between public and Catholic education required the opening of an emergency school, in effect for black children.

In August 2007, the Minister of State with responsibility for integration, Conor Lenihan, spoke in assimilationist mode when he suggested foreign nationals needed to understand the ways things were done in Ireland. He said: "When the President and Ministers travel to the Middle East, they accept the cultural requirements of the country and the culture they are operating in. It is a vice-versa situation with regard to Ireland."<sup>44</sup>

It is for this reason that the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, launched by the 47 member state foreign ministers in May 2008, distinguished the interculturalist approach from that of assimilation – and, indeed, from the now also discredited UK philosophy of multiculturalism, which met its nadir in the 2001 riots between young whites and Asians in northern English mill towns. Interculturalism privileges dialogue across communal boundaries and is committed to integration as a two-way street, in which 'majorities' as well as 'minorities' are transformed.<sup>45</sup>

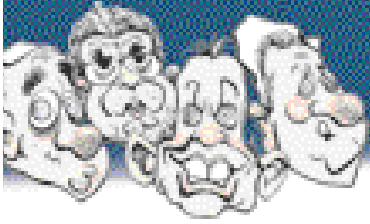
An example of what this means in practice is the Intercultural Football Plan published by the Football Association of Ireland in mid-2007. The plan argues that

the universal nature of the game and of the norms of 'fair play' on which it is, in principle, based, dovetail with intercultural ideals.<sup>46</sup> Claiming that feeling 'at home' in Irish football is part and parcel of feeling at home in Ireland, it contends: "The FAI wants everyone resident in the State to feel they can spontaneously enjoy the successes – and endure the failures – of the national team. This is an example of how integration in football can be a building-block of integration in the wider society."<sup>47</sup> And the FAI has translated this into a series of concrete intercultural initiatives at all levels of the game.

### **Emergence of cosmopolitanism**

If republicanism is running out of political steam, cosmopolitanism is coming into its own. Delanty and O'Mahony argue that it is gaining credibility as an antidote to 'destructive nationalism'.<sup>48</sup> David Held and his colleagues assert that "in the millennium ahead each citizen of a state will have to learn to become a 'cosmopolitan citizen' as well: that is, a person capable of mediating between national traditions, communities of fate and alternative forms of life". Citizenship in the future must encompass "dialogue with the traditions and discourse of others with the aim of expanding the horizons of one's own framework of meaning, and increasing the scope of mutual understanding".<sup>49</sup>

This entails a world where 'multiple citizenships' are possible – as in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement referring to the right of everyone in Northern Ireland to choose to be "Irish or British,



or both". Far from cosmopolitanism being merely "the class consciousness of frequent travellers",<sup>50</sup> we can "look to the unspectacular, practical, everyday life activities that allow movement beyond group identities to the business of simply living together and solving practical problems collectively".<sup>51</sup>

This chimes with the aim set out in the UK Government's 2005 policy framework on 'community relations' in Northern Ireland, *A Shared Future*: "the establishment over time of a normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially."<sup>52</sup> That aim was designed<sup>53</sup> to embody the political

philosophy of cosmopolitanism as articulated by Held – which may partly explain why *A Shared Future* was shelved by the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein when they became the dominant governing parties after devolution was renewed in 2007.

According to Held, cosmopolitanism is based on three premises:

- **egalitarian individualism**, which treats individuals, not states or 'communities', as the unit of moral concern and recognises that each individual is equally worthy of respect and consideration;
- **reciprocal recognition**, which involves acknowledgment by everyone of this condition of equal worth; and



## Leading Ireland's Research Revolution

**In its 25 years, DCU's determination to be a radical leader of change has established the university as a significant catalyst in Ireland's social and economic development.**

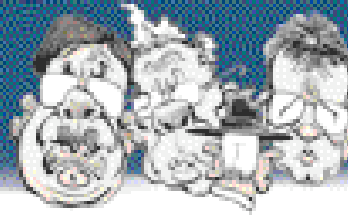
Research at DCU cuts across the traditional boundaries between academic disciplines and involves collaboration with a broad range of funding agencies, institutions, non-governmental agencies and private companies.

**DCU Research Institutes and Centres of Excellence include:**

- Biomedical Diagnostics Institute • National Centre for Sensor Research • National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology • National Centre for Plasma Science and Technology • Research Institute in Networks and Communications Engineering
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- International Centre for Neurotherapeutics • Centre for International Studies (CIS)
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- **impartial treatment**, which requires public authorities to treat the claims advanced by individuals and associations on principles on which all can act.<sup>54</sup>

It offers a philosophy not only appropriate to the challenges of Northern Ireland – just think of the relevance of ‘impartial treatment’ to the troubled history of the region – but to democratic societies generally in the 21st century. Nor is it a philosophy ‘foreign’ to a wider Irish context. Indeed, in his nuanced rewriting of the 20th century Irish story, Diarmaid Ferriter has done a service in reinserting at the heart of the narrative many often marginalised figures – Tom Kettle, Louie Bennett, Seán O’Casey, Seán O Faoláin, Samuel Beckett and Hubert Butler among them – who in their various ways embodied a cosmopolitan sense of what Irishness might mean.<sup>55</sup>

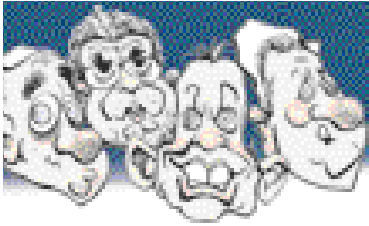
Cosmopolitanism makes a fundamental break with homogeneous conceptions of national identity: if all Ferriter’s cosmopolitan characters could have been gathered into one room at the same time, they might have felt themselves kindred spirits but the one certain outcome is that they would have argued. And it recognises that no national ‘tradition’ can be set in aspic in the face of the displacements effected by capitalist development and global migration – a theme so well explored, in an Irish context, in the novels of Dermot Bolger.

Cosmopolitanism is compatible with the ‘individualistic concept of society’ which,

as the late Norberto Bobbio pointed out, is the unit of all democratic constitutions. It places the citizen centre stage, not the collectivised ‘imagined community’ – with all the consequences that had, in Ireland and Yugoslavia, in the last century. It does not therefore abandon social solidarity but, on the contrary, makes it possible in heterogeneous societies through recognition of our common humanity and the reciprocal obligations which arise. Interestingly, as the Republic has become more diverse in recent years, public opinion has also become more egalitarian, according to a recent survey commissioned by the think tank TASC.<sup>57</sup>

Critically, cosmopolitanism replaces nationalism by a project of constitutional tolerance. Ulrich Beck contends that the ‘cosmopolitan state’ is “grounded in the principle of the state’s neutrality towards nationality and allows national identities to exist side by side through the principle of constitutional tolerance”.<sup>58</sup> It was eventually to be recognised after the religious wars in Europe (albeit very belatedly in Ireland) that only the separation of church and state could guarantee freedom of conscience. By the same token, in the wake of the nationalistic wars of the 20th century, the European Union has established – within and between the member states – a peaceful regime associated with the separation of nation and state.<sup>59</sup>

In recent times, the Irish state has sought to manage diversity by supporting a relatively successful policy of interculturalism in the Republic but a



contrasting multiculturalist approach of 'parity of esteem' in the North. As in the Netherlands,<sup>60</sup> where it led to the emergence of the anti-Muslim politician Pim Fortuyn and the Islamist killing of the film-maker Theo van Gogh, multiculturalism in Northern Ireland has inadvertently reinforced ghettoisation and intolerance, symbolised in Belfast by the proliferating 'peace walls'.<sup>61</sup> Now we have a worrying vacuum on the whole island, with the expiry in 2008 of the National Action Plan Against Racism and the abolition of the NCCRI<sup>62</sup> and the long-awaited devolved successor to *A Shared Future* still to appear.<sup>63</sup>

The chance to retain a single political jurisdiction in Ireland, it is now clear nearly a century on, was lost with the failure of 'home rule all round'. The beauty of cosmopolitanism is that it allows a united approach to be adopted across the two jurisdictions to the otherwise insoluble problem of multi-national diversity, based on the pursuit of constitutional tolerance across the island.

Irishness in this context will be recognised as neither unchanging nor exclusive – it will be accessible to any citizens willing to embrace constitutional patriotism, whatever other national identities they may retain. It will coexist and overlap with Britishness (and other identities) in the North, rather than sustaining a war of attrition against it. And it is hoped that people voting in the second referendum on Lisbon in autumn 2009 will appreciate that Europe is not a conspiracy to destroy Irish identity, but a transnational governance arrangement

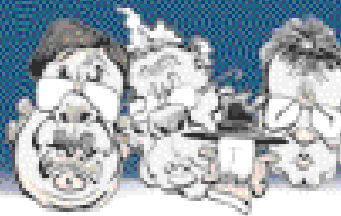
which protects us from the horrors to which aggressive nationalism and intolerance can lead – as we, of all Europeans, should know.

### Conclusion

Irishness came to be defined in the 19th century by the separation of the tectonic plates of Protestantism and Catholicism. They separated as they became associated with the connotations of 'Irish' and 'British' and, even more antagonistically, 'nationalist' versus 'unionist', with in each case the ethnic protagonists embodying the self-regard encapsulated in Sigmund Freud's notion of the "narcissism of minor difference". The National Schools, for instance, which arose with mass schooling, were, because of church opposition, to be anything but.<sup>64</sup>

As with Lebanese nationalism, which counterposed itself to French colonialism, Irish nationalism was self-declaredly progressive and secular, when in reality it became deeply imbued with communalist associations.<sup>65</sup> The global ethnic conflict expert Stefan Wolff explains the consequences simply: "Different ethnic identities can, and in many cases do, peacefully coexist in the same state; different nationalisms cannot".<sup>66</sup>

That antagonism is for most people in these islands now largely irrelevant. But it is sustained in the North through the meaningless, in the sense of inoperable, slogan of 'parity of esteem' between unionists and nationalists. The bizarre logic of that slogan has been for the Irish state to elect to mark the even more



brutal and inhuman 'blood sacrifice' of the Somme alongside the Easter Rising.

A cosmopolitan redefinition of Irishness would move in precisely the opposite direction. At its core it is "the inclusion of the other in one's own life".<sup>67</sup> Thus a cosmopolitan approach would not be associated with restrictions on immigration to Ireland motivated by 'security' concerns, as in the 2008 Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, the subject of criticism from the Irish Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Commissioner on Human Rights.<sup>68</sup>

In education, a cosmopolitan perspective would seek to reverse the 19th century concession to clerical control. In May 2007 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, part of the Council of Europe, called on the Republic of Ireland to "promote multi-denominational or non-denominational schools and adopt the necessary legislation to that end".<sup>69</sup> The community school is an important innovation in that regard but looks set to remain, like integrated education in the North, a marginal one.

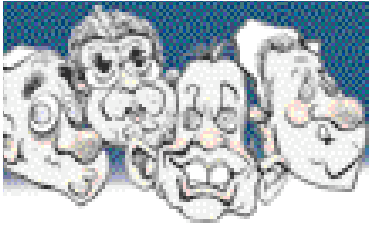
Most radically, it would mean abandoning partisanship towards the nationalist 'side' in Northern Ireland, officially secured in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, in favour of a commitment to long-overdue reconciliation within Northern Ireland, as well as between the two parts of the island. Catherine O'Donnell has painstakingly demonstrated that under governments led by Fianna Fail progress

in the North was hindered, rather than helped, by that party's commitment to pursuit of a nationalist consensus until shortly before the 1998 Belfast Agreement.<sup>70</sup>

Cosmopolitanism may have been historically associated in the public mind with elitism and idealism.<sup>71</sup> Yet, ironically, it is the only practical way to deal with today's world of 'really existing cosmopolitanization'.<sup>72</sup> Nowhere is the choice between nationalist and cosmopolitan definitions of Irishness more stark than on the European canvas.

The success of decades of European integration has rested on the replacement of the old, zero-sum game of clashing state sovereignties by a positive-sum game of transnational intermeshing.<sup>73</sup> The failure of the Lisbon 'yes' campaign to put across this important point effectively led to the diplomatic debacle of the 'no' vote, following unsubstantiated conspiratorial claims about the many demons Europe was apparently set to unleash on the Irish people.

It also led to the perverse, post-referendum outcome where the retention of one commissioner per state, contrary to Lisbon, has been presented by the government as a victory. By reinforcing lowest common denominator inter-governmentalism within the EU, not only will this debilitate the capacity of an expanding Europe to act in a concerted way on the global stage, at a time when this has never been more essential. It is also contrary to the interest of small



states in a European Commission whose members do *not* see themselves as mere national representatives: the Commission, committed to the overall European *public* interest, is meant to offset the capacity of the large states to dominate the EU via the Council of Ministers. Nationalism, perversely, is thus against Ireland's national interest in Europe, which would be much better pursued through an approach of 'cosmopolitan realism'.<sup>74</sup>

True, a 'cosmopolitanised' Irishness will no longer be defined by its distinctiveness, which some may find threatening. But, with the Celtic Tiger having run into the ground, its great attraction is that it allows us to redefine ourselves internally in terms of our mutual obligations to one another. In the

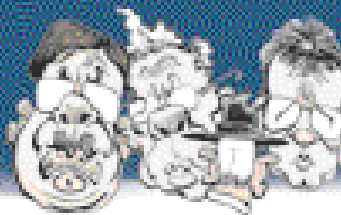
face of the stark choice between a savage retrenchment of the public realm and a strengthened fiscal effort rooted in social solidarity, that realisation will be critical to what kind of Irish society emerges from these turbulent times.

**Robin Wilson, a former editor of *Fortnight* magazine and former director of the Belfast-based 'think tank' Democratic Dialogue, co-drafted the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the FAI Intercultural plan. He also co-conducted the northern leg of the Democratic Audit executed by TASC.<sup>75</sup> His PhD thesis is on ethnonationalism and consociationalism in Northern Ireland.<sup>76</sup> He is an Irish citizen.**

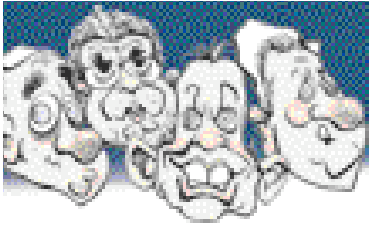
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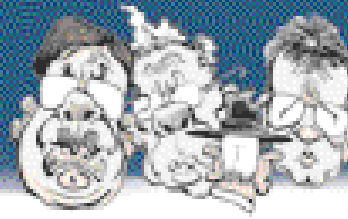




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*Staff of the Centre for Cross Border Studies with the old Armagh Infirmary building which houses the Centre's offices in the background. From left to right: Mairead Hughes, Eimear Donnelly, Patricia Clarke, Andy Pollak, Annmarie O'Kane, Joe Shiels, Patricia McAllister and John Driscoll (director, International Centre for Local and Regional Development)*

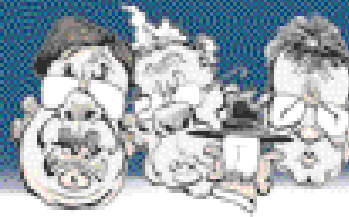
## THE CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES

March 2009

**The Centre for Cross Border Studies, founded in September 1999 and based in Armagh and Dublin, researches and develops cooperation across the Irish border in education, training, health, ICT, the economy, public administration, agriculture, planning, the environment and a range of other practical areas.**

The Centre is an independent company limited by guarantee (UK charity no. XR 31047) and is owned jointly by Queen's University Belfast, Dublin City University and the Workers' Educational Association (Northern Ireland). Its principal financial contributors in the past year have been the EU Peace Two programme and the Irish Department of Education and Science. The Centre has also raised a large proportion of its income through sponsorship and selling its research and consultancy services to government and other agencies.

Controversy about relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the constitutional field now obscures less than ever before the broad consensus that exists in both jurisdictions about the value of cross-border cooperation on practical issues. This holds that a low level of contact and communication across the Irish border damages the well-being of both parts of the island, and there is a clear need to identify and overcome the present barriers to cooperation and mutual understanding.



## PURPOSE

The pragmatic view, that cooperation should take place where it brings real benefits to both parts of the island, is weakened by an additional factor: there has been too little research to date on how this practical cooperation is to be achieved, and how the outcomes of such research should be developed. The Centre for Cross Border Studies – itself a unique expression of cross-border cooperation – provides an objective, university-based setting for policy research into and development of such cooperation.

### **The Centre is a policy research and development institute, whose purpose is to:**

- Identify gaps in cross-border information, research and mutual learning in Ireland;
- Commission and publish research on issues related to opportunities for and obstacles to cross border cooperation in all fields of society and the economy;
- Host events at which research findings can be discussed and disseminated, and at which policy formation in the area of cross border cooperation can be developed;
- Present the findings of such research and development projects to the European Commission, the two governments, the Northern Ireland Executive, employer, trade union and social partnership bodies, and the wider public;
- Manage and provide administrative

support for cross-border programmes and organisations which have a strong education, research and development dimension;

- Provide training programmes for public officials and others in North-South cooperation in Ireland;
- Provide sources of comprehensive and accurate information about North-South and cross-border cooperation in Ireland.

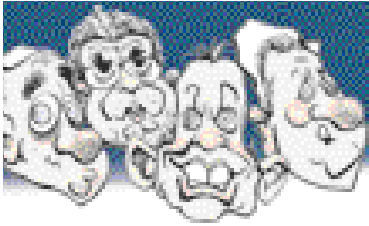
## WEBSITES

### CCBS HOUSE WEBSITE

[www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie)



Usage of the Centre's home website has increased steadily since 2003, the first year for which statistics are available. Since 2004 the number of unique visitors and the number of visits have increased by 300% and 290% respectively. The number of page views has risen by over 330% and the average number of hits by has gone up by nearly 260% in the six year period up to the end of 2008. Visitors came predominantly from the



Year (Monthly average)	Unique Visitors	Visits	Page views	Hits
2003	1619	2161	4802	14373
2004	1453	2084	9178	18981
2005	2566	3603	8127	24747
2006	3481	4915	10149	30534
2007	3969	5432	12041	32207
2008	4340	6060	15930	37045

United States, followed by the Republic of Ireland, the UK, and the rest of the EU.

**BORDER IRELAND**

[www.borderireland.info](http://www.borderireland.info)

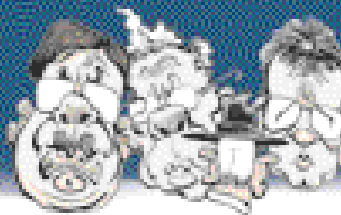


**Border Ireland is the first ever online searchable database to provide access to the full range of information on North-South and cross-border issues in Ireland, covering education, health, agriculture, transport, the environment, tourism, culture, mobility issues, business and community development.**

Formally launching it in March 2006, the then Irish Minister for Finance, Mr Brian Cowen TD, said: "This website will be the keystone for information provision that will enable us all to meet future challenges, be they economic, social or educational. I would encourage everyone who wishes to benefit from a cross-border approach to their activities to make use of this invaluable website."

By February 2009 Border Ireland had documented (online) the details of 3,776 North-South and cross-border activities, 1,782 organisations, 2,048 publications, and 2,334 individual contacts (people).

With funding from the EU Peace II programme, the Centre developed Border Ireland to centralise the very large amount of uncoordinated and fragmented information about North-South cooperation and the Irish border region. This has involved the creation of an information capture strategy and strong working relationships with a network of over 200 information providers from all government departments, North and South; the managing authorities for all EU programmes; relevant charitable



foundations on the island; research coordinators in all higher education institutions, and key community and voluntary, and business leaders.

Border Ireland is available online at **www.borderireland.info** where people can search through the information by year, sector and location, and view an organisation's history of involvement in cross-border cooperation.

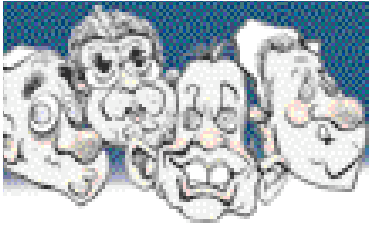
The independent evaluation of Border Ireland Phase 1 (May 2003-June 2006: David Clarke Consulting) highlighted its work as the "product of the highest standards in information sourcing and IT management expertise on the island". It called the website "one of the most important projects supported under the Peace II Programme in terms of its potential long-term impact beyond the period of the Programme's support, as an increasingly significant and valuable online resource tool for the collation and sharing of information and good practice relating to cross-border development and cooperation".

A second 2006-2008 phase of the project was implemented through support provided under the Peace II Extension Programme. The key objective for this second phase was to develop Border Ireland as the recognised portal for information on and communication about cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland. During 2008 Border Ireland recorded over 40,000 unique visitors with 1,515 subscribers to a new discussion forum called **Border Ireland/Discuss**.

This new interactive discussion forum was developed to disseminate *Border Ireland Briefings*, provide responses to 'A Note from the Next Door Neighbours' (see below) and provide updates on progress in collecting data for and maintaining this very large database. The last of the Border Ireland Briefings was completed before the end of the Peace II-funded second phase in August 2008. Briefings now on the site are: a guide to cross-border cooperation in the health services; cooperation between public libraries; a guide to the geographical location of cross-border cooperation activities; an overview of North-South and cross-border cooperation in the Common Chapter of the two jurisdictions' development plans; 'Who's Who' in North-South and cross-border cooperation; and overviews of North-South and cross-border cooperation in agriculture, economic development, tourism and transport.

In 2008 Border Ireland received a facelift, modifying its presentation to place the **Media Centre**, featuring regularly updated media reports on North-South and cross-border issues, at the centre of the information provided. The Media Centre is now the most popular page on the site, and as of February 2008 contains 1,449 news articles.

The Centre has also used the Border Ireland database in partnership with the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at NUI Maynooth to develop *Mapping Programmes*, an online



*The public launch of [www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info) in Derry/Londonderry by Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA in May 2008. From left to right: Mr Tom Hanney, Southern Joint Secretary, North/South Ministerial Council; Alderman Drew Thompson, Mayor of Derry; Mr Pat Colgan, Chief Executive, Special EU Programmes Body; Dr Patricia Clarke, CCBS Research Manager; Mr McGuinness; Councillor Alex Baird, Mayor of Fermanagh; Ms Mary Bunting, Northern Joint Secretary, NSMC.*

spatial mapping initiative to show the location of cross-border infrastructure funded through the EU's INTERREG and other programmes.

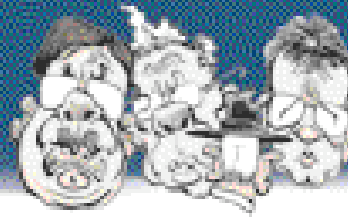
## **BORDER PEOPLE**

### **[www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)**

In early 2007 the Centre for Cross Border Studies was commissioned by the North/South Ministerial Council to develop a new online information portal to provide useful citizens information for people crossing the border to live, work, study or retire. This new cross border mobility website was created with technical assistance from DID, the web and design team of the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel, and funded by the EU Peace Two programme.

The prototype website was officially launched (initially as [www.crossbordermobility.info](http://www.crossbordermobility.info)) in October 2007 at a meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council in Ballymascanlon, Co. Louth by the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Dr Ian Paisley MP MLA, the Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern TD. Work continued on the site, and it was launched to the public as [www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info) in Dublin in April 2008 (by television presenter Clare Byrne) and in Derry/Londonderry in May 2008 (by Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness). It received widespread publicity throughout Northern Ireland and the Southern border region, including a full page in the *Belfast Telegraph*. An all-Ireland and international marketing company, Weber





Shandwick, was retained to publicise the initiative, and in May and June billboards advertising the new website featured in many border towns while leaflets were distributed through council offices, citizen advice centres, libraries and shopping centres.

The new public information website – the first of its kind on the island of Ireland – is structured around the four themes of Commute, Work, Live, Study. It includes in-depth information on a range of areas in both Irish jurisdictions, including taxation, social security, job seeking, qualifications, health, education, housing, banking and telecommunications. The website content is continuously being updated in consultation with Borderwise, the cross-border advice and information service provided by Citizens Advice Northern

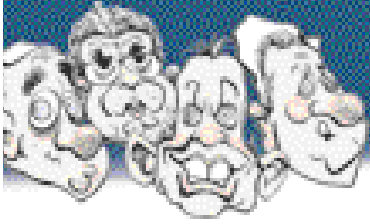
*Patricia Clarke and Clare Byrne, television presenter, at the Dublin launch*



Ireland and the Citizens Information Board in the Republic of Ireland. The Border People website ([www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)) is a clear example of cross-border cooperation at its most pragmatic and sensible: a means of making government departments, information and advice providers and the general public in both jurisdictions more knowledgeable about and thus effective in dealing with practical obstacles to cross-border mobility. Common difficulties faced by people moving across the border to live, work, study or retire include knowing where to start when inquiring about specific cross-border issues; the absence of advisors in public offices who know the two jurisdictions well; the need for information leaflets in 'plain English' for cross-border workers; the unfamiliar requirements of having to complete self-assessment tax forms in the other jurisdiction; a lack of knowledge about how educational qualifications translate across the border; the absence of portable pensions, and the difficulties of accessing information about social welfare and health care entitlements.

There appears to be an untapped market for information and advice on cross-border mobility issues. The impact of a professional marketing campaign is shown in the increase in the number of online visitors to the site during a three month marketing campaign last year: from 6,000 visitors in April 2008 to well over 10,000 visitors in June 2008.

A second phase of the website will be developed by the Centre in 2009-2011 in partnership with the North/South

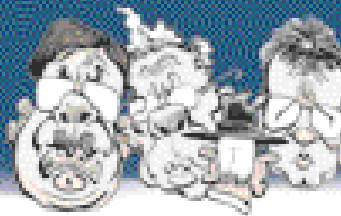


Ministerial Council and funded by the EU's INTERREG IVA programme (see also page 135). The site will be further developed as the central access point for all cross-border mobility information in Ireland, signposting individuals to original sources of information, in consultation with Citizens Advice NI and Citizens Information Board (RoI). New features will allow a much higher level of public feedback, and for the systematic analysis of that feedback. A user group of cross-border mobility information providers and users – including citizens advice bureaux, government agencies, health organisations, cross-border networks, community groups, business groups and individual firms – will be developed and expanded. The initial three-month marketing campaign will be extended into the 2009-2011 period.

### **A NOTE FROM THE NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOURS**

Since September 2006 the Centre has been sending an opinionated monthly e-column, *A Note from the Next Door Neighbours*, to a growing audience of subscribers: over 6,000 at the last count. These Notes have provoked enthusiastic feedback and debate.

The 29 'Notes' so far have covered the following issues: whether North-South cooperation actually works to bring about reconciliation between people in the two jurisdictions; the inaccurate reporting of North-South cooperation in the media; the possible re-opening of the Ulster Canal; the importance of EU funding to cross-border cooperation in Ireland; the need for Northern Ireland to attract back its highly educated and skilled emigrants; how Ireland, North and South, could play a distinctive role in combating world hunger; hopes after the March 2007 Northern Ireland election; the cross-border role of teacher education; Rev Ian Paisley as a champion of North-South cooperation; the contribution of Norwegian human rights lawyer, Torkel Opsahl, to the peace process; the need for civil society groups in both Irish jurisdictions to talk to one another; a possible high-speed rail bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland; the row over families in Donegal sending their children to Derry schools; why higher education students don't cross the border to study any more; more about barriers to cross-border higher education; the resurrection of Clones; whether the Irish border region could become the best border region in Europe; how the Centre for Cross Border Studies is becoming involved in work in Africa; an upbeat message from the chairman of the Centre; reconciliation initiatives in Monaghan and Armagh; anti-racism and anti-sectarianism work in primary schools in County Antrim and the Southern border region; cross-border cooperators say 'Yes' to the Lisbon Treaty; cross-community gaelic games; the value of



having both a united Ireland and a United Kingdom at the same time; statistics which show the commonalities between North and South; North-South cooperation during the recession; why the concept of an 'island of Ireland' economy is still a valid one; the 'patriotism' of cross-border shopping; and the work of a Monaghan priest in cross-border reconciliation.

These columns have been reported in the *Irish Times*, *Irish News*, *Derry Journal*, *Northern Standard* (Monaghan), *Scotsman*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Sunday Post* (Scotland) and on RTE, BBC Scotland, Border Television and local radio stations in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. They also appear on the celebrated website of British-Irish and Northern Irish issues Slugger O'Toole (<http://sluggerotoole.com>)

The columns can also be accessed at [www.crossborder.ie/home/index/ndn/index.php](http://www.crossborder.ie/home/index/ndn/index.php)

### CURRENT AND RECENTLY COMPLETED RESEARCH AND EXCHANGE PROJECTS

#### Immigration Emigration Racism and Sectarianism Schools Project

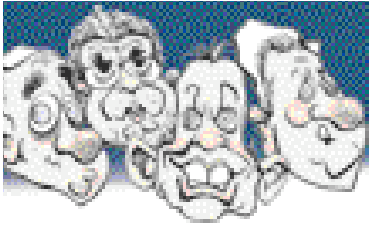
The Immigration, Emigration, Racism and Sectarianism (IERS) Schools Project was a two year project which ran from September 2006 to June 2008. It was created,



developed and managed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies and funded by the EU Peace II (extension) Programme. It brought together over 300 children aged 9-14 from 12 schools – six Protestant and Catholic schools (upper primary and lower secondary) in County Antrim and County Derry/Londonderry and six Catholic and Protestant schools (upper primary and lower secondary) in Louth and Monaghan – to learn about the cultures associated with Protestantism and Catholicism and with the new immigrant communities who are becoming numerous in both regions. The Irish children also learned that they have something important in common with each other and with the new ethnic community children: they are all from societies which have seen large-scale emigration. This project produced a set of high-class teaching materials for the 9-14 age group in both jurisdictions entitled 'People are People all over the World.' The coordinator was Marie Hoeritzauer.

In his August 2008 report, the independent evaluator called the IERS project "distinctive and significant in terms of its breadth of thematic scope, and its efforts to address difficult and potentially sensitive issues with honesty and openness." The North Eastern Education and Library Board's Advisory Officer, Michael Graham, said:

*This project has been a tremendous learning experience for the schools involved. Migration is something that we hear a lot of today, but in reality it has long been a major part of our*



*Children from schools in Antrim, Derry/Londonderry, Louth and Monaghan taking part in an Immigration Emigration Racism and Sectarianism Schools project 'residential' in Gartan Outdoor Education Centre, Co Donegal*

*experience, culture and heritage in these islands. Equipping our young people with such knowledge and understanding is of great benefit in helping them to appreciate such historical development, to know the world they live in now, and to form positive relationships with others from differing backgrounds and cultures. I would wish to commend the hard work and creativity of the project organisers and the schools themselves.*

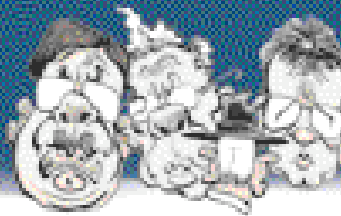
### **North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project (Year Five)**

In March 2009 the North-South Student Teacher Exchange project will enter its fifth year with the latest exchange of 20 students to do a key part of their

*Directors of Teaching Practice Ms Gail Eason, Stranmillis University College and Ms Claire Connolly, St Mary's University College with student teachers at the January 2009 North-South Student Teacher Exchange 'orientation day' in Froebel College of Education, Blackrock, Co Dublin.*

assessed teaching practice in schools in the other Irish jurisdiction. The partners with the Centre in this project are the seven colleges of primary education on the island: Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College in Belfast; St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Marino Institute of Education, Froebel College of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education in Dublin; and Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. 123 student teachers have taken part in this exchange project since it was initiated in 2003. Previous





exchanges were funded by the EU Peace Programme; the 2009 exchange will be funded by the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)( see also pages 124-126).

In October 2008 a study by Dr Maeve Martin of NUI Maynooth on the impact of the exchange on the personal attitudes and professional practice of the student teachers who had taken part in it between 2003 and 2007 was completed. Dr Martin concluded:

*This project has been a great success in terms of the enduring positive dispositions it has helped to develop among the beneficiaries, the young teachers. These have included: greater interest in peace and reconciliation issues; greater consciousness of the demands of multicultural classrooms; greater knowledge of the other jurisdiction's education system and curriculum; the invaluable experience gained from learning from skilled teachers in the other jurisdiction; and a greatly increased sense of personal worth and confidence gained through participation in the exchange.*

She called the project "a courageous, inclusive and groundbreaking exchange" and "an experience that has been transformational" for the student teachers involved.

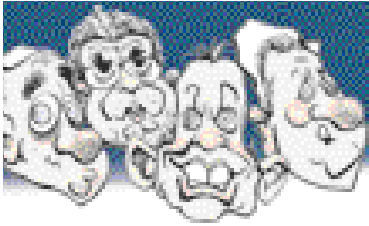
## CURRENT TRAINING PROJECTS



*Cooperation Ireland Chief Executive Mr Tony Kennedy presents Mary Whelan of the Department of Education and Science with her course certificate*

### North-South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme

Between May and September 2008 the Centre – together with its partners, Cooperation Ireland and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Northern Ireland's leading provider of training to the public sector – organised a fifth training course for civil and public servants working on North-South and cross-border issues in North-South bodies, government departments, local authorities and other public agencies in the two Irish jurisdictions. The final course was over-subscribed: it enrolled 39 officials instead of the intended 30 (with seven still turned away), and over 50% of these were from central government departments (this was compared to only



15% central government officials on the first two courses in 2005). The intake included senior officials such as the Chief Executive of NI-CO, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Northern Ireland, the Director of the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation, the Deputy Secretary to the Irish President and senior inspectors in the Irish Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Department of Education and Science.

There are currently over 700 officials working directly in North-South and cross-border co-operation on the island of Ireland. There are few opportunities for such people to undertake induction or training courses to work in this new, complex and sensitive area.

The courses, which take place over five-six days during a four month period, feature four modules: Introduction to North-South co-operation; North-South public finance and governance issues; North-South economic and business co-operation; and cross-border co-operation at local authority (NGO) and community level.

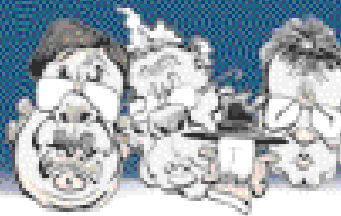
The programme has featured prestigious guest lecturers including Sir George Quigley, chairman of Short Brothers (Bombardier Aerospace Group); North/South Ministerial Council joint secretaries, Mary Bunting and Tom Hanney; head of the Northern Ireland Review of Public Administration, Greg McConnell; director of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland, Dr Jane Wilde; Fermanagh businessman and former GAA president, Peter Quinn; chief executive of

the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, Dr Duncan Morrow; director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Avila Kilmurray; Professor John Bradley, formerly of the Economic and Social Research Institute; and the chief executives of four North-South bodies – Liam Nellis from InterTradelreland, Pat Colgan from the Special EU Programmes Body, Martin Higgins from the Food Safety Promotion Board and Derick Anderson from the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission.

In October 2007 the partners published *The Wind across the Border*, a handsomely produced compilation of the six best written assignments carried out by teams of trainees (paired on a North-South basis) from the four courses up to that date. In his foreword to the book, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern TD, said:

*What these young public servants are doing is truly pioneering. Here is the pith and substance of what good government is meant to be about. These essays all outline fresh new ideas, clearly laid out, about how practical cross-border and all-island cooperation can make a real difference to improving the lives of the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland.*

The Centre, CIPFA and Cooperation Ireland are planning a sixth course in late 2009.



## CURRENT ADMINISTRATION PROJECTS

The Centre has filled an important niche by providing administrative support to North-South and cross-border initiatives, particularly in the field of education. Many cross-border projects are sustained largely through EU funding and the commitment of enthusiastic individuals, and when the money and enthusiasm runs out their absence of a proper administrative structure often dooms them to early closure. The Centre offers this cross-border administrative structure, and a detailed knowledge of support mechanisms in both Irish jurisdictions, which can ensure such projects' longer-term sustainability.

## UNIVERSITIES IRELAND

**universities  
ireland**  
Promoting Irish Universities

The Centre acts as the secretariat for Universities Ireland (UI), set up in 2003 to promote co-operation and collaboration between the nine universities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Its chairman for the 2008-2010 period is Professor Richard Barnett, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ulster.

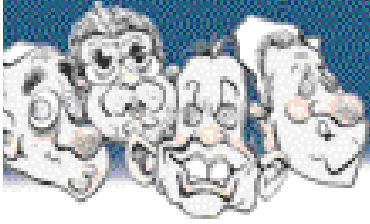
In the past year the two major initiatives launched by Universities Ireland in 2005 and 2007 – the North-South Postgraduate Scholarship scheme and the Irish-African Partnership for Research

Capacity Building (IAPRCB) – have been further developed. The Taoiseach, Brian Cowen TD, presented five masters and PhD scholarships to students – three from the North and two from the South – at a ceremony in Trinity College Dublin in October 2008. The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building held successful workshops at Dublin City University and Entebbe in Uganda, and carried out an unprecedented 'stakeholder consultation' with over 300 academics and researchers to identify opportunities for and constraints to development research in the 13 partner universities in Ireland, North and South, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi.

## NORTH-SOUTH POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2008 five scholarships were awarded under this scheme, which is a collaboration between Universities Ireland and the Joint Business Council of the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC) and the Confederation of British Industry (Northern Ireland). The scholarships were co-funded by Universities Ireland (with Dublin Institute of Technology) and five business firms in Belfast and Dublin: Belfast City Airport, Arthur Cox, Dublin Port, Healy Group and RPS Group. For the first time they were also open to Irish students who had done their undergraduate courses in English, Scottish and Welsh universities and to students taking the first year of a PhD.

Four scholarships went to masters students: Laura Duggan, a graduate of



*Winners of the 2008-2009 Universities Ireland-IBEC-CBI North-South postgraduate scholarships with the Taoiseach, Mr Brian Cowen TD, at the awards ceremony in Trinity College Dublin on 2 October 2008. From left to right: Seamus Carlin, Aileen O'Doherty, the Taoiseach, Laura Duggan, TCD Provost Professor John Hegarty, CBI Northern Ireland Chairman Brian Ambrose, Alan Coyne and Natasha McShane*

TCD doing an MSc in Leadership for Sustainable Development at Queen's University Belfast; Alan Coyne, a graduate of UCD, doing a Master's in Legal Science at QUB; Natasha McShane, a graduate of University of Ulster, doing a Master's in Regional and Urban Planning at UCD; and Aileen O'Doherty, a graduate of University of Ulster, doing an MSc in Marketing at the Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School at UCD. One scholarship went to a doctoral student: Seamus Carlin, a graduate of University of Ulster, doing a PhD in the Performance Management of Sustainable Communities at University College Cork.

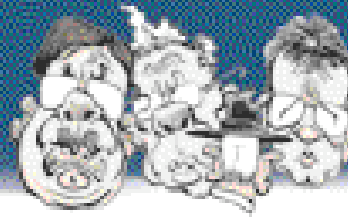
These awards were presented to the winners by the Taoiseach, Mr Brian Cowen TD, at a ceremony in Trinity College Dublin after the autumn meeting of the IBEC-CBI

Joint Business Council. At the spring meeting of the Joint Business Council in the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office in March 2008, both the Northern Ireland First Minister, Dr Ian Paisley MP MLA, and the Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA, praised the North-South Postgraduate Scholarship scheme as an outstanding example of both business-university and practical North-South cooperation.

The fundamental requirement for eligibility for this scheme is a willingness by students to relocate to the other Irish jurisdiction for a whole year or the major part of a year in order to undertake a course of postgraduate study.

In 2009 there will be three scholarships, reflecting the sharp reduction in private





*President Mary McAleese with the leaders of participating African universities at the first IAPRCB workshop in April 2008: From left to right: Professor Orlando Quilambo, Vice-Rector, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique; Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, Vice-Chancellor, University of Dar es Salaam; President McAleese; Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, Secretary General, Association of African Universities; Professor Livingston Luboobi, Vice-Chancellor, Makerere University, Uganda.*

sector sponsorship caused by the economic recession. Two of these (in areas of interest to business) will be funded by Dublin Port and RPS Group, and the third (in other areas, notably arts and social sciences) will be funded entirely by Universities Ireland. The scholarships this year will be worth €15,000.

### **THE IRISH-AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING (IAPRCB)**

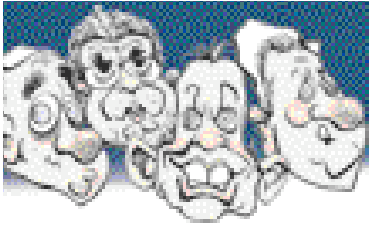
**THE IRISH-AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING**



The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (2008-2011) was put

together by a small group of people working out of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, Trinity College Dublin and Dublin City University in 2007. It is largely funded by the Irish Government under the Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes (2007-2011) – which has provided €1.5 million – with €110,000 in matching funding from Universities Ireland.

The IAPRCB brings together the nine universities on the island of Ireland along with Makerere University in Uganda, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique, and the University of Malawi in a unique, high-level partnership to develop a coordinated approach to Research Capacity Building (RCB) in higher education institutions in order to make an effective contribution



*Participants at the second IAPRCB workshop in Entebbe, Uganda, 10-13 November 2008*

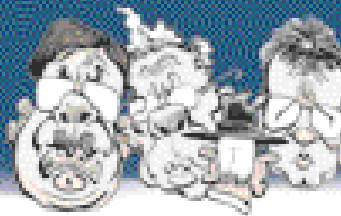
to the reduction of poverty in those countries. The IAPRCB aims:

- to build the capacity for development research in Irish and Northern Irish universities;
- to build capacity in health, education, gender and ICT research in the four participating African universities;
- in the longer term, to develop an Irish-African network of excellence in development research.

The co-chairs of the IAPRCB's steering committee are Professor Jane Grimson of Trinity College Dublin and Professor Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya of Makerere University; the chair of its executive committee is Professor Ronnie Munck of Dublin City University, and its administrative leader is the Centre for Cross Border Studies. The project director, Dr Niamh Gaynor, is based at Dublin City University. Other IAPRCB staff are Dr Eimear Barrett, a postdoctoral fellow in health based at Queen's University Belfast; Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo, a

postdoctoral fellow in education based at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick; Yaoxue Lin, a web portal manager based at TCD; and Catriona Fitzgerald, a part-time administrative officer based at DCU.

The partnership was launched by President Mary McAleese on the opening day of the first IAPRCB workshop at Dublin City University on 8-11 April 2008. This workshop was attended by over 70 senior academics from Ireland and five African countries. The keynote speaker was Professor Akilalagpa Sawyerr from Ghana, Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, and an international authority on research capacity building in African higher education institutions. Among those who also addressed the workshop were the President of Dublin City University, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski; the Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, Professor Livingston Luboobi; the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, Professor Rwekaza Mukandala;



the Vice Chancellor of University of Malawi, Professor Zimani Kadzamira, and the Vice-Rector of Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, Professor Orlando Quilambo.



A second four-day workshop was held in Entebbe in Uganda on 10-13 November 2008, again with more than 70 senior academics participating. It was addressed by, among others, the Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, Professor

Livingston Luboobi; the Director of Research of the University of Dar es Salaam, Professor Saida Yahya-Othman; the Dean of Medicine of Eduardo Mondlane University, Professor Mamudo Ismail; the Dean of Science at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Professor John Saka; the Provost of Trinity College Dublin, Professor John Hegarty; and the former Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dick Spring, chair of the IAPRCB's international advisory board. Future workshops will be held in Maputo (11-14 May 2009), Malawi (autumn 2009) and Belfast (spring 2010).

The project's **objectives** are:

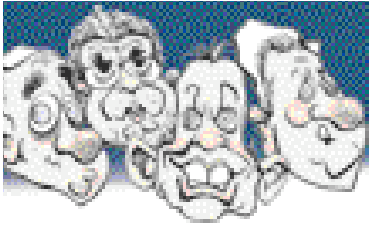
- To assess existing capacity in development research in the Irish universities and research in health, education, gender and ICT in the African universities.
- To identify opportunities for and constraints to such research in the 13 partner universities
- To address a selected number of

those opportunities and constraints through a 'summer school' training programme

- To build an Irish-based development research network through agreed principles of partnership
- To provide an enabling platform to facilitate the development of specific partnerships between researchers and institutions.

The project's **activities and outputs** are as follows:

1. A **stakeholder consultation** among the 13 participating institutions (and external agencies such as relevant government ministries and donor organisations) using workshops, focus groups, structured interviews and e-consultation. The first phase of this exercise took place in summer-autumn 2008 and involved 312 academics and researchers in the institutions. This was the first ever joint baseline study of development research capacity in the Irish and participating African universities. Of this, the aim is to produce a register of development researchers in the partner institutions (see *also Web Portal below*) and a report documenting the opportunities and constraints to development research in the partner institutions. A preliminary report was presented to the Entebbe workshop in November 2008.
2. **Four workshops** (in Dublin, Entebbe, Maputo and Belfast) to develop the network and specific partnerships, and identify priority



areas in health, education, gender and ICT research in the next 10 years through a 'foresight' exercise.

3. **Foresight report** identifying the priority themes in health and education research, with gender and ICT as cross-cutting themes, over the next 10 years.
4. **'Summer School'**, to take place in Malawi in autumn 2009 to provide training in selected areas of research capacity building identified through the stakeholder consultation, workshops and the foresight exercise.
5. **Network development** through online discussion forums, bi-annual meetings of Steering Committee and monthly meetings of Executive Committee, and presentations at conferences and seminars by staff and Steering Committee members.
6. **Consultative working papers** on key topics such as development research for poverty alleviation, research capacity building, the role of foresight in research capacity building and partnership in development research (these four papers were presented to the Entebbe workshop in November 2008).
7. **Web Portal** ([www.irishafricanpartnership.ie](http://www.irishafricanpartnership.ie)) to provide an online and interactive register of development researchers and their research in the partner institutions and an online communications forum.

body of British universities, was initiated in September 2004 in Dublin, with a follow-up meeting in London in January 2006, and a third meeting in Dublin in March 2008. At this latter meeting the presidents and vice-chancellors discussed matters of mutual interest in the areas of business-university collaboration, university funding and research, and European developments.

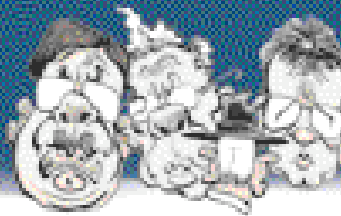
**Innosport Ireland.** A scoping study carried out by University of Ulster's Sport and Exercise Research Institute on the all-island economic potential of sports innovation and technologies (i.e. performance devices and monitoring, sports accommodation, sports nutrition and sporting goods, footwear and clothing) was completed in September 2008. UI gave a grant of £4,000 in seed funding to this project with the aim of preparing a cross-border inter-university application to the EU Framework Seven programme in this area.

Universities Ireland is funded by an annual levy paid by the nine universities, and by grants from the Department of Education and Science in Dublin, the Department for Employment and Learning in Belfast and InterTradeIreland in Newry.

**Website:** [www.universitiesireland.ie](http://www.universitiesireland.ie)

## OTHER INITIATIVES

**A series of meetings with Universities UK**, the representative



*Speakers at the 2008 SCoTENS conference – 'School Leadership, Policy and Practice, North and South'. From left to right: Dr Paucic Travers, Ms Deborah Nusche (OECD), Minister for Education Ms Caitriona Ruane MLA and Dr Tom Hesketh.*

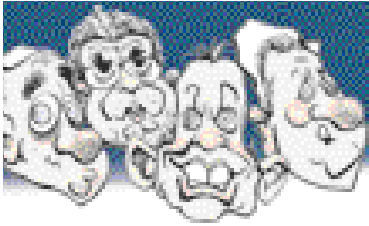
### **STANDING CONFERENCE ON TEACHER EDUCATION, NORTH AND SOUTH (SCoTENS)**

The Centre also acts as the secretariat for the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South. This was set up in 2003 by a group of senior teacher education specialists from universities, colleges of education and other education agencies in both jurisdictions. The 2007-2008 joint chairs of SCoTENS were Dr Paucic Travers, President of St Patrick's College Drumcondra, and Dr Tom Hesketh, Director of the Regional Training Unit in Belfast. Dr Teresa O'Doherty of Mary Immaculate College Limerick takes over as Southern joint chair in 2008-2009.

SCoTENS' sixth annual conference, 'School Leadership: Policy and Practice,

North and South' was held in October 2008 in Belfast. It was opened by the Minister for Education, Ms Caitriona Ruane MLA. The keynote speakers were Deborah Nusche, of the OECD's Directorate for Education in Paris (co-author of a 2009 OECD study, *Improving School Leadership*); Dr Ciaran Sugrue, University of Cambridge; Dr Timothy London, Queen's University Belfast; Dr Tom Hesketh, Regional Training Unit (NI); Mr Paddy Flood (Leadership Development in Schools (Rol)); and Dr David Armstrong, PricewaterhouseCoopers (author of a forthcoming study *Attractiveness of Headship: Ireland North and South*).

A research report – *A Review of Science Outreach Strategies, North and South*, by a team led by Dr Kevin Davison of NUI Galway – was launched at the conference.



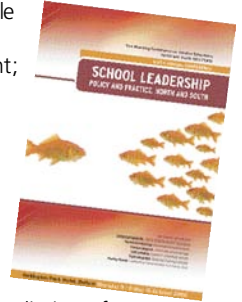
Previous SCoTENS' annual conferences were on 'Teaching in the Knowledge Society' in 2007; 'Teacher Education and Schools: Together Towards Improvement' in 2006; 'Teacher Education for Citizenship in Diverse Societies' in 2005; 'The Changing Contexts of Teacher Education, North and South' (with a particular emphasis on Teaching Councils) in 2004; and 'Challenges to Teacher Education and Research, North and South' in 2003.



SCoTENS has also provided seed funding for all-island conferences on social, scientific and environmental education (five), initial teacher education, citizenship and diversity education (two), educational research, special educational needs (two),

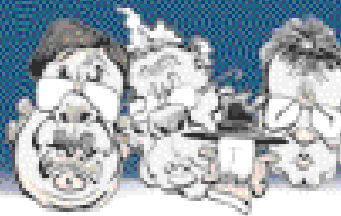
social justice education in initial teacher education (two), language teacher education, doctoral research in education and the competences approach to teacher professional development. It has also provided seed funding for North-South research projects on the social/national identity of young children in the border region; ICT in teacher education; children with profound and multiple learning difficulties; student teacher exchanges; student perceptions of history, geography and science; school-based work in colleges of education; the professional development of teachers working with students with special educational needs; examining assessment procedures for trainee

teachers; universities' role in continuing teacher professional development; work-placed learning models in post-compulsory teacher education; measuring the value of education technologies; primary student teachers' mathematical identities; consulting pupils on remediation of their specific literacy difficulties; student teachers and the needs of pupils with autism spectrum disorder; English as an additional language in undergraduate teacher education; inclusion and diversity in post-primary education; the experiences of primary teachers in teaching healthy eating guidelines; and building North-South links in global justice education.



In February 2009 Mary Robinson launched a book, *Education for Citizenship and Diversity in Irish Contexts*, by Dr Gerry Jeffers of NUI Maynooth and Dr Una O'Connor of University of Ulster, which contains essays based on presentations at two SCoTENS-supported North-South conferences on citizenship and diversity.

The SCoTENS website (<http://scotens.org>) has been updated over the past six months and highlights, in particular, resources on special education, citizenship education and teaching and learning with digital video. Assistance with inputting content has been provided by Maurice Blease (Stranmillis University College) on special



education and Fionnuala Waldron (St Patrick's College Drumcondra) on citizenship education.

In 2009 SCoTENS is also taking over from the EU Peace Programme in supporting a fifth year of the groundbreaking North-South Student Teacher Exchange, which brings student teachers from the island's seven colleges of primary education to do a key part of their assessed teacher practice in the other jurisdiction (also see pages 115-116).

SCoTENS is funded by annual grants from the Department of Education and Science, and the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education (Northern Ireland). A significant proportion of its funding comes from institutional subscriptions from universities, colleges of education, teaching councils, education trade unions, education centres, curriculum councils and other bodies involved with teacher education. In 2006-2008 it also received grant aid from the Nuffield Foundation.

### INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The Centre administers the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). The ICLRDR is a

North-South-US partnership to explore and expand the contribution that planning and the development of physical, social and economic infrastructures can make to improving the lives of people in both Irish jurisdictions. The partner institutions are: the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster; the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Athlone Institute of Technology, and the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Each of these partners brings together complementary expertise and networks – North and South, East and West – to create a unique, all-island centre that is more than the sum of its parts. The ICLRDR is very open to involving other academic and research institutions in its activities. The director of the ICLRDR is John Driscoll, who is also a vice-president of the Institute for International Urban Development.

#### The ICLRDR

- Provides independent, expert, joined-up research, thinking and policy advice on cross-border and all-island spatial planning and local and regional development issues at three spatial scales: EU and all-island, sub-regional and local;
- Offers capacity building programmes for communities and local, regional and national government representatives and officials;
- Acts as a catalyst and conduit to bring relevant actors, North and

South, together to work on common goals;

- Promotes international cooperation and exchanges.



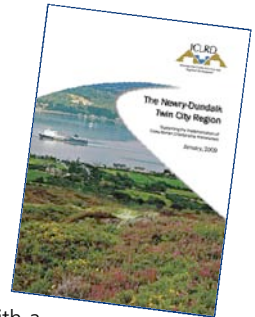
In January 2009 the ICLRD held its fourth annual conference in Letterkenny, Co Donegal under the title 'Achieving Balanced Regional Development: Dynamic Regions, Spatial Strategies and Collaboration.' Over 130 people attended. The conference was opened jointly by Mr Michael

Kitt TD, Irish Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and Mr Conor Murphy MP MLA, N.Ireland Minister for Regional Development. Conference presentations are available on the ICLRD website at [www.iclrd.org](http://www.iclrd.org)

Keynote speakers from overseas included Steve Quartermain, Chief Planning Officer in the Department for Communities and Local Government in London; Jim MacKinnon, Director for the Built Environment in the Scottish Government; Grant Duncan, Head of the Sustainable Futures Division in the Welsh Assembly Government; Dr Gabor Novotny, from the European Commission's DG Regio (Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion); Dr Rupert Kawka from the German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning; and Professor Gerrit Knapp, Director, National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, University of Maryland.

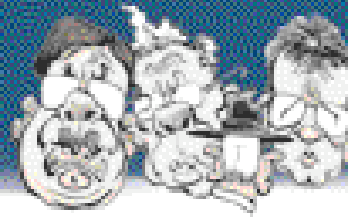
### Implementing sub-regional strategies

The ICLRD report – *The Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region: Supporting the Implementation of Cross-Border Collaborative Frameworks* – was completed in December 2008 in cooperation with Newry and Mourne District Council, Louth County Council and Dundalk Town Council (with a Steering Committee chaired by InterTradeIreland). The study, which also involved the two cities' chambers of commerce, identified a number of projects to support a linked sub-regional approach, including:



- Developing a twin city centre of excellence in sustainable energy, building on the work of Sustainable Energy Ireland and the Dundalk 2020/EU Concerto programme, and positioning the region as an island exemplar in this field;
- Exploring the concept of a Geo-Tourism initiative linked to the outstanding geological features of the Mournes, the Cooley Mountains, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford Lough;
- Marketing the Newry-Dundalk region as a centre for internationally tradeable service operations based at the midpoint of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor;
- A joint town centre regeneration strategy for Newry and Dundalk to promote both towns as places where people want to visit, settle and work.





- Programmes to identify common data sets that will support joined-up planning and innovation across this border region; coordinate Dundalk Institute of Technology and Southern Regional College courses to develop a diversified and qualified regional labour force; and build infrastructure connectivity using the M1/A1 corridor.

The project research team comprised Professor Alastair Adair, Professor Jim Berry and Professor Stanley McGreal, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Professor Francois Vigier, John Driscoll and Erick Guerra, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Dr Chris van Egeraat, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth.

### **Enhancing connectivity in Small Cross-Border Towns**

A key challenge for many border region small towns and villages, characterised by their peripheral location and the impact of that border, is how to build a future based on cross-border cooperation. In November 2008 the novelist Colm Toibin launched the ICLRD-published book, *Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas: The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages*. This book is the culmination of an 18 month research project, funded in part by the International Fund for Ireland, which examined the relationships and connectivity between five cross-border settlement groupings. These were Lifford-

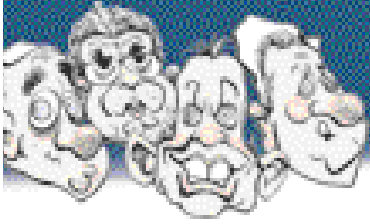
Strabane; Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver; Blacklion-Belcoo-Glenfarne; Clones-Rosslea-Newtonbutler-Lisnaskea; and Castleblayne-Crossmaglen.

The project research team consisted of Brendan Bartley, Caroline Creamer, Justin Gleeson and Dr Chris Van Egeraat, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; Dr Neale Blair, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Dr Brendan O'Keefe, Mary Immaculate College/ University of Limerick; and John Driscoll, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### **Sustainable Communities**

High-quality affordable housing and sustainable communities, closely linked to good services and employment, are a requirement in any society. In societies divided by religion, class and income, the challenge to provide them on an integrated basis takes on an extra dimension. Through the development of case studies in Antrim, Enniskillen, Derry/Londonderry, Sligo, Cork and Adamstown (Co Dublin), an ICLRD research team is exploring issues of religious, ethnic and income segregation in housing estates in both jurisdictions. International experience and emerging best practice will also be addressed by looking at examples from Europe and the United States. This study will be launched at the annual Conference of the Isles in Newcastle, Co Down in May 2009.

Research team: Paddy Gray, Michaela Keenan, Ursula McAnulty and Professor



*Speakers and delegates – including the NI Minister for Regional Development, Mr Conor Murphy MP MLA, and the Minister of State at the Irish Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr Michael Kitt TD – at the January 2009 ICLRD conference*

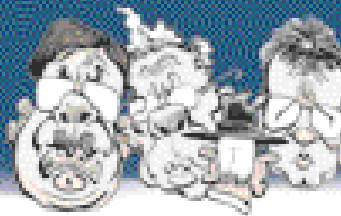
Stanley McGreal, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Brendan Bartley, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; and John Driscoll and Erick Guerra, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### **Rural Restructuring**

ICLRD is currently undertaking a research project that considers the role of rural restructuring and economic diversification, together with the growing importance of the urban-rural interface, in the achievement of balanced spatial development. The programme of research is focussing on three rural areas: the Draperstown-Magherafelt district in Co Derry/Londonderry; Emyvale-Truagh-Aughnacloy on the Monaghan-Tyrone border; and Duhallow on the Cork-Kerry-Limerick border. Both Draperstown and

Duhallow have been engaged in the process of rural restructuring for the past 25 years and have built up a wealth of experience. The challenges facing Emyvale-Truagh-Aughnacloy have been further exacerbated by its cross-border location, the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', and the impact of decades of back-to-back policy development by both Northern and Southern administrations. The research team will be developing a series of working papers on each area and a synthesis report which will be presented at a conference on 'Rural Restructuring: a rural challenge requiring local sustainable solutions' (provisional title) in summer 2009.

Research Team: Caroline Creamer, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; Dr Neale Blair, University of Ulster; Dr Brendan O'Keefe, Mary Immaculate College/ University of Limerick, Karen



Keaveney, Queens University Belfast, and John Driscoll, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Mass.

### **Evidence-informed Spatial Planning**

Policy makers and practitioners involved in cross-border spatial planning initiatives are seeking high quality data to better understand economic trends and demands for cross-border services. In 2007 the ICLRD and the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) published *The Atlas of the Island of Ireland - Mapping Social and Economic Change*. This pioneering atlas presents a set of detailed, full colour maps on population, housing, transport and the economy across the island based on census data for the Republic of Ireland in 1991 and 2002 and for Northern Ireland in 1991 and 2001.

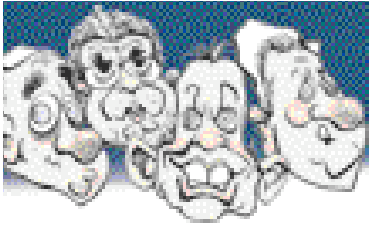
In 2008 ICLRD and AIRO began working on a new initiative part-funded by the Strategic Investment Board in Northern Ireland to develop a baseline inventory of service infrastructure in Northern Ireland. This pilot project to illustrate the accessibility of services and infrastructure will develop a series of accessibility maps using Geographical Information Systems. The research team is also collecting data to extend the analysis on a cross-border basis where compatible data exists, and will produce a series of maps representing both the spatial distribution of, and accessibility to, services. The mapped output will be accompanied by commentary from an expert analyst in each field which can be made available to policy makers and practitioners.

A related ICLRD research project is 'Delineation of Functional Territories of Urban Systems on the Island of Ireland'. The need for this work, especially on an inter-jurisdictional basis, was identified by policy makers on both sides of the border after the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) generated pioneering maps illustrating travel-to-work patterns on an all-island basis. The research team will consult with policy makers and practitioners through a series of seminars to present emerging findings and discuss their implications.

The research teams for these two projects include Professor Rob Kitchin, Brendan Bartley, Proinnsias Breathnach, Dr Chris van Egeraat, Helen Caughey and Justin Gleeson of NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; Dr Des McCafferty of Mary Immaculate College/University of Limerick; Professor Francois Vigier of the Institute for International Urban Development, and Chris Lloyd of Queen's University Belfast.

### **Cross-border Planning and Training Network (CroSPlan)**

In early 2009, in cooperation with the Centre for Cross Border Studies, the ICLRD started work on a new three-year programme of research, training and workshops in Northern Ireland and the Southern border region (see also pages 133-134). This initiative has been funded by the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme, administered through the Special EU Programmes Body. The main elements of this work on an annual basis are:



- Two action research projects. In 2009 these will be on the impact of local government reform in the North and new planning legislation in the South on cross-border planning; and on the comparable experience in cross-border planning of local and regional authorities elsewhere in Europe.
- Two executive training programmes for 30 local councillors, officials and other key community leaders.
- An annual conference and an annual technical workshop, with the dual function of facilitating networking and addressing areas of need, some of them identified and analysed in the action research projects.

The CroSPlan Network will also be valuable in providing a link between policy makers and practitioners on an intra- and inter-jurisdictional basis. The network will raise awareness of, and where appropriate, translate some of the practices of other successful European cross-border networking organisations – e.g. Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière in France – to Ireland.

### **ICLRD Journal and e-journals on spatial planning issues**

As part of its evolving publication strategy, ICLRd will launch an annual journal on the theme of collaborative spatial planning, following the model of the CCBS-published *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland*. To assist ICLRd in gathering the articles for the printed journal, and to provide on-line access to research findings of interest, two e-journals will be published every year. Each

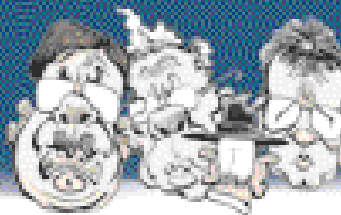
issue of this e-journal will be theme-specific. The first, due to be published in spring 2009, will address the theme of 'Evidence-Informed Spatial Planning'. The *Journal of Collaborative Spatial Planning in Ireland* will be jointly edited by Andy Pollak, Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies and John Driscoll, Director, ICLRd.

### **NORTH/SOUTH ROUNDTABLE GROUP**

Director Andy Pollak represents the Centre for Cross Border Studies and Universities Ireland on this influential 'think tank', which draws its members from business leaders and senior civil servants in both Irish jurisdictions. The joint chairs are Stephen Kingon, Chair of Invest Northern Ireland, and Laurence Crowley, former Governor of the Bank of Ireland. The Joint Facilitators, Michael D'Arcy and Liz Gilmartin, are supported by InterTradelreland.

### **EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION**

The Centre is a partner with the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee's Curriculum Development Unit in the 2009-2011 phase of the Education for Reconciliation project, sub-titled 'Securing the Future through Active Citizenship.' This project develops peace and reconciliation materials and trains teachers in the use of them as part of the citizenship education curricula in both Irish jurisdictions (Civic Social and Political Education in the South and Local and Global Citizenship in the North). To date over 60 secondary schools, North and South, have taken advantage of the professional development, cross-border



networking, and teaching and learning resources developed by the project. Another 20 schools will join the project this year.

### CROSS BORDER OPENINGS

The Centre is also a partner with the Open University in Ireland and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in Cross Border Openings (CBO), a project which offers 500 free places on a return to study programme for socially and educationally disadvantaged people on both sides of the border. The project also involves the provision of training on cultural diversity issues, and joint work with the trade union movement to promote the concept of workplace learning in general and workplace learning agreements in particular.

The CBO project has played a leading role in developing a strategic partnership between the Open University in Ireland and the ICTU, which mirrors the UK-wide agreement between the Open University and the Trades Union Congress *unionlearn* programme – this offers new learning opportunities and progression routes for trade union members. In May 2008 it held a conference in Dublin to promote workplace learning and learn from UK and European experience in this area.

CBOs was scaled down at the end of 2008 following the end of its EU Peace funding. However the Open University is actively seeking to raise funds in both Britain and Ireland to implement ambitious plans to extend this much-

praised project for educationally disadvantaged people to the whole of Ireland.

### CURRENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH PROJECTS

**Between February 2009 and December 2011 the Centre will undertake five major new research projects funded by the EU cross-border programme INTERREG IVA. These have been packaged under the collective title: the Ireland-Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory (INICCO). The five constituent projects are as follows:**

**1. NORMAL BUSINESS RESTORED: Reviving the border economy in a new era of peace and devolved government**

The aim of this package of four closely inter-related research projects is to find ways of understanding and increasing the accessibility, size, transparency, competitiveness and profitability of Irish border region markets in a context where peace and normality have finally arrived in Northern Ireland and the Southern Border Region. The new element of an international economic recession has been added since the application was first written in 2007. This overall project – in which the Centre will be partnered by *InterTradelreland* – will begin in autumn 2009.

The four constituent research projects will be:

- a. The specific challenges the region faces due to its peripheral location, with an exploration of how it might become less peripheral through new business communication technologies, optimal use of supporting institutions (including higher education institutions) and the experience of more advanced border regions elsewhere in Europe.
- b. How border region retail and wholesale markets as a whole might be made more efficient drivers of regional growth (and more robust in the face of currency changes) after the present temporary imbalance caused by currency distortions.
- c. How the micro-enterprises (with under 10 employees) which are the mainstay of so much economic activity in the region might be enabled to expand by exploiting increased access to larger cross-border markets on their doorstep (and to learn from the experience of successful 'niche' producers in other parts of Ireland and Europe).
- d. How the region's tourism product (including 'green' tourism) might dovetail with strategic plans for tourism in Ireland as a whole and how border towns might learn from 'good performers' elsewhere on the island to bring more visitors to the region.

## 2. THE CROSS-BORDER SPATIAL PLANNING AND TRAINING NETWORK (CroSPLaN)

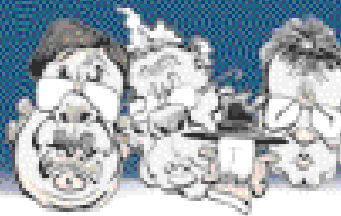
The benefits of harmonising cross-border planning in specific regions along the



*Senior staff members Mairead Hughes and Patricia McAllister with an exhibition of CCBS conference and research project posters*

Irish border is something that has already been recognised by both administrations (e.g. in the North-West Gateway initiative). On a small island like Ireland the complexity of spatial planning – and its relationship with economic development, social policy and infrastructure (e.g. transport) – is increased by the border's existence. In the next few years local authorities in Northern Ireland and the Southern border region will have to take on extra responsibilities for planning under the Reform of Public Administration in the North and new regional planning guidelines in the South.

The Centre and its sister organisation, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, will bring together a network (CroSPLaN) of planners, housing providers, economic



development officers, local officials, councillors, and community and business interests on both sides of the border to promote more systematic learning and exchange in planning (see also pages 130-131). The ICLRD will lead a three year programme consisting of the following:

- Two action research projects per year
- Two executive training programmes per year for local councillors, officials and other key community leaders
- One technical workshop per year
- One annual conference

The 2009 action research projects will explore the impact of local government reform in the North and new planning legislation in the South on cross-border planning; and the comparable experience in cross-border planning of local and regional authorities elsewhere in Europe. Other research areas to be covered in future years could include sustainable rural transport; mapping spatial indicators; understanding travel-to-work patterns; border region land and property markets; joint management of the environment, including waste management; the regeneration of marginalised areas; comparative emergency planning; and learning from new cross-border planning initiatives in other parts of Europe. This overall project began in early 2009.

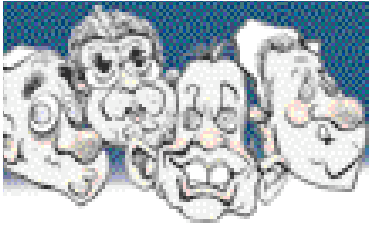
### **3. EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR CROSS-BORDER HOSPITAL SERVICES IN THE BORDER REGION**

This project – in which Centre will be partnered by the Institute of Public Health

in Ireland – will consist of two linked research studies on modelling hospital service planning on a border region basis, and on the democratisation of health care.

The former study, which will build on a piece of initial desk research completed in late 2007, will examine the number, size, composition and possible locations of the hospitals that would be required in the future if the planning of acute services in the border region was on the basis of population needs rather than jurisdictional frontiers. It will work towards developing a prototype model of cross-border health service accessibility driven by geographical considerations around the distribution of patients (potential need and demand); the configuration of hospitals North and South (potential supply based on bed numbers and specialisms); and the transport network (modelling of accessibility based on travel time). This study will begin in autumn 2009.

While population modelling is important for health service planning, it is less than useful if the needs and rights of the people who use those services are ignored. The second study will examine the role of community involvement in decision making in the planning of hospital services in the border regions of both jurisdictions. It will also explore the implementation of 'patient empowerment' initiatives in other parts of Europe, notably in the Dutch-German border regions. This study began in early 2009.



#### 4. PILOT IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN IRELAND

As part of the integrative work of a cross-border observatory, the Centre will research the development of a pilot Impact Assessment Toolkit for practical, mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation in Ireland. Impact assessment is a continuous process to help the policy maker fully think through and understand the consequences of possible and actual interventions. It has been used particularly in the health and environmental sectors in Ireland, North and South, but not until now in cross-border cooperation.

The Centre will develop this 'toolkit' to guide policy-makers through the process of planning and implementing a major cross-border project. This would consist of a number of stages: the early stages of identifying and defining the policy challenge; the identification of options; the consultation stage; the final proposal, focussing on costs and benefits; the implementation stage; and the review stage, when actual costs and benefits indicate whether the project is achieving its desired aims. This project will start in summer 2010.

#### 5. BORDER PEOPLE CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY INFORMATION WEBSITE (Phase Two)

This will be the second phase of the Border People ([www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)) information website, to be developed in a continuing partnership with the North/South Ministerial Council (See also pages 111 -

113). A new information officer largely dedicated to this project started work in the Centre in early February 2009.

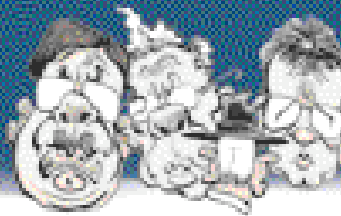
Since Border Ireland was only launched to the public in spring 2008, it was only starting to become properly known in Northern Ireland and the Southern border region by the summer of 2008, when its EU Peace funding expired. The number of visitors accessing the website rose sharply during a three month marketing campaign in April-June 2008 – run by a professional marketing company – from 6,000 per month to well over 10,000 per month.

Phase Two will allow for a more systematic dissemination and marketing of information and public feedback on cross-border mobility issues, assisted by an active and enlarged user group drawn from a wide range of citizens advice, employment advice, local authority, business and community organisations. Performance will be reviewed against agreed targets for information content, along with regular statistical website reports to evaluate demand and usage. An annual survey will test whether the interests of users are being matched and how well the various website features are working.

The Border People website is a uniquely practical expression of cross-border movement, interaction and cooperation on the island of Ireland, and one that will







bring concrete benefits to the citizens of both jurisdictions. Development of Phase Two of the site began in early 2009.

### PAST RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Centre has commissioned 15 cross-border research projects in the fields of telecommunications developments, health services, disadvantage in education, EU funding programmes, local government links, mental health promotion, waste management policies, local history societies, animal health, the euro, sustainable development, diversity in early years education, science and citizenship education, public sector training and hospital services.

These projects involved researchers drawn from 13 universities, colleges and independent research centres in Ireland and Britain: Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, Dublin City University, University College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland Maynooth, St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Stranmillis University College, the Institute of Public Administration, Belfast City Hospital, Dundalk Institute of Technology, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Centre for Cross Border Studies itself. The research assignments under the North/South public sector training project (see pages 117 and 139) also involved civil and public servants from both jurisdictions.

The Centre has published the following research projects:

#### **The Evolution of Telecom Technologies: Current Trends and Near-Future Implications (2001)**

A number of case studies of developments in mobile and wireless telephony across the Irish border from a research team led by two of Ireland's leading specialists in information retrieval, data analysis and image and signal processing: Professor Fionn Murtagh, then of Queen's University Belfast, and Dr John Keating of National University of Ireland Maynooth. The project was sponsored by eircom.



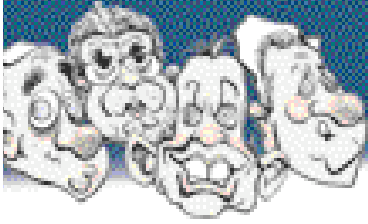
#### **Cross-Border Co-operation in Health Services in Ireland (2001)**

A study of the past, present and potential for future co-operation in health services across the Irish border by a research team led by Dr Jim Jamison, formerly director of the Health and Social Care Research Unit at Queen's University Belfast, and including Professor Martin McKee of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr Ciaran O'Neill of the University of Ulster, and Ms Michelle Butler of the Institute of Public Administration in Dublin.



#### **Ireland's Learning Poor: Adult Educational Disadvantage and Cross-Border Co-operation (2001)**

A study of the needs of the more than a million people on the island who left



school with few or no qualifications by Dr Mark Morgan of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and Mr Paul McGill, formerly education correspondent of the *Belfast Telegraph*. They concluded that current policies in both jurisdictions were far

removed from a vision of lifelong learning which allows people of all ages and social classes equal access to education and training.



**Creating Living Institutions: EU Cross-Border Co-operation after the Good Friday Agreement (2001)**

A study by Professor Brigid Laffan and Dr Diane Payne of the Institute for British-Irish

Studies at University College Dublin, which analysed the interaction between the North-South Institutions set up under the Good Friday Agreement – notably the North/South Ministerial Council and the Special EU Programmes Body - and the EU's funding programme for cross-border co-operation, INTERREG.



**Cross-Border Co-operation in Local Government: Models of Management, Development and Reconciliation (2001)**

A study by Professor Derek Birrell and Amanda Hayes

of the University of Ulster of the different kinds of cross-border links between local authorities, including one-to-one linkages, local government cross-border networks, and cross-border partnerships involving other agencies. It also analysed the project management methods used, the views of the councillors involved and the involvement of the European Union.

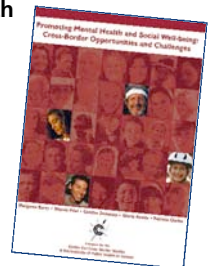
**The Foot-and-Mouth Disease Crisis and the Irish Border (2002)**

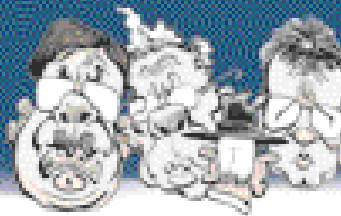
A study of the cross-border dimension of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak by the Centre's research manager, Dr Patricia Clarke, with comments from the Departments of Agriculture in Belfast and Dublin. Issued exactly a year after the original outbreak in England, the report's findings were praised by the two Ministers, Brid Rodgers and Joe Walsh, as "extremely valuable" in helping the Departments to formulate actions to deal with animal health emergencies.



**Promoting Mental Health and Social Well-being: Cross-Border Opportunities and Challenges (2002)**

This is a two-part study by a team from National University of Ireland Galway led by Dr Margaret Barry and Ms Sharon Friel. It examined a number of cross-border projects in the areas of postnatal depression, public awareness of suicide,





cancer support services, the mental health of young men and mental health in rural communities. The study also looked at the comparability and compatibility of mental health data sources in the two jurisdictions.

### **The Local History Project: Co-operating North and South (2003)**

This study, by Dr Jacinta Prunty, Dr Raymond Gillespie and Maeve Mulryan-Moloney of National University of Ireland Maynooth, provided the basis for the first all-Ireland register of local

history societies. They identified 330 societies, but estimated that a complete list would exceed 500 societies, North and South, involving an active membership of perhaps 28,000 persons.



### **Towards a Green Isle? Local Sustainable Development on the Island of Ireland (2004)**

A study of local sustainable development as carried out (through the Local Agenda 21 process) by local authorities and social partners throughout Ireland,

by a cross-border team comprising Geraint Ellis and Dr Bill Neill of the Queen's University Belfast's School of Environmental Planning, and Dublin-based researchers Una Hand and Brian Motherway. It found that 54% of local authorities on the island had begun a process of LA21, but stressed that the main challenge is to move from debate to action.



### **Diversity in Early Years Education North and South: Implications for Teacher Education (2004)**

The aim of this EU-funded study was to identify the difficulties facing teachers and children in areas of inter-community conflict and tension on both sides of the Irish border with a view to developing a framework for preparing young teachers working with children in the early years. It was carried out by researchers at St Patrick's College Drumcondra in Dublin and Stranmillis University College in Belfast, Mairin Kenny and Helen McLaughlin, under the direction of Philomena Donnelly and Louise Quinn.



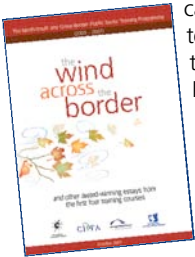
### **Citizenship and Science: The Connecting Axes (2005)**

The final report of the EU-funded Citizenship and Science Exchange (CaSE) Schools project looked at how a group of 12-14 year old students in 16 schools on both sides of the border deepened their understanding of the dynamic relationship between science and citizenship. The students explored subjects such as air and water pollution, waste management, GM and fair trade foods, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Much of the cross-border work centred on a shared Web resource. This project was led by Professor Peter McKenna and Dr Charlotte Holland of Dublin City University.



### **The Wind Across the Border (2007).**

This report brought together six award winning research assignments carried out by pairs and teams of officials as part of the North/South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme. They were on the proposed reopening of the Ulster Canal; an all-island service for the recycling of waste fridges and freezers; expanding



the CAWT-sponsored eMed renal information system to the whole island; an all-island visitor pass for heritage sites; setting up a cross-border training and accreditation system for installers of renewable energy technologies; and cross-border sharing of patient electronic records.

### **Removing the Barriers: An Initial Report on the Potential for Cross-Border Cooperation in Hospital Services (2007)**

This short report compared the planning of hospital service reorganisation, North and South. It noted that there are different strategies in the two jurisdictions, with Northern Ireland placing greater emphasis



on travel time and the Republic on the size of the catchment population. The authors, independent Belfast researcher Dr Jim Jamison and Dr Michelle Butler, Senior Lecturer in UCD's School of Nursing Midwifery and Health Systems, point to the clear scope for joint hospital planning and rationalisation in the

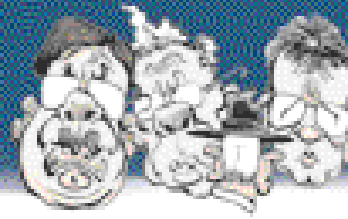
border region to benefit the health of the population.

## **COMMISSIONED STUDIES AND EVALUATIONS**

The Centre has carried out **studies and evaluations for government and other public agencies and social partner organisations.**

These have included:

- A study of mental health policy and research on the island of Ireland, for the Mental Health Commission (RoI) and other agencies, supported by the Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) cross-border network of health authorities (December 2008)
- An evaluation of the cross-border GP out-of-hours service for Cooperation and Working Together (July 2008)
- A study of postgraduate flows from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland higher education institutions, for the Irish Department of Education and Science (January 2008)
- How the trade union movement can become more involved and influential in North-South cooperation, for the Northern Ireland office of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (December 2007).
- A review of policy recommendations from the five research projects commissioned by the Higher Education Authority under the 2004-2006 Cross-Border Programme for Research contributing to Peace and Reconciliation: Intergenerational transmission and ethno-national



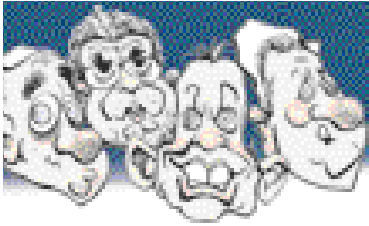
- identity in the border area; Equality and social inclusion; Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways; E-consultation; and Virtual Research Centre for Point-of-Care Technology (February 2007).
- An overview of the activities of the Common Chapter of the Republic of Ireland's National Development Plan and Northern Ireland's Structural Funds Plan for the Special EU Programmes Body – in partnership with FPM Chartered Accountants (February 2007)
  - A report on public attitudes to the development of cross-border health services, with particular reference to GP out-of-hours services, for CAWT (January 2007)
  - A report on education and skills in the North West, for the Irish Department of Education and Science and the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning (2006)
  - An Evaluation of the Education for Reconciliation Project (Year One and Two), for the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (2003-2005)
  - A Review of Cross-Border Mobility Information Provisions in the South of Ireland, for the North/South Mobility Information Group (2003)
  - An Evaluation of the Upstate Theatre Company's 'Crossover' cross-border community drama project (2002-2004)
  - 'Towards a Strategic Economic and Business Research Agenda for the island of Ireland', for InterTradelreland (2002)
  - A report on public feedback to the

PriceWaterhouseCoopers/Indecon Obstacles to Mobility study, for the North/South Ministerial Council (2002)

- A study into the feasibility of extending University for Industry/*learn*direct to the Republic of Ireland, for University for Industry (2001)
- An evaluation of the Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) cross-border network of health boards and trusts, for CAWT(2001)
- A 'scoping study' of North-South School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges, for the Department of Education (Bangor) and the Department of Education and Science (Dublin) (2001)

#### SEMINARS AND STUDY DAYS

The Centre holds regular seminars and study days in Armagh, Dublin and in the border region to examine strategic areas of interest to North-South policy makers. These bring together groups of policy makers, senior practitioners and academics to discuss a research paper prepared by the Centre under the chairmanship of a distinguished authority in the field. As the Centre's research programme has developed, these seminars have moved from studying broad policy fields to examining more focussed areas which have been the subject of specific research projects and commissioned work. Cross-border seminars and study days have been organised in the following areas:



- Agriculture
- Education
- Tourism
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Health Services
- Mental Health Promotion
- Developments in Telecom Technologies
- Local government links
- Foot and Mouth disease
- School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges
- European citizenship education
- The euro
- Business research
- The North-South Consultative Forum
- Ageing
- *Border region history\**
- *Border region regeneration\**
- Waste Management
- *Economic co-operation\**
- *Planning and mobility in the North West\**
- Science and Citizenship
- Information provision
- Housing and sustainable communities
- Education and Skills in the North West
- Mental Health Research
- Personal Banking
- Web 2.0 aspects of online cross-border information

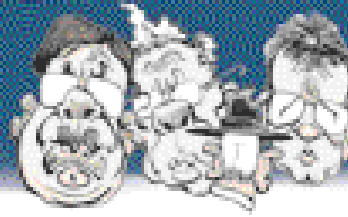
\* *For the Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways project*

## CONFERENCES

The first major conference organised by the Centre, jointly with the Centre for International Borders Research (CIBR), was

held at Queen's University Belfast in autumn 2000 under the title '**European Cross Border Co-operation: Lessons for and from Ireland.**' This international conference was opened by the Irish President, Mary McAleese, and was addressed by a wide range of distinguished speakers, including the then First Minister of Northern Ireland, David Trimble; the Deputy First Minister, Seamus Mallon; the then RUC Chief Constable, Sir Ronnie Flanagan; the head of the EU's cross-border INTERREG programme, Esben Poulsen; the international emergency communications expert, Professor Edward Johnson; Ambassador Hermann von Richthofen of the German-Polish Governmental Commission; and the then SDLP leader John Hume. Participants came from 13 countries to discuss cross-border co-operation in five areas: administrative institutions, security and policing, business and the economy, the environment, and culture and the arts.

The Centre has also organised six North-South conferences on aspects of higher education on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning (Belfast) and the Department of Education and Science (Dublin). The first of these, in October 2002 in Armagh, was on '**Ireland as a Centre of Excellence in Third Level Education.**' This conference, which was attended by the presidents of seven of the nine universities on the island of Ireland, was addressed by several world authorities on higher education. These included Professor Malcolm Skilbeck, the OECD's former Deputy Director for Education;



former US Secretary of Education, Richard Riley; the Director-General for Education and Culture in the European Commission, Nikolaus van der Pas, and the Chief Executive of the English Higher Education Funding Council, Sir Howard Newby.

In May 2003, the second conference was held in Cavan on **'International Education: A Capacity Builder for the Island of Ireland?'** The keynote speakers were Lindy Hyam, Chief Executive of IDP Education Australia, a world leader in international education and development services, and Neil Kemp, director of the Education UK Division of the British Council. The conference was chaired by Sir George Quigley.

examined examples of good practice in cross-border higher education elsewhere in Europe, notably in the Oresund region of Denmark and southern Sweden (with keynote speaker Professor Linda Nielsen, Rector of the University of Copenhagen), and the EUCOR network between French, German and Swiss universities in the Upper Rhine region. The conference was co-chaired by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and Noel Dorr.



The fifth conference was held in Belfast in June 2005 under the title **'Higher Education and Business: Beyond Mutual Incomprehension'**. The keynote speaker was Richard Lambert, member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy

Committee, former editor of the *Financial Times* and author of the seminal Lambert Review of University-Business Collaboration for the British Government. The conference was opened by the Irish Minister for Education and Science, Ms Mary Hanafin TD, and the Northern Ireland Minister for Employment and Learning and Education, Ms Angela Smyth MP. Other speakers included the Presidents of Queen's University Belfast and NUI Maynooth, Professor Peter Gregson and Professor John Hughes, and leading Irish entrepreneurs Dr Chris Horn and Dr Hugh Cormican.

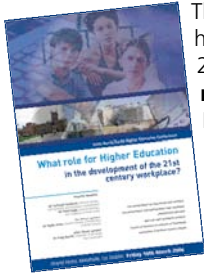


In November 2003, the third conference was held in Belfast on **'Widening Access to Third Level Education on the Island of Ireland: Towards Better Policy and Practice'**. The keynote speakers were Dr Arnold Mitchem, President of the

Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington DC, a champion of access to higher education for low income and disabled Americans for 35 years, and Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer of the South African Qualifications Authority.

The fourth conference – entitled **'Cross-Border Higher Education Co-operation in Ireland and Europe'** – was held in Cavan in May 2004. This





The sixth conference was held in Malahide in March 2006 with the title **'What role for Higher Education in the Development of the 21st Century Workplace?'** The keynote speakers were the Board Chairman of the Intel

Corporation, Dr Craig Barrett; the Directors General of the Confederation of British Industry and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation, Sir Digby Jones and Turlough O'Sullivan; the Education and Training Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Peter Rigney; the Chief Executive of Forfás, Martin Cronin, and the President of Dublin City University, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski. The conference was opened by the Secretary General of the Irish Department for Education and Science, Brigid McManus, and the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning, Dr Aideen McGinley. The event was organised in collaboration with the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council.



In March 2007 the Centre joined with Armagh Observatory to organise **'Discover the Stars at Armagh: a Cross-Border Schools Science Conference.'** This brought together 260 students from secondary schools in Belfast,

Armagh, Dublin, Dundalk, Drogheda, Dungannon, Killeel, Cookstown,

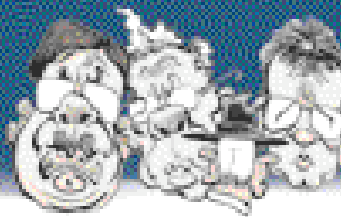
Fermanagh, Monaghan and Westmeath to engage in two days of astronomical activities in Armagh. The event was funded by the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Irish Department of Education and Science, and was designed to attract students aged 13-14 towards science and a scientific thinking at a critical stage of their academic careers. A 32 page booklet, edited by Dr Miruna Popescu, was produced for the participating schools by Observatory students and staff. A second cross-border schools science conference will be held in Armagh in April 2009.

In June 2008 the Centre organised a major conference in Dundalk entitled **'Cross-Border Cooperation as part of the Northern Irish Peace Process: Some Lessons for Europe'** which was attended by over 130

people from 13 countries: Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Serbia, Kosovo, China and the USA. The conference was opened by the Irish Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern TD, and among the speakers were Stephen Kingon, Chairman, Invest Northern Ireland; Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions; Ronald Hall, Head of the European Commission's Northern Ireland Task Force; Professor Elizabeth Meehan, former Director of the Institute of Governance at Queen's University Belfast; Silvia Gobert-Keckeis of





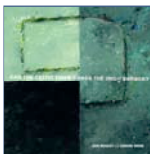
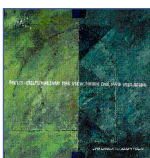


Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) in Paris; Linda Blom from the Euregio Gronau-Enschede (Germany-Netherlands); and Gorka Espiau Idoiaga, Senior Advisor for Peacebuilding to the Basque Government. This conference was funded by the EU Peace Two programme.

## PUBLICATIONS

In 2001 the Centre published, in association with Cork University Press, a series of short books containing essays by leading writers on key issues of interest to both Irish jurisdictions:

- *Multi-Culturalism: the View from the Two Irelands* by Edna Longley and Declan Kiberd, with a foreword by President Mary McAleese
- *Can the Celtic Tiger cross the Irish Border?* by John Bradley and Esmond Birnie, with a foreword by Peter Sutherland
- *Towards a Culture of Human Rights in Ireland* by Ivana Bacik and Stephen Livingstone, with a foreword by Mary Robinson

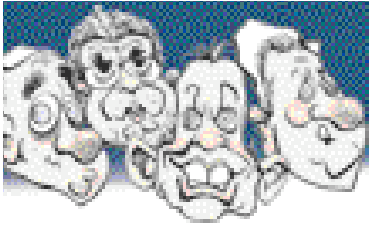


## WHAT THEY SAY

I mean it quite genuinely when I say that we wouldn't be able to work at the level that we are working at – at ministerial or departmental level – if the 'on the ground' cross-border work hadn't been happening for the last few years. If the type of interactions, workshops, seminars, publications and visiting speakers hadn't been going on in frameworks like that of SCoTENS, the barriers wouldn't have been broken down to the same degree. The contribution that SCoTENS, the Centre for Cross Border Studies and Andy Pollak have made to the overall process of peace and cooperation in this country is probably not widely noticed, but it is certainly well-recognised and well appreciated as part of the overall process.

*Irish Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin TD, November 2007*

What the Centre for Cross Border Studies is doing is really important. We hope that you will provide analytical and research support to what we're trying to do in the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, pushing forward a significant North-South agenda on a purely practical basis, and looking at the concept of an all-island economy. We need to maximise the benefits of this cross-border work, identifying what will and will not succeed. This is not an academic exercise – its practical outcomes are almost limitless. In economic terms this is a pretty small island which should be looking outwards towards the global economy rather than inwards. We need



*Speakers at the June 2008 conference: 'Cross Border Cooperation as part of the Northern Irish Peace Process: Some Lessons for Europe.' From left to right: Mr Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secretary General, Association of European Border Regions; Ms Aine Lawlor, RTE (chair); Mr Dermot Ahern TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform; and Mr Pat Colgan, Chief Executive, Special EU Programme Body.*

to be encouraging cross-border cooperation to gain the maximum benefits for Northern Ireland in that global context. This is very rich and fruitful territory for the Centre to be working in.

*Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,  
Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, February 2007*

The Centre for Cross Border Studies always takes a very fresh and innovative approach, bringing together sources of energy on both sides of the border that used to be back to back but are now in an extraordinary dialogue.

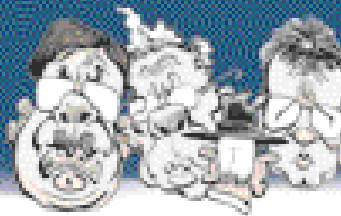
*President Mary McAleese,  
February 2005*

It is essential that North-South co-operation is not the exclusive preserve of the politicians or the public sector. Other actors in the North-South arena –

the private sector, trade unions, the farming sector, the voluntary and community sector, the universities and other educational institutions, to name but a few – have a critical role to play also in this process. This is where the role of the Centre for Cross Border Studies has been, and will continue to be, so important and valuable. You have carved out a very useful role in complementing the work of the new North-South institutions created by the Agreement, and serving as a kind of interface between the public sector in both parts of the island and non-governmental practitioners in the field.

*An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD,  
February 2005*

The continued excellence of the research carried out by the Centre brings to mind the words of John Ruskin: "Quality is



never an accident. It is always a result of intelligent effort.”

*Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Nigel Hamilton, March 2006*

The Centre for Cross Border Studies has had yet another successful year in supporting mutually beneficial cross border co-operation in key policy areas such as health, education and cross border mobility. Through its research activities and findings the Centre has added to the knowledge base and brought together policy makers, researchers, academics and others to collaborate and find practical solutions to issues affecting people's lives.

With the able assistance of the Centre, the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) has gone from strength to strength, having seed-funded over 40 North-South research and conference projects in the past six years. It is now also supporting the highly innovative North-South Student Teacher Exchange programme, which sends student teachers to do their teaching practice in the other jurisdiction (now in its fifth year).

The Centre's North/South Public Sector Training Programme held an over-subscribed fifth course in 2008, with more senior and central government civil servants on it than ever before, and is planning a sixth course, the first without EU Peace funding and with the Institute of Public Administration as a possible new partner, in 2009.

One of the Centre's key achievements during 2008 was the public launch, in Dublin and Derry/Londonderry, of the cross-border mobility website Border People ([www.borderpeople.info](http://www.borderpeople.info)), which was developed at the request of the NSMC. This website provides a wide range of information for people who wish to cross the border in either direction to work, study and live. The Centre continues to develop the information on the website and monitor its usage.

We look forward to the continuing support of the Centre in 2009.

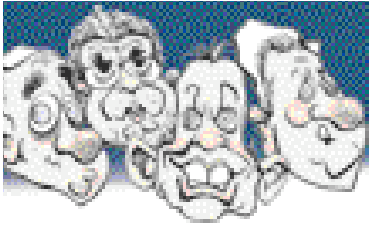
*North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretaries, Mary Bunting and Tom Hanney, February 2009*

## EVALUATION QUOTES

**by Brian Harvey (Brian Harvey Social Research, Dublin)**

‘Clients of the Centre appraised its work as more than competent, demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism, coupled with commitment and invariable courtesy. Expert opinion likewise gave a high assessment of the Centre's performance, admiring its quality, output, impact, relevance, value for money, working methods, expertise, vision, tact and diplomacy.’

‘Comments were: “its projects are always very thorough”; “doing a great job in challenging circumstances”; “the director



has an excellent grasp of what is necessary to move things along"; "nothing more important than north-south reconciliation"; "contributes a significant amount of information to the wider policy arena"; "does important work and deserves more exposure".

'The Centre was considered to be professional, reliable and worked hard. Its staff were "a pleasure to deal with". They did a "tremendous job", provided "good support and service", "they do what they have to do – and more." All the staff were good – "but that comes from the values set down from the director at the top". They were "efficient, focussed, interested and believed in what they were doing".

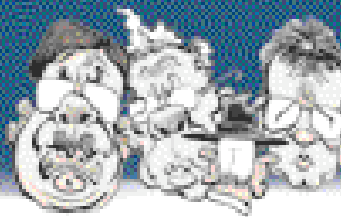
'Several commented that the Centre went beyond what was expected, "treating the project pro-actively, bringing fresh energy and commitment, finding imaginative ways to work around problems".

'The Centre was admired and respected for its commitment, energy, political even-handedness and ability to open doors to people who might not otherwise be in contact with each other. It has oiled the wheels of co-operation better than anyone else could, bringing an ever wider range of people into co-operation – "not just border people, but as far south as Cork".

All had a sense that the Centre had performed well on minimal staffing and resources. "It is transparent, managing an extensive programme, working within

tight timeframes and with a small number of staff".

'One organisation, whose work had been facilitated by the Centre, spoke enthusiastically of the Centre's commitment to arranging cross-border contacts and promoting relationships between groups that had hitherto little contact, making the comment that: "Once the relationship was established and got going, the Centre walked quietly away. It didn't try to hog the limelight or build an empire but let them get on with it".



## Board Members and Staff

**Dr Chris Gibson (chair)**, chairman, Foyle Meats Group and Wilson's Country Ltd; chair, Northern Ireland Civic Forum



*Chris Gibson*

**Dr Pauric Travers (vice-chair)**, president, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin



*Pauric Travers*

**Dr Jane Wilde**, director, the Institute of Public Health in Ireland

**Helen Johnston**, senior social policy analyst, National Economic and Social Council, Dublin

**Professor Liam O'Dowd**, director of the Centre for International Borders Research and professor of sociology at Queen's University Belfast

**Paul Nolan**, director, Institute of Lifelong Learning, Queen's University Belfast



*Patricia Clarke*

**Professor Ronaldo Munck**, strategic theme leader for internationalisation, interculturalism and social development, Dublin City University

**Colin Neilands**, director, Workers' Educational Association (Northern Ireland)

**Professor Dermot Diamond**, director, Science Foundation Ireland-funded Adaptive Information Cluster', National Centre for Sensor Research, Dublin City University



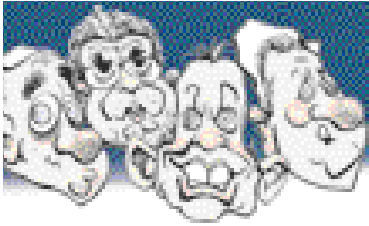
*Mairead Hughes*

**Tony Kennedy**, former chief executive, Co-operation Ireland, and member, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

**Colin Stutt**, independent economic consultant, Belfast



*Andy Pollak*



The director of the Centre is **Andy Pollak**, formerly religion and education correspondent of *The Irish Times*, and in the early 1990s coordinator of the Opsahl Commission.

The Centre's research manager is **Dr Patricia Clarke**, formerly a senior researcher with the London Ambulance Service, and its IT manager is **Joseph Shiels**, a former software developer with Fujitsu and consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The Centre's finance and administration manager is **Mairéad Hughes**. The director's PA and events manager is **Patricia McAllister**. The INICCO project administrator is **Eimear Donnelly**. The information officer is **Annmarie O'Kane**.



*Patricia McAllister*



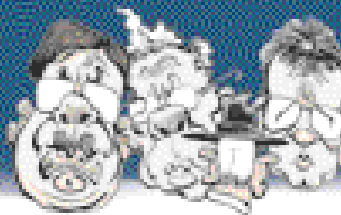
*Joseph Shiels*



*Eimear Donnelly*



*Annmarie O'Kane*



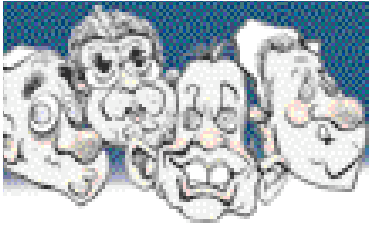
## EXTRACTS FROM 2007-2008 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### *The opinion of the independent auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP:*

- The financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the charitable company's affairs at 31 July 2008 and of its net incoming resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- and the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, and
- the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2008

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2008 £	Total Funds 2007 £
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
Activities for generating funds	-	646,020	<b>646,020</b>	316,936
Other income	472,239	-	<b>472,239</b>	431,475
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	472,239	646,020	<b>1,118,259</b>	748,411
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Direct charitable expenditure	430,450	436,494	<b>866,944</b>	660,025
Costs of generating funds	14,141	-	<b>14,141</b>	13,805
<b>Total resources expended</b>	444,591	436,494	<b>881,085</b>	673,830
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	27,648	209,526	<b>237,174</b>	74,581
<b>Fund balance carried forward at 1 August 2007</b>	76,741	161,242	<b>237,983</b>	163,402
<b>Fund balance carried forward at 31 July 2008</b>	104,389	370,768	<b>475,157</b>	237,983



**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2008**

	<b>2008</b>	2007
	<b>£</b>	£
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	<b>629,352</b>	402,262
Cash at bank	<b>200</b>	200
	<b>629,552</b>	402,462
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(154,395)</b>	(164,479)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>475,157</b>	237,983
<b>Funds</b>		
Unrestricted	<b>104,389</b>	76,741
Restricted	<b>370,768</b>	161,242
	<b>475,157</b>	237,983

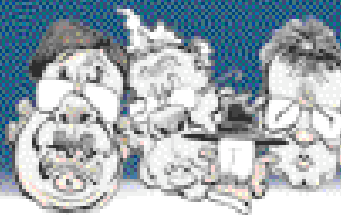
**Debtors**

	<b>2008</b>	2007
	<b>£</b>	£
Other debtors and prepayments	<b>205,913</b>	59,014
Amounts due from The Queen's University of Belfast	<b>423,439</b>	343,248
	<b>629,352</b>	402,262

**Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2008</b>	2007
	<b>£</b>	£
Accruals	<b>27,275</b>	51,517
Deferred income	<b>127,120</b>	112,962
	<b>154,395</b>	164,479

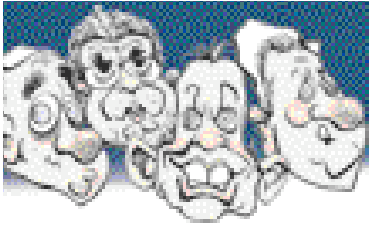


**Funds**

	Balance at 1 August 2007 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	<b>Balance at 31 July 2008 £</b>
Restricted funds	161,242	646,020	(436,494)	<b>370,768</b>
Unrestricted funds	76,741	472,239	(444,591)	<b>104,389</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>237,983</b>	<b>1,118,259</b>	<b>(881,085)</b>	<b>475,157</b>

Unrestricted funds are amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Board in furtherance of the aims of the Company.

Restricted funds are amounts which are expendable only in accordance with the specified wishes of the sponsor. The restricted funds consist of grants and awards for specific projects or administrative functions carried out by the company.



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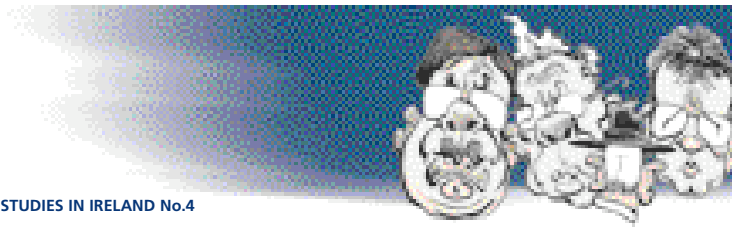
Annmarie O'Kane

### Websites:

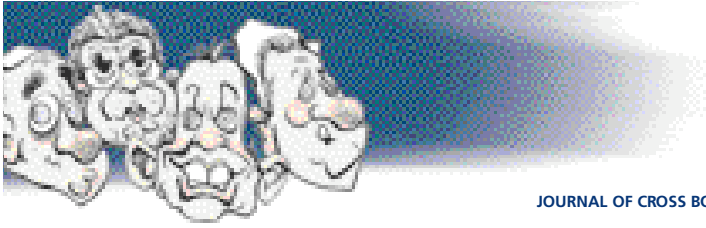
[www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie)

[www.borderireland.info](http://www.borderireland.info)

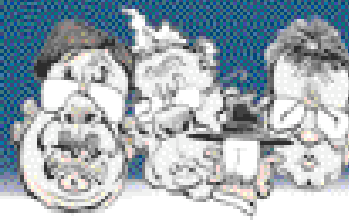
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## NOTES



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