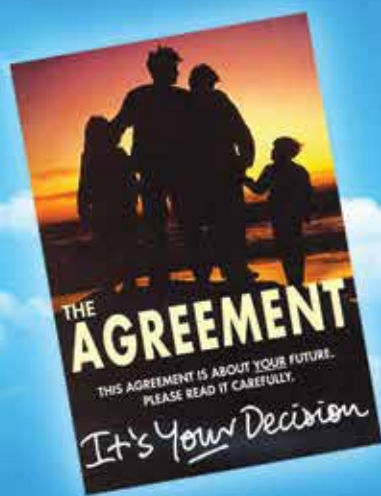




BEYOND BREXIT THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

WATERFRONT HALL, BELFAST

SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY 11AM



MINISTER JOE MCHUGH TD • MARY LOU MCDONALD TD • COLUM EASTWOOD MLA
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A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

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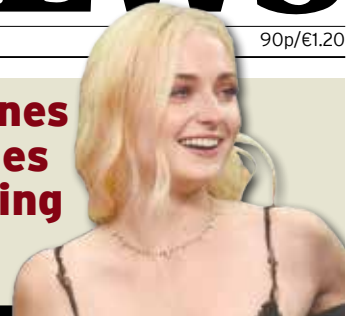
Derry SFC winner tells of rebuilding life and working with Arsenal

SPORT: P52,53



Game of Thrones star encourages Belfast's singing rugby players

NEWS: P2



Don't leave north out in the cold

Influential figures' open letter implores taoiseach to protect rights of Irish citizens in Northern Ireland

Allison Morris
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INFLUENTIAL figures within northern nationalism – including the GAA – have penned an open letter to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar urging him to act to protect the rights of Irish citizens in the north.

Signatories include former All-Ireland-winning Tyrone captain Peter Canavan as well as Republic of Ireland soccer international James McClean and boxers Paddy Barnes and Michael Conlon.

Prominent lawyers, business leaders, and figures from academia, the community, education and sports sectors



STORMONT'S SLIPPERY SLOPE: Children repurpose a Vote Leave placard as a sledge in the Stormont Estate on Saturday

PICTURE: Matt Mackey/PressEye

have also signed the unprecedented open letter carried in *The Irish News* today.

They call on the Irish government, as a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, to use its influence to end the political crisis.

They outline how the stalled Stormont process and Brexit have led to a sense of abandonment not felt since the country was partitioned.

"We believe that the current crisis has come about funda-

mentally due to a failure to both implement and defend the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements," they say.

"The result has been a denial and refusal of equality, rights and respect towards the section of the community to which we belong, as well as everyone living here.

"The impending reality of Brexit now threatens to reinforce partition on this island and revisit a sense of abandonment as experi-

BREXIT

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enced by our parents and grandparents."

While the letter acknowledges some assurances given in Friday's deal between the

EU and the British government in relation to Northern Ireland, it also warns that "Brexit pushes us all into uncharted territory with huge uncertainty for business and the economy".

Dublin and London, meanwhile, clashed yesterday over whether the Brexit agreement intended to trigger trade talks is legally binding or not.

The dispute was sparked when Brexit Secretary David Davis insisted it was much

more a statement of intent than "legally enforceable".

The Irish government's chief whip, Joe McHugh, branded the comments "bizarre".

It came as Secretary of State James Brokenshire told the BBC's *Sunday Politics* programme the deal did not mean Britain and Northern Ireland would remain in alignment with the EU.

"We are not... We are leaving [with] NI being part of that," he said.

FASHION, LIFESTYLE, CELEB GOSSIP & MORE in WomenTalk **STARTS P29**

BEYOND BREXIT
THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

BEYOND BREXIT

THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

11am – 2pm - Saturday 26th January 2019, Waterfront Hall, Belfast

Running order:

11:00 Anna McHugh
11:05 Niall Murphy
11:20 Minister Joe McHugh TD



11:35 **Panel Discussion - Brexit**
CHAIR Andrée Murphy
PANEL Clare Bailey MLA
 Paul Gosling
 David McCann
 Professor Colin Harvey
 Brian Feeney



12:20 Colum Eastwood MLA
12:35 Dara Calleary TD



12:50 **Panel Discussion - The Future**
CHAIR Patricia MacBride
PANEL Professor Jim Dornan
 Eamonn Mallie
 Frances Black
 Katie Rose Mead
 Kevin Meagher



13:35 Mary Lou McDonald TD



DECEMBER 2017 LETTER TO AN TAOISEACH

CONTEXT

In December 2017, over 200 individuals from within nationalist civic society in the north, from a wide range of sectors including sport, music, the arts, the legal profession, health, education and community, put their names to a letter to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

This letter outlined the deep concerns of the nationalist community in the north as a result of Brexit and the pertaining crisis in the northern political institutions due to the denial of rights by political unionism.

We can be in no doubt that we are in the midst of a generational epoch defining constitutional moment, not of our choosing. However it should be recalled that the immediacy and seriousness of what is coming down the tracks in a matter of months if not weeks, is not what compelled us to compose our correspondence to the Taoiseach.

It is a fact that the June 2017 Confidence and Supply arrangement that the DUP have with the Tory Government is a breach of the Good Friday Agreement, as it dispels for the absolute avoidance of doubt the pretence that the British Government are independent co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement. The DUP's narrow minded selfish political interests are at the heart of the British Government, and will dominate the British Government's approach to BREXIT.

The issues we recorded in our letter to the Taoiseach addressed the issues which we were all having organically in our own spheres of life, in staff rooms, coffee shops, at the sidelines of football pitches. That there was no respect for an Irish identity at the heart of the power sharing arrangement at Stormont, and that the rights based issues which had caused Stormont to collapse a year previous were not safe in the hands of the DUP Tory alliance. We asserted that there had been a denial and refusal of equality, rights and respect towards the section of the community to which we belong, rights such as :

1. Access to Justice:

- All victims of the conflict had the right to avail of mechanisms in accordance with European defined laws, to have access to Justice.
- Compliance with article 2 of the ECHR is not an issue for Stormont, as Stormont is not a sovereign entity, Westminster is, and it is Westminster that signed the ECHR.
- That Westminster seek to then derogate from its ECHR duties, by somehow alleging that their compliance with the ECHR is a matter for political consensus at Stormont, is a deft sleight of hand of Machiavellian proportions.
- This is a distinct matter for the Irish Govt to apply sovereign pressure in respect of.

2. Marriage Equality:

- Leo Varadkar and indeed the Irish Govt, rightly speak with pride in respect of the referendum vote in 2016 which brought Marriage Equality to the south.
- Marriage equality was promoted by the Irish Government as a fundamental rights issue in the referendum yet it is relegated to a matter of political consensus here. Rights are not negotiable or a matter of consensus.
- Many American voted for slavery but thankfully it was considered to be an inappropriate practice and was ended.
- Why is it that citizens of England, Scotland, Wales and the South all benefit from marriage equality but it is a right denied to citizens of our micro jurisdiction?

3. Language rights:

- A clear example of the DUP's sneering contempt for parity of esteem, is their sneering contempt for Acht na Gaeilge.
- Our language is an intrinsic part of all of our identity as citizens, yet we endure contemptuous taunts, such as Curry My Yoghurt and the cancellation of microscopic bursaries for the Donegal Gaeltacht.
- The fact that this jurisdiction is the only region in Britain or Ireland that makes no statutory provision for the protection of a minority language in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which was signed and ratified over 15 years ago.

- Irish is an official language in the Republic of Ireland, with Welsh given statutory protection under the Welsh Language Act 1993, with Scots Gaelic protected under the Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005.
- Why is it that citizens of Scotland, Wales and the South all benefit from statutory protection for an indigenous language but it is a right denied to citizens of our micro jurisdiction?

A Parliamentary response from Claude Juncker to Martina Anderson MEP provided a dark insight into the abyss, we as Irish citizens living in the north are staring into. Despite earlier commitments, British and EU statements now point to Irish passport holders resident here being stripped of access to almost all active EU rights following BREXIT.

This would render Irish citizens here with only the same 'dormant' EU rights held by Irish citizens who live outside Europe. In effect, we would be on a par with Irish people living in New York, Canada or Australia, in terms of our Irish citizenship.

President Juncker of the EU Commission response to Martina Anderson noted that:

- The north would no longer be in an EU member state,
- whilst Irish citizens would remain EU citizens, benefits from UK participation in EU programmes would end with BREXIT.

This position would leave Irish citizens here with access to almost none of the following EU rights:

1. Political rights to stand as and vote for MEPs; The right to vote for an MEP is normally tied into the member state of residency
2. Continued use of the European Health Insurance Card; Access to EHC normally involves billing the health authorities in the EU member state of residence –e.g. the NHS.
3. Studying elsewhere and being able to avail of EU student fee rates. Access to EU student fees rates normally requires residency in an EU member state for three of the previous five years;

So, without special arrangements, access in practice to these EU rights would be lost to Irish citizens resident here - unless of course they left and went to live somewhere else in the EU.

Practical Scenarios

In reality this means:

1. We will be disenfranchised. The democratic rights of us Irish and EU citizens in the north, include the right to direct representation in the European Parliament, which needs to be protected. We must continue to lobby the Irish Government to ensure that right is protected by creating a mechanism for people in the north to continue to elect an MEP, i.e. by means of a single constituency.
2. If you are on holiday in France, and fall, you will not be able to access their Health Service without paying or having medical insurance. An elderly person requiring medical assistance such as dialysis will in effect be grounded, as they will not be able to obtain insurance.
3. If you have a child wanting to study in Trinity or UCD, you will have to pay. For example QUB undergraduate annual tuition fees for NI domiciled students are £3,925; the same figure is applied for EU students – whereas the figure for international students is between £13k (classroom based courses) and up to £34k for clinical medical courses. If you have a child aged under 16 today, who has ideas of studying in the south, as things stand they will be treated as a non EU national and will be charged accordingly as you must be resident in an EU state for 3 of the preceding 5 years so if Brexit happens next March 2019, a child now aged 16 won't have the requisite 3 of 5 years to attend Trinity or UCD.
4. Other rights denied include the fact that the ability to take up work is dependent on mutual qualification recognition, which will leave with BREXIT. The right to be joined by family members (who are not EU/EEA nationals) are an inherent part of EU treaty rights to work and study, which also leave with BREXIT.

BREXIT IS AN ABANDONMENT OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

– Brian Feeney

There was a poll last August, long before the Withdrawal Agreement which showed the 'Brexit effect' on people's political preferences here. The poll found that if the UK leaves the EU 52% of people here would vote for a united Ireland. If there was a hard border the figure goes up to 56%. Of those from a 'nationalist heritage', an astonishing 94% would vote for a united Ireland in the event of Brexit.

The findings are in line with other polls taken in 2018 which illustrate that the DUP's stupidity in blocking an accommodation on the border and supporting leaving the customs union and the single market has produced the opposite of their political aims. The indications are that a substantial number of unionists – though far from a majority – would prefer Irish unity to Little England.

More importantly however, what these polls confirm is the final alienation of northern nationalists from the British government which has been underway over eight years watching and enduring the consequences of ever closer collaboration with unionists culminating in the dirty deal May struck with the DUP in 2017. That deal was merely the inevitable destination of the direction of travel of Conservative governments since 2010. Even before the 2010 election, solely to serve the interests of the Conservative party, David Cameron wilfully abandoned the neutrality on the north's politics his predecessor John Major had carefully constructed with proconsul Peter Brooke from 1990.

Brook's statement that Britain had no selfish strategic or economic interest in Ireland, repeated formally in the 1993 Downing Street Declaration, was critical in persuading the IRA to end its campaign. Since 2010 the British government has jettisoned that commitment for selfish political and electoral reasons.

Desperate to get into government at any cost after thirteen years of Labour, Cameron demonstrated his total ignorance of politics here and joined up with the dying UUP. He also fought every seat in the UK except two; north Belfast and Fermanagh/South Tyrone hoping to earn the gratitude of the unionist candidates there. Having backed the wrong horse he then cynically swung to the most toxic party in the UK bar none, the DUP, and granted their every wish in his tussles with the hopeless, hand-wringing, coalition Lib Dems.

He sent a succession of dimwits over here as proconsuls with one simple instruction: give the DUP anything they want. The worst example of this injunction was the abolition of 50/50 recruiting to the police. As a result, in 2017 only 20% of new police recruits were Catholic and 77% Protestant – exactly what the DUP want. Catholic recruits also leave the PSNI in greater numbers than Protestant. Great. A few more years of that and we'll be back to 90% Protestant and 100% unionist. At the behest of the DUP, dullard proconsuls have blocked movement on legacy, coroners' inquests, equality of marriage, LGBT rights, and so on.

Cameron, and then this current preposterously ineffectual, beleaguered prime minister have dismantled brick by brick the crucial elements of the Good Friday Agreement and set aside the pledges built into the Downing Street Declaration without the slightest concern about the damage they are doing. The abandonment of neutrality between the two communities here has destroyed the ability of any British government to participate in a talks process or cooperate meaningfully with the Irish government, a requirement of the GFA mechanisms. Theresa May's refusal last August's British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference to meet any Irish minister or to allow a joint press conference with the NIO's present political nonentity, or even provide a room for Irish ministers to meet the press, showed how deeply in thrall to the DUP she is.

As Britain ignores the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and leaves the European Court of Justice, this Conservative government begins to unravel the network of rights-based provisions in the GFA. It was never envisaged that the final arbiter of human rights and equality here would be the UK Supreme Court. Nationalists looked to the international clout of the EU as a final court of appeal.

Northern nationalists turned their backs on Westminster in last year's election when the British kicked away these two pillars of the peace process; neutrality, and EU guarantees of rights and equality.



CITIZENS RIGHTS: A test for Dublin's commitment to not leave northern Nationalists behind. – Chris Donnelly

Brexit has had a profound effect on the politics of Ireland. The full extent of its implications will not be known for quite some time, with detailed negotiations on the future EU-UK relationship likely to continue for the next few years. These negotiations are crucial to ensuring that the rights of Irish citizens residing in the north of Ireland are safeguarded. Important issues relating to health, education, transport, tourism, the economy, the border and much more will be shaped by the outcome of these negotiations.

Brexit presents a real and present danger to the future livelihoods and prospects of our young people. Amongst the priorities for citizens in the north in the time ahead must be ensuring that our children can continue to study in southern Irish universities on the same terms as other EU citizens beyond 2021 and that involvement in the ERASMUS programme (and its successor) will continue to be open to our universities, colleges and schools. Ideally, these are rights we would wish to secure for all people living in Northern Ireland, but protecting the specific rights and entitlements of Irish citizens residing in the north must be our first priority.



People living in the north of Ireland have found themselves engulfed in the eye of the Brexit storm, in spite of a clear majority voting Remain, and this has served to focus minds on the National Question in a manner unprecedented in the post-Good Friday Agreement era.

Opinion polls and surveys have illustrated that a significant consequence of Brexit has been to trigger the debate on the constitutional future of Northern Ireland within sections of northern society which hitherto would have been assumed to be solidly in support of the union with Britain.

Combined with the reality of demographic change now manifesting itself electorally, this development should serve to both galvanise Irish nationalism whilst also challenging supporters of Irish unity to plan a coherent and credible case for constitutional change in the short term.

There is a very clear role for the sovereign Irish government in leading discussions on shaping a vision for unity. To date, however, no Irish government has prioritised the issue. Furthermore, a political consensus has developed in the South (Sinn Féin apart) which eschews mentioning Irish unity in the mistaken belief that this somehow advances reconciliation within Northern Ireland and across the island.

Earlier this month, during a visit to Belfast, the Tanaiste Simon Coveney criticised people for even discussing Irish unity today, claiming that it was akin to “pouring petrol into a furnace that is already pretty hot.”

Challenging this mindset must be an immediate priority as it inherently relegates the rights, entitlements and aspirations of Irish citizens to a status subordinate to our neighbours.

Both Leo Varadkar and Simon Coveney have rightly been widely commended for articulating and lobbying for Ireland's case in the Brexit negotiations to date, securing the Backstop arrangement in the Withdrawal Agreement.

But the real test of their willingness to represent the interests of Irish citizens in the north will be in the time ahead.

There are concrete steps that the Irish government can take in the short term which will clearly demonstrate a willingness to live up to the promise made by the Taoiseach in December 2017 to ‘never again leave northern nationalists behind.’

These must include fighting to protect the rights of Irish citizens as EU citizens, pro-actively making the case for Irish citizens in the north to continue to be represented within the European Parliament and setting a date for the referendum to extend voting rights for future Irish Presidential elections to citizens living in the north and abroad.

For Irish citizens in the north, the Irish government must be judged by their actions from this point forward.

BREXIT

Open letter to
Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

A Thaoisigh, a chara,
WE are writing this letter to you as Irish citizens living in the north of Ireland to express our frustration and growing concern over the deepening nature of the ongoing political crises in the north. We are committed to human rights and cherish our Irish cultural traditions and our Irish national identity, as do hundreds of thousands of others living in this part of our country. We value equality for all citizens yet continue to be denied rights afforded to all others living on these islands. We fully endorse the recent call from human rights groups and others on this island for no regression on rights and equality and respect for the principle of equivalence. In 1998 the overwhelming population of the country voted in favour of the Good Friday Agreement. In recent years we have observed a concerted undermining of the political institutions established under the Good Friday Agreement and a laissez-faire approach being adopted by the two governments as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement. We believe that the current crisis has come about fundamentally due to a failure to both implement & defend the Good Friday and St Andrew's Agreements. The result has been a denial and refusal of equality, rights and respect towards the section of the community to which we belong, as well as everyone living here. The impending reality of Brexit now

threatens to reinforce partition on this island and revisit a sense of abandonment as experienced by our parents and grandparents. The fact that a majority of voters in the north of Ireland voted to remain within the EU must not be ignored. Against the stated will of a majority of voters in the north, and notwithstanding recent announcements, Brexit pushes us all into uncharted territory, with huge uncertainty for business and the economy, and continuing doubts about what this will mean in reality for Irish and European citizens living in this region. We, our children and grandchildren should not be forced out of the EU against our democratic will. All of this is offensive and unacceptable to us and many others. Despite the British government's co-equal and internationally binding responsibility for overseeing the Peace Process with the Irish government, we have no confidence in its commitment to do so with impartiality or objectivity. This is most recently instanced in the British Government's refusal to move on legacy inquest rights. The Conservative Party's political pact with the DUP has now become a grave threat to political progress. We appeal urgently to you taoiseach, and to the Irish government, to reassure us of your commitment to stand for equality and a human rights based society and your determination to secure and protect the rights of all citizens in the north of Ireland.



■ APPEAL: Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

List of signatories

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Cathy Rooney, Antrim
Paddy Barnes, Antrim
Michael Conlan, Antrim
Jamie Conlan, Antrim
Aoife Ní Chasaide, Derry
Shannon Lynch, Tyrone
Benny Tierney, Armagh
Enda McNulty, Armagh
Paddy Bradley, Derry
Ciaran McKeever, Armagh
Danny Hughes, Down
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BREXIT

High-profile figures appeal to taoiseach to secure rights of Irish citizens in the north

Allison Morris
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ALMOST 200 high-profile members of the nationalist community have penned an open letter to Leo Varadkar urging him to work to "secure and protect the rights of all citizens in the north of Ireland".

The list of signatories includes GAA sports stars including former All Ireland Tyrone GAA captain Peter Canavan and Republic of Ireland soccer international James McClean.

Prominent lawyers, academics, doctors, members of the arts community and media also feature on the list which is not party political.

In the major intervention they call on the Irish government, as a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, to use their influence to end

the current political crisis.

As it approaches the one-year mark since the collapse of the devolved assembly at Stormont, the unprecedented open letter to the taoiseach states: "We believe that the current crisis has come about fundamentally due to a failure to both implement and defend the Good Friday and St Andrew's Agreements".

"The result has been a denial and refusal of equality, rights and respect towards the section of the community to which we belong, as well as everyone living here.

"The impending reality of Brexit now threatens to reinforce partition on this island and revisit a sense of abandonment as experienced by our parents and grandparents.

"The fact that a majority of voters in the north of Ireland voted to remain within the EU must not be ignored".

While the letter acknowledges some recent assurances given in Friday's deal between the EU member states and the British government in relation to Northern Ireland it also warns that "Brexit pushes us all into uncharted territory, with huge uncertainty for business and the economy".

"We, our children and grandchildren should not be forced out of the EU against our democratic will. "All of this is offensive and unacceptable to us and many others".

Irish News columnists Brian Feeney and Danny Hughes are among those who have signed the letter as has well known priest Fr Gary Donegan and respected academic Prof Patricia Lundy.

Among the many GAA players to sign are former Down player Ross Carr, former Antrim hurler Terence McNaughton and Armagh's All-Ire-



SOCCER STAR: Republic of Ireland player James McClean was one of almost 200 people to sign a letter to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

land-winning manager Joe Kernan. Former GAA president and businessman Peter Quinn is also named.

Medal winning boxers Michael Conlon and Paddy Barnes also signed the letter.

Lawyers including Peter Madden, Niall Murphy, Kevin Winters, Des Fahy, Patricia Coyle and Sinéad Larkin have also put their name to the call for action from the taoiseach stating they "have no confidence" in the British government to defend

their rights "with impartiality or objectivity".

"This is most recently instanced in the British Government's refusal to move on legacy inquest rights.

"The Conservative Party's political pact with the DUP has now become a grave threat to political progress.

"We appeal urgently to you taoiseach, and to the Irish government, to reassure us of your determination to secure and protect the rights of all citizens in the north of Ireland".



NAMES: Clockwise from left, boxer Michael Conlan, Tyrone great Peter Canavan, Eugene Reavey, solicitors John Finucane and Kevin Winters and film director Terry George



Signatories from world of sport, arts and academia

Gareth McKeown
g.mckeown@irishnews.com

THE list of signatories urging taoiseach Leo Varadkar to protect the rights of nationalists in the north includes figures from sport, arts and the worlds of legal and academia.

Leading GAA figures include Tyrone's former All-Ireland-winning captain Peter Canavan and current county star Ronan McNamee among the huge representation from the GAA fraternity.

They are joined by former Down manager Ross Carr, former Armagh goalkeeper Benny Tierney, former Down Allstar and *Irish News* columnist Danny Hughes and

ex-Armagh manager and current Irish International Rules manager Joe Kernan.

Peter Quinn, a former GAA president and well-known businessman is also among those to sign the letter.

Republic of Ireland football star James McClean is a signatory along with Belfast boxers Paddy Barnes and brothers Michael and Jamie Conlan.

Within the arts notable signatories include Co Antrim novelist and screenwriter Rónan Bennett and Oscar-winning director Terry George, while in the media contingent, *Irish News* columnist Brian Feeney features.

Brian McCartney, QC heads a weighty legal sector, alongside prominent Belfast so-

licitors Kevin Winters, Peter Madden and Westminster Sinn Féin candidate John Finucane.

Notable signatures in the community sector come from former Holy Cross priest Fr Gary Donegan and Eugene Reavey.

Mr Reavey spent years fighting to clear his name after former DUP leader Ian Paisley used parliamentary privilege to wrongly name him as being involved in the murder of 10 Protestant workmen at King-smill in 1976. The attack happened a day after Mr Reavey's three brothers were fatally wounded in an attack on their family home at nearby Whitecross, carried out by the Glenties gang.

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IRELAND'S FUTURE
TOGETHER IN EUROPE

A letter to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

A Thaosigh, a chara,

In December 2017 you made a commitment to Irish citizens in the north:

“To the nationalist people in Northern Ireland, I want to assure you that we have protected your interests throughout these negotiations. Your birth right as Irish citizens, and therefore as EU citizens, will be protected. There will be no hard border on our island. You will never again be left behind by an Irish Government. These rights will, of course, be available to everyone in Northern Ireland who chooses to exercise his or her right to be an Irish citizen, regardless of their political persuasion or religious beliefs.”

Leo Varadkar 8th December 2017

Your commitment and assurances were welcomed by all who cherish their Irish citizenship and identity in the north.

However, almost a year later, the denial of rights continues.

The political institutions remain in suspension as political unionism continues to deny respect for our Irish identity and language, marriage equality, access to justice for legacy matters. As you know, these rights are now taken for granted by citizens in other parts of these islands.

The British Conservative government has rendered itself unable to effect any progress on these rights issues due to its dependence on the DUP.

Chuir siad siúd sa tuaisceart ar mór acu a saoránacht agus a bhféiniúlacht Éireannach, chuir siad sin fáilte roimh na gealltanais a thug tú.

Bliain ina dhiaidh sin, áfach, leanann leis an diúltú ceart.

Tá na hinstitiúidí polaitiúla ar fionraí fós mar a dhiúltaíonn polaiteoirí aontachtacha meas a thabhairt ar an Ghaeilge agus ar ár bhféiniúlacht Éireannach; ar an chomhionannas pósta; agus ar chearta maidir leis an chóras dlí agus ábhair a bhaineann leis an choinbhleacht. Mar is eol duit, is cearta iad seo nach iontach le saoránaigh in áiteanna eile sna hoileáin seo.

De dheasca go bhfuil siad ag brath ar an DUP, níl an Rialtas Coimeádach sa Bhreatain ábalta aon dul chun cinn a thabhairt i bhfeidhm i dtaobh na gceisteanna ceart seo.

De bharr Brexit, tá an bhagairt ann go rachaidh an ghéarchéim ceart in olcas agus go gcreimfear dearbhuithe reatha.

Diúltófar cúram sláinte saor in aisce do shaoránaigh i dtíortha san Aontas Eorpach; cuimsíonn sé sin an saoránach Éireannach ó thuaidh dá mbeadh cóir leighis ag teastáil air/uirthi agus é/í ar saoire nó ar cuairt ag cairde nó ag daoine muinteartha sa deisceart.

Brexit threatens to deepen the rights crisis and there is a real danger of serious erosion of current guarantees.

Access to free healthcare in EU countries will be denied, including if an Irish citizen from the north requires medical treatment while on holiday or visiting friends and family in the south.

The cost for studying at any university in the south will increase substantially rendering this option closed to many young Irish citizens in the north.

Irish citizens in the north will no longer be represented in the European Parliament.

After Brexit occurs, there are presently no guarantees as to the mutual recognition of qualifications. This may affect an electrician wanting to work in Dublin. Or a nurse from Dublin wanting to work in Belfast.

There is a very real potential that partition could be reinforced, and our country and our people further divided. This is a source of grave concern to all of us.

We, as Irish citizens, urge you to adhere to your commitment that we would “never again be left behind by an Irish Government” and to redouble your efforts, and the efforts of your government, to ensure that our rights are protected.

Méadóidh an costas a bhaineann le duine ag freastal ar ollscoil sa deisceart; rud a scriosfaidh sin mar rogha do chuid mhór saoránach óg sa tuaisceart.

Ní dhéanfar ionadaíocht, níos mó, sa Pharlaimint Eorpach ar son saoránaigh Éireannacha sa tuaisceart.

Ó thaobh cáilíochtaí de, níl aon ghealltanais ann faoi láthair maidir le haitheantas frithpháirteach i ndiaidh Brexit. Is féidir go gcuirfidh sé sin isteach ar an leictreoir ar mhaith leis/léi bheith ag obair i mBaile Átha Cliath; nó ar an altra atá ag iarraidh post i mBéal Feirste.

Tá fíorchontúirt ann go neartófar an chríochdheighilt, agus go scarfar ár dtír agus ár muintir níos mó arís. Is cúis mhór inni i sin dúinn ar fad.

Mar shaoránaigh Éireannacha, iarraidimid ort cloí leis an choimintimint a thug tú nach bhfágfaidh rialtas d’Éirinn ina dhiaidh muid “choíche arís”. Iarraidimid ort do chuid iarrachtaí féin agus iarrachtaí do rialtais a ghéarú lena a chinntiú go ndéanfar ár gcearta a chosaint.

Is sinne,

ACADEMIA

Dr Fiontán de Brún Antrim
Dr Conor Caldwell Antrim
Dr Michael Boyle Antrim
Prof Bill Rolston Antrim
Dr Margaret Ward Antrim
Prof Paddy Hilliard Antrim
Eilish Rooney Antrim
Dr Sean Mac Corraigh Antrim
Mark McGovern Derry
Stephen McGirr Tyrone
Dr John McMahon Down
Ruairi Boyle Down
Dr Tom Clonan Dublin
Prof James J Kennedy Kerry
Sean Marlow Tyrone
Kevin Starrs Monaghan
Prof Patricia Lundy Antrim
Prof Colin Harvey Derry

Dr Michael Piersie Antrim
Ruan O'Donnell Limerick
Prof Phil Scraton Antrim
Yvonne O'Donnell Tyrone
Cyril Toman Armagh
Dr Caoimhin Mac Aoidh Donegal
Dr Fintan Valley Armagh
Martin McAndrew Mayo
Niall Meehan Dublin
Cian McMahon Westmeath

ARTS

Myles Gaffney Cork
Brian Ferran Antrim
Tony Devlin Antrim
Michelle Devlin Down
Pearse Elliott Antrim
Ciaran Nolan Antrim
Ronan Bennett Antrim

Daniel Collins Derry
Audrey Gallagher Antrim
Neil Martin Antrim
Conor Grimes Tyrone
Terry George Down
Shane McNaughton Antrim
Oorlagh George Down
Sean Murray Antrim
Gerry Loughran Tyrone
Laurence McKeown Louth
Jim Fitzpatrick Dublin
Brendan J Byrne Antrim
Fintarr Bradley Dublin
Padraig Parkinson Donegal
Robert Ballagh Dublin
Adrian Dunbar Fermanagh
Justin McGurk Tyrone
Ciaran McMenamin Fermanagh

Tommy Sands Down
Seth Linder Down
Jim Sheridan Dublin
Seamus O'Neill Antrim
Méabh Ryan Derry
Ian McDonald Dublin
Brigid Murray Derry
Jason Mitchell Dublin
Gerard Cappa Antrim
Tony Bell Antrim
Brian Valley Armagh
Dominic Mac Giolla Bhríde Donegal
John Connors Dublin
Packy Lee Antrim
Declan McLaughlin Derry
Claire Allan Derry
Gáirne Holland Antrim
Damien Dempsey Dublin
Colm Sands Down

Brid Ó Gallcháir Antrim
Chris Byrne Donegal
Luke McLaughlin Derry
Frances Black Dublin
Rossa Ó Snodaigh Dublin
Breandan de Gallai Donegal
Mary Jo McAteer Antrim
Jo Spain Dublin
Cormac Juan Breatnach Dublin
Frankie Gaffney Dublin
Paddy Cullivan Donegal
Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh Donegal

BUSINESS

Louise Clarke Derry
Chris Keenan Derry
Sinead Ní Mhairtín Cork
Brian Stephenson Louth
Noel Gallagher Tyrone

Aidan McGuckin Derry
Tim Dalton Dublin
Kieran Coyle Tyrone
Dominic Kearns Antrim
Brendan McCoy Down
Tony Donnelly Antrim
Declan Donnelly Antrim
Ciaran Mackel Down
Pat McGuinness Armagh
Ciaran Ó Piontaigh Tyrone
Gerry Carille Antrim
Sean Napier Down
Jim Conlon Antrim
Patrick Magee Antrim
Brendan Mulgrew Antrim
Garvan O'Doherty Derry
Danny McGeown Antrim
Mickey McCallan Tyrone
Joe Morrison Down

Aidan Short Armagh
Cillian Short Armagh
Enda McCallan Tyrone
Tony McCotter Antrim
Conor Devine Tyrone
Kevin McKeogh Antrim
Steven Thompson Antrim
John Kelly Antrim
Pat Walsh Antrim
Cathal Sinnott Antrim
Kieran Kennedy Tyrone
John Trainor Antrim
Frank Caldwell Antrim
Alan Feely Antrim
John Kelly Antrim
Colin Thompson Antrim
David McGreevy Antrim
Paul Black Antrim
Bob McCoubrey Down

Arthur Mooney Antrim
Martin Hill Antrim
Ciaran McLaughlin Antrim
Sean McKenna Derry
James Cumiskey Armagh
Feargal Keenan Derry
Shaun McElhinney Derry
Barry Armstrong Down
Dan Keenan Tyrone
Pat Wilson Tyrone
Sean Quinn Tyrone
Eamon McGurk Tyrone
Declan Teggart Antrim
Declan Rodgers Antrim
Donal O'Connor Antrim
Jim Clinton Antrim
Mark McCreesh Tyrone
Martin Loughran Tyrone

Seamus Grimes	Tyrone	Aidan Corey	Tyrone	Joseph Fitzpatrick	Armagh	Jim Ledwith	Fermanagh	Chris Donnelly	Antrim	Julie Mallon	Tyrone	Shanna Carberry	Tyrone	Shannon Lynch	Tyrone
Des Cruden	Fermanagh	Leona Finn	Limerick	Brendan McAleavey	Armagh	Leo Carey	Antrim	Mairéad Ní Chonngáile	Antrim	Shauna McCusker	Tyrone	Mary O' Kane	Derry	Kevin Dobbin	Antrim
John Conway	Tyrone	Sheila Finn	Clare	Liam Davison	Armagh	Seamus Graffin	Antrim	Máire Ní Dhorcairt	Tyrone	Christy Muldoon	Tyrone	Desmond Fahy	Tyrone	Damien Harvey	Tyrone
Tony Shivers	Antrim	Emma O'Sullivan	Clare	Neil Valley	Armagh	Donal McCann	Antrim	Séamus O'Donoghue	Antrim	Petra Heagney	Tyrone	Patricia Coyle	Antrim	Kevin Kelly	Derry
Maurice O' Kane	Tyrone	Shane O'Leary	Clare	Tony Gildener	Armagh	James Magill	Antrim	Garar Mac Robaird	Antrim	Dr Enda Cullen	Antrim	Chris McCann	Antrim	Tony Scullion	Derry
Raymond Loughran	Tyrone	Hughie Mullin	Tyrone	Ni Gildernew	Armagh	Fr Des Wilson	Antrim	Bridín Ní Dhomhnaigh	Antrim	Dr Shane Cullen	Antrim	Clare McGoldrick	Antrim	Banjo Bannon	Down
Karen Young	Derry	Pierce Hickey	Limerick	Colm Devlin	Armagh	Greg Ennis	Meath	Frank Maskey	Antrim	Dr Peter Murphy	Antrim	Frank Maskey	Antrim	Neil McLanahan	Antrim
Joan O'Hanlon	Tyrone	Kate Hickey	Limerick	Aidan Swift	Armagh	Patrick Dermot	Down	Cara Mac Giolla Fhionda	Derry	Catherine Glover	Antrim	Setanta Marley	Antrim	Aileen McLanahan	Antrim
Olisín Murray	Down	Dermot Hickey	Limerick	Gary Rushe	Armagh	Dermod Ó Hara	Derry	Séan Mac Giolla Fhionda	Derry	Tony Carlie	Antrim	Marie Hans	Tyrone	Seamus McLanahan	Antrim
Manus Barry	Tyrone	Jack Cumiffe	Dublin	Oliver Mone	Armagh	Ciara Ferguson	Tyrone	Ciara Mhic Giolla Bhríde	Antrim	Padhraic Conlon	Antrim	Eugene McKenna	Antrim	Terence McNaughton	Antrim
Paul McKeaney	Fermanagh	Paula McKenna	Limerick	Thomas Mallon	Armagh	Gerard Rice	Antrim	Gabriel O' Kane	Derry	Dr Barra Mac Giolla Aeláin	Armagh	Micky Crawford	Antrim	Dominic McKinley	Antrim
Seamus McCann	Fermanagh	Pat McKenna	Limerick	Gerard Davidson	Armagh	Gaeráid Ó Cairéalláin	Derry	Bronagh Farrimond	Antrim	Dr John Burton	Derry	Martin Durkan	Down	Marian McGuinness	Armagh
David Finn	Dublin	Tony Kennedy	Kerry	Jimmy McCreech	Armagh	Deslie Nyle	Derry	Martin McCaughan	Antrim	Ana Mac Giolla Bhríghde	Derry	Anna Nugent	Down	Rebecca O'Reilly	Armagh
David Kennedy	Cork	Michael Hannett	Tipperary	Martin Smith	Armagh	Andree Murphy	Antrim	Deirdre Cree	Antrim	Catherine Scullion	Derry	Shane O'Neill	Antrim	Tony Haveni	Armagh
Joseph Carlie	Antrim	Kevin McKay	Antrim	John Quinn	Armagh	Mark Thompson	Antrim	Teresa Cash	Antrim	Dr Thomas Donnelly	Antrim	Gary Daly	Dublin	Martin Lynch	Down
Emmet Clarke	Antrim	Kevin McKay	Antrim	Mickey McCreech	Armagh	Seanna O'Neill	Antrim	Éibhlín Mhíic Aoidh	Antrim	Dr John McSparran	Antrim	Mark Bassett	Antrim	Ritchie Hogan	Kilkenny
Ciarán Loughran	Tyrone	Kevin McKay	Antrim	Larry Quinn	Armagh	Paul O'Connor	Derry	Nícheál Ó Kane	Derry	Martin Dobbin	Antrim	Seamus Leonard	Fermanagh	Patrick Horgan	Cork
Pat McCullough	Tyrone	Charlie Keenan	Antrim	Kenny McClelland	Armagh	Declan Meehan	Dublin	Séamus Ó Tuama	Antrim	Chris Carlie	Down	Mark Donnelly	Tyrone	Shane O'Sullivan	Waterford
Sean Nash	Derry	Pat McCortey	Antrim	Fergie Harte	Tyrone	Sinead Murray Lynch	Donegal	Margaret Neeson	Antrim	Donna Buick	Antrim	Alan Delany	Dublin	Adrian Fulton	Antrim
Niall Ó Gatháin	Derry	Claire McCullough	Down	Francis Butler	Antrim	Séan Mór Ó Dáimhín	Tyrone	Martin Short	Antrim	Dr James Tumelty	Down	Ciarán Toner	Antrim	Timmy Hammersly	Tipperary
Chris Moore	Derry	Brendan McCullough	Down	Tim Molloy	Antrim	Niall Conlon	Down	Kieran Austin	Antrim	Dr John Canning	Down	Meabh Molloy	Antrim	Martin Donnelly	Derry
Neil Corr	Antrim	Oliver Lennon	Antrim	Kevin Totten	Antrim	Cathy Neils	Down	Riaghach Doherty	Antrim	Dr John Canning	Dublin	Kevin McDonnell	Antrim	Joe Kernan	Armagh
Liam McStravick	Down	Martin Mallon	Tyrone	Dominic Ó Kane	Antrim	Dermot Mulholland	Derry	John Martin	Antrim	Deirdre Murphy	Down	Conor Mullan	Derry	Kieran McGeeaney	Armagh
Allison Connor	Down	Fergal Sherry	Fermanagh	Teresa McKeaney	Fermanagh	Dermod Kelly	Armagh	Damian Ó Neill	Armagh	Declan Campbell	Fermanagh	John McMahon	Antrim	Andrew Muir	Armagh
Nuala Quinn	Derry	Chris Conwell	Fermanagh	Stephen Tierney	Fermanagh	Seamus Heaney	Derry	Michele Deery	Derry	Nicola Trainor	Down	Paddy McDermott	Derry	Aaron Kernan	Armagh
Tony Clarke	Antrim	Eamon Fitzpatrick	Fermanagh	Colin Elliott	Antrim	John Lynch	Derry	Eileen Gribbin	Derry	Anna O'Leary	Down	George Burns	Dublin	Ciarán McKeeever	Armagh
John Leonard	Antrim	John Klyne	Dublin	Sean Donnelly	Derry	Una McCarty	Derry	Diarmuid Shivers	Antrim	Conor McKinney	Down	Dáithí Mac Garthaigh	Meath	Stephen O'Neill	Tyrone
Rosemary McKenna	Antrim	Peter Kirby	Down	Jimmy Doherty	Derry	Sharon O' Kane	Derry	Sharon O' Kane	Derry	Kathryn Robinson	Down	Davy Fitzgerald	Down	Wesford	Down
Keith Tierney	Antrim	Ciarán Crilly	Down	Rosie Doherty	Derry	Elisabeth Ó Kane	Derry	Elisabeth Ó Kane	Derry	Ciarán McCullinan	Antrim	Brian G. McCarty QC	Antrim	Eamon Heery	Dublin
Gareth MacKinn	Antrim	Tony Jackson	Derry	Brian Loughran	Antrim	Brian Loughran	Derry	Diarmuid Da Broadair	Antrim	Gerard Dobbin	Antrim	Sean G. Doherty	Derry	Mark Carey	Derry
Joe Taylor	Antrim	Graeme Finnegan	Down	Neil Keenan	Tyrone	Carol McGowan	Derry	Kieran McGourty	Antrim	Aisling Conway	Tyrone	Lauren McGarry	Antrim	Justin Crozier	Antrim
Roisín McKurk	Tyrone	Rick Grogan	Galway	Mark Matthews	Tyrone	George McGowan	Derry	Stobhán Ní Dhoibhlin	Derry	Christopher Grieves	Down	Paul Duffly	Antrim	Christophers McGuille	Antrim
Pat McCormack	Tyrone	Jim Ferrin	Antrim	Oliver Meegah	Tyrone	Seamus Ward	Derry	Peter Murray	Antrim	Rosalene Nolan	Antrim	Sorcha Uí Cheallaigh	Armagh	Tomas McCann	Antrim
John Begley	Tyrone	Hugh Kennedy	Antrim	Eugene Murray	Derry	Linda McKinney	Derry	Roisín McBride	Antrim	Barney Herron	Antrim	Kevin Winters	Antrim	Declan Lynch	Antrim
Paddy McDonald	Tyrone	John Jones	Antrim	Colette Brazill	Dublin	Donna McCloskey	Derry	Ronan M'Hugh	Antrim	Patricia O'Rourke	Antrim	Pearse McDermott	Derry	Patrick McBride	Derry
Luke Daly	Tyrone	Sean Owens	Antrim	Habib Brizi	Dublin	Aileen McKinney	Derry	Gavin Brown	Antrim	Dr Doreen Fitzsimmons	Down	Ciarán Shiel	Derry	Emmett McGuckian	Derry
Martin McCrystal	Tyrone	Thomas McStocker	Antrim	Brian McKullan	Tyrone	Maire Mhíic Phíneachtá	Armagh	John Quigley	Derry	Lucille O'Hagan	Antrim	Colleen Gildernew	Tyrone	Ciarán Johnston	Antrim
Bernadette Gallagher	Armagh	James Toal	Antrim	Una Short	Antrim	Gary Bunting	Armagh	Séan Mac an Tuile	Armagh	Geraldine Barry	Antrim	Paul Pierce	Antrim	Martin Johnson	Antrim
Eugene Hughes	Tyrone	Una Johnston	Tyrone	Stephen Kelleher	Dublin	Eileen Drumm	Fermanagh	Seamus Mac Dhaibhéid	Armagh	Dr Catherine Donnelly	Down	Kevin Neary	Louth	Paddy Bradley	Derry
Martin McCann	Tyrone	Enda McGarrity	Tyrone	Martin Conlon	Antrim	Sean Quinn	Antrim	Pilib Mistel	Antrim	Dr Aisling Hillick	Galway	Eamon McLaughlin	Louth	Ronan O'Neill	Tyrone
Peter McGirr	Tyrone	Paddy Marrion	Antrim	Orlaith Carland	Antrim	Tony McDonagh	Antrim	Janette McQuaid	Derry	Dr Tom Delap	Donegal	Michelle McDonnell	Tyrone	Martin Dunne	Cavan
John McGarry	Tyrone	Finbar McCoy	Antrim	Conor Patterson	Down	Jim Donnelly	Antrim	Mairéad Harvey	Tyrone	Dr Eoin Mac Giolla Mhuire	Tyrone	Conor Saly	Tyrone	Barren Hughes	Monaghan
Brian O'Neill	Derry	Eugene McCann	Antrim	Andrew McCallin	Antrim	Terry Quinn	Antrim	Pauidie Shivers	Antrim	Rosalene McCooey	Armagh	Colin Gervin	Tyrone	Finn Moriarty	Armagh
Peter McEvoy	Down	James McMeel	Antrim	Patrick Mooney	Antrim	Peter Lynch	Antrim	Joanne Smyth	Antrim	Síofra McCooey	Armagh	Colin O' Kane	Tyrone	Conor Johnson	Antrim
Patricia McFrank	Derry	Aidan Reid	Antrim	Aidan Reid	Antrim	Michael Culbert	Antrim	Raymond Hunter	Antrim	Dr Scott Rafferty	Armagh	Frank McManus	Fermanagh	Matty Donnelly	Tyrone
Patsy McDaid	Derry	Sean Waide	Antrim	Kevin Gamble	Antrim	Ronan Coyle	Tyrone	Anthony Daly	Dublin	Harry Crossan	Derry	Myles McManus	Fermanagh	Kevin Hughes	Monaghan
Shane Quinn	Derry	Pádraig McCullinan	Fermanagh	Fr Joe McVeigh	Fermanagh	Gerry McConville	Antrim	Adrian Walsh	Antrim	Dr Andrew Fitzsimmons	Down	Caitlín Bunting	Antrim	Conor Mortimer	Mayo
John Ross Mac Mathuna	Down	Gareth Graham	Antrim	Pilib Ó Ruainí	Down	Claire Hackett	Tyrone	Maehdhín Ní Andresa	Antrim	Therese McCarty	Antrim	Frank Roberts	Antrim	Liam Bradley	Derry
Seán Ó Fáilch	Fermanagh	Margaret Daly	Dublin	Patrick Leonard	Down	Fra Stone	Down	Cathal O'Doherty	Antrim	Máirín Uí Ghastúin	Antrim	Frank Rogers	Antrim	Martin Toland	Armagh
Mark Bonner	Tyrone	Brian Daly	Kildare	Christie McKeown	Antrim	Sal Brennan	Antrim	Brid Bradley	Armagh	Pat McGovern	Fermanagh	Sean Pól Begley	Tyrone	Colm McKurk	Derry
Darryl Burns	Tyrone	Brownen Daly	Kildare	Harry Conolly	Antrim	John Holland	Antrim	Jim McCann	Antrim	Alanah Laverty	Antrim	Martin Mallon	Antrim	Gary O' Kane	Antrim
Paddy Finn	Armagh	Connor Daly	Dublin	Conor Maskey	Antrim	Pauline Kersten	Antrim	Kevin McCreavey	Antrim	Michael McDaibhéid	Fermanagh	Seamus Duffly	Armagh	Gregory O' Kane	Antrim
Rory Cunningham	Down	Gabriel McKeaney	Fermanagh	Joe Duffy	Antrim	Harry Maguire	Antrim	Damien Coyle	Antrim	Thomas Short	Armagh	Blaine Nugent	Tyrone	Liam Watson	Antrim
Aidan Robinson	Down	Louise McLaughlin	Armagh	Grainne Reilly	Antrim	Aine Hargey	Antrim	Anne Keenan	Tyrone	Thomas Short	Armagh	John Burke	Derry	James Haughton	Antrim
Barry Madine	Antrim	Deirdre McCooey	Armagh	Liam Ó Flanagan	Antrim	Christopher Totten	Derry	Kevin Ó Neill	Down	Diarmuid Short	Armagh	Emonn Dorman	Down	Edie McCloskey	Antrim
Francis McDaid	Derry	David McLaughlin	Derry	Fionnuala Black	Antrim	Peter Deazley	Antrim	Dr Liam Ó Cuinneagáin	Derry	Damien Austin	Antrim	Paul Fitzsimmons	Down	Michael McShane	Antrim
Ronan Heenan	Antrim	Jane Adams	Antrim	Michael Ryan	Antrim	Fr McMorrow	Fermanagh	Roisín Mhíic Thaidéig	Derry	Kevin O'Doherty	Clare	Karen McDavid	Derry	Conor McKinley	Antrim
Michael Muldoon	Antrim	Cathal Leach	Antrim	Ferdia Carson	Antrim	Roisín Mhíic Thaidéig	Derry	Aine Ní Mhurchú	Down	Irene Cusack	Offaly	Ruadhán MacAodhán	Dublin	Pilly Elliott	Antrim
Darren O'Rodaigh	Dublin	Joseph McKullan	Antrim	Jordan Madden	Antrim	Áine Ní Mhurchú	Down	Damien Brown	Derry	Owen Magill	Down	Seamus Mac Giolla Fhíneáin	Dublin	Patrick Maguire	Antrim
Colm Finn	Clare	Hugh McIlwaine	Antrim	Pádraig Ó Ceallaigh	Antrim	Damien Brown	Derry	Tom Cilly	Antrim	Orla McKenna	Derry	Rhona Murphy	Antrim	Andy McIlwaine	Antrim
James Conlon	Down	Daniel Ó Hara	Antrim	Dr Pádraig Ó Tiarnaigh	Armagh	Peter Donnelly	Armagh	Máire Darragh	Antrim	Paula Dawson	Donegal	Paul Tiernan	Armagh	Paul Gormley	Derry
Martin Carey	Fermanagh	Patricia O'Boyle	Antrim	Liam Maskey	Antrim	Kieran Burns	Armagh	Joe McNulty	Armagh	Sarah Louise Dows	Antrim	Michael Cassidy	Derry	Seán Mary Lockhart	Armagh
Lee Madden	Derry	Peter McAllister	Antrim	Liam Herick	Dublin	Gerard McClelland	Armagh	James Boyle	Armagh	John MacManus	Antrim	Patrick Maguire	Tyrone	Barry McGurgan	Armagh
Siobhán McDaid	Down	Gerry Towe	Armagh	Pol Deeds	Antrim	Brian Cunningham	Down	Bernard O'Connor	Fermanagh	Lorette Gleeson	Fermanagh	Patrick Devine	Donegal	Noel McMonagle	Armagh
Dee Keenan	Tyrone	Anthony McDonald	Armagh	Maracas Mac Ruairí	Down	Damian McGeeney	Antrim	Lorette Gleeson	Fermanagh	Máirín Ó Gormliathé	Tyrone	Shane McConville	Donegal	Jimmy Magee	Armagh
MT McSoy	Down	Paddy Hurl	Derry	Angela Hegarty	Down	John Sheridan	Fermanagh	Tommy Keane	Down	Tom Murray	Down	Alan O'Leary	Cork	Caomhán Ó Fearain	Derry
Daniel Fitzsimons	Down	John Kelly	Derry	Eugene Reavey	Armagh	JJ O'Hara	Leitrim	Tom Murray	Donegal	Paul Gibbins	Monaghan	Sean Brophy	Antrim	Archie Rae	Antrim
Barry Conway	Tyrone	Eugene Reavey	Armagh	Seamus Mullan	Down	John Kelly	Derry	Johnny Kelly	Armagh	Johnny Kelly	Armagh	Helen Foster	Antrim	Fergal Wray	Fermanagh
Peter Mulligan	Down	Seamus Deery	Derry	Jim Girvan	Down	Richard Twomey	Cork	Patrick Carlie	Antrim	Seamus McDonnell	Antrim	Colm Casserly	Antrim	Kevin Foster	Fermanagh
Peter Quinn	Fermanagh	James Valley	Armagh	Réamonn Ó Ciaráin	Armagh	John McNamee	Armagh	Aileen Conroy	Antrim	Dominic Fryers	Antrim	Mark Lohan	Galway	Vincent Martin	Fermanagh
Joanna Loughran	Tyrone	Brendan Hurl	Antrim	Ciarán Mac Giolla Bhréin	Antrim	John McNamee	Armagh	John McVeigh	Armagh	Arthur Kinney	Armagh	Jim McVeigh	Antrim	Geraldine Montgomery	Fermanagh
Donna O'Hagan	Antrim	John McGowan	Derry	Gaeráid Ó Éirí	Down	John McNamee	Armagh	Darina Halpeny	Dublin	Éilis Ní Chasaide	Derry	Frank Connolly	Dublin	Kevin Maguire	Fermanagh
Mark Lynch	Dublin	Tom Heaney	Derry	Aodhan Harkin	Tyrone	John Grant	Derry	Pat McTeggart	Fermanagh	Angela O'Hagan	Antrim	Michael Halpeny	Dublin	Sonia Ní Giolla Easbuig	Donegal
Colm McNicholl	Dublin	Ken Tsang	Antrim	Conal McKeeney	Derry	Doreann Ní Dhomhnaill	Antrim	Orla Devlin	Derry	Ruairi Creaney	Antrim	Michael Halpeny	Dublin	Dr Jude Collins	Antrim
Pauline McCann	Antrim	Ling Tsang	Antrim	Mary Cooke	Derry	Stephen Travers	Antrim	Mary Crawford	Antrim	Stevie Fitzpatrick	Wicklow	Gerry Murphy	Armagh	Eamonn McCormack	Antrim
Suzanne McCarty	Derry	Martina Ma	Antrim	Jake MacSiarais	Antrim	Gerard Rosary	Donegal	Gerard Rosary	Donegal	Clare Short	Armagh	Brian Quinn	Antrim	John Keenan	Derry
Lisa Hickson	Derry	John B Farren	Derry	Mairead Madden	Antrim	Cillian McConville	Tyrone	Susan McKuskey	Armagh	Susan McKuskey	Armagh	Liam McBrien	Antrim	Brian Smith	Armagh
Jennifer Barr	Donegal	Fiona Gibben	Antrim	Kevin Donnelly	Down	Donal McKinney	Antrim	Paul Collins	Antrim	Fiona Kearney	Derry	Seán Maher	Offaly	Gerard Tracey	Fermanagh
Amber Dermot	Dublin	Gerry Cadden	Fermanagh	Mark Breen	Down	Thomas Walls	Antrim	Paddy O'Donnell	Antrim	Simon McCloy	Derry	Pat McFealy	Longford	Mickey Savage	Antrim
Monica Duffy	Louth	Martin McDaid	Fermanagh	Finian Tumelty	Down	Paddy O'Donnell	Antrim	Niall Mac Innrachtaigh	Donegal	Susan Haughey	Tyrone	Denis Gormalley	Sligo	James McGarry	Kilkenny
Orla Ní Cheneide	Louth	Martin McDaid	Fermanagh	Donald Tumelty	Down	Niall Mac Innrachtaigh	Donegal	Michael Barron	Donegal	Tara Nugent	Antrim	Michael P. Neeson	Sligo	Noel McClelland	Armagh
John Donaldson	Down	Gerry Cadden	Fermanagh	Tommy Lacken	Down	Michael Barron	Donegal	Enda Kilpatrick	Antrim	Enda Kilpatrick	Tyrone	Dr Bolger	Dublin	Ben McGarrigle	Tyrone
John MacMahon	Down	Martin McDaid	Fermanagh	Laurence Bradley	Down	Conchúr Ó Muadaigh	Antrim	Conor Fitzsimmons	Antrim	Náirín Greene	Dublin	Náirín Greene	Dublin	Padraig Hampsey	Tyrone
Lenny Laverty	Down	Martin McDaid	Fermanagh	Conchúr Ó Muadaigh	Antrim	Dáithí Mac Ualláin	Antrim	Niall Banks	Antrim	John Douglas	Wicklow	John Douglas	Wicklow	Gerard Galvan	Tyrone
Martin McAuley	Antrim	Shamus Cosgrove	Fermanagh	Conchúr Ó Muadaigh	Antrim	Máirín Mac Cathmháid	Antrim	Deaglan Murphy	Antrim	Deaglan Murphy					

LETTER TO TAOISEACH

Nationalist civic leaders appeal to Varadkar for support over Brexit 'rights crisis'

John Manley
Political Correspondent
j.manley@irishnews.com

ACCLAIMED actors, leading business figures and top sports people are among the 1,000 signatories to an open letter to Leo Varadkar which calls on the taoiseach to ensure the rights of northern nationalists are protected as Brexit looms against the backdrop of a suspended Stormont.

The letter from a broad cross-section of civic nationalism is published in a double-page advert in *The Irish News* today.

It follows a similar initiative last December, when 200 people, including many influential figures, signed a letter to Mr Varadkar in which they voiced frustration at the deepening political crises affecting the north.

The signatories to the latest letter include actors Adrian Dunbar and Ciarán McMenamin, international footballer James McClean and film director Jim Sheridan. It's also signed by Hillsborough campaigner Phil Scraton and singer-songwriter Tommy Sands.

Among the more than 300 business people lending their support are restaurateur Bob McCoubrey, football agent Gerry Carille and public affairs practitioner Brendan Mulgrew, previously an SDLP special adviser.

The signatories have been approached because they

Citizens in north being denied freedoms taken for granted by others say 1,000 signatories

Brexit threatens to deepen the rights crisis and there is a real danger of serious erosion of current guarantees

- Letter, right



represent a breadth of nationalist opinion, with more than 30 school principals, dozens of lawyers and 20-plus doctors and consultants.

The letter welcomes the Fine Gael leader's commitment to represent the interests of northern nationalists at the Brexit negotiations but notes how all citizens north of the border are denied rights which are "taken for granted by citizens in other parts of these islands".

"The British Conservative government has rendered itself unable to effect any pro-

gress on these rights issues due to its dependence on the DUP," it says.

"Brexit threatens to deepen the rights crisis and there is a real danger of serious erosion of current guarantees."

The letter raises concerns about Brexit's impact on cross-border health care and education, as well as a lack of representation for Northern Ireland in the European Parliament.

Belfast lawyer Niall Murphy, who has been involved in compiling the letter and



'AN AWAKENING OF NATIONALIST CONFIDENCE': Among the more than 1,000 signatories of the letter to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, above, are, below from left, actors Ciarán McMenamin and Adrian Dunbar, footballer James McClean and director Jim Sheridan



its predecessor, told *The Irish News* that almost every section of nationalist civic life was represented among the signatories.

"That this letter is signed by over a thousand leaders from the nationalist community is a testament to an evolving earthquake in terms of an awakening of nationalist confidence," he said.

"The 1,000 names are symbolic - the letter is not a pe-

titition, but a representative sample of the views of hundreds of thousands of people across the north and indeed across the entire island."

The taoiseach acknowledged the concerns spelled out in last December's letter, saying the his government's guiding light in Brexit negotiations was the Good Friday Agreement.

It is hoped Mr Varadkar will respond in equally post-

itive terms to the latest open correspondence.

In February, in what was regarded as a riposte to last December's letter, a "civic unionism" group of more than 100 people signed a letter challenging what was described as a nationalist assumption that qualities such as rights, truth and equality are not inherent within unionism.

➤ Editorial ➤ P20

LETTER TO TAOISEACH

Shocking state of affairs causing deep dismay for EU citizens in north

A YEAR ago I was one of more than 200 people who signed a letter from civic nationalism to the taoiseach appealing to him as head of the Irish government to defend the rights of northern nationalists who, as Irish citizens, will remain EU citizens after Brexit. There was growing concern at the starkly xenophobic stance the British government was adopting in Phase 1 of negotiations with the EU. Phase 1 was to deal with three elements: protecting the rights of EU citizens in the UK, the unique position of the north and the financial settlement – the 'UK divorce bill'. On December 8 a joint UK-EU report was agreed, including the crucial paragraph 52 which states: 'The people of Northern Ireland who are Irish citizens will continue to enjoy rights as EU citizens, including where they reside in Northern Ireland. Both Parties therefore agree that the Withdrawal Agreement should respect and be without prejudice to the rights, opportunities and identity that come with European Union citizenship for such people and, in the next phase of negotiations, will examine arrangements required to give effect to the ongoing exercise of, and access to, their EU rights, opportunities and benefits.' The taoiseach pronounced himself satisfied with the Joint Report and promised Irish citizens' rights in the north, as EU citizens, would be protected and they would 'never again be



Brian Feeny

Irish, as EU citizens, in the north will cease to have access to rights EU citizens are entitled to in health, education, professional qualifications, representation in the European parliament, and... human rights

left behind'. Sadly none of that has happened. To the contrary. Within 48 hours the British ratted on what they had signed up to in the Joint Report. In the draft Withdrawal Treaty of March 2018, the phrase in paragraph 52, 'where they reside in Northern Ireland' had vanished. Furthermore, the undertaking to, 'examine arrangements required to give effect to the ongoing exercise of, and access

to, their EU rights etc' never happened. Worse, in response to a question from Martina Anderson MEP, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, wrote that people in the north will not have access to EU policies and programmes when Brexit happens. It became increasingly clear that Irish, as EU citizens, in the north will cease to have access to rights EU citizens are entitled to in health, education, professional qualifications, representation in the European parliament, and perhaps most critical, human rights. The British government will no longer recognise the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice and have already set aside the EU Fundamental Charter of Human Rights. Therefore there are no means for anyone in the north accessing or enforcing their rights as EU citizens. The growing alarm this plight has caused led me to join with 1,000 others from all over Ireland to sign another letter to the taoiseach pointing out that our rights continue to be denied in many fundamental aspects. This is not only because of Brexit but by the despicable alignment of the British government with DUP policy to deny rights and equality to northern nationalists. The British prime minister in her speeches does not even acknowledge our existence. The fact that five times as many people as this time last year readily signed the letter illustrates the deep dismay at this shocking state of affairs.



Nationalism is woke – ignoring it will only fuel anger

REWIND just a few short years and nationalism was largely a latent force. Relative political stability coupled with the freedom to express Irish identity to a degree unheard of in the modern era, led to increased nationalist apathy in the north. The tacit acceptance of the status quo among many in the nationalist community was reflected in the electoral performance of Sinn Féin and the SDLP. Even though demographic trends indicate that support for a united Ireland should be growing, the two main nationalist parties' share of the vote was steadily sliding. In the Republic, the belief that politics north of the border was settled also signalled increasing degrees of disengagement by Dublin. But events since the EU referendum have transformed the political landscape. Uncertainty about the border and the implications of Brexit for so many aspects of everyday life has raised nationalist consciousness. Running parallel to this, and not entirely

ANALYSIS

John Manley



unrelated, is the Stormont crisis. The DUP's imperious unwillingness to respect Irish identity and to respond to rapid social change fractured the executive's fragile pretence of consensus. The RHI scandal accelerated the demise of power-sharing but even without it, the sustainability of the institutions was questionable. Nationalism, to borrow a phrase from African America, is woke, seeing both threats and opportunities in the situation that has evolved since June 2016. Yet its voice is muted at this crucial time. Stormont's dormancy coupled with Sinn Féin's abstentionism and the SDLP's loss of its Westminster representatives means nationalism struggles to

make its concerns heard. These circumstances are all the more pointed because nationalism now unites around more than a single, abstract aspiration. Instead, real anxieties about Brexit are manifested on many levels, while Stormont's stagnancy and subsequent mothballing have left many social and cultural ambitions unrealised. These circumstances are unlikely to change significantly in the months ahead, which is why the Dublin government, as co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, is being asked to stand firm on behalf of northern nationalists. This is a responsibility that Taoiseach Leo Varadkar appears willing to take on, at least in part. The open letter from 1,000 representatives of civic nationalism cites the taoiseach's statement almost a year ago when he assured northern nationalists that their interests would be protected during the Brexit negotiations. "You will never again be left

Nationalism, to borrow a phrase from African America, is woke... Yet its voice is muted at this crucial time

behind by an Irish government," he said. Perhaps uncharacteristically for a Fine Gael leadership team, Mr Varadkar and Tánaiste Simon Coveney have been overt in their support for a united Ireland. Their strategy is based both on a sincere ideological belief and political reality. Clearly they both believe in Irish unity but as rivals of Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil they must also ensure that they cannot be exposed to accusations of not being green enough. The letter published today underlines their duty and

identifies the areas where the Dublin government must be most active and vocal in defending and advancing the cause of nationalism. It follows a similar open letter from civic nationalism last year though this time there are many more signatories and they represent broader political opinion. Reflecting Sinn Féin's place as the foremost voice of northern nationalists, many of the signatories are republicans but there are others happy to put their name to the letter who would shun that term. What unites them is a belief that circumstances are conspiring to undo many of the advances made by nationalism in recent decades. They also share a deep concern that an expedient deal between the Tories and the DUP is frustrating social progress and blocking cultural rights. To ignore this situation or underplay it will only fuel anger and resentment at a time of increased uncertainty and political instability. Dublin can ill afford not to heed this call.



LETTER TO TAOISEACH

'Ongoing denial of basic rights

As 1,000 prominent figures from civic nationalism put their names to an open letter to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, a number of the signatories explain why they felt it necessary to support the initiative...



Pat Cullen, former director of nursing at the Public Health Agency

OVER the last 10 years many health services have been delivered on an all-Ireland basis. The development of acute services networks across the island of Ireland is now at risk because we are being forced out of the EU, despite voting to remain. The north, with a population of just over 1.8 million (2011 census), has insufficient demand to make it economically viable to provide some specialised medical services alone. However, cross-border cooperation on health services with the south (which has a population of approx. 4.8m people) allows for quality specialised medical services to be delivered on an all-island basis, with patients in the north of Ireland no longer having to travel to England to receive their care. €53 million of specialist services are on hold pending Brexit negotiations. These include all island acute hospital services, prevention and detection services and services to tackle health inequalities, particularly along border areas. By April 2018, 87 per cent of EU nurses have left the NHS since the Brexit referendum citing the reason for leaving being they felt very unwelcome and concerned for future work. This is catastrophic for health and social care services. The Irish government must protect our health rights because the British government simply doesn't care.



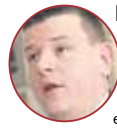
Patricia MacBride, media commentator

BREXIT has created a situation where many of the rights and freedoms we have come to take for granted are at risk. Among those most likely to be at the sharp end of this are our young people. October and November are the months of university campus tours, where thousands of next year's freshers make probably the first big decision of their lives: where will I go to university? As the parent of one such young person, the decision becomes even more complex because there is uncertainty over whether he will be treated as a non-EU student should he pursue his wish to study in Dublin. Should this happen, the level of fees for a non EU student would make such a choice potentially unaffordable. The opportunity to take part in Erasmus programmes is potentially curtailed. A key reason I signed the letter is to safeguard the rights of all our young people pursuing education to be treated as Irish citizens in Ireland. Anything less is unacceptable.



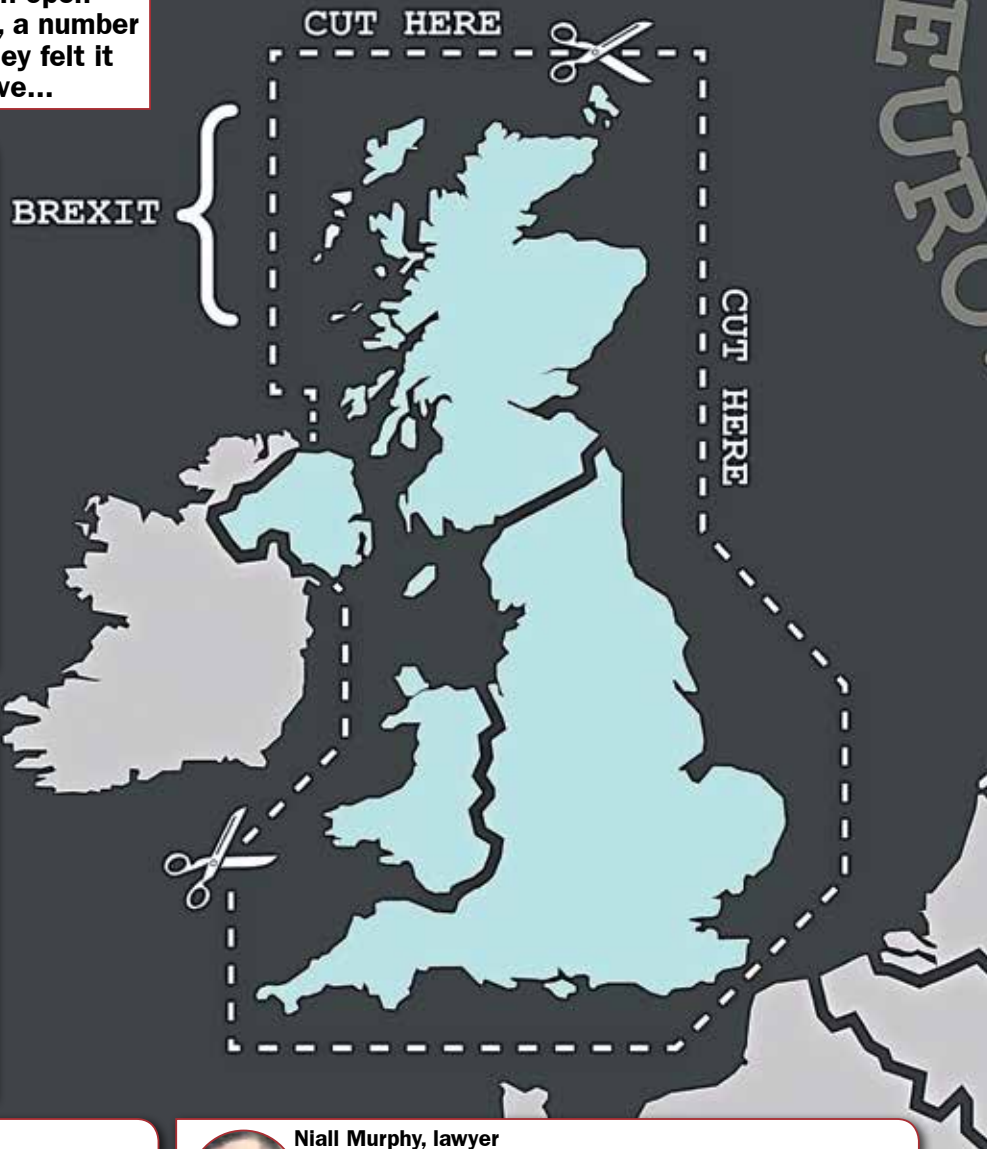
Gerry Carlile, businessman

THIS letter is a reminder to the Irish government of their responsibilities regarding the north of this country. We cannot be left behind and we will not be left behind. We did not vote for Brexit. Brexit is being forced on us against our will. We are Irish and European citizens and we must have the same rights and entitlements that other Irish and European citizens across this island have access to. The Good Friday Agreement has been under attack since its inception. Rights envisaged in the Good Friday Agreement have not been realised. Brexit threatens to further erode the Good Friday Agreement. As our economy comes under increasing pressure, it is incumbent upon the Dublin government to defend and protect the people in the north. The British government has no interest in us. Dublin must step up and represent the people in the north. Put quite simply, An taoiseach must keep to his word.



Niall Murphy, lawyer

WE COLLECTIVELY seek to give expression to a deep sense of fear in respect of the current Brexit negotiations in the midst of the continuing political crisis in the north, the denial of rights taken for granted in all other parts of these islands by a DUP emboldened by its alliance with the British Conservatives and, as a result of that alliance, the denial of democracy and functioning of the Good Friday Agreement political institutions. Our concept of Irish identity is inclusive, welcoming and embraces an agenda of rights and equality for all. The denial of rights to Irish speakers, those who seek access to justice for hurt endured during the conflict and those who seek marriage equality is an impediment to fundamental rights which are expected and demanded. The fear that partition in our island will be deepened by a border, due to a constitutional crisis that no Irish person has sought to provoke. We implore the taoiseach and the Irish government to stand firm in these negotiations and to ensure that rights enjoyed in Donegal will continue to be enjoyed in Derry and that a return to a border in Ireland will not be acceptable.



LETTER TO TAOISEACH

threatens all'



GAA personalities add their voices

Marie Louise McConville
m.mcconville@irishnews.com

A HOST of high-profile GAA stars and personalities are among 1,000 signatories who have signed an open letter to the taoiseach calling for the rights of Irish citizens in the north to be protected post-Brexit. A plethora of managers, players and ex-GAA alumni are among more than 120 people from the world of sport who have signed the letter to Leo Varadkar raising concerns about life in the north after Brexit.

McNaughton and Dominic McKinley. Other high-profile GAA stars include Tyrone legend Peter Canavan and Armagh great Oisín McConville, both of whom were All Stars. Also among the signatories is former Down player and All Star Danny Hughes, former Derry player Tony Scullion, ex-Tyrone star forward Stephen O'Neill and former Derry ace Paddy Bradley as well as Tyrone star Padraig Hampsey and Monaghan player Darren

Hughes. The letter cites: "A very real potential partition could be reinforced and our country and our people further divided. This is a source of grave concern to us all". The signatories call on Mr Varadkar to "redouble" his efforts and "the efforts of your government, to ensure that our rights are protected".

■ **SIGNATURES:** Below, from left, Paddy Tally, Padraig Hampsey, Peter Canavan, Darren Hughes and Kieran McGeeney




Conchur Ó Muadaigh, Irish language advocate



IS GAEL mé agus bhí mé mar dhalta i nGaeilscoil na bhFál nuair a síníodh Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta agus bhí mé mar dhalta i gColáiste Feirste nuair a gealladh Acht Gaeilge go sonrach ag Cill Rímhín i 2006. Chreid mé go raibh ré úr chomhionannais do Ghaeil ó Thuaidh ach, go fóill, níl aon chearta ag Gaeil, tuismitheoirí, daltaí scoile agus teaghlaigh ó thuaidh mar atá ag Éireannaigh ó dheas nó ar gool ceathracha Ceilteacha sa Bhreatain Bheag. Níor chóir go gcaitheadar linn mar shaoránaigh den dara grád agus tá an t-am ann d'Acht Gaeilge ceartbhunaithe, neamhspleách ó thuaidh.

I am Irish and my identity is central to who I am. The rights deficit in the north is shameful and regressive. I want to live in a new, inclusive, progressive society where my friends can love and marry regardless of sexual orientation, and live their lives through Irish, if they so wish. I want my neighbours to have access to legacy inquests and I want all of us to be protected by a Bill of Rights. These are basic entitlements in countries across the world. Rights are a threat to nobody, but the continued denial of these basic human rights threatens us all.

Conal McFeely, community worker



IN LATE October 2018, An Taoiseach visited Creggan Enterprises in Rath Mor, where we had the opportunity to put to him some of the concerns, and very real fears, held by those of us in marginalised border communities. We told Mr Varadkar that we were very mindful of his continued pledge not to permit new, or further, divisions on this island, which might impact on us. Derry, as a city already on the margins of this island, and on the margins of Europe, needs to ensure that we will not face any new borders, which could marginalise us even further. We welcome An Taoiseach's stated determination to protect the rights, and aspirations, of all Northern citizens as laid out in the Good Friday Agreement. The Foyle constituency voted by 78 per cent to remain in Europe, and not one of us wants a return to the dark days of the hard border. We were encouraged by Mr Varadkar's remarks that the people of the north who identify as Irish and European, under the terms of the GFA, must continue to enjoy the rights of European citizens post-Brexit. There has been so much good and positive work done in marginalised communities over the past 25 years – so we would impress on Mr Varadkar that there is still so much more good and positive work yet to do. On a recent visit to An Taoiseach, the EU president Donald Tusk ruled out a hard border, saying: "Ní neartgo cur le chéile." There is no strength without unity. We look forward to all of us growing stronger together.

Open Days at #DkIT

Friday 9th November 9am – 3pm

Saturday 10th November 10am – 1pm

Welcome Talks
10.00am, 11.00am and 12 noon

Campus Tours
Come see our state-of-the-art facilities for yourself

Courses Expo
Find out about our 49 career-focused degree courses in agriculture, business, computing, creative media, engineering, finance, nursing, science, sports, music & more.

CAO Clinic
Learn about our enhanced access for NI students and get advice from our admissions team about applying to DkIT and completing your CAO application.

Feel free to come along with your friends or family!
dkit.ie/opensdays



The Letter to Leo: the Evolution of an Earthquake

– Niall Murphy

On Friday 2nd November 2018, a letter was sent to an Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, by over 1,000 people from right across nationalist civic society. Individuals with political affiliations and none, from the worlds of academia, health, the legal profession, business, the community and voluntary sector, sport and the arts made a direct public appeal to the Taoiseach to stand by his government's stated commitment that no Irish citizen living in the north would ever be left behind by an Irish Government.

The letter was signed by 323 business people, the employers of tens of thousands of people, 115 senior educationalists including over 30 school principals along with prominent figures from third-level institutions and teachers from all parts of the north, 82 lawyers, 75 healthcare professionals, including over 20 Doctors and Consultants, dozens of international caps, 30 senior All Ireland medals, doyens of our arts sector and the leaders of our communities. Dozens of senior journalists and trade unionists, 7 University Professors, 3 Olympic medals, 3 Oscar winners, 2 men who lifted Sam Maguire, and one man who climbed Everest.



In total, the letter was signed by over a thousand leaders from the nationalist community. This bears testament to an evolving earthquake in terms of an awakening of nationalist confidence. The 1012 names are symbolic – the letter is not a petition, but a representative sample of the views of hundreds of thousands of people across the north and indeed across the entire island.

Why write to the Taoiseach? There is an onus on the Taoiseach to hold the British government to account for the denial of rights and secure the implementation of the agreements. The Irish government are co-guarantors of internationally-binding agreements and we expect them to stand up for those agreements, for equality and respect for our Irish identity. We need the Taoiseach to stand up in the national interest of all the people of this island on Brexit.

This initiative seeks to give expression to a sense of civic frustration as to the reasons why we don't have a functioning executive. The denial of rights, enjoyed in every other jurisdiction in these islands, is a barrier to political progress. The letter is Independent of the political process and demonstrates that there is a groundswell of concern.

Citizenship rights, human rights, and the rights contained in the Good Friday Agreement need to be protected from the DUP/Tory Brexit agenda which is scrapping the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and WE NEED the Irish government to hold firm and ensure there is no regression on rights. Rights are for all in society. Everyone benefits when rights are protected and all traditions and communities are respected and valued.

The denial of rights and respect and recognition of an Irish identity in the north, the lack of reciprocation for reconciliatory gestures by political leaders and the blocking of the political institutions as a result of all this create the context of a perfect storm in to which Brexit has been plummeted as a hurricane.

BREXIT THREAT

We did not vote for Brexit. Brexit is being forced on us against our will. Brexit is a threat to our economy, could further erode rights and there is a real danger that partition could be reinforced, further dividing our country and our people, hence our

appeal to the Taoiseach and the Irish government to redouble its efforts to ensure our rights are protected and that we will never be left behind again.

BREXIT is the constitutional issue of our day and we are sleep walking into a Constitutional Disaster.

The DUP are nihilistic wreckers who do not have anyone's interests other than their own narrow party political interests. There can be no regulatory alignment on this island, and Bangor must be as British as Finchley, unless you are gay and want to be married or seek to live a life through the medium of Irish with statutory protection.

The specificity of the threat posed by Brexit to all citizens has sharpened in recent months

THREAT TO HEALTH

- Over the last ten years many health services have been delivered on an all-Ireland basis.
- The development of acute services networks across the island of Ireland is now at risk because we are being forced out of the EU, despite voting to remain.
- The North, with a population of just over 1.8million (2011 census), has insufficient demand to make it economically viable to provide some specialised medical services alone. However, cross border cooperation on health services with the South (which has a population of approx. 4.8m people) allows for quality specialised medical services to be delivered on an all-island basis, with patients in the North of Ireland no longer having to travel to England to receive their care.
- €53million of specialist services are on hold pending Brexit negotiations. These include all island acute hospital services, prevention and detection services and services to tackle health inequalities, particularly along border areas.
- By April 2018, 87% of EU nurses have left the NHS since the Brexit referendum citing the reason for leaving being they felt very unwelcome and concerned for future work. This is catastrophic for health and social care services.

THREAT TO EDUCATION

Erasmus+ is an EU programme enabling young people to study, gain work experience or volunteer abroad. It is also designed to modernize education, training, youth work & sport through strategic partnerships and opportunities for staff and professional to train or exchange experience. The current programme runs from 2014-2020 with a budget of almost €15 billion across Europe.

€28m awarded to 215 educational projects, training and youth work organisations here since 2014 broken down as follows:

- €9.2m to universities
- €9.6m to organisations working in vocational education/ training
- €3.8m to schools
- €3.2m to youth work organisations
- €1.8m to organisations working in adult education

More than 7,800 people here estimated to have taken part from here from 2014-2016, most being students and young people. School staff approved to teach, train or job shadow more than doubled from 22 to 49 in that period, and from 2018 more schools can benefit from an increase in funding to support school exchanges of pupils and staff.

915 vocational education and training staff and students successfully applied to train in Europe through Erasmus+ in 2016, with Southern Regional College and Northern Regional College benefiting from funding.

Hundreds of students from our universities are involved in Erasmus+ projects annually. The University of Ulster's primary research budget is dependent upon Erasmus+ funding.

THREAT TO THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

Brexit is a constitutional crisis that no Irish person sought to provoke. It is the product of a deep dispute in the Conservative party and threatens the express democratic wishes of the vast majority of people on our island who voted overwhelmingly for the Good Friday Agreement. However for the Tory right, as recently highlighted by Craig Murray, the destruction of the Anglo Irish Agreement and the GFA is a major goal to be achieved through Brexit.

Consider the 58 page paper by Michael Gove, entitled *The Price of Peace*, published in 2000 by the Tories' leading "think tank" the Centre for Policy Studies. Michael Gove of course is a key figure in a current leading "think tank" the European Research Group which is attempting to hold Theresa May to ransom in the current negotiations.

Gove argues the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement and the Anglo Irish Agreement should be annulled. He argues that the rights of the "majority community" to rule must not be limited or mitigated and objects to every measure of the Good Friday Agreement, including promotion of Catholic recruitment into the RUC, support for the Irish language, state support for businesses, prisoner releases and changes to the oath of allegiance to the United Kingdom.

It [The Good Friday Agreement] enshrines a vision of human rights which privileges contending minorities at the expense of the democratic majority. It supplants the notion of independent citizens with one of competing client groups. It offers social and economic rights: "positive rights" which legitimise a growing role for bureaucratic agencies in the re-distribution of resources, the running of companies, the regulation of civic life and the exercise of personal choice. It turns the police force into a political plaything whose legitimacy depends on familiarity with fashionable social theories and precise ethnic composition and not effectiveness in maintaining order. It uproots justice from its traditions and makes it politically contentious. It demeans traditional expressions of British national identity. And it privileges those who wish to refashion or deconstruct that identity.

In this regard, the Tories share more than a recent alignment of interests with the DUP, who also oppose the Good Friday Agreement.

Conclusion - The roadmap for the journey from Brexit Britain to Little England is being led by the blind, the ignorant and the reckless. Mark Twain once said that you should never argue with stupid people, as they would drag you down to their level and beat you with their experience. Michael Gove, and his ERG colleagues, is indeed experienced and has been public in his views of peace in Ireland. We cannot however stand idly by. Brexit is one part of a sustained attack on the concept and the practice of human rights, and is an erosion of the core constitutional values of our peace/political process. The attitude to this must be one of legal, policy and political challenge and community led constitutional confrontation. Our letter in November was an example of that spirit and was a demonstration of a new resolve and confidence in nationalist thinking.

On a recent visit to Ireland the EU president Donald Tusk ruled out a hard border, saying: "Ní neart go cur le chéile." There is no strength without unity. Our letter has demonstrated a unity of confidence and purpose and may become a catalyst for a unity not envisaged by the proponents and architects of Brexit...

¹<https://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/111220142628thepriceofpeace2000MichaelGove.pdf>

ENGLISH NATIVISM BELIES DELUSIONS OF NATIONHOOD

– Brian Feeney

You might remember Theresa May wrote a so-called ‘letter to the nation’ pleading for support for her deal. It was just another typically provocative and divisive use of the terminology she always chooses to describe the UK which qualifies as a nation under no definition of the word. However, it’s more than that. Her use of the word ‘nation’ betrays her ugly, nasty, nativist view of the place she lives in, a place now unlike her English idyll.

The UK isn’t a nation, it’s a state. The word state correctly describes the political unit that is the UK which has sovereignty over its territory and the people living there. It’s not a country either. England is a country, so is Scotland and Wales, distinct national entities in political geography. Those three are also nations, composed of people who mainly share a feeling of common national unity, identity or ethnicity, or all three.

As you see, the one that doesn’t fit is the north, an artificial construct, a political invention which is a region of the UK, but not part of Britain. Nor is it a nation for it meets no definition of the word, though the BBC thinks it is because the Corporation is too lazy to think of a more precise definition or qualification. Loyalists think the north is a country because it’s an area given to their ancestors 97 years ago which they designated as their country, or colloquially, ‘our wee country’.

There’s another difference about the north. It’s the only part of the UK state which is entitled by law to secede from the UK when a simple majority votes to do so. Now the north has the additional attraction that the vote to secede automatically creates a parachute to float back into the EU. How long do you think it will take to sew the parachute? Five years? Ten? Or less, given that the backstop means the north remains in effect in the EU?

Not everyone knows the north’s peculiar position, especially British politicians. One egregious example is Shaillish Vara who resigned as a junior minister here in opposition to Theresa May’s Brexit policy. Vara said it was important that the north retained its place in Great Britain. Hah.

And there you see the nonsense of this place. A person you never heard of, resigned from a job you didn’t know he had, and he had the nerve to take decisions about a place where he had not a single vote and didn’t even know its status. Sounds a bit like the colossus of intellect who is our present proconsul.

Now back to Theresa May who presides over this place for the time being. May doesn’t like immigration. In fact she has knocked her brains out for eight years to try to stop it. She it was who was responsible for the infamous ‘hostile environment’ policy which made the lives of people from the West Indies a misery. It was on her watch that the vans with appalling notice boards saying ‘Go home or face arrest’ toured London streets.

May, the nativist, sees England, and only England, as her country, her nation. In none of her speeches has she ever acknowledged the existence of either Scottish or Irish nationalists, trapped for the present in the UK state. She conflates England, Britain and the UK interchangeably. Occasionally her true feeling blurts out as when she said in an attack on Remainers, ‘If you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere.’

Her hostility to immigrants is the main driving force and USP behind her Brexit deal. She insisted on leaving the single market and customs union for that reason and that’s the reason for the backstop. You can’t stop freedom of movement and stay in the single market. May could have kept the whole UK in the customs union and single market by any other name or subterfuge, but the price of ending free movement was to lose the north to the single market.

Obviously, given her nativism, her atavistic Englishness, her antipathy to immigration, she opted to jettison freedom of movement. Keep single market rules for the UK or keep the north? No brainer.



Will NI-born Irish citizens now have to pay a £65 or £437 fee to keep some EU rights after Brexit?



– Daniel Holder

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Home Office  @ukhomeoffice

EU citizens and their families will need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 31 December 2020....

6:17 am - 27 Dec 2018

The above derided Home Office tweet and other official Brexit communications overlook the part of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) where the UK recognises the birthright of those born in Northern Ireland to be accepted as Irish and hold Irish citizenship. Given this recognition it is hardly compatible with the GFA to casually imply that the group of EU citizens who are NI-born Irish citizens will have to pay a £65 fee to the Home Office or be put out by the end of next year.

The EU Settlement Scheme is due to open April this year, the closing date has recently shifted to June 2021, but it is tied to the end of the planned transition period in December 2020.

Despite the vote against the Withdrawal Agreement at Westminster, there is no sign yet of this element of the deal being reopened. The UK plans to press ahead with the EU Settlement Scheme even if there is a no-deal, although possibly watering down its terms. It is off the table if Brexit does not happen.

The Settlement Scheme will allow EU citizens in NI to retain a number of EU rights: both in relation to living in NI but also when visiting other EU member states. Whilst it could have been free the Home Office has decided to charge £65 per adult (about half for a child) for applications.

It's bad enough subjecting EU citizens from 26 countries who exercised rights to free movement in good faith having to pay what looks like a £65 fine for having come here. Irish citizens having to pay a £65 fine for having been born here to keep rights that are being removed by Brexit, would generate even more of an outcry. This option to retain EU rights won't be open to any Irish citizen who 'arrives' (i.e. is born here) after Brexit day, creating an entitlements boundary between the current generation and the next.

It takes a few clicks on the offending tweet to get to the 'who should apply' page which states that (any) Irish citizen does not 'need' to apply. The Home Offices position has consistently been that Irish citizens are not 'required' to apply under the EU Settled Status Scheme – but that equally Irish citizens "may do so if they wish".

The Withdrawal Agreement itself – which is the legal basis for the EU Settlement Scheme - applies equally to Irish citizens as it does to citizens of the EU26.

There are currently a range of good reasons why NI-born Irish citizens may 'wish' to apply under the EU Settlement Scheme, not least as it is currently the only way of guaranteeing retaining some EU rights, for a number of reasons elaborated on below.

The Common Travel Area – written in sand?

First, the official line was originally that Irish citizens don't need to apply due Irish citizens already having rights to reside, work and access services in NI under the 'historic arrangements' of the Common Travel Area (CTA):

23. As a result of these historic arrangements, the reciprocal rights for UK and Irish nationals include:
- the right to enter and reside in each others' state without being subject to a requirement to obtain permission;
 - the right to work without being subject to a requirement to obtain permission;
 - the right to study;
 - access to social welfare entitlements and benefits;
 - access to health services; and
 - the right to vote in local and parliamentary elections.
24. In practice, the operation of the CTA and many of the benefits enjoyed by Irish and UK nationals have also been provided for in instruments setting out EU free movement and associated rights. This intermingling of rights can make it difficult to distinguish what rights accrue under the CTA as opposed to under EU instruments.

UK Brexit 'Ireland and Northern Ireland Position Paper', August 2017, listing areas of rights covered by the CTA

The problem with this is CTA rights are currently incomplete, uncertain and insecure in legal terms – they are 'written in sand' in the words of the human rights commissioner.

In reality entitlements of Irish citizens in NI are currently largely underwritten by EU law not the CTA. Presently, most CTA rights are in fact political promises, not law.

An obvious example is that any Irish citizen here who goes on a trip outside the CTA can only re-enter into and reside in Northern Ireland because of EU law – unbelievably there is no right 'under the CTA' for Irish passport holders born in NI, to come back and live here after a weekend in Paris.

This is a product of the UK never bringing its immigration and nationality law in line with the provisions in the GFA that allow NI-born to be accepted as Irish, if they so choose. There is therefore no 'right' after such a trip to come back and live here by virtue of being an Irish citizen. Hardly anyone has noticed this as the gap is currently more than plugged by EU law. But that eventually goes with Brexit.

The Home Office has now realised this and slipped legislation into Westminster before Christmas to remedy this particular issue. Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill, would now grant Irish citizens the rights to re-enter and reside in NI in their own right.

This does not remedy other significant gaps in law as regards the listed areas of CTA rights – nor is their clarity as to their scope (e.g. what does the right to study actually cover?)

Whilst the political promise to legislate for the CTA has been consistent it, has not happened yet and our peace process is littered with examples of Bills of Rights, Irish language acts and other theoretically binding commitments that have not been delivered.

The political commitment was recently extended to some areas like social security being underpinned by a treaty, but there is no commitment to all CTA rights being treaty based or secured in a Bill of Rights or any other vehicle that cannot be changed at the whim of any future government. Both the British and Irish governments have generally wished to keep the CTA as a loose arrangement. The two governments have engaged on 'detailed bilateral work' on the CTA in the context of Brexit, but to date it has been behind closed doors.

In contrast to the current fragile nature of the CTA, rights retained under the EU Settlement Scheme would be underpinned by a treaty in most circumstances for life.

In addition, any rights under the CTA stop at the borders of the UK and Ireland. The EU Settlement Scheme will allow the

retention of some other EU rights and benefits when visiting the EU. The CTA won't. There is not even a commitment to the CTA covering any cross-border provision (e.g. schooling, education) which may only be open to those who can retain EU rights.

Retaining EU rights: the commitments in EU-UK December 2017 agreement

A second reason why NI-born Irish citizens currently 'may wish' to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme is that a commitment in the UK-EU 'Phase 1' agreement of December 2017, has not been delivered. The commitment stated:

"...The people of Northern Ireland who are Irish citizens will continue to enjoy rights as EU Citizens.... the next phase of negotiations, will examine arrangements required to give effect to the ongoing exercise of, and access to, their EU rights, opportunities and benefits."

Paragraph 52, EU-UK Joint Report, December 2017

Whilst Irish citizens are still EU citizens after Brexit (any citizen of an EU member state is automatically also an EU citizen), this itself only retains some EU citizen rights – including crucially basic freedom of movement in the EU. However most other –EU rights, opportunities and benefits are dependent on residency in an EU member state, or participation in EU programmes, or coordination of social security systems. This lapses with Brexit, meaning rights to use say the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or pay home student rates, or have qualifications recognised, will be lost.

Retaining any such EU rights requires the specific arrangements committed to in December 2017.

A year on however there was nothing to implement this in the draft Withdrawal Agreement, and it is not even mentioned in the 'Political Declaration' on future EU-UK arrangements.

Nor is it clear what 'arrangements required' were actually examined, if any. Both the UK Brexit Ministry and the EU's Taskforce 50 say they hold no documents on the matter.

It also would have been possible for the UK to have negotiated an NI special status agreement for equivalent provision for those in NI who solely identify as British and don't take Irish citizenship (a bit like the bespoke economic/border provisions that have become known as the Backstop). However, this was never on the UK's agenda. This is despite the GFA not being about just being about being able to have a British or Irish passport (or both) – that was the case anyway, but rather it being about not suffering detriment because of that choice. The UK refers to this principle of 'equal treatment' in its Brexit Position Papers:

Protecting the Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement – identity and citizenship rights

12. Issues of identity go to the heart of the divisions in Northern Ireland, so finding a way to address them was a crucial part of the Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement. The Agreement confirmed the permanent birthright of the people of Northern Ireland, irrespective of Northern Ireland's constitutional status: to identify themselves and be accepted as British or Irish or both, as they may so choose; to equal treatment irrespective of their choice; and to hold both British and Irish citizenship.
13. The British-Irish Agreement, signed by the UK Government and Irish Government, arose out of the Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement, which was reached on the same day between the Northern Ireland parties, the UK Government and the Irish Government. The British-Irish Agreement is binding on the UK Government and Irish Government, and gives the commitments on equality, parity of esteem and citizenship legal force in international law.

The outworking of Brexit as currently envisaged manages to make every group a second class citizen in some way. That's before we even get to our migrant population. British citizens in NI won't continue to enjoy the EU free movement Irish citizens will. British citizens will have their rights to reside, work, access NI services secure in law – to date Irish citizens have only undefined, insecure promises. From British and Irish citizens presently being in the same category (as fellow EU citizens) there will be over a dozen categories:

	Citizenship status when in NI	Access to work / public services/ benefits in NI	Basic Freedom of Movement in EU	Other related EU rights, opportunities & benefits
1	British Citizens	✓ Secure under domestic law	✗ No - cease to be EU citizens	✗ No - no arrangement in place
2	Irish citizens who do not apply for EU Settled Status before Brexit Day	? Political promise of some rights under CTA but not currently secured in domestic law	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✗ No - not provided for by CTA & EU-UK Joint Report commitment not in place
3	Irish citizens in NI for 5-years who apply for and get full Settled Status before Brexit day	✓ Yes. range of equal rights retained, with (qualified) lifetime guarantee	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✓ Yes - significant retained rights under Settlement Scheme
4	Irish citizens in NI for less than 5 years and get temp settled status before Brexit day	✓ Range of equal rights temporarily; permanent with continued residence	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✓ On temporary basis
5	Irish citizens who apply but are refused EU settled status	? Political promise of some rights under CTA but not currently secured in domestic law	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✗ No - not provided for by CTA & EU-UK Joint Report commitment not in place
6	Irish citizens who arrive in NI (including by birth) after Brexit Day	? Political promise of some rights under CTA but not currently secured in domestic law	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✗ No - not provided for by CTA & EU-UK Joint Report commitment not in place
7	EU26 Citizens in NI who get EU Settled Status before Brexit Day	✓ Yes range of equal rights retained, with (qualified) lifetime guarantee	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✓ Yes - significant retained rights under Settlement Scheme
8	EU26 Citizens refused EU Settled Status	✗ Heavily restricted	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✗ No (not when resident in NI)
9	EU26 Citizens who arrive after Brexit Day	✗ Heavily restricted	✓ Yes- still EU citizens	✗ No (not when resident in NI)
10 /11	EEA citizens (except EU26) (Norway/Iceland, Lichtenstein & Swiss Citizens)	✓ If covered under EEA/EFTA Separation Agreement & Swiss Separation Agreement respectively	✓ Yes- through EU-EEA agreements	? Subject to EU/EEA agreements and settlement scheme
12	Non-EEA citizens	✗ Heavily restricted	✗ No- not EU citizens	✗ No
13	Frontier Workers in NI (non resident - CTA only likely to cover residents)	? Heavily restricted unless EU and covered by Settled Status Scheme	? Depends on citizenship	? Depending on status in Ireland/ other EU or any Settled Status

Will the Home Office refuse EU Settlement Applications from NI-born Irish citizens?

What further muddies the waters is the prospect that the Home Office may possibly try and refuse applications from NI born Irish citizens under the EU Settlement scheme, under variations of a Home Office line that such persons are to be treated as British and not Irish and therefore are not exercising EU rights.

Whilst this contradicts the duties under the GFA that NI born are entitled to identify as and “be accepted as” Irish, the Home Office relies on the UK never having brought its nationality laws in line with the GFA.

The British Nationality Act 1981 continues to bestow British citizenship on almost all NI born and although this does not oblige the Home Office to refuse to discharge its duty under the GFA to ‘accept’ someone as Irish if they so choose, this is what it has done in some existing cases where Irish citizens in NI have invoked EU rights to be joined by family members. This has been recently highlighted by the case of Emma and Jake DeSouza.

In some cases, the Home Office has suggested that if Irish citizens in NI want EU rights they should pay £372 to renounce the British citizenship that was conferred upon them. This involves first making a GFA-incompatible declaration of being a British citizen, paying the fee, and living with the uncertain consequences formal renunciation could bring. One Belfast woman who did so recently was then asked to prove her right to live here by the Home Office. The cost of renouncing British citizenship added to the settlement fee means paying a grand total of £432 to retain some EU rights.

The Home Office may choose not to refuse NI applications under the EU Settlement scheme – but if it does, as things stand this would render Irish citizens in NI possibly the only EU citizens in the UK who cannot retain some EU rights.

Daniel Holder is the Deputy Director of CAJ.

Uniting our Shared Island

– Professor Colin Harvey

The discussion of Irish unity is gaining momentum; Brexit has altered the nature of this conversation, as more people now reflect on the constitutional future. The debate is already happening, and has been ongoing for some time. That does not mean Irish unity is any closer; it simply suggests a willingness to contemplate this option and to think through the implications. Work by, for example, Claire Mitchell, Andrée Murphy, Paul Gosling, Fintan O'Toole, David McWilliams, Mark Daly, Richard Humphreys, and Kevin Meagher combines with the efforts of groups such as Think32 to create the sense of a genuinely organic debate. These are only a few selected examples of the contributions and, of course, political parties on the island are also involved. The intention here is to offer five reflections as part of this evolving dialogue.



First, there is a need to bring civility to the conversation. The idea of referendums on the island of Ireland is embedded in the Good Friday Agreement, and reflected in domestic and international law. It is the result of a democratically endorsed constitutional compromise that is intended to underpin relationships on this island, and across these islands. The adopted formula is complex. The tendency to lambast those raising it reflects understandable party political divisions and current pressures over Brexit. However, the language of utter rejection could sensibly be avoided as part of a 'de-dramatisation' project. There is really no need for terms such as 'inflammatory', 'dangerous', 'toxic', 'divisive', and 'destructive' in response to those asking self-evident questions about constitutional promises made. Are people supposed to ignore the fact that there is already one anticipated and agreed solution to a hard border on the island? Irish citizens in Northern Ireland will point, for example, to the near constant references to 'strengthening our precious union' and the UK Government's actions in undermining the doctrine of 'rigorous impartiality'. A detailed grasp of Irish history is not required to accept that there is something profoundly troubling about the notion that it is 'dangerous' to test the 'principle of consent'.

Second, the pathway to these referendums poses intriguing questions. The Good Friday Agreement sets out the requirements, and these are largely reflected in domestic law. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has a central role, and significant discretion to call a referendum at any time and for any reason. Where this shifts into the realm of duty is when it 'appears likely ... that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland'. The High Court judgment of Lord Justice Paul Girvan in the McCord case (28 June 2018, GIR10679) has provided further clarity around the nature of these powers. Much of this is self-explanatory, and can be understood by reading the legislation. But the rationale underpinning it should be spelled out. Once it appears that a voting majority might prefer a united Ireland then the 'sovereignty arrangements' here begin to have a de facto illegitimate quality. If constitutional status rests on ongoing consent (and there are still plenty of people in the region who doubt that), then once it appears that it may be absent this region is in radically new political territory. That is why it is essential that consent be tested in that context. And this is one reason why (looking at polling evidence) it is reasonable to raise the no-deal Brexit scenario as a basis for assessing the levels of consent. There are, of course, other considerations in play, but it would arguably be a dereliction of political duty in the current context not to mention it. Party political competition should not encourage any further erosion of the fundamentals of a peace process that is already at risk.

Third, there should be planning and preparation within an appropriate timeframe. Too often, however, this argument is deployed as an excuse for inaction. Responsibility must be taken for co-ordination of a coherent approach, and that should fall to the Irish Government. That is not to promote a top-down or exclusionary model but it does suggest that such work requires government-level resourcing and support. The more revealing conversations may well happen elsewhere, particularly within community-led initiatives that aim to conceive of this island as a shared space. The scale of misunderstanding is immense and it will only be, as ever, community-led courage that will begin to thaw relationships between people.

Fourth, there will be many complex and difficult practical challenges of absorbing this region into an existing state. These can be exaggerated, as can the impact of reunification. However, the opportunity should not be missed to reflect on the human rights, equality and identity aspects of the constitutional architecture. In, for example, building a persuasive case for unity amongst the unionist community there would be considerable merit in providing enhanced guarantees on rights, equality and identity. Concerns that people have over socio-economic status could be met, for example, by discussing more robust protections. The opportunity should not be lost to consider what assurances might be needed and what sort of ‘new Ireland’ this would be. Will this be a project of radical transformation or an exercise in conservative stabilisation?

And finally, unity is arguably in the strategic interests of the Irish state in a post-Brexit world. The Irish Government has a formidable incentive to ensure alignment on this island for its own purposes. That is one reason for its effective and impressive approach to the EU-UK negotiations. Successive governments have sought, and will continue to seek, to contain this region and conserve the existing arrangements (this place remains the abandoned reminder of past sins of British-Irish relations). It would be silly to ignore the scale of anxiety about potential unity and its implications. There is considerable merit in the constitutionally recognised centrality of uniting people, and that will always remain a project based on persuasion (both ways, of course). However, what Brexit will do – particularly if the UK drifts ever further away from the EU – is incentivise unity in hard strategic and geopolitical terms. The obvious way to shield Ireland from the risks of a hardening border, and the subsequent damage to its own reputation within the EU, is to absorb this relatively small region into its own state. Many will see that as a provocative statement (no one doubts the work to be done) but it does have a logical quality. In the longer term it may well be in the selfish and strategic interests of the Irish state to render the border on this island permanently invisible (even if the cost of that may be losing a much loved and admired twitter account).

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UK GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO RECOGNISE IRISH CITIZENSHIP

– Emma de Souza

The Good Friday Agreement was overwhelmingly supported in referenda both North and South- yet a core principle and the very integrity of the treaty itself is currently being questioned and undermined. I am an Irish citizen born in Northern Ireland, whose Good Friday Agreement right to identify as such has been persistently denied by the UK Home Office.

In 2015 when I married my American husband Jake, I discovered that my lifelong Irish identity is evidently considered secondary to an unclaimed British identity. I have always believed throughout my life that I was Irish; it's not a choice, it's not a decision - it is simply who I am. I haven't held a British passport or claimed British citizenship- yet there I was; in an unprecedented situation where this additional and entirely imposed citizenship was stripping me of my EU Right to Family Life. Our application for an EEA Residence Card was met with a letter of refusal, accompanied by a deportation order. The UK's Home Office rejected Jake's application for an EEA residence card in Northern Ireland, for complex reasons. Although I was born in Derry, and have a right under the Good Friday Agreement to identify as either Irish or British or both, the UK has classified me as being British.

In their refusal letter, the Home Office wrote:

"...your spouse is entitled to renounce her status as a British citizen and rely on her Irish citizenship, but until that status is renounced she is as a matter of fact a British citizen".

The UK government effectively argued that I am a British citizen until I revoke it in favour of my Irish citizenship. As they therefore class me as a British citizen, but am an Irish passport holder, the UK government had classed me as having dual-citizenship, and cannot go through the UK immigration system as an EU national. On this basis, my husband's application for a residence card was refused.

This presupposition goes against my understanding, not just of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, but of my identity as a whole.

We appealed the Home Office's decision on the grounds that the Good Friday Agreement explicitly allows the people of Northern Ireland to choose their nationality- be that Irish or British or both- and were successful at the first hurdle, with Judge S Gillespie ruling:

"The constitutional changes effected by the Good Friday Agreement with its annexed British-Irish Agreement, the latter amounting to an international treaty between sovereign governments, supersede the British Nationality Act 1981 insofar as the people of Northern Ireland are concerned. He or she is permitted to choose their nationality as a birth right. Nationality cannot therefore be imposed on them at birth."

Two years later, and the UK Home Office are still seeking to have this ruling set aside. Worryingly, the Secretary of State has lodged grounds of appeal, stating "A treaty HMG is a party to, does not alter the laws of the United Kingdom", and devastatingly for us the UK Government has pursued us tirelessly through the courts – for the duration of our marriage – because I hold Irish citizenship and will not accept a government-imposed British citizenship. The Home Office's appeal is based on arguing that the judge's interpretation of the law was flawed, and that the Good Friday Agreement has less authority than British immigration law.

The legal wrangle is now entering its fourth year. For the first two years, we lost our Freedom of Movement. The UK Home Office retained Jake's passport with no legislative authority or policy to do-so. With these restrictions, Jake was unable to leave the country and had to turn down opportunities for work. The highest price, however, was losing the last two years of his grandmother's life. Every request to see Jake's grandmother in her progressively deteriorating condition was denied. When she passed away at home in Los Angeles, Jake's request to attend the funeral was denied. It was only after increased media pressure that the Home Office eventually relented- couriering Jake's passport back to us and allowing him a belated farewell to his late grandmother; a bitter-sweet farewell mired by remorse for not having been afforded an opportunity to say goodbye. By this point, the personal cost and loss resulting from the Home Office and their decisions was becoming overwhelming.

Most troubling though is that our experience is not unique, but rather a window into a much deeper and wider issue occurring across our society. The reality being felt by myself and many in our community is that there is a price on Irish identity. A personal price that leaves many questioning what our identity is truly worth. A process referred to as Renunciation of British Citizenship is offered by the UK Home Office as a solution, but what does it really entail?

Firstly, the form is a legal document that begins with a declaration; "I am a British citizen"

It also requires substantial evidence to prove you have British citizenship. Birth in Northern Ireland constitutes automatic British citizenship for those seeking to realize their EU rights. For those renouncing, it is considered insufficient evidence of British citizenship. Considering that many individuals choosing this route do not consider themselves British in the first place, it can be an emotionally arduous process.

In addition, the process also costs £372!! No small fee for renouncing a citizenship which under the GFA should be entirely optional. There should be no levy on an Irish person to be recognised as Irish to live on our island! Anyone taking this route will also lose Freedom of Movement for up to 6 months while the Home Office processes your application.

Then there's the uncertainty; nobody knows what the ramifications of renouncing are. In a recent case, the Home Office went so far as to question the residency rights of a citizen who had renounced their British citizenship. There is a very real possibility that going forward, anyone else choosing to renounce may be exposed to further impedance of their right to remain in their home. There's also concern about the rights of the wider family as a whole, and the effect renouncing may have on them.

This, in my opinion, is not a reasonable solution.

The basis of the Good Friday Agreement is founded on equality of treatment and respect for the two communities of Northern Ireland. A commitment the British Government agreed to, and in the Brexit negotiations, has promised to uphold, however the Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes has raised grave concerns as to the British Government's intentions stating;

"Our view is that an international agreement such as the Belfast Agreement cannot supersede domestic legislation... as a matter of law, people in Northern Ireland are British by birth"

My assertion calls into question the UK government's interpretation and dedication to the Good Friday Agreement, the effects of which are far-reaching, and are causing immense personal strain and hardship on families across Northern Ireland.

For many, identity is something which cannot be taken away, or even questioned. It has been long accepted by many as the most fundamental of rights. It is of paramount importance to the integrity of the Good Friday Agreement. If the UK Government can arbitrarily disregard rights guaranteed to the people of Northern Ireland under an internationally binding peace treaty, what safeguards are in place to prevent further diminution of rights? The uncertainty and lack of legal protections seems certain to get worse with the onset of Brexit, for us 2019 will mark another court hearing on the right to have my identity recognised, respected and accepted as Irish.

Emma runs a coffee shop in Belfast, but dedicates her spare time to campaigning to reform unenforced EU rights. In September, Emma organised a "We Are Irish Too" campaign in September involving other families in similar situations – please visit <https://medium.com/@ecklewchuk/we-are-irish-too-a61256eb3012>

The case for an all-Ireland economy

– Paul Gosling

The discussion of Irish unity is gaining momentum; Brexit has altered the nature of the United Kingdom. A clear majority of economists expect Brexit to harm the UK's economy, with Northern Ireland likely to be the most damaged region. Even without knowing the shape of Brexit, we can predict a smaller economy than there would have been without Brexit. There might even be a recession, especially in the border areas of the north.

This economic slowdown in the UK coincides with a sustained period of growth in the Republic. Indeed, the long term trend of growth has continued over decades. While the Good Friday Agreement has done little for Northern Ireland's economy – the gap between our employment rate and that of GB has actually increased since the GFA – that period has been marked by a sharp improvement in the Republic's economy.

While many people dismiss the Republic's strong performance as being down simply to a lower rate of corporation tax, this is lazy thinking. Other countries have even lower tax rates, without the same outcome. As important – more important, I suggest – is the foundation of the Republic's economy of investment into infrastructure and skills. David McWilliams adds, in his new book *Renaissance Nation*, the additional factor of the south's now open, innovative and diverse culture as an economic driver.



Employers have certainly complained about the lack of socially liberal policies in Northern Ireland. They say that the north's failure to legislate for gay marriage is putting off potential employees. But it is unquestionably true that our poor road and rail infrastructure makes it difficult and slow to move around our region. Meanwhile, the shortage of university places and the lack of investment in vocational training mean that we have a dire skills shortage. And that skills shortage will get worse because Brexit has already had the effect of persuading thousands of EU26 nationals who were working here to leave.

Put these factors together and you get a productivity crisis in Northern Ireland. (The Republic has a productivity level 60% higher than that of Northern Ireland, calculates accountancy firm PwC.) This, in turn, means that we don't produce enough, don't earn enough and don't attract enough inward investment. And the result of that is a weak tax base, too few private sector jobs and an over-reliance on the public sector. If you want to turn our failing economy into a successful one the answer is pretty obvious – you copy the ingredients of the Republic's economy achievements.

The response of some unionists is that this is turning our back on our main trading partner, Great Britain. After all, the value of trade between Northern Ireland and GB is much greater than that between the north and the south of the island. But this argument is simplistic. There are more transactions between NI and ROI than between NI and GB, and the north-south trade is especially important for small firms. Moreover, much of the trade between NI and GB is based on production – especially in agri-foods – that takes place cross-border.

Northern Ireland needs a Brexit solution that keeps open our trade with both GB and ROI. It is not either-or. Losing the trade in either direction is disastrous for NI.

Another key argument made against Irish reunification is the subvention – the annual subsidy paid by GB taxpayers for the privilege of Northern Ireland staying in the UK. According to the UK Treasury this stands at around £9bn a year. To put it another way, that is more than the cost of the UK's membership of the EU. Try discussing that with the English nationalists who demanded Brexit.

But Tom Healy, of the Nevin Economic Research Institute, calculates that the figure is actually around £5bn, once non-NI costs (such as debt interest repayments and the armed forces) are removed. Still a large amount, but not as huge.

The next steps

The next steps to Irish unity could begin with support for a ten year plan that provides a blueprint that is gradual and realistic. A 'Big Bang' reunification is unattractive to many. Firstly, we have to reduce the subvention. Secondly, we have to reform the health services – integrating the systems of the north and the south in line with the principles of the NHS, ensuring it is

comprehensive and free at the point of delivery. Ireland’s Sláintecare programme can be the means to deliver this over a ten year period.

I believe that a ten year plan, is realistic, achievable and attractive, not just for health service reform, but also for social and economic reform. Calls for an immediate border poll, to be followed by an instant transfer of sovereignty, without agreeing the details, plan and timetable in advance, run the risk of replaying Brexit in an Irish setting.

That ten year plan could begin with an agreement that sovereignty would transfer over a ten year transitional period, during which time the UK state subsidy would be phased-out. The UK will benefit financially from this over the longer-term, by reducing, and eventually eliminating, its subsidy of NI. The parallel adoption of Ireland’s economic policies will gradually improve the tax base of Northern Ireland, allowing the Republic to take over.

In itself, this is unlikely to be enough for the north’s economy to grow sufficiently, or sufficiently quickly. So the reduction in subsidy should be accompanied by an infrastructure investment programme, supported by the UK government and the EU, as well as the Republic. Remember that the UK will continue to be the ‘mother nation’ for hundreds of thousands of people in NI and the UK government will continue to accept a responsibility for their welfare. The EU’s Interreg programme, plus the European Investment Bank, will be important additional sources of funding for infrastructure improvement.

The north’s public sector might need to be reduced in size on a phased basis. Per capita, the north has around 50,000 more staff than have either England or the Republic. While this sounds like a very large number, an earlier process reduced public sector staffing by about 20,000 posts. Retirements and voluntary redundancies over a ten year period will itself reduce the size of the public sector.

Detailed application of the Republic’s economic policies can be expected to provide a boost to NI’s economy. IDA Ireland is more effective than Invest NI and would replace it. Harmonising corporation tax rates will boost the north’s ability to attract inward investment. Belfast would benefit from releasing some of the excess demand heat currently focused on Dublin. Health service integration should both produce a better system for both places, while reducing costs in the Republic (where service standards are poor and costs high).

Expanding the north’s higher education sector is a major priority, along with increasing the focus on high quality vocational education and addressing the crisis of the large number of school leavers in NI without basic skills. Co-operation between universities across the island would help Ireland to be recognised as a global centre of innovation, research and learning.

An integrated economy, along with an integrated society and an integrated nation could deliver immense benefits. Just don’t demand that it should all happen in one day.

Paul Gosling is author of ‘A New Ireland: a ten year plan?’

Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
<p>Strengths Higher education sector NHS (in principle) Good quality of life Low cost of living</p>	<p>Strengths Stable government Strong economy Higher education sector Graduate skills High productivity Good infrastructure Falling fiscal deficit (near balanced budget) High, and growing, pay Open economy EU membership/EU funding High levels of FDI IFSC IDA</p>
<p>Weaknesses Lack of devolved government Administrative uncertainty Service duplication/sectarianisation Weak economy Brexit impact Public sector dependency High level of economic inactivity Too few graduates/undergraduates Inadequate vocational skills Too many without basic skills NHS (in practice) Lack of effective sub-regional policy Low productivity Poor infrastructure Substantial fiscal deficit Declining manufacturing sector Low wages Economic inequality</p>	<p>Weaknesses Still recovering from bank bail-out Brexit impact Poor/expensive health service Too many without basic skills Too few homes Inadequate sub-regional policy High cost of living Vulnerability to global trading conditions/eurozone Threats to tax rate from EU & US Economic inequality</p>



Ulster clashes decided

CLUB SFC REPORTS & ANALYSIS: P68-BACK



PICTURE: Niall Carson/PA

Key figures from worlds of business, sport and arts sign letter to taoiseach on Brexit

ACCLAIMED actors, leading business figures and top sportspeople are among the 1,000 signatories to an open letter urging Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to fight for northern nationalists' rights.

The letter, published in *The Irish News* today, calls on the Irish government to safeguard EU rights for all Ireland's citizens, north and south.

The signatories raise concerns about Brexit's impact on cross-border health care and education, as well as a lack of representation for Northern Ireland in

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the European Parliament.

It follows a similar initiative last December when 200 people, including many influential figures, signed a letter to Mr Varadkar in which they voiced frustration at the deepening political crises affecting the north.

The latest signatories include actors Adrian Dunbar and Ciarán McMenamin, international footballer James

McClellan, film director Jim Sheridan, Hillsborough campaigner Phil Scraton and singer-songwriter Tommy Sands.

Among more than 300 businesspeople lending their support are restaurateur Bob McCoubrey, football agent Gerry Carlile and public affairs practitioner Brendan Mulgrew, previously an SDLP special adviser.

The signatories represent a breadth of nationalist opinion, with more than 30 school principals, dozens of lawyers and more than 20 doctors and consultants.



FULL COVERAGE

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“

To the nationalist people in Northern Ireland, I want to assure you that we have protected your interests throughout these negotiations.

Your birth right as Irish citizens, and therefore as EU citizens, will be protected.

There will be no hard border on our island. **You will never again be left behind by an Irish Government.**

”

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar
8th December 2017

BEYOND BREXIT

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