

**St Andrews Agreement Review of North/South Implementation Bodies  
and Areas for Co-operation**

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## 1 Introduction

### (i) A flawed review

I note this review is **jaundiced and restricted** in its capacity to fully and adequately examine the question of cross-border bodies and cooperation, in that it is **prohibited from addressing the fundamental question of whether we in fact need any, or less bodies**. Its terms of reference only permit it to contemplate expansion, not reduction. This is a systemic flaw.

For this review to be meaningful it should have addressed basic foundational questions, including whether any of the cross-border bodies are necessary.

The very reason d'être of having cross-border bodies requires to be challenged. It is clear from their genesis that their **primary purpose is political rather than practical**. They are designed to fit and advance the promotion of Irish unification embraced in the Irish Constitution.

### (ii) The Belfast/St Andrews Agreement and the goal of an "Irish nation"

The Irish Constitution, as amended pursuant to the Belfast Agreement, makes the function of the cross-border element of that Agreement very clear. That Constitution now asserts:

"It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of **the Irish Nation**. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage."

and

"It is the firm **will of the Irish Nation**, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions, recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island. Until then, the laws enacted by the Parliament established by this Constitution shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws enacted by the Parliament that existed immediately before the coming into operation of this Constitution.

**"Institutions with executive powers and functions that are shared between those jurisdictions may be established by their respective responsible authorities for stated purposes and may exercise powers and functions in respect of all or any part of the island."**

Thus cross-border bodies with executive powers and functions are identified straightaway as an essential part of the apparatus to devise and promote the political unification of the so-called "Irish nation".

The Irish Constitution still seeks to purloin the geographic entity of the entirety of the island of Ireland to make it the exclusive setting for the “Irish nation”. There is no such Irish nation and, therefore, no entitlement or birthright on the part of anyone to belong to such a mythical nation. **To identify and hold to a single Irish nation, co-terminus with the island of Ireland, is to treat contemptuously all who live on the island of Ireland but are British and Unionist in nationality and persuasion.** This contempt is compounded by the Irish Constitution’s affirmation that it is “the firm will of the Irish nation” to politically unite the whole island in a “united Ireland”

Spawned within an Irish Constitution with such an expansionist agenda, it is no surprise that the cross-border bodies are indeed political in purpose and design, rather than practical.

The Irish Constitution’s promotion of cross-border bodies, taken with the trajectory of the Belfast Agreement, makes it clear that above all else such bodies exist to promote and advance the Irish unity which is the ultimate goal of both. They are an indispensable part of the harmonisation process which is intended in time to deliver one nation, under Dublin, on the island of Ireland.

## 2 Setting the scene

No other part of the United Kingdom has contrived links with a foreign country similar to those which presently exist between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. I do, of course, acknowledge that Northern Ireland is unique in that it is the only part of the United Kingdom which shares a land border with another EU member state. As a result, it is both logical and necessary that Northern Ireland cooperates with the Republic on matters of mutual benefit.

However, the cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic as enshrined in the Belfast/St Andrews Agreement is **not designed to be of mutual benefit** but is intended to **undermine the position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom**.

Nationalists do have a legitimate right to pursue their goal of Irish unification through peaceful means. However, they need to recognise that Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom because that is the wish of the majority of her population.

Attempts by Republicans to destroy the Union are bloodsoaked. In the course of a thirty year campaign of terror Republicans slaughtered members of the security forces and civilians in an attempt to unite the island. Between 1966 and 2003 1781 people were murdered by the IRA alone.<sup>1</sup> The cross-border arrangements established under the Belfast Agreement are all the more objectionable because four of the ministers who supposedly represent Northern Ireland are unapologetic about their support for and / or role in that terrorist campaign. Furthermore, they make no attempt to disguise the fact that they see the current political situation as a continuation of their "struggle".<sup>2</sup>

Little wonder, therefore, that traditionally and rightly Unionists have been hostile to cross-border bodies.

Whereas some might find their former analysis inconvenient, even embarrassing, the veracity of what they then said makes their words worth repeating.

Reacting to the first meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council in 1999 Dr Ian Paisley described the cross-border element of the Belfast Agreement as "**an embryonic united Ireland**"<sup>3</sup> and the NSMC was boycotted by the two Democratic Unionist members of the Executive – Regional Development Minister Peter Robinson and the Minister for Social Development, Nigel Dodds.

When asked why he was boycotting the meeting, Mr Dodds said:

**"The purpose of these institutions, the purpose of the Belfast Agreement is to ensure that this is used for political purposes to advance the form and the substance of all-Ireland action leading to eventual all-Ireland government."**

Mr Robinson went on to say that the NSMC meeting was "the type of event that no Unionist should be part of".

As well as the all-Ireland agenda of the NSMC being cited, Mr Robinson gave a second reason for his boycott – the presence of Sinn Fein/IRA ministers Martin McGuinness and Bairbre de Brún. Instead of going to the inaugural meeting of the NSMC Messers Dodds and Robinson spent the day in Markethill, Co Armagh, where they met representatives of groups supporting those bereaved by republican violence. Commenting Peter Robinson said: "If I have the choice of sitting down with those who speak for the perpetrators of violence and sitting down with the victims of violence, I prefer to be with the victims of violence".<sup>4</sup>

### **3 A border poll every seven years - A recipe for instability**

Schedule 1 paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Belfast Agreement gives the Secretary of State the power to call a referendum if it appears likely to him that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should leave the United Kingdom. This referendum can be held again 7 years later.

**There is no provision in legislation for a border poll to be held in order to demonstrate Northern Ireland's determination to remain part of the United Kingdom.**

In their 2004 policy paper *North South East West* the DUP made the sensible suggestion that "*all the participants in the process accept that there will be no change in the status of Northern Ireland and that the first opportunity for any referendum on the status of Northern Ireland will be in 30 years time*" (8).

It went on to say that "*there should be a solemn constitutional contract entered into by the leaders of all parties who aspire to involvement in Government whereby, without prejudice to long-term aspirations, there would be an unequivocal acceptance that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland within the Union would be unalterable for a generation*" (9).

Like so many pledges made by that party, this policy was quietly dropped in order to secure office. As a result, the potential for the instability and community tension which a border poll every seven years would undoubtedly bring remains.

#### 4 St Andrews – Making North/South Accountable?

At the outset, it is important to realise that St Andrews is **not a new agreement**. It merely amended the existing Belfast Agreement.

##### (i) The North South Ministerial Council

*“In practice, that the Assembly’s role in controlling the NSMC is virtually non-existent. ... The Assembly is reduced to a forum where questions can be asked but no effective action can be taken.*

*“This is not a form of administration which is democratic. Only the Executive parties have any vote on decisions. The Assembly has no role whatsoever to hold the NSMC to account. ...*

*“Smaller parties have no role whatsoever in relation to North/South co-operation. Power is vested in Ministers.*

*“It is critical for democracy and for the Union that any relationship with the Republic of Ireland is accountable to the Assembly”.*

That is what the DUP had to say about the North/South Ministerial Council in 2003 (*Towards A New Agreement*, 20). In spite of the fact that they now trumpet that North/South matters are accountable to the Assembly **every word quoted above is true of the situation today**.

The 1998 Ministerial Code has been amended so that draft NSMC and BIC papers are circulated to all Executive members in advance of a NSMC meeting and a member of the Executive has the right to seek an executive discussion on such a paper (St Andrews Agreement, Annex A Paragraph 17).

There is **no** provision in the St Andrews Agreement or Act for such discussions after a NSMC meeting.

It is also interesting to note that the Belfast Agreement’s requirement for the Northern Ireland Executive to be represented on a cross-community basis remains. In practice this means that Unionists will **always be in a minority at meetings** as the Dublin administration will obviously never include Unionist representatives while the representatives of the Northern Ireland Executive must always include nationalist representation.

##### (ii) No room for boycotts

I have already noted the fact that the DUP boycotted meetings of the NSMC when they held office in the UUP/SDLP led Executive. As a result of the St Andrews Act it is no longer possible to do this.

It states that if ministers do not plan to intend a NSMC meeting the First and deputy First Minister “acting [as always] jointly must nominate a Minister or junior Minister—



- (a) to attend the meeting in place of the appropriate Minister; and
- (b) to participate in the meeting so far as it relates to matters for which the appropriate Minister has responsibility”.

There was no provision for this in the 1998 Act and therefore DUP members could boycott the meetings of the NSMC.

### **(iii) How much is the NSMC costing us?**

Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland contributions towards the expenses of the NSMC and BIC was defrayed as expenses of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

This was changed in the Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2006 – the money now comes from OFMDFM.

There is no figure for the cost of North/South cooperation provided in the 2008 – 2011 OFMDFM Budget. Figures are broken down into “Support for the Executive”, “Support for Equality, Human Rights and Community Relations” and “EU Peace Programme Match Funding”. **Therefore the cost of the NSMCI to the Northern Ireland tax payer is concealed.**

This is in stark contrast to the situation when David Trimble and Seamus Mallon shared the office of joint First Minister. During the discussions surrounding the draft budget published in 2000, Mr Trimble responded to DUP criticisms of expenditure on cross-border initiatives by pointing out that only £11 million out of a budget totaling £6 billion had been set aside for that purpose.<sup>5</sup>

### **(iv) British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference**

The Belfast Agreement made it clear that the BIIC would “subsume both the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and the Intergovernmental Conference established under the 1985 Agreement” (Strand 3, Section 2 Paragraph 1).

As the DUP’s 2003 Policy Paper *Towards a New Agreement* put it: “*The Maryfield Secreteriat has simply been renamed and moved premises to the centre of Belfast*” (27).

Ministers, the Belfast Agreement states, would meet “as required at Summit level” (Strand 3, Section 2 Paragraph 3) and “in recognition of the Irish Government’s **special interest** in Northern Ireland ... there will be **regular and frequent** meetings of the Conference concerned with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters” (Strand 3, Section 2 Paragraph 5).

The current proposals for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and a parallel process in the Republic appear to have their genesis in this body which was to address “**in particular the area of rights**” (Strand 3, Section 2 Paragraph 6).

St Andrews **does not even mention** the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.

### **(v) Independent Consultative Forum**

Annex A Paragraph 22 of the St Andrews Agreement states “The Northern Ireland Executive would support the establishment of an independent North/South consultative forum appointed by the two Administrations and representative of civil society.”

Although this body was discussed at a meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council on 17 July 2007, the details of its function and makeup remain unclear.<sup>6</sup>

However, one thing can be said for certain – there is the potential for this body to become yet another unwelcome layer of Southern interference in the affairs of this part of the United Kingdom.

## 5 The Implementation Bodies - No useful purpose and (almost) no Protestants

*“Apart from any constitutional issues it is clear that people are not receiving value for money from the work of the implementation bodies. They are politically motivated bodies, negotiated and designed to appease the republican aspiration of an all-Ireland Government” (Towards a New Agreement, 17).*

While the Belfast Agreement claimed that funding would be provided to the NSMC and the implementation bodies on the basis that they constitute “**a necessary public function**” (Strand 2, Paragraph 15), in looking at the operation of the cross-border bodies two things soon become evident: most serve **no useful purpose** and they themselves have **lamentably failed to embrace the unionist tradition** within their workforce – always a telling indicator of the ethos and culture of a body.

### (i) The Food Safety Promotion Board

The FSPB is probably the most pointless of the 6 Cross-border Implementation Bodies established under the terms of the NI Act 1998.

It exists, we are told, to promote and research food safety, communicate food safety alerts, carry out surveillance of food borne disease, promote scientific co-operation and laboratory linkages and the develop cost-effective facilities for specialised laboratory testing.

An examination of the Food Safety Promotion Board's website reveals how this works in practice. Guidelines as to how to wash your hands before eating and preparing food are certainly useful but do we really need a cross border body to tell us this? <sup>7</sup>

### Religious breakdown of work force

In December 2002, following an inquiry as to how the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 could be monitored if the religious breakdown of the employees was not noted it was revealed that “Food Safety Promotion Board staff are employed in the Republic of Ireland, where there is no requirement under legislation to monitor the religious breakdown of these staff.” <sup>8</sup>

In October 2005 a breakdown of the religious balance of the Food Safety Promotion Board was again requested. The government's response was that the data was not recorded because none of the employees were based in Northern Ireland. <sup>9</sup>

It remains the case that the Food Safety Promotion Board **employs no one in Northern Ireland – in spite of the fact that 30% of the body's funding comes for the Northern Ireland Executive.**

### (ii) InterTradeIreland

It is claimed that InterTradelreland exists to “promote the value of growth sectors to make the island more competitive in a global economy”.<sup>10</sup>

The whole premise of this organisation is a nonsense. The Republic is tied into the eurozone, with its interests rates set by the European Central Bank while Northern Ireland is part of the much more stable UK economy. In 2003 the DUP slammed the UUP for conceding the very idea that such a body needed to exist on the premise that the UUP had previous stated (and the DUP still held) that it would serve no useful purpose (*Towards A New Agreement*, 16). However, in 2007 DUP Minister Nigle Doods presided over a department which saw a massive 45.7% increase in the budget allocation to that body over 2009 – 2011.

### Religious imbalance in workforce

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 the religious background of InterTradelreland employees was as follows:

Grade	Number in Grade	Religious Background
Chief Executive	1	Roman Catholic
Director	3	3 Roman Catholic
Manager	20	16 Roman Catholic
		4 Protestant
Executive	9	8 Roman Catholic
		1 Protestant
Administrative Support	5	3 Roman Catholic
		1 Protestant
		1 Non-determined

These figures tell their own story. Protestants held just 7 of the 38 posts in InterTradelreland – accounting for less than 20% of the work force.

Of course this is hardly surprising as InterTradelreland is perceived by the Unionist community as furthering a nationalist agenda by marketing Ireland – an island on which where are two separate economies – as a single economic unit.<sup>11</sup>

### (iii) Waterways Ireland

The Republic of Ireland has, historically, got much more out of Waterways Ireland than Northern Ireland.

For 2000 to 2002 the percentage of funds for capital projects authorized by Waterways Ireland spent in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was as follows:

Year	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
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2000	100%	0%
2001	89%	11%
2002	98%	2%

While the capital/development expenditure by Waterways Ireland is funded totally by the jurisdiction in which it is incurred the budget for the body is financed on the basis that current expenditure is divided between jurisdictions on the basis of 85% from the Republic and 15% from Northern Ireland, reflecting the proportional length of the waterways in each jurisdiction.

### **Religious imbalance in workforce**

In November 2005 it was revealed that the number of former Northern Ireland civil servants employed by Waterways Ireland was 90% less than when the organisation was created while the number of former members of the Republic's civil service had fallen by just 20%. It also emerged that there was an almost two to one ratio of Roman Catholic to Protestant employees.<sup>12</sup>

Waterways Ireland's problems when it comes to recruiting Protestants still continue.<sup>13</sup>

### **(iv) The language body /Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency**

The North/South Language Body is a single Body reporting to the NSMC but composed of two separate and largely autonomous agencies - Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord O Ulst r-Scotch. Foras na Gaeilge promotes Irish on an all-Ireland basis while the Ulster-Scots Agency has responsibility to promote greater awareness of Ulster-Scots culture.

Since the creation of this body there has been a massive differential in the level of funding of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency. The most recent Annual Report on the Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency websites is from 2003. It makes interesting reading in relation to the money spent on the two bodies.

In 2006, the budget for the two language bodies meant that for every  1 that was given to the Ulster-Scots Agency, Foras na Gaeilge received  6. In one year, that disparity amounts to around  10 million.<sup>14</sup>

Today 75% of the funding for the Ulster-Scots Agency comes from the Northern Ireland Executive and 25% from the administration in Dublin. The situation is reversed with regards to Foras na Gaeilge (i.e. 25% of its money comes from the Northern Ireland Executive while 75% comes from Dublin). It is interesting to note that the 25% of Foras na Gaeilge's funding which comes from the Northern Ireland Executive is **greater** than the 75% which the Northern Ireland Executive provides to the Ulster Scots Agency.<sup>15</sup>

### **(v) Tourism Ireland**

Tourism Ireland spends £40 million a year, one third of which comes from Northern Ireland. However, throughout its existence it has failed to promote the distinctiveness of Northern Ireland.<sup>16</sup>

By marketing Ireland to the world as a single tourist destination it fails to take account for what makes Northern Ireland what it is – a separate constitutional entity with many unique features which make it a destination worthy of note in its own right. Tourism Ireland peddles the republican myth of a single Irish nation to the world. One has only to view the adverts on the Tourism Ireland website to see that they promote a view of the island which is exclusively nationalist. The music in the background would be associated exclusively with Irish nationalism and there is no recognition of Unionism's cultural heritage.<sup>17</sup>

Only in November of this year did Tourism Ireland announce that anything associated with Unionist culture – some aspects of Ulster Scots – would feature in their advertising campaigns. It is noteworthy that Tourism Ireland has no plans to highlight Orange Order parades and Eleventh Night bonfires – the highlights of the Unionist cultural calendar and events which have huge tourism potential.<sup>18</sup>

#### **(vi) SEUPB**

The SEUPB is the body charged with distributing EU PEACE money. The shocking record of this body was revealed in response to an Assembly question tabled in December 2007. Terrorist ex-prisoners groups received **50 times** more money than organizations that work with the security forces.

Organizations that work with police officers, soldiers and other former members of the security forces – many of whom have been permanently maimed by terrorists - were awarded £225,138 from PEACE II over the past five years.

Terrorist ex-prisoners, on the other hand, received £11,376,011 during the same period. On top of that £11.3 million, another £2,093,978 went to groups that ran projects “addressing the needs of ex-prisoners”.

In 2002-03 alone there were no less than 13 individual former terrorist prisoners' groups that received more than the total amount awarded to address the needs of former members of the security forces over five years.

One group (Abhaile Aris) which works with “the republican ex-prisoner community to bring about their acceptance as equal members of Irish society”, received £447,844 in 2002-03 alone – almost double the total given to former members of the security forces in five years.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Religious imbalance in workforce**

SEUPB has a continuing problem in attracting Protestant employees. In December 2005 just 9 of its 31 employees in Belfast and Omagh – or 29% - were Protestant. This situation had improved by January 2008 but Protestants still only make up 37% of SEUPB's workforce in Belfast and Omagh.

### **(vii) Huge increases and taxation without representation**

*“It was clear from the DUP attempt to amend the Budget in 2001 that the implementation bodies are immune from Assembly control. A DUP amendment to reallocate funding from these bodies was deemed to be outside the scope of the Assembly. People in Northern Ireland are therefore paying taxes and rates without any ability to control how they are being spent. No taxation without representation has been a fundamental democratic principle for centuries, but it is flouted today in Northern Ireland” (Towards A New Agreement, 17).*

In spite of the appalling record of these bodies when it comes to employing people from the Protestant/Unionist community and their questionable usefulness, **not a single cross-border body saw its budget cut in the recently published Draft Budget. In fact, all but one of the bodies saw huge increases.**

That resources should be wasted on these bodies when the money could have gone to reward the work of Northern Ireland’s nurses is nothing short of scandalous.

Not only that but nowhere in the St Andrews Act is the situation where the Assembly is unable to reallocate funding to cross-border bodies addressed. Therefore the principle of no taxation without representation is **still** being flouted in Northern Ireland.

### **(viii) Assembly/Oireachtas scrutiny of implementation bodies**

Under the St Andrews Agreement Chairs and Chief Executives “when called upon and at least yearly, would appear before the relevant Assembly Committees. There is provision in the South for similar arrangements in relation to the Oireachtas” (St Andrews Agreement, Annex A Paragraph 20).

This is the only provision for Assembly scrutiny of the implementation bodies which differs from the Belfast Agreement and is flimsy in the extreme.

Since St Andrews **a convicted IRA terrorist** who served 15 years in the Maze for his role in the murder of a 19 year old policewoman has been appointed as the vice-chair of Foras na Gaeilge without a squeak of protest from any Unionist representative in the Assembly.<sup>20</sup>

## 6 Freelance north/south cooperation

Any examination of north/southerly requires that one looks at how individual departments in the Northern Ireland Executive seek to harmonize Northern Ireland and the Republic. Across the departments – particularly those run by Sinn Fein/IRA ministers – there is neglect of the East-West dimension and promotion of all-Ireland policies.

The DUP's 2003 policy paper *Towards a New Agreement* contains a section headed "Freelance unaccountable north/south co-operation". It makes the point that while Strand Two of the Belfast Agreement set out a number of areas of cooperation for the North/South Ministerial Council and implementation bodies it did not limit ministers in Northern Ireland outside these arrangements with the result that "*individual department's relationships with the Republic of Ireland are almost totally unaccountable. ... The DUP solution is to render Ministers accountable for their actions*" (*Towards a New Agreement*, 21).

Following the restoration of devolution, it has been claimed that that the Executive is running to a Unionist agenda and implementing British rule. St Andrews, it is claimed, tied the hands of individual ministers because there is now a "Unionist veto". In truth, there is a mutual veto which can be exercised by Nationalists as well as Unionists. And an analysis of Sinn Fein/IRA controlled ministries shows that what the DUP described as "freelance cooperation" with the Republic continues apace.

### (i) DARD

Since she took up the Agriculture portfolio, Michelle Gildernew has pursued a narrow all-Ireland agenda which displays no regard for the impact it has upon Northern Ireland's Agri-food industry.

After Ms Gildernew became Agriculture Minister designate but before she took up office her party made their intentions for the department very clear in a document called *Equality for Rural Communities*.

The word "equality" – as employed by Sinn Fein/IRA – could be substituted by republicanism. This is clearly demonstrated in a document which promised Sinn Fein would "work towards single representation of Ireland in trade talks"; "ring fence the milk quota for distribution on an island-wide basis"; "develop an island-wide animal health strategy" and "remove "UK" status from our food exports, and integrate the agri-food industry and agricultural services on an all-Ireland basis".<sup>21</sup>

These priorities are not something which farmers and food producers want but reflect the Minister's narrow Republican mindset.

The following are just a few examples of how the Minister manipulated her portfolio to pursue a Republican agenda:

- Following an outbreak of Foot – and – Mouth on the Mainland, the Agriculture minister made great play of the idea of "fortress Ireland" – a



phrase which naturally appeals to an Irish Republican given its lets keep the big bad Brits out connotations.

Some may be persuaded that this was a sensible policy. However, if Northern Ireland is marketed as a single entity with the Irish Republic obvious complications arise when a disease arrives in the Irish Republic of which Northern Ireland and Mainland UK are free.

Consider the example of bluetongue. Bluetongue is spread by midges. The warmer climate in the Irish Republic is more likely to attract the infected midges than, say, the north of Scotland.

It would be much more sensible for the Department to adopt a “**Fortress Northern Ireland**” approach to disease prevention. However, given that the Minister is unable to bring herself to utter the name of the Province it is hardly surprising that this sensible policy was never even considered by her.

- The Minister for Agriculture’s pursuit of her all-Ireland agenda at the expense of the Northern Ireland agri-food sector was recently demonstrated at the December 2007 meeting of the Fisheries Council.

If Ms Gildernew’s had been focused on securing a fair deal for Northern Ireland’s fishermen perhaps there would not have been such a huge failure in the negotiations under “the Hague Preference”. Under this anachronistic arrangement between the UK and the Republic quotas are traded. **This year we have suffered a major setback with getting back only 150 tonnes of cod compared with 300 tonnes last year. Thus in Northern Ireland we stand to lose nearly one third of our present cod allowance. This was due to an appalling and dismal failure by the Minister.** Why did the Republic get off so lightly? <sup>22</sup>

Of course, Sinn Fein/IRA being an all-Ireland party will never seek to negotiate solely in the interests of Northern Ireland. This places Northern Ireland at a clear disadvantage in such negotiations and perhaps goes some way to explaining Ms Gildernew’s otherwise baffling statement issued following the conclusion of the negotiation: “**We achieved what we wanted thanks to a well planned approach to the negotiations. I believe this is the best possible outcome**”. <sup>23, 24</sup>

- Again, while Ms Gildernew is perusing an all-Ireland animal health and welfare strategy through regular meeting with Ms Coughlan there is a distinct lack of similar meetings with her Scottish counterpart to ensure that measures are taken to prevent disease entering or leaving the UK – in spite of the fact that animal import/exports from and to Mainland UK are hugely significance to many farmers. <sup>25</sup>

## **(ii) Department of Education**

Like her party colleague Ms Gildernew, Caitríona Ruane has displayed an enthusiasm for all things south of the border.

- In December 2007 Ms Ruane and her southern counterpart Cornor Lenihan jointly launched a “Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School”

jointly funded by the Republic's Department of Education and Science and the Southern Education and Library Board - **the first time that a resource for schools has been developed on a cross border basis.**

Speaking at the launch Minister Lenihan stated, "The objective of the project was to develop an inclusive and intercultural primary school, which ... welcomes children whose language, culture and ethnicity **are not Irish**".<sup>26</sup>

While we all wish to see a Northern Ireland in which people from overseas are welcomed and integrated into the local community it should be acknowledged that not all people living on the island of Ireland for generations regard themselves as being Irish. Needless to say, there is no record of Northern Ireland's Education Minister making this point to Mr Lenihan.

- In November 2007 Ms Ruane and the Republic's Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin addressed the **first OECD conference to be jointly hosted by the departments in Northern Ireland and the Republic**. During this conference the ministers announced the establishment of a joint research project, to be funded by both Departments, allegedly "aimed at attracting and developing school leaders".<sup>27</sup> There is no report of any plans to expand this project to include Great Britain.
- In October 2007 Ms Ruane presented the "All Ireland Awards for Services to Education" – awards which aim to "**promote North – South relations through education**". It is, I feel, significant that education is of secondary importance to promoting north- south relations - an aim which accords well with Sinn Fein/IRA's agenda.<sup>28</sup>
- It is interesting to note the **North-South dimension of the education minister's proposals for post-primary education**. What Ruane is seeking to do is secure an all-island approach where transfer occurs at 14 with no academic selection.<sup>29</sup>
- In November the Minister announced that there had been a delay in issuing the Transfer circular supposedly because "the possibility had been raised of a conflict between Article 16(4) of the 1997 Education Order (for primary and post-primary schools) and Article 32(4) of the 1998 Education Order (for pre-schools) and EU legislation."<sup>30</sup>

Article 16(4) of the 1997 Education Order and Article 32(4) of the 1998 Education Order gives Northern Ireland children priority over those from the Republic when enrolling in Northern Ireland's schools.<sup>31</sup> Significantly, the Minister failed to specify what piece of EU legislation supposedly troubled her in this regard.

### **(iii) Department of Regional Development**

The Draft Programme for Government, Draft Investment and Draft Budget make it clear that there will be an upgrading of transport links between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

The Draft Investment Strategy contains a section headed “Benefits of North/South Co-operation”. Significantly there is **no** section dealing with the benefits of East/West co-operation. Under this heading it is stated that: “Co-operation in developing infrastructure, where appropriate, will help ensure more efficient planning and **joined-up delivery of key projects**”. It goes on to say that “**a particular focus** will be on cross-border links and developing infrastructure in the border areas” and that the “upgrading” of transport links “along the Dublin-Belfast corridor will ensure that this corridor forms a major axis for economic development on the island” (DIS, 5).

**Why is it that nowhere in the Draft Programme for Government, Draft Investment and Draft Budget is there a commitment to further develop East-West transport links, despite their deficiency?**

I would suggest that the bias of the DRD minister – a convicted terrorist who is working to see the destruction of Northern Ireland’s place in the Union – provides an answer. <sup>32</sup> It suites the Irish Republican agenda to see to it that Northern Ireland’s transport links with the South are maintained and kept in pristine condition while those with GB mainland are neglected. The establishment of a “joined-up” infrastructure with the Republic will make trading with the Republic much more attractive than with the Mainland.

## 7 Conclusion

In recent times it has been repeatedly claimed by Unionist representatives that Northern Ireland's relationship with the Republic has fundamentally changed as a result of the St Andrews Agreement. An analysis of the facts tells a different story. It is evident that the all-Ireland agenda of the Belfast Agreement continues largely unchallenged.

- Cross-border bodies – with their disgraceful record when it comes to the employment of Protestants and questionable usefulness – remain and they still operate largely without check.
- Power in relation to cross-border matters remains vested with Ministers with the Assembly reduced to a forum where questions can be asked but no effective action taken.
- **Outrageously the cost of the NSMC is being concealed from the people of Northern Ireland by our First Ministers – Dr Paisley and his colleague Martin McGuinness.**
- The British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference remains intact and **entirely unchanged.**
- Proposals contained within the St Andrews Agreement for a North/South Parliamentary Forum and an Independent Consultative Forum have the potential to become a whole new level of Dublin interference in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland.
- An analysis of the departments run by Sinn Fein/IRA – and indeed the whole Programme for Government, Investment Strategy and Budget – displays a neglect of East/West cooperation and promotion of North/South linkages.<sup>33</sup>

These are not welcome developments as far as the pro-Union people of Northern Ireland are concerned and should be vigorously opposed by all who want to see the retention and strengthening of Northern Ireland's links with Great Britain.

Far from there being a case for the creation of additional bodies there is no justification for the existing bodies and they should be abolished.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Lost Lives*, 1534.

<sup>2</sup> “Sinn Fein votes to support police” 28 January 2007  
< [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6308175.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6308175.stm)>

<sup>3</sup> “Ministers back £400m roads boost” 17 July 2007  
< [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6902722.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6902722.stm)>

<sup>4</sup> “DUP ministers boycott historic meeting” 13 December 1999  
< [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/562449.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/562449.stm)>

<sup>5</sup> “Trimble and Mallon unveil priorities”, 24<sup>th</sup> October 200 <  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/988007.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/988007.stm)>

<sup>6</sup> Ministerial statement on a North/South Ministerial Council meeting by Martin McGuinness, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 <  
<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2007/070918.htm#3>>

<sup>7</sup> The Food Safety Promotion Board  
< <http://www.safefoodonline.com/article.asp?article=1900>>

<sup>8</sup> House of Lords Hansard, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2002  
< <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldhansrd/vo021209/text/21209w01.htm>>

<sup>9</sup> House of Lords Hansard, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2005  
< <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldhansrd/vo051010/text/51010w08.htm>>

<sup>10</sup> Intertrade Ireland <<http://www.intertradeireland.com/>>

<sup>11</sup> House of Lords Hansard, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006  
< <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldhansrd/vo060605/text/60605w05.htm>>

<sup>12</sup> House of Lords Hansard, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003  
< <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldhansrd/vo030402/text/30402w01.htm>>

<sup>13</sup> “Waterways Ireland receive less applicants from the Protestant Community than might be expected, therefore, we particularly welcome applicants from this community”.

Advertisement for Assistant Valuer, Waterways Ireland  
< <http://www.waterwaysireland.org/index.cfm/section/article/page/AssistantValuer>>

<sup>14</sup> Official report of the Transitional Assembly, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006  
< <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/theassembly/Plenary/060926.htm>>

<sup>15</sup> Official report of the Transitional Assembly, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007  
< <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/transitional/plenary/070129.htm#5>>

16 “TV Advertising: Your very own Ireland”  
[http://www.tourismireland.com/Home/Our\\_Marketing\\_Overseas/TV-Advertising.aspx](http://www.tourismireland.com/Home/Our_Marketing_Overseas/TV-Advertising.aspx)

17 “Ulster-Scots will feature in ads” 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/7118103.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7118103.stm)

18 Telephone conversation with George Patton, Chief Executive of Ulster Scots Agency, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

19 The table below details funding awarded under the EU PEACE II Programme during the last five years to projects addressing the needs of former members of the security forces.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Total Commitment £</b>
2002-03	Disabled Police Officers Association Ltd	89,762
2003-04	Derry and Raphoe Action	27,000
	Disabled Police Officers Association	9,810
	Prison Service Trust	64,039
2004-05	Conflict Trauma Resource Centre	9,837
2006-07	Organisation for Ex-servicemen and women Teoranta (ONET)	24,690
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>225,138</b>

(ii) The table below details funding awarded under the EU PEACE II Programme during the last five years to ex-prisoners’ groups.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Total Commitment £</b>
2002-03	Abhaile Aris	447,844
	Amach Agus Isteach	150,466
	An-Eochair Ex-Prisoner Support Group	260,740
	Ar Ais Aris	146,011
	Aráis Arís ar an Omaigh	35,600
	Cairde Strabane Republican Ex-prisoners Group	221,154

	Coiste Na N-Iarchimí	697,407
	Cumann na Meirleach Ard Mhaca Theas	414,373
	Expac (Ex-Prisoners Assistance Committee Ltd)	391,927
	Failte Abhaile	437,007
	Failte Cluain Eois	404,152
	Goitse	141,268
	Iar Cimi Liatroma Teoranta	399,078
	Iarchimí Fhearmanach	261,529
	Lisburn Prisoners Support Project	549,308
	North Belfast Prisoner's Aid	93,242
	Prisoners Enterprise Project	217,639
	REACT (formerly EPIC Mid Ulster)	323,890
	REACT Northwest	123,217
	Tar Abhaile	300,549
	Tar Anall	219,325
	Tar Isteach	152,067
	Teach na Failte	414,329
	Trá Ghearr	132,570
2003-04	AAI Construction Ltd	106,315
	An-Eochair Ex-Prisoner Support Group	29,911
	Áras Tar Abhaile	427,919
	Cairde Strabane Republican Ex-prisoners Group	9,439
	Cumann na Meirleach Ard Mhaca Theas	111,073
	Failte Abhaile	131,200
	Goitse	5,420
	Iarchimí Fhearmanach	10,000

	Lagan Valley Ex-Prisoners Support Group	6,543
	Lisburn Prisoners Support Project	68,149
	North Belfast Prisoner's Aid	41,712
	Prisoners Enterprise Project	15,185
	REACT Northwest	10,000
	Tar Anall	252,729
	Tar Isteach	8,280
	Teach na Failte	24,433
	Trá Ghearr	10,000
2004-05	Ar Ais Aris	66,125
	Coiste Na N-Iarchimí	124,587
	Cumann na Meirleach	61,094
	EPIC (Ex Prisoners Interpretative Centre)	4,000
	REACT (formerly EPIC Mid Ulster)	15,572
	Tar Anall	26,727
2005-06	Abhaile Aris Teo	357,230
	Coiste Na N-Iarchimí	387,000
	Expac (Ex-Prisoners Assistance Committee Ltd)	238,751
	Failte Abhaile	319,856
	Fáilte Chluain Eois	221,148
	Iar Cimi Liatroma Teoranta	252,370
	REACT	132,976
	Tar Isteach	197,730
2006-07	Ar Ais Aris	76,403
	Cairde Strabane Republican Ex-prisoners Group	10,133



	Coiste Na N-Iarchimí	283,157
	Expac (Ex-Prisoners Assistance Committee Ltd)	74,286
	Faillte Abhaile	78,820
	REACT	20,800
	REACT Armagh	115,786
	Teach na Failte	108,460
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11,376,011</b>

In addition, the following organisations (although not specifically ex-prisoners' groups) have been awarded EU PEACE II funding in the last five years for projects addressing the needs of ex-prisoners.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Total Commitment £</b>
2002-03	Cavan Family Resource Centre Ltd.	223,710
	Clonoe Community Development Association	5,000
	Comharchumann Finn Thiar Teo	9,677
	New Lodge Forum	216,212
	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)	89,800
	Rossinver Community Development Company Ltd.	118,492
	Upper Springfield Development Trust	186,687
2003-04	Educational Trust	302,276
	New Lodge Forum	9,291
	Trademark	59,753
	University of Ulster	60,919
2004-05	Armagh College of Further and Higher Education	66,646
	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	339,993

	Upper Springfield Development Trust	32,000
2005-06	Iar Cimi Liatroma Teoranta	252,370
2006-07	CHARTER for Northern Ireland	121,152
TOTAL		2,093,978

Written Answers to Questions Northern Ireland Assembly, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007

<<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/qanda/2007mandate/writtenans/071214.htm#8>>

<sup>20</sup> “Killers, robbers and rowdies on SF slate”, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2004 <[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/newspapers/sunday\\_times/ireland/article419318.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/newspapers/sunday_times/ireland/article419318.ece)>

“New North South bodies appointed today”, OFMDFM press release, 17 December 2007 <<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-ofmdfm-171207-new-north-south>>

<sup>21</sup> *Equality for Rural Communities A Sinn Fein Platform for 2007*, 4, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007 <<http://www.sinnfeingeneralelection.com/media/EqualityforRural.pdf>>

<sup>22</sup> “Statement by Jim Allister MEP on Outcome of Fishing Negotiations in Brussels”, Press Release by Jim Allister, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007 <<http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=841>>

<sup>23</sup> “Gildernew delivers fishing industry priorities”, DARD press release, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007 <<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-dard/news-dard-191207-gildernew-delivers-fishing.htm>>

<sup>24</sup> A fishermen's representative, speaking on the BBC's *Talkback*, remarked that sending in Michelle Gildernew to negotiate fishing quotas with the EU was “like ordering Boy George to fight Joe Calzhage”. “Boy Gildernew”, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007 <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markdevenport/2007/12/boy\\_gildernew.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markdevenport/2007/12/boy_gildernew.html)>

<sup>25</sup> “Gildernew consults on new animal diseases bill”, DARD press release, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008 <<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-dard/news-dard-071008-gildernew-consults-on.htm>>

<sup>26</sup> “Diversity resource is a first for primary schools, North and South”, DE press release, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 <<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-de/news-de-101207-diversity-resource-is.htm>>

- <sup>27</sup> “Ministers launch north south research project to attract leaders in teaching”, DE press release, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008 < <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-de/news-de-november-2007/news-de-071107-ministers-launch-north.htm>>
- <sup>28</sup> “Education Minister presents all Ireland education awards”, DE press release, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007 < <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-de/news-de-121007-education-minister-presents.htm>>
- <sup>29</sup> Jim Allister press release, 8th December 2007 “All-Ireland fusion is underway”  
<<http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=830>>
- <sup>30</sup> “THE PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFER FROM PRIMARY TO POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION: 2007/08”, 20 November 2007  
<[http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular\\_2007.14\\_transfer\\_from\\_primary\\_to\\_post-primary\\_education\\_2008.09.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_2007.14_transfer_from_primary_to_post-primary_education_2008.09.pdf)>
- <sup>31</sup> Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998  
<<http://opsi.gov.uk/si/si1998/87717--g.htm>>
- <sup>32</sup> “Back to jail for politicians”, BBC NI, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2002,  
<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/2010320.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/2010320.stm).>
- <sup>33</sup> Jim Allister QC MEP Submission on: Draft Programme for Government 2008-2011, Draft Budget 2008-2011, Draft Investment Strategy 2008-2018, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
< [http://www.jimallister.org/uploads/\\_254.pdf](http://www.jimallister.org/uploads/_254.pdf)>