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OÉ Gaillimh



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# The European Union and the Northern Ireland Peace Process in the shadow of Brexit

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## Introduction

This report is based on a symposium at the National University of Ireland Galway in April 2018 that brought together several of the architects of the European Union peace programmes in Northern Ireland for the first time in twenty years, to reflect on the role the EU played in the peace process. They were joined by academic experts on the EU, and key figures active in cross-border cooperation to explore the significance of the EU role in the peace process and discuss the future of the Good Friday Agreement and the Irish border. The symposium discussed the challenges posed by Brexit twenty years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, at a time when EU involvement in the peace process and cross-border relations in Ireland are at the centre of public debate. The event included an exhibition of original documentary evidence on the peace process from the private papers of Hugh Logue and the papers of intermediary Brendan Duddy held at NUI Galway (details in Appendix III).



Delegates at NUI Galway  
(Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

Over the past twenty years the European Union has funded a series of major PEACE programmes to support and sustain the peace process on both sides of the Irish border, providing approximately 1.1 billion euro in funding. In doing so the Union had a clear political purpose, to contribute to the bedding down of peace and the definitive ending of large-scale violence. It was a directly political project, aimed at contributing to ending the most serious violent conflict taking place within the boundaries of the European Union. It forms an important part of the story of the EU's development as an actor in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It was all the more sensitive because it involved the core interests of two EU member states, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

European concern about the conflict stretches back to the early 1970s but the first direct elections to the European parliament in 1979 and the feverish activity surrounding the Irish Republican hunger strike of 1981 brought about a step change in European engagement on the issue.<sup>1</sup> From a very early stage the Northern Ireland conflict was discussed in Europe in a British-Irish context, as a major domestic concern for both states. This was first clearly stated in the 1984 Haagerup report to the European Parliament:

[...]Real progress towards improving the overall political situation could be accomplished if a degree of consensus is achieved among Irish and British political parties respectively. [...] Such a consensus must provide ways and means as to how the Irish dimension of Northern Ireland could find many more legitimate and visible expressions than is the case today, even including the establishment of joint British-Irish responsibilities in a number of specific fields, politically, legally and otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

The British Government was initially resistant to EU involvement but became more comfortable with it over time, seeing the benefits of endorsement of British policy by the Irish government and the European Parliament in return for modest concessions on the involvement of the Irish government. The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 institutionalised this new British-Irish context for settlement as the two states deepened cooperation in the context of their joint membership of the European Community. The Joint Declaration of 1993 that paved the way for the IRA ceasefire of 1994 subsequently acknowledged the importance of this European context in paragraph 3 which stated that ‘the development of Europe will, of itself, require new approaches to serve interests common to both parts of the island of Ireland, and to Ireland and the United Kingdom as partners in the European Union.’

The conference at NUI Galway, on which this report is based, traced the origins of EU engagement with the Northern Ireland conflict by bringing together several former European Commission officials to reflect on their roles twenty years later. Each of them gave a short talk giving their recollections before taking part in a roundtable discussion where they shared their memories. It brought us a series of new insights into the process, beginning with Colm Larkin’s recounting of his search with newly elected MEP John Hume in 1979 for a piece of text in existing EU documents that could open the space for wider conversations about the EU’s role in peacemaking. This first half of the conference, reflecting on the past, drew out just how significant and important the role of the European Commission had been, exemplified by the secondment to Stormont from 1998 to 2002 of

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<sup>1</sup> Lagana, Giada (2018) *The Genesis of the Europeanisation of the Northern Ireland peace process*, PhD dissertation in Political Science, National University of Ireland Galway

<sup>2</sup> Haagerup Report, p.73. Historical Archives of the European Parliament, PE 1-88.265, ‘Report drawn up on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on the situation in Northern Ireland’, 19 March 1984.

Commission officials Hugh Logue and Colm Larkin as Special Advisors to the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.



Roundtable discussion with (from L to R) Niall Ó Dochartaigh (Chair) Hugh Logue, Jane Morrice, Carlo Trojan, Andy Pollak, Colm Larkin (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

Now that the UK's exit from the EU has thrown relations between Britain, Ireland and Europe up in the air, this history has a renewed significance. The second half of the conference looked accordingly to the future. At a moment in time when the Northern Ireland peace process, the Irish border and North-South relations in Ireland are at the very centre of debate on future relations between Europe and the UK, this report recovers a partially submerged history of European engagement with, and support for, the peace process and peacebuilding on both sides of the Irish border. The event showed how extensive this was, how important the EU context was for the growing bilateral partnership and cooperation between Britain and Ireland, and just how much the European Commission was driven by the deeply political goals of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

This unique and innovative event was organised by the Conflict, Humanitarianism and Security Research Cluster of the Whitaker Institute, National University of Ireland Galway, in partnership with the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES), the Moore Institute and supported by the Irish Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

## Opening remarks by Noel Dorr

*During his career in the Department of Foreign Affairs Dr Noel Dorr served as Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN 1980-1983, Ambassador to the UK 1983-1987 and Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs 1987-1995, among other posts. He also represented Ireland on the official-level working groups that drafted the EU Treaties of Amsterdam, 1996-1997, and Nice in 2001.*

Dr Noel Dorr began by recognising the importance and the perfect timing of this conference. The island of Ireland has now reached a crossroads. The UK has chosen a difficult path in Brexit, which raises serious questions for Irish people. The symposium, by looking back at what the EU has done in relation to the peace process and by looking forward to the considerable problems Brexit has generated, helps in the difficult task of thinking about the future. The peace process in the island of Ireland has meshed very well and worked very well with the European Union, the larger peace process on the European continent. If Brexit takes the kind of unfortunate course that it appears it will take, the British and Irish governments and Irish and Northern Irish people will need to develop some other mechanisms for nurturing natural good relations, the natural friendly exchanges between North and South, but also between these two islands [Full text in appendix I].



Noel Dorr (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

## Reflecting on the European Union and the Northern Ireland peace process

The objective of this section was to understand how the European Union provided significant practical and political support over the years, most notably through the on-going provision of funding for reconciliation and conflict transformation initiatives under the PEACE programmes.



Carlo Trojan (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

Speakers:

**Colm Larkin** (senior official of the EU Commission from 1974-2004 and special advisor in the Office of First and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland from 1998-2001) described his work with MEP John Hume and the experience of the 1981 Martin Report. He worked with John Hume on the promotion of an EU role in the settlement of the Northern Ireland problem after Hume's election to the European Parliament in 1979. In his talk he recalled Hume's focus, concentration, and discretion, and how they worked together to submit a motion for a resolution calling on the Commission to involve itself in the Northern Ireland situation. They 'stayed alert to the policy entrepreneurs within the Commission, the movers and shakers whom we tried to appeal to with proposals and suggestions which went with the new thinking they were trying to promote inside the Commission'. He outlined how, 'from the Martin Report onward the Commission gradually involved itself, immersed itself in Northern Ireland' and spoke of the strong personal role and interest of individuals such as Commissioner Wolf Mathies, President Delors, Carlo Trojan and Commissioner Barnier.



**Andy Pollak** (founding Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh) described his experience of working within the cross-border context, the political symbolism of cross-border cooperation and how cross-border cooperation was seen by the EU as having an impact on the conflict.

Extracts from his talk: 'In the period 1995-2020 the PEACE programme will have provided €2.6 billion, and in 2000-2020 the pan-European cross-border INTERREG programme will have provided €681 million for around 24,000 cross-community and cross-border projects in Northern Ireland and the Southern Irish border region. 65% of PEACE and 100% of INTERREG-funded projects have been cross-border... SEUPB – the body in charge of distributing PEACE and INTERREG funding to the regions – provided a valuable 'neutral space' for politicians and others to keep talking when other institutions had broken down, notably during the 2002-2007 period.

There were some weaknesses in the EU funding programmes. One was the sometimes excessive bureaucracy, perhaps inevitable with programmes that involve two governments... and the EU. Another was the lack of effective mechanisms to 'mainstream' projects... The EU continues to see the NI peace process, together with its cross-border dimension, as a success story that in a bitterly contested local arena has learned lessons from the wider Union on overcoming conflict through patient dialogue and consensus-building...All this, of course, has been put in serious jeopardy by Brexit.'

**Hugh Logue** (former EU Commission official from 1984. In 1994 he, along with two colleagues, was asked by President Jacques Delors to consult all parties in Northern Ireland. Their recommendations became the blueprint for the first EU PEACE Programme). He outlined how the SDLP was strongly committed to Europe from the outset and successfully campaigned for a single 3 seat constituency and Proportional Representation for European Parliament elections in Northern Ireland. The 1994 EU Task Force, of which he was a member, took a strongly bottom-up approach to the consultation they conducted, receiving submissions from local groups and political parties across the political spectrum. He emphasised the significance of President Barroso's 2007 meeting with First Minister Ian Paisley and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness. He described his work in implementing the Structural Funds and explored and provided detail on the issue of additionality.

**Jane Morrice** (former head of the EU Commission Office Northern Ireland. She was involved in the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and was a member of the Standing Orders Committee which set the initial rules governing Assembly procedures post-devolution). She began by outlining her background in the unionist community and how she had almost no contact with the Catholic community during her childhood. She began her career as a journalist in Brussels in 1980 and in 1987 joined BBC Northern Ireland as a reporter covering current affairs for radio and television. She became the BBC Business and Labour Relations Correspondent in 1989. She was called on to write about the Enniskillen bombing



and that experience touched her so much emotionally that she started to believe that peace and reconciliation was the most important goal to work towards. She had a European background and she started to believe very firmly that the European Union could help to provide the solution to the problems of Northern Ireland. In 1992, Morrice was appointed Head of the European Commission (EC) Office in Northern Ireland, representing the EC in Belfast for the following five years. She promised during her job interview that she would bring President Delors to visit Northern Ireland and she started to work to organize this visit from her very first day. Delors came to Northern Ireland seven months after her appointment and famously answered her, when she asked how the EU could be more involved in the resolution of the conflict, ' You only need to ask'. She explained how she took a particular interest in the establishment of the Special EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and how she worked with Carlo Trojan and Hugh Logue in the design of PEACE I.

**Carlo Trojan** (former Secretary General of the European Commission) described his work as the head of the Northern Ireland Task Force in 1994 and how they followed a bottom-up approach in pursuit of a more direct involvement of civil society and private networks in EU peacebuilding activities in the region [Full text in appendix II].



Jane Morrice (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

## Roundtable discussion: The European Union contribution to peace in Northern Ireland?

Panel discussion with **Colm Larkin, Andy Pollak, Hugh Logue, Jane Morrice and Carlo Trojan**. Chaired by **Niall Ó Dochartaigh** (NUI Galway)

- Among Northern Ireland political parties, with the exception of the SDLP, the view that European Economic Community membership might have a positive impact on the conflict was not generally appreciated, as sovereignty and national identity were the filters through which hardened political positions on Europe were articulated. At first these outlooks did not engender an open-minded disposition towards Europe or its potential, not least because no settlement existed at the institutional level to allow any progress in this sense, although conditions changed after 1985 and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA).
- A clear emphasis needs to be given to the role of political actors (notably the Irish and Northern Ireland MEPs) in this framework and their essential role in enacting and triggering the process of Europeanisation.



Andy Pollak (Photo Credit: [Maurizio Zanella](#))

- The discussion on the EU programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland questioned the speakers on the motives, the approaches, and the debates behind the decision of the EU to take a very concrete and decisive step to Europeanise the Northern Ireland peace process. Reflections encompassed the contextual framework of Northern Ireland after the 1994 ceasefire, showing how the EU consciously worked to design the new programme with a bottom-up approach.

## Brexit and the future of peace in Northern Ireland: academic and policy perspectives

The aim of the afternoon's discussions was to provide an opportunity for the policy makers to respond to academic analyses. **Dr Katy Hayward (QUB), Dr Mary C. Murphy (UCC), Dr Brendan Flynn (NUIG)** and **Dr Giada Lagana (NUIG)** each gave a ten minute paper on an aspect of Brexit on the basis of their expertise. The policy-makers discussed the papers, giving their thoughts on the present political situation of the island of Ireland on the basis of their expertise and experience in the past. Chaired by **Professor Daniel Carey**, Director of the Moore Institute (NUI Galway)

Reflections touched on three main areas: the Brexit process thus far and the negotiations. Secondly, discussions focused on the implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland, for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and for the peace process. Finally, debates touched on the longer-term consequences of Brexit for the UK as a whole. Societal actors and citizens in Northern Ireland have become more attuned to the EU and to the consequences of the EU referendum vote for many aspects of their lives. This is found most emphatically among citizens around the border area (Hayward) but concerns about Brexit have also been expressed by political parties and civil society in Northern Ireland. For nationalists, the EU issue poses clear challenges to their interests and aspirations, and there has also been a reluctance to discuss Brexit, for the very fact that it exposes polarized views (Arnold).

Societal actors have expended more time, resources and energy on contesting certain preferences. Political parties have produced manifesto promises and policy documents. Interest groups have published analyses of the impact of Brexit for their sectors (Lagana). The Irish government has been particularly active in seeking to influence the EU and the UK (Flynn).



Dr Mary C. Murphy (Photo Credit: [Maurizio Zanella](#))

There is clear evidence too of diverging opinions on Brexit in Northern Ireland. This was evident during the EU referendum campaign but became more emphatic following the result. The preferences of nationalists and unionists are different. Their interpretation of what UK withdrawal from the EU means differ, as do their formulations about Northern Ireland's status outside the EU. The interplay between domestic issues including the RHI scandal, the Irish language act and marriage equality also polarized parties and voters during this period (Murphy).

The media has certainly taken a greater interest, academics have found a new niche, and some dedicated civil society groups have emerged. NI's political institutions have been relatively quiet; and not all interest groups have taken a position on Brexit. The extent to which there has been a broad mobilization of citizens is unclear, and it's also unclear as to how much more attentive societal actors have become (Lagana).



Dr Giada Lagana (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

Taken together, what can be empirically observed since Brexit is:

- the increased salience of the EU in Northern Ireland;
  - greater contestation and polarization of parties, groups and individuals;
  - an expansion in the number and diversity of actors mobilized by the EU/Brexit question.
- (Hayward)

This has manifested itself in a unionist-nationalist cleavage resulting in heightened political tensions, which in turn have fueled hostility between the two political blocs and produced a polarizing effect. Most societies can contain and manage this type of contestation. In Northern Ireland however, that is not necessarily a given (Murphy).

*Diverging opinions* on Brexit in Northern Ireland were evident during the EU Referendum campaign but became more emphatic following the result. Northern Ireland's political parties do share some points of commonality in relation to Brexit. There exists a shared understanding that Brexit is problematic for Northern Ireland and there is cross-community opposition to a hard border. However, proposed 'solutions' to Northern Ireland's Brexit quandary expose hard opposition to 'special status' (or the backstop option) among unionism, whereas nationalists support the proposal. Unionists conceive 'special status' as undermining the unity and integrity of the UK (to which Unionists are loyal) whereas for nationalists, 'special status' is a pragmatic means to protect Northern Ireland's political and economic interests (Logue).



Delegates at NUI Galway (Photo Credit: Maurizio Zanella)

The 1998 Agreement was built on the back of an extraordinary commitment by not just the Northern Ireland political parties, but also the British and Irish governments which maintained a long, watchful and supportive eye over Northern Ireland affairs (Lagana). This became particularly emphatic from the late 1980s

onwards as the prospects for peace became possible. The commitment to a joint approach to all things Northern Ireland was challenged by the EU referendum. The very decision by the British government to call a referendum without sufficient acknowledgement of its impact in Northern Ireland started a series of interruptions to the previously solid British-Irish partnership. Divergence and tension have been a feature of the relationship since June 2016 (Flynn). This was arguably most evident following the 2017 UK general election result when Prime Minister Theresa May agreed a Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Conservative Party and the DUP (Pollak). The convention that the British government is a neutral arbiter on Northern Ireland is now questionable and is fueling contestation and hostility. The equality afforded to both communities, as guaranteed by the 1998 Agreement, is challenged by this arrangement and there are legitimate questions about the extent to which the key principle of parity of esteem is accommodated by this recent quirk of electoral arithmetic. Brexit undermines the very basis of the 1998 Agreement, which was built on the solid foundations of British-Irish consensus and cooperation, and buttressed by respect for equality (Logue).

When we look to the longer term there's no question that Brexit even in its more benign form raises very serious longer term questions for the future of the UK at a number of different levels. At the economic level there's a question as to whether the Brexit decision is ultimately going to lead to Britain growing at a slower rate into the future than it would otherwise—and that's likely to be the case. Brexit essentially is a victory for English nationalism. Financial transfers between Westminster and the rest of the UK—Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are going to be under great pressure in the post-Brexit era. And the second area where it's going to be of real concern is the devolved power to the different administrations. The future of North-South and East-West cooperation is challenged by Brexit, which limits the capacity of the institutions of the Agreement to operate effectively. This produces a distance between the two states and undermines the central tenets of the Agreement's unique institutional architecture (Pollak). On all of these aspects, both on the economic-stroke-financial plus the power issue within the UK, there are very basic questions which are going to give rise to big challenges for the future of the UK.

**In summary,** Brexit has revealed a swathe of divisive and transformational forces with the potential to alter Northern Ireland's constitutional architecture. Given that the 1998 Agreement followed a 25 year period of violent conflict, and its terms were only agreed after a complex, tense and difficult negotiation period, it is highly disconcerting and troubling that Brexit threatens key features of a hard won peace. Protecting the Agreement, however, is vital to Northern Ireland's future – there is no ready or easy alternative (Murphy).

Given the 20th anniversary of the Agreement, it is worth noting that the document provides something of a template for facing down current challenges. At this critical juncture, summoning the spirit and attributes of the 1998 negotiation period – cooperation, consensus, compromise, creativity and courage – provides

some basis for addressing Brexit. Should the local political parties produce agreement on what fits Northern Ireland's best interests, and then collectively contribute to shaping a UK exit from the EU, which recognises those preferences, it may be possible to stabilize the worst Brexit consequences. This is an admittedly challenging and complex prospect, but Northern Ireland's fragile peace process, and the future of the Agreement may depend on it (Lagana).



## Conclusions

The symposium confirmed that the relationship between Northern Ireland and the European Union was, and is, much more significant than is usually recognised. European involvement in the search for a political solution in Northern Ireland was substantial, long-standing and deeply-rooted. The conflict was just a few years old when both Ireland and the UK joined the European Economic Community together in 1973 and almost of their shared work towards a settlement took place in the context of their partnership as members of the that Community.

European involvement deepened after the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. Unionists and northern nationalists, deputies from the Republic of Ireland and from Great Britain found themselves operating in the same parliament for the first time since Ireland's independence from the UK. Prior to 1984 there was extensive dialogue, cooperation, communication, and lobbying within EU institutions, especially within the European Parliament, with the objective of fostering a European dimension to conflict amelioration in the six Northern Ireland counties, but with little fanfare. From 1984 the European Community started to assess its engagement with the routine public policy-making of the region in a more determined manner, although still staying primarily focused on the economic component of Northern Ireland's engagement with EU Structural Funds. Nonetheless, that policy remit was essential in demonstrating to Northern Ireland representatives and local authorities how they might gain greater control over their relationship with the EU. Such control was ultimately filtered through a range of new regional institutions and the development of relationships and networks on the whole island of Ireland. Finally, the window of opportunity for intensifying EU engagement arose in the aftermath of the 1993 Downing Street Declaration (DSD) and the IRA and loyalist ceasefires of 1994 when, after 25 years of violent conflict and uncertainty, paramilitaries finally declared a cessation of violence. In this context, EU PEACE programmes for Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland yielded positive peacebuilding results in the region. The increased contact, communication, and cooperation across the Irish border and across sectional divides helped to support a search for commonality and an increase in respect for minor cultural differences among participants. Most notably, the PEACE programmes consolidated previous attempts to engage grassroots organisations in peacebuilding initiatives.

The European Union is a political project, not just an economic one and so it was with European involvement in the Peace Process and cross-border cooperation in Ireland. Economic development was a central focus of the EU but this economic

support was directed at the political goal of sustainable peace and helping to deal with the economic and social drivers of violent conflict.

Diverging opinions on Brexit in Northern Ireland were evident during the EU Referendum campaign but became more emphatic following the result. Northern Ireland's political parties do share some points of commonality in relation to Brexit. There exists a shared understanding that Brexit is problematic for Northern Ireland and there is cross-community opposition to a hard border. However, proposed 'solutions' to Northern Ireland's Brexit quandary expose hard opposition to 'special status' of any kind (or the backstop option) among the bulk of unionists, whereas nationalists overwhelmingly support such measures. Unionists conceptualise 'special status' as undermining the unity and integrity of the UK whereas for nationalists, 'special status' of some kind is a pragmatic means to protect Northern Ireland's political and economic interests.

The 1998 Agreement was built on the back of an extraordinary commitment by not just the Northern Ireland political parties, but also the British and Irish governments. This joint governmental approach became particularly emphatic from the late 1980s onwards as the prospects for peace became possible. The commitment to a joint approach to Northern Ireland was challenged by the EU referendum. The very decision by the British government to call a referendum without sufficient acknowledgement of its impact in Northern Ireland started a series of interruptions to the previously solid British-Irish partnership. Divergence and tension have been a feature of the relationship since June 2016. This was arguably most evident following the 2017 UK general election result when Prime Minister Theresa May agreed a Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Conservative Party and the DUP. The equality afforded to both communities, as guaranteed by the 1998 Agreement, is challenged by this arrangement and there are legitimate questions about the extent to which the key principle of parity of esteem is accommodated by this recent quirk of electoral arithmetic. The future of North-South and East-West cooperation is challenged by a Brexit which limits the capacity for the institutions of the Agreement to operate effectively. This produces a distance between the two states and undermines the central tenets of the Agreement's unique institutional architecture.

Discussions held during the symposium are also relevant to the current political context. Debates around the 'Irish backstop' usually focus on economic losses and the free movement of people across the Irish border but the backstop is about much more than this. The strong emphasis on economic prosperity and growth in the past was seen (particularly by elite actors in the EU) as being fundamental to the success of cross-border activity on the island of Ireland. This reinforced the idea among elected representatives that the EU's greatest asset when

it came to conflict transformation was that EU initiatives drew links between economy, societies and communities and the prospects for decreasing level of sectarian violence. The very high unemployment levels had serious political implications: they were understood by senior EU officials to be at the root of paramilitary recruitment, particularly among young people. The expected impact of a permanent cessation of violence and the consequent creation of new activities were expected to help to tackle Northern Ireland's major structural weaknesses and ultimately contribute to addressing issues of social exclusion and marginalisation. Cross-border cooperation was thus implemented by the EU with the objective of building networks of interdependence and common action across the Irish border and between actors at all levels. The connective societal impact provided by cross-border programs has been considered a broadly positive influence on the conflict and on community relations. The funding given by the EU to community groups in Northern Ireland had popular recognition. Economic assistance - and especially the common management of these programmes - encouraged North-South and cross-community rapprochement.

Today, the most disadvantaged communities are extremely vulnerable. nationalists/republicans, who share the characteristics of the 'left behind by globalisation' cohort associated with the Brexit vote, became more receptive to the united Ireland rhetoric which locates their economic and political best interests in a united Ireland. There are already signs that support for Irish unity among nationalists is growing. The political identity of unionism is centred to a great extent around resistance to the demands of nationalists and so it does not have as secure an ideological basis as its opponents, while the unionist share of the electorate is also in decline. These factors feed into unionist political insecurities. In the context of Brexit, those insecurities are bolstered by overwhelming nationalist support for Remain (which clashes with majority unionist support for Leave) and against the reinstatement of a hard border in Ireland. In all this, communal polarisation is heightened. The resulting chasm has intensified the division between the parties, and led to shifts in their focus: the DUP and unionism more generally looking East, Irish nationalism looking south; and experiencing something of a resurgence. The two dynamics have contributed to an increasingly toxic political environment which is not helped by the strained relations between the DUP and Sinn Fein, and the absence of a proper democratic forum.

There is much more at stake in the proposed 'backstop' in the draft Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU than the focus on cross-border movement in much public commentary might suggest. The backstop is aimed not just at ensuring ease of movement across the border but also at protecting the all-island economy and the 1998 Agreement. Ultimately it seeks to protect the close and open-ended

relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland established by the Good Friday Agreement,

Brexit lends greater weight to the case for strong external support for political, cross-community relations and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland and across the Irish border. It is reassuring then that the EU has agreed to continue funding for PEACE programmes until 2020 whether the Withdrawal Agreement is ratified or not. Brexit also lends greater weight to the arguments for Scottish independence and Irish unity and creates deep uncertainties about future relations between the various jurisdictions in these islands. It is worth noting that the Good Friday/Belfast agreement provides something of a template for addressing current challenges even if there is little evidence right now of the kind of cooperation between unionists and nationalists that was vital in implementing the Agreement. At this critical juncture, summoning the spirit and attributes of the 1998 negotiation period – cooperation, compromise, creativity and courage – might help to provide some basis for managing Brexit.

The departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union extracts UK and Irish Government cooperation on peacemaking and peacebuilding from the European context in which it has been located since 1973. Intergovernmental cooperation and EU support for peacebuilding and cross-border cooperation seem set to continue, but the unanchoring of inter-governmental relationships from the context of shared membership of the EU presents deep challenges. One of the greatest challenges now is how to sustain those cooperative relations between Ireland and Britain and hold together all of these elements without regular and intense interaction and cooperation as partners in a shared European project.

*Lead author: Dr Giada Lagana*

*Contributing authors: Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh and Dr Anita Naughton*

*Event organisers: Dr Giada Lagana, Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh, Dr Anita Naughton, Ms Anna Tulin Brett and Ms Angela Sice*

## Biographies of Speakers

### **Tom Arnold**

Currently chair of the All Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit, he has been Director General of the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA), Director of the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, Chairman of the Irish Constitutional Convention, and Chief Executive of Concern Worldwide (2001-13). He worked for the Department of Agriculture and Food, serving as Assistant Secretary General and Chief Economist and with the European Commission, in the directorates general of agriculture and development, in Brussels and in Africa. He has been a member of a number of bodies at national, European and international level, mainly dealing with food and nutrition. He was Chairman of the Irish Times Trust, a member of the Irish Times Board, and is a member of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).

### **Dr Brendan Flynn**

College Lecturer, National University of Ireland Galway. He studied at the University of Essex for his Masters and PhD degrees, his doctoral thesis having the title: "Subsidiarity and the Evolution of EU environmental policy", with Prof. Albert Weale as his supervisor. His primary research interests include comparative environmental policy, with a special focus on EU and Irish developments. He also retains an interest in wider EU policy and European politics.

### **Dr Katy Hayward**

Reader in Sociology at Queen's University Belfast and Senior Research Fellow at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice. She has over twenty years' research experience on the topic of the EU and Ireland/N.Ireland. She is the author of over 100 publications, including most recently a report for the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs: UK Withdrawal and the Good Friday Agreement (2017, with David Phinnemore). She has presented widely on the topic of Brexit and has given evidence on this before parliamentary committees in both the UK and Ireland. Outside the University, she is a Board Member of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, the Institute for Conflict Research and Conciliation Resources.

### **Colm Larkin**

A senior official of the European Commission from 1974-2004, working as Deputy Chef de Cabinet to Commissioner Peter Sutherland and as Chef de Cabinet to Commissioner Ray Mc Sharry. He was Director of the Commission Representation to Ireland from 1993-1998 and special advisor in the Office of First and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland from 1998-2001. From 2010 to 2015 he headed the EU Policy and Coordination Unit in the Central Bank of Ireland and is currently studying for a degree in Irish in University College Dublin.

### **Dr Mary C. Murphy**

Lecturer in politics at University College Cork, Mary holds a Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and is a Fulbright Scholar awardee. She specializes in the study of the EU and Northern Ireland politics and recently published 'Europe and Northern Ireland's Future: Negotiating Brexit's Unique Case' (Agenda Publishing 2018). Mary is also involved in a three-year ESRC funded project 'Between Two Unions: The Constitutional Future of the Islands after Brexit'.

### **Dr Giada Lagana**

Giada was awarded her PhD in Political Science and Sociology in January 2018. Her thesis is entitled 'The genesis of the Europeanisation of the Northern Ireland peace process', submitted under the supervision of Niall Ó Dochartaigh. Giada started out as an historian, completing her undergraduate studies in modern and contemporary history at the University of Pavia (Italy). She then obtained an MA in International Relations and History, under the joint supervision of Didier Poton (Université de La Rochelle) and Michel Catala (Université de Nantes). She is author of 'A preliminary investigation on the genesis of EU cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland', *Space and Polity*, Volume 21, 2017 - Issue 3.

### **Hugh Logue**

Former European Commission official joining in 1984. Former Civil rights leader, member of N. Ireland Civil Rights Executive and Vice chairman of North Derry Civil Rights Association. Founder member of the SDLP and elected to Stormont Assembly for SDLP in 1973, 1975 and 1981.

Following the 1994 ceasefire, Logue, along with two colleagues was asked by EU President Jacques Delors to consult all parties in N. Ireland and their recommendations became the blueprint for the first EU Peace Programme. In 1997, new EU President Santer asked Logue and his team to return and advise on a renewed Peace II programme.

Following the Good Friday Agreement Logue was seconded from the EU to N. Ireland as Special Advisor to the First and Deputy First Minister from 1998 to 2002. He was an InterTradeIreland board member 2008-2011.

### **Jane Morrice**

Honorary president of the European Movement Northern Ireland and former politician in Northern Ireland, Jane was a prominent member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. She was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in June 1998 and was appointed as Deputy Speaker in February 2000.

She was involved in the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and was a member of the Standing Orders Committee, which set the initial rules governing Assembly procedures post-devolution. She was also a member of the Assembly's Trade and Industry Committee and the Public Accounts Committee.

In 1992, Jane was appointed Head of the European Commission (EC) Office in Northern Ireland, representing the EC for five years. She took a particular interest

in the establishment of the Special EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

### **Prof Niall Ó Dochartaigh**

Personal Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland Galway. He has published extensively on back channel communication in the Northern Ireland conflict and is currently completing a monograph on the topic.

Niall's other research interests are in conflict and territoriality, conflict and new technologies and attempts to moderate or resolve conflict. At NUI Galway he is the cluster leader for the Conflict, Humanitarianism and Security research cluster in the Whitaker Institute and Chair of the Research Committee in the School of Political Science and Sociology. He is also founding convener of the ECPR Standing Group on Political Violence and co-convener of the Political Studies Association of Ireland Specialist Group on Peace and Conflict.

### **Andy Pollak**

Founding Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh (1999-2013), he was also Secretary of the all-island university presidents' body, Universities Ireland, and the all-island teacher education body, SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South). Before that he was Belfast reporter, religious affairs correspondent, education correspondent and assistant news editor with the Irish Times (1981-1999). In 1992-1993 he was coordinator of the Opsahl Commission, an independent inquiry into ways forward for Northern Ireland, and editor of its report 'A Citizens' Inquiry: the Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland' (Lilliput, 1993). He was the co-author (with Ed Moloney) of 'Paisley' (Poolbeg, 1986). He is a board member of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in County Wicklow and blogs at [www.2irelands2gether.com](http://www.2irelands2gether.com).

### **Carlo Trojan**

Carlo Trojan was Chief of Staff to Frans Andriessen, Vice-President of the European Commission, dealing successfully with Competition Policy and Agriculture. In 1987 he was appointed Deputy Secretary General of the European Commission and became Secretary General in 1997. In that time he handled some of the most delicate budget negotiations, not least of which was his success as head of a Delors task force on German unification in brokering a £2.5 billion package to ease the transition. In 1989 Trojan was appointed by Jacques Delors to represent the Commission on the board of the International Fund for Ireland and he became, in 1994, Head of the Northern Ireland Task Force.



## Acknowledgements

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Conference organisers/report authors Anita Naughton, Giada Lagana, Anna Tulin-Brett (Photo Credit: [Maurizio Zanella](#))

## Appendix I: Opening Remarks by Noel Dorr

On the programme you will see that I'm down to make 'Opening Remarks'. I suppose my role is a little bit like that of the prologue in a Shakespearean play – that is to give you a taste of what lies ahead but the really good part will be the players who follow me on to the stage.

Let me first welcome you here today. Though, like many of you, I am now a visitor here, I was a student here for four years a long time ago; later, I chaired the governing authority for a time; I was present at the opening of this fine theatre space here some years ago; and I suppose I can claim some remote ancestral connection to this theatre space since long ago, as a student, I was an active member of the University Dramatic Society.

However, that's all in the past. My main role today is, very broadly, to outline the background in order to set the scene for the speakers who are to follow me.

I will begin by saying that this is a very timely conference. I think John Hume described the EU as the greatest peace process in history. And our peace process in this island has meshed very well and worked very well with the EU, the larger peace process on the European continent.

Now we have reached a crossroads. The UK has chosen a different path in opting for Brexit. This raises serious questions for us here in Ireland. Because of our close relationship with the UK there are likely to be difficulties in many areas; and there is particular concern about the Good Friday Agreement which has been the basis for peace in Northern Ireland. The conference here today ought certainly to look back at what the EU has done in relation to the peace process, but it may also need to look forward and help in the difficult task of thinking our way through this considerable new problem that has arisen. The old British complaint in the 19th Century was that the Irish question was difficult because every time they thought they had a solution the Irish changed the question. I think in our time we might say it wasn't we who changed the question - it was the British referendum that did so.

Some of you may know—or remember—the Monty Python film *The Life of Brian*. You may remember John Cleese, as a leader of one of the many Palestinian factions contending with each other, claimed in an exasperated way, 'What have the Romans ever done for us?' The answer he got, of course, was aqueducts, roads, laws, so on.

It's not quite the same with the EU, but a lot of people are not fully aware I think of what the European Union has done in relation to the peace process. That will probably be dealt with in greater detail later by others more expert than I. There

are the three peace programmes and PEACE IV. I think I've seen a figure of something more than €1.5 billion in all that has come to Northern Ireland and the border counties in the South. It has also been a contributor to the International Fund for Ireland, which grew out of Article 10 in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, which envisaged international support.

I'd like, though, to say something about the less tangible beneficial aspects of EEC membership on peace in Ireland.

As I see it the conflict in Northern Ireland is a legacy of a long and complex interaction between Britain and Ireland. In reflecting on that long history while I was ambassador in London in the 1980s I was very struck by the many varieties of political relationship we have tried out between us in these two islands over a nearly thousand years.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century King John assumed the title 'Lord of Ireland'; King Henry VIII proclaimed himself King of Ireland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Then for more than two centuries we were two kingdoms under a single crown. Then within one two-year period at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century two events occurred which still echo down to the present day and are still at play in Northern Ireland. I'm talking, of course, about the 1798 Rebellion with its dream of reuniting everybody in Ireland in a separatist Irish Republic; and, in part as a reaction to that, the Act of Union pushed through by Prime Minister Pitt, which created a union of the two islands under a single parliament. Since then, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have had the partition of Ireland, the creation of the Irish Free State as a State within the Commonwealth with Northern Ireland remaining within the United Kingdom. Then, following the further evolution of the Free State and the adoption of a new Constitution, came the formalization of our status as an independent republic in the late 1940s which resulted in our departure from the Commonwealth. And now, since 1973, the UK and Ireland have been fellow members of the EEC which has evolved into the European Union.

I quoted Monty Python. Let me elevate the tone a little and talk about a character in a Shakespearean play, Henry V, who intrigues me. Captain Macmorris—I think he's probably the first comic Irishman on the English stage. He's a captain in the army of Henry V in France and he's exasperated, in an argument with his Welsh colleague. And he comes out with this phrase, which is actually printed in the text in kind of stage Irish—'What ish my nation? What ish my nation?' That question may be comic on the stage but it is a question that has echoed down the centuries for us on this island – particularly since the two events at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which I mentioned and which, as I see it, had the effect of creating two alternative agendas for the future of this island: one would realise Tone's dream of an independent republic 'uniting Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter'; the other would see Ireland as

a constituent part of the United Kingdom. Those two agendas, now in reduced form, are still in a sense, in contention between Unionists and Republicans and Nationalists in Northern Ireland

The partition of Ireland in 1920-21 can perhaps be seen in retrospect as a kind of ‘Solomon’s judgment’ by Lloyd George – an effort to divide the island between Unionists and Nationalists. That might possibly have worked over time if each of the two parts had been homogenous. But, as we know, in Northern Ireland the population was not homogenous: it has been a divided society in which community fears and tensions erupted into decades of serious conflict.

In our time we have been trying to cope with the consequences of that and find a way forward – particularly through the Good Friday Agreement. The Agreement should be seen, not so much as a single event but as the start of a process which will consolidate peace and promote reconciliation.

Now I want to highlight one way in which our membership of the EU along with the UK has helped to advance this process. My book on the Sunningdale Agreement has been mentioned.<sup>3</sup> It deals with the period of four years which led up to the Sunningdale Conference of 1973. Following the Apprentice Boys’ march in 1969 there were serious riots in Derry and subsequently in Belfast, and the British Army was brought onto the streets for the first time. At that stage the Irish Foreign Minister, Dr Hillery, went to London to raise his serious concern, both before and after. And he was told, in effect, by British Ministers ‘you’re a friendly country but you’re a foreign country, it’s not your business’. That attitude had changed greatly four years later in face of continuing conflict. At Sunningdale in 1973 the two Governments and leaders of the three Northern Ireland parties willing to participate agreed to set up new institutions which would provide for a sharing of power between parties in Northern Ireland and a North/South Council of Ireland with no direct British involvement. That was a major change of approach. There was a new willingness on the part of both governments to cooperate in an effort to address a conflict which was an unresolved legacy of history to the peoples of both islands. My book—I won’t go into the detail—tries to trace how that happened, but what I want to emphasise here is my view that it is not coincidental that the two countries were at the time both negotiating for EU membership. That meant already that the two Prime Ministers met much more regularly than they would have otherwise.

At an earlier stage in the ‘Troubles’, in 1969, Jack Lynch, the Irish Taoiseach, tried at one point, without success, to get a meeting with Prime Minister Wilson, but once both countries joined the EEC the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister were meeting regularly in the Brussels context. No longer was a meeting at head of

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<sup>3</sup> Noel Dorr (2017) *Sunningdale: The Search for Peace in Northern Ireland*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

government level a rare and exceptional event. As fellow members of the EEC/EU since 1973 they meet frequently, several times a year, in the European Council framework and there is always an opportunity for a bilateral discussion between them – as the phrase has it ‘*en marge*’, that is on the margin. Furthermore, the UK and Ireland are both countries of the common law tradition. This means that they have had many interests in common on which they find it useful to cooperate when they are dealing with the continental countries whose legal systems, like that of the European Union itself, can be said to derive from the Napoleonic Code.

And it has been not just the Ministers for Foreign Affairs or the Prime Ministers who meet in the EU context. Ministers of many other Departments and their officials also meet regularly in the Council framework. These regular meetings have been very important in creating an ease of contact and a considerable improvement in the Anglo-Irish relationship at government and official level. Of course there has also been a certain turbulence in the relationship at times as the conflict in Northern Ireland continued, but it remained that our common membership of the EU gave both sides a new ability to meet and to talk and to get to know each other. When I was in London as ambassador, Geoffrey Howe, who was then the Foreign Secretary, was very strong on that point and he talked about it a great deal on every suitable occasion.

I think that is an aspect of the EU in relation to the conflict in Ireland which needs to be highlighted. But it also means that if Brexit takes the kind of unfortunate course that we think it will take—it depends, of course, on how it will be worked out—but we may need to develop some other mechanism for more regular meetings to develop what should be the natural good relations, the natural friendly exchanges between these two islands.

I know I’m coming close to the end of my time, so I will just mention that in the lead-up to the Sunningdale Conference there was already serious thinking in Dublin about using the EEC as a model; we were thinking of institutions which would help to promote reconciliation and would have a capacity to evolve further over time but with no predetermined future outcome. Of course Sunningdale didn’t succeed, but that kind of approach, broadly speaking, has continued and in a way you can find it in some of the institutions established under the Good Friday Agreement.

The Good Friday Agreement— or call it the Belfast Agreement if you wish— is remarkable and unprecedented in so many ways. It finessed the whole issue of self-determination which had bedeviled our thinking here because Nationalists claimed that the unit for self-determination should have been the whole island while Unionists in the North insisted that it should be Northern Ireland where they were a majority since the settlement of 1920-21. The Agreement handled this difficult

issue by recognising ‘that it is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively... to exercise their right to self-determination on the basis of consent freely and concurrently given, North and South to bring about a united Ireland if that is their wish...’

It has structures which, in some ways, follow the pattern of Sunningdale – power-sharing and North/South structures which give expression to the ‘Irish Dimension’ of Northern Ireland – though in much more highly developed form, on a wider base and with wider participation. I would highlight one aspect of the Good Friday Agreement which to me seems remarkable – that is Article 1, subsection 6 of what became the British/Irish formal agreement which recognises ‘the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose.’

In a way one might say that centuries after Captain Macmorris his question ‘What ish my nation?’ has been one of the underlying causes of conflict in Northern Ireland. It is now answered at last in the acceptance in 1998 that the people of Northern Ireland may be British or Irish – **or both** – as they so choose. That has the consequence of course that people in Northern Ireland who identify themselves as Irish will continue *ipso facto* to be EU citizens after Brexit -and that’s only one of the many questions which have now to be dealt with.

I have tried here, as background to the day’s discussion to touch on some ways in which EU membership has had a vital role in the peace process in Northern Ireland. I look forward to other speakers who will consider this in much greater detail and, I hope, offer reflections on how that may be preserved, notwithstanding the UK decision to opt for Brexit.

## Appendix II: Remarks by Carlo Trojan

I am particularly honored to have been invited today to this symposium. Many thanks to Giada for organizing this event and to the National University of Ireland Galway for hosting it. I am delighted to be here and to have the opportunity to revisit Galway and to meet old friends. My last visit to Galway was in the mid-seventies. That was the beginning of my Irish connection. It was during that trip that I was elected to Honorary Vice President for life of the County Clare Beekeepers Society, an honour of which I am still proud today.

My personal involvement in the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland goes way back. As early as 1989 – almost ten years before the Good Friday Agreement – the EC President Jacques Delors committed himself and the European Commission to contribute to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. It was his firm belief that the European Community could not sit at the sidelines where deep divisions within one of its regions was costing lives and undermining social and economic advance and the very livelihood of its people.

As a first step the Commission decided in 1989 to become a contributor to the International Fund for Ireland, an independent international organization set up in 1986 following the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The European Commission has been the second largest contributor to the Fund ever since and continued to do so until its winding up in 2010. Over the years it has contributed well over 300 Million Euro.

I was appointed as the Commission's observer on the IFI Board and I served in that capacity for eleven years. I worked closely with its longtime president Willie Mc Carter whom I will meet tomorrow in Dublin. The Fund's objective was to promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between the two communities. It operated both in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish Republic. Working together with men and women from both communities and both sides of the border was an inspiring experience and the beginning of my personal engagement in the reconciliation process.

During his visit to Northern Ireland in 1992 Jacques Delors declared that he would seize every opportunity to engage the European Community in contributing to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The window of opportunity arose in the aftermath of the Downing Street Declaration with the August 1994 cease fires. They opened the way for a joint effort for a comprehensive Peace Program. Jacques Delors set up a Task Force for the preparation of what eventually would become the PEACE I Program. I had the privilege of chairing that Task Force. Next to my chairing the Taskforce on German Unification this was certainly one of the most challenging



experiences in my professional career. As a matter of fact it was in the Europa Hotel in Belfast that I learned on the radio that the Berlin Wall had come down on November 9<sup>th</sup> 1989.

We worked in close cooperation with the three Northern Ireland MEP's – Dr.Paisley, John Hume and Jim Nicholson – who paid a joint visit to this effect to the President of the European Commission. The very fact of this joint démarche by three gentlemen who were hardly on speaking terms was exceptional in itself. Within the Task Force I worked closely with their personal representatives who did much of the preparatory work on the ground. Hugh Logue who is with us today was one of them.

They consulted widely with grassroots organizations of both communities and from both sides of the border as I did myself during my subsequent visit to Northern Ireland. Jane Morrice was instrumental in setting up these consultations. The report of the Taskforce was the result of widespread consultations with the British and Irish governments, Northern Irish authorities, voluntary organizations and a wide range of public and private actors on the ground. A large number of written submissions were also considered by the Taskforce. Both the subsequent PEACE programme and its implementation were very much a bottom up process. Indeed, a 1997 report drawn up on behalf of the three Northern Irish MEP's assessing the programme, identified the dialogue it had fostered amongst and with local level “partnerships” as one of the most positive outcomes of the whole process.

The report of the Task Force was issued on 14 December 1994 in time for endorsement by the December European Council in Essen. This was also the last European Council of Jacques Delors as President of the European Commission. It was a privilege serving under him and he deserves great credit for engaging the EU in the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

The PEACE I program (1995-1999) came into effect in July 1995 and provided a substantive package of measures of an amount of 300 Million ECU. A very tangible peace dividend and testimony of European solidarity. As the UK government would later acknowledge “EU support, and especially the PEACE programme, made a vital contribution to securing the Good Friday Agreement”. Cross-border and cross-community cooperation have been at the very heart of the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland. This also meant attempting to remove any semblance of a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland through the PEACE programmes. The EU internal market, the Custom Union and the Good Friday Agreement all play a crucial role within this process.

Nowadays the Island of Ireland's economy is fully integrated into the EU. North-South cooperation has flourished in sectors covered by the Good Friday Agreement and beyond those, being underpinned by the shared EU regulatory

framework. Up to 30.000 workers live and travel every day on both sides of the Irish border and cross-border trade is extremely important. It constitutes almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the whole exports of Northern Ireland, for small and medium size companies. Therefore, it is fair to say that Northern Ireland represents a unique situation where very much is at stake and Brexit could threaten the undoing of 20 years of peace and reconciliation.

The official position of both governments is that Brexit should not entail the restoration of a hard border. The restoration of a hard border is not inevitable: we have no hard border with Monaco. We have no hard border with Andorra, just to mention a few countries with whom we have a Custom Union. In relation to Brexit, I think the problem is a political problem: it is not a sovereignty problem, or an identity problem. It is a political problem because Theresa May has manoeuvred herself into an almost impossible situation. She is hostage to Tory brexiteers, but she relies on the support of the Democratic Unionist Party. The problem stands exactly in here: on the position of Ms May as Prime Minister of the UK. There are no multiple solutions for the Irish problem. Ms May could either make a major U-Turn and keep all of the UK in the Single-Market and the Custom Union - what we call the Norway Plus Solution - or keep only Northern Ireland within the Custom Union and within the common regulatory area. The first solution would be in the British interest, but would most probably entail a leadership challenge. The second solution may result in the DUP withdrawing its support for the British government.

Let me go a bit further: the UK wishes to have full autonomy and to conclude a special trade agreement with the EU. This wish is at the same time political and symbolic, but it is not very practical. Access to the EU internal market is by far more important than the potential benefits of possible trade agreements with Commonwealth Countries, China, Gulf Countries and the USA. The EU has far more leverage on the UK than these other countries. Moreover, it needs to be noticed that when we talk about Customs Union, we only talk about goods. Outside goods, the UK would need to negotiate trade agreements on services, on public procurement, on investments, on data protection and on intellectual property: a whole range of elements, which are by far more important for the British economy than goods.

The British export economy is an economy almost exclusively based on services and totally dependent on value change. Without a Customs Union, for example, the automobile and aviation industries in Great Britain would risk disappearing. For all these reasons it is in the United Kingdom's best interests to maintain the Customs Union.

We will have to wait and see what the future brings. For the next two years, until the end of 2020, the UK will be in a situation of Status Quo. Before the end of the year the British government has to indicate in detail what kind of free trade agreement it would wish to have beyond 2020. This will have to be negotiated between March 19th and the end of 2020. If the British Government remains in the position that being part of the Single Market and the Customs Union is not desirable, we will have a real problem. Issues will arise not only for the island of Ireland, but also for relations between the UK and all of the 27 member-states.



## Appendix III: Exhibition of historical documents



Exhibition from Hugh Logue's personal collection and Brendan Duddy Archive, NUI Galway (Photo Credit: [Maurizio Zanella](#)).

This exhibition presented materials from the private papers of Hugh Logue and the papers of intermediary Brendan Duddy held at NUI Galway. This historical documentary evidence provided context for the peace-making initiatives which culminated in the historic signing of the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. In conjunction with the symposium, it illustrated the crucial role of EU policy makers and MEPs in drafting and delivering the first PEACE Program and consulting widely on the ground in Northern Ireland. It illustrated too how the increasing pace of European integration was invoked in the secret back-channel discussions between the British government and the Republican leadership.

**European Union involvement in the Northern Ireland Peace Process 1981-1994:** Beginning with the Martin Report in 1981 and continuing through the Haagerup Report and John Hume's 1987 Report on Northern Ireland to the 1994 Task Force report which culminated in the PEACE 1 Programme, EU support for the Northern Ireland peace process gradually developed and expanded.

- 1981: Report on behalf of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning on Community regional policy and Northern Ireland, European Parliament, S. Martin
- 1984: Political Affairs Committee on the situation in Northern Ireland, N. J. Haagerup

- 1987: Report on “the regional problems of Ireland and the border counties”  
J. Hume
- 1994: Task Force Report – European Structural Funds Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation



**Brendan Duddy - Intermediary:** Throughout twenty years of violent conflict in Northern Ireland a secret channel of communication linked the IRA to the highest levels of the British government. At the heart of this channel was a single intermediary, Brendan Duddy. His house was the venue for secret negotiations between the British Government and the IRA throughout 1975. He managed the intense negotiations over the Republican hunger strikes in which ten men died (1980-1981) and he was at the heart of the contacts (1991-1993) that culminated in a secret offer of a ceasefire that was a precursor to the public IRA ceasefire of 1994.

The organisers would like to thank Hugh Logue, for the loan of documents and photographs from his private collection, Jane Morrice for sharing her private photographs and Barry Houlihan from NUI Galway Archives who organised the Duddy archive documents.

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