WHY BREXIT SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY “IREXIT”

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It is in the political and economic interests of people North and South that Ireland should leave the European Union at or around the same time as the United Kingdom for the following principal reasons:-

1. AVOIDING A NEW PARTITION OF IRELAND:

If the Republic remains a member of the EU when the United Kingdom leaves, the North-South border within Ireland will have several new dimensions added to it. We shall in effect have to get the EU’s permission to decide trade, travel and other legal arrangements between Derry and Donegal !

That would adversely affect good relations within the island and might threaten the Peace Process.  It would mean that for Irish reunification to occur at some future date the people of the North would have to agree to adopt the euro-currency, take on a portion of the private bank debt that the European Central Bank  has foisted on the Republic’s citizens, as well as the burden of the many new EU laws and regulations that are likely to be adopted in the next few years if the Eurozone is to be held together.

It would give 26 EU Governments other than the UK and Ireland a veto on eventual Irish reunification. Such developments should be unacceptable to all Irish democrats and nationalists.

2. WHY SHOULD WE PAY MORE MONEY TO BRUSSELS THAN WE GET BACK?

In 2014 the Irish State became a net contributor to the EU Budget. In that year we paid in €1.69 billion to the EU and received €1.52 billion. This means that in future any EU moneys that come to the Republic under the CAP, EU cohesion funds, Erasmus programmes, research grants and the like, are Irish taxpayers’ money coming back, having been recycled through Brussels to employ some EU bureaucrats along the way.

In Northern Ireland too, EU grants and subsidies are UK taxpayers’ money being similarly recycled. This means that in future the EU will no longer be the “cash cow” that it has widely been regarded as being since we joined the then EEC in 1973 and that has been the basis of most Irish europhilia, official and unofficial, since that time.

3. FOREIGN TRADE AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN IRELAND ARE GEARED MAINLY TO ENGLISH-SPEAKING MARKETS OUTSIDE THE EU:

The principal attraction for foreign investors in Ireland is its low corporation profits tax rate of 12.5%. The Irish State’s ability to use a low tax rate to attract foreign investment is already under attack in the EU, as evidenced by the Brussels Commission’s power-grab over taxation in the 2016 case on taxes allegedly owed to Ireland by Apple and the Commission’s commitment to introducing a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base for levying company taxation across the EU.

Britain has been Ireland’s principal ally in the EU in resisting such attacks. If Ireland remains in the EU when the UK leaves, these attacks will assuredly increase, while Ireland will be in a weaker position to defend the current arrangements.

Foreign direct investment in the Republic is in any case geared more to exporting to English-speaking markets, primarily the USA and UK, than to continental EU ones.  Foreign trade is divided between trade in goods and trade in services. Once the UK leaves the EU three-fifths of Irish goods exports will be going to countries that are outside the EU, mostly English-speaking, and two-thirds of its goods imports will be coming from non-EU countries.

For Ireland’s foreign trade in services the figures are 66% for exports outside the EU26 and 72% for imports from outside the EU26. So overall the Republic does some one-third of its trade with the continental EU26 and two-thirds with the rest of the world, with the USA and UK predominating.

This puts exaggerated talk of the EU’s “giant market of 500 million” in perspective. Without the UK the EU’s population falls to 435 million, while the joint population of the USA, Canada and the UK becomes 425 million. That of the wider English-speaking world is much bigger still.  We need to remember that some 7 billion people in all live outside the EU. These are the growing markets for Irish exporters, not the austerity and recession-ridden Eurozone.

From the standpoint of most foreign investors in Ireland therefore it is access to English-language markets rather than continental EU ones that is most important if a choice has to be made between them.

But there will be no need for any such choice if a free trade arrangement continues between the EU and a UK and Ireland outside the EU, as common sense and mutual interest suggest should happen and as long as the EU does not seek to “punish” Britain, or indeed Ireland, for having the temerity to seek to take back control of their own laws, economic policies and international relations.

 4. TAKING BACK CONTROL OF IRELAND’S VALUABLE SEA-FISHERIES:

Outside the EU Ireland can take back control of its valuable sea-fishing waters, whose value if they had been exploited in the Irish interest over the years is a several-times multiple of the net moneys the Irish State has received from the EU since 1973. These fisheries are still a very valuable resource, as are Ireland’s potential undersea energy resources, which the EU also has its eyes on these days.

5. LEAVING THE EU IS THE ONLY WAY THAT IRELAND CAN GET AN INDEPENDENT CURRENCY BACK, AND WITH IT CONTROL OF ITS RATE OF INTEREST AND  EXCHANGE RATE:

 As the pound sterling falls vis-a-vis the euro and the dollar as the UK disengages from the EU, the Republic desperately needs an Irish pound that can fall along with it, so maintaining its competitiveness in its principal export markets – the UK and America.

That is why Ireland urgently needs to get its own currency back. There is no legal way for a State that uses the euro-currency to do that other than by leaving the EU altogether, for membership of the Eurozone is in principle supposedly for ever.

It was economic and political folly for Dublin to abandon its own currency.  Amongst other things that was principally responsible for the Republic’s 2001-2008 financial boom/bust, which led to the ECB imposing €64 billion of private bank debt on to Irish taxpayers.

The Eurozone is not going to last in any case, certainly not for its current nineteen members.  So the sooner the Republic leaves it the better – presumably over some long weekend when the Banks are closed and  a new Irish pound is issued, initially at par with the euro, or as existing euros overprinted as Irish pounds.

Support from the Bank of England to prevent that currency depreciating too much initially would be desirable in this event, and it should be in the interest of the UK Government that that be provided if the Irish Government concerts our leaving the EU along with it, as is the sensible thing to do.

6. BY LEAVING THE EU WE CAN AVOID THE FURTHER HARMFUL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION  THAT IS PENDING  FOR US IF WE TRY TO STAY IN IT WHEN BRITAIN AND THE NORTH LEAVE:

If Ireland remains in the EU/Eurozone following the UK’s departure from the EU  it will be subjected to ever further integration measures as Brussels and Frankfurt seek to hold the Eurozone together.

Such measures, entailing EU banking union, the establishment of a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, pressures to harmonize corporation tax rates and commitments to collective EU trade agreements, would severely hit the Republic economically in the years ahead, while adding further dimensions to the North-South border within Ireland.

7. BEING ABLE TO JETTISON UNSUITABLE EU RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Outside the EU the Republic, like the UK, can get rid of a mass of unsuitable EU rules and regulations that are designed to serve the interests of transnational big business and hit the small and medium-sized nationally-based enterprises that are particularly important for employment here.

Outside the EU the Republic can also revert to a genuinely independent foreign policy, adopt once again a meaningful neutrality policy, and once more do trade deals with the UK and the wide world, having regained the power to sign commercial treaties, which currently is an exclusive power of Brussels.

8. ESCAPING FROM A LOW-GROWTH ECONOMIC AREA WITH A DISFUNCTIONAL CURRENCY AND AN AGEING POPULATION:

Ireland is economically and psychologically closer to Boston than Berlin, and to Britain than Germany . The proportion of both Irish and British trade with the EU has been declining in recent years as exporters move into the more dynamic expanding markets  of America and Asia.

Leaving the EU, getting its own currency back and with it control over interest rates and exchange rates, and repatriating control over trade treaties would put Ireland, like the UK, in the best position to develop links with the wide world outside the sclerotic EU/Eurozone.

9. POSSIBLE GERMAN SUPPORT FOR “IREXIT” ALONGSIDE BREXIT:

Germany will do its best to try and prevent the UK from leaving the EU,  but when it fails, as it will do, it will accept it.  Germany will then think that it will be easier to aspire to control continental Europe without Britain or Ireland and it will not want to challenge the UK for influence in the Republic.

Resistance to Ireland leaving the EU is to be expected from Irish MEPs, Commissioners, EU Court judges, EU media correspondents and the large number of civil servants, translators, lobbyists, researchers and others who are paid by or receive pensions from the Brussels apparatus and its related institutional structures.

Such resistance is to be expected but there is no reason why the legitimate concerns of such Irish personnel should not be met and their anxieties assuaged, as with their UK counterparts.  They should not be allowed to override the true interests of the Irish and British peoples however, now and for future generations.

TAKING BACK CONTROL BY AND FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE:

Most people do not realise how the EU has undermined Ireland’s national independence and democracy by shifting legislative, executive and judicial powers from the national level to Brussels.

At national level these powers are under democratic control by the people whom Irish voters elect and whom they can get rid of if they do  not like what they do. At the supranational EU level, laws are made and decisions taken by supranational committees that are responsible as collectivities to nobody and whom voters cannot get rid of.

In 2016 EUR-LEX estimated that there were over 123,000 EU rules, international agreements and legal acts binding on or affecting citizens across the EU, including Ireland. These included 1,683 EU Directives; 12,915 Regulations; 15,561 Decisions; 5,337 international agreements, 16,592 EU Court verdicts and 71,077 international standards from such bodies as CEN, CENELEC, ETSI and the Codex Alimentarius, which the EU has signed up to and which are therefore binding on all EU Member States and their citizens as supranational  EU law.

Most people do not realize how anti-democratic interference by the EU now affects most aspects of their lives. The EU is the “elephant in the room” in many of our current political controversies:  Water charges - an EU requirement; Bin charges - an EU requirement; Social housing - restricted by EU requirements on State aid; Mass surveillance of e-mails, internet usage and social media - an EU requirement; Dáil private members’ bills with financial implications having to be submitted first to the ECB for vetting – an EU requirement … Bogus national income statistics leading to taxpayers having to pay €300 million extra to th EU Budget on top of existing payments. And the list goes on.

This situation is clearly far from “the unfettered control of Irish destinies” that the men and women of the 1916 Easter Rising aspired to for the independent Irish Republic they fought and died to establish.

It raises serious and disturbing questions about the compatibility of EU membership with genuine national democracy.

The widely acknowledged “democratic deficit” that attaches to EU membership is leading citizens in every EU Member State today to organise to win back their national democracy and the right to make their own laws and decide their international relations independently.

Joining this growing international movement in defence of national democracy is the best way that we can apply the values of the men and women of 1916 in the conditions of today.

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