

Obstacles to a new Relationship in Ireland

1. Unionists have identified Articles 2 + 3 as the major obstacle and by agreeing to place this perceived obstacle 'on the table' the Dublin government is meeting the need to address this obstacle.

2. From the SDLP's point of view there are other obstacles that need to be addressed:

(a) the fact that approx. 35-40 per cent of the people in NI have an all-Ireland frame of reference and do not regard the South as 'foreign' requires that identification and allegiance to be openly acknowledged and accommodated both within the structures for NI itself and in any structures which would reflect the wider all-Ireland relationships; failure to admit this need is an obstacle;

(b) the fact that political division in Ireland has resulted in disruptions to and distortions of development both on an all-Ireland basis and more obviously in border areas - the need to ensure that structures will address this situation is a challenge and failure to acknowledge the need for common approaches amounts to a further obstacle;

(c) particular problem areas exist in policing and the administration of justice - these need to be acknowledged and addressed; failure to do so reinforces other obstacles.