

Fianna Fail, At the door to Europe

Caption: In 1972, in the run-up to Ireland's accession to the European Communities, the Irish political party Fianna Fail publishes a guide which answers the key questions on the country's participation in the European Community.

Source: Fianna Fail. At the door to Europe. Dublin: Referendum Campaign Director Fianna Fail, 1972.

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At The Door To Europe

GENERAL

Voters' questions will fall into two categories. They will either be looking for more factual information about EEC entry or they may be seeking reassurance that there is no substance in the claims made by opponents of entry.

The Questions and Answers given below should meet the needs of most voters and canvassers. Each answer has been made as short as possible and is intended as a reminder of the information made available by the Government in the summary White Paper **Into Europe** which may be obtained free from Post Offices or in bulk supplies from the EEC Information Service, Department of Foreign Affairs, 80 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. (Tel. 780822).

If in the course of the Referendum Campaign further questions are found to occur frequently, a supplement to this Guide may be issued.

What is the EEC?

The European Economic Community is an organisation of countries for close co-operation in economic, commercial and related social matters. It has six members — Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands. Its planned enlargement with Ireland, Britain, Denmark and Norway will bring it up to Ten members.

Why did we apply to join?

Because membership provides the best opportunity to build a prosperous and united Ireland. A Yes vote in the Referendum will help to create more jobs, reduce emigration and raise the standard of living. Through membership of the Ten, Ireland will play a positive role in world affairs and participate in the achievement of a peaceful and prosperous Europe.

Surely Fianna Fail must be doing something wrong if Fine Gael is supporting EEC entry?

No. From time to time the Fianna Fail view on any particular issue can be the same as that of one or other opposition party. Fine Gael is right in sharing the Government's view that EEC entry is of vital importance for the country.

What would happen if we stayed outside the EEC?

We would lose our special trading position with Britain which takes nearly 70 per cent of our exports. Our industrial goods would face tariffs in that market and our agricultural products would be subject to levies and other restrictions. We would also be denied free access for our goods to other countries of the Community. There are 35,000 jobs dependent on our Export trade. Outside the EEC these could be under threat, that is one job in five in manufacturing industry.

In effect, de-valuation would be the price of economic survival and the prospects of full employment, improved living standards and social services, with reduced emigration, would disappear.

Are there not real alternatives to EEC entry?

No. We know where we stand on the entry terms negotiated. No other terms could offer us the same balance of advantage — if we stay out we would lose major benefits to agriculture, industry, and the country in general.

The Common Market has its own difficulties and shows signs of more, why should we go in now?

Everyone will always have problems. Some of our problems, and those of other European countries, can only be solved by international co-operation through an organisation like the Common Market. Now may be our only opportunity of full membership of the Common Market, and we will participate in meeting the problems it faces.

Doesn't signing the Treaty of Rome mean we accept the border between the Six and Twenty-Six Counties?
Absolutely not. The Treaty contains no such clause nor even one which could be so interpreted.

Will our claim to the Six Counties in the Constitution remain intact inside the EEC?

Yes. The proposed Constitutional amendment which will be voted on in the Referendum does not affect this claim in any way. But if we stay out we make the border into one between ourselves and Western Europe.

Inside the EEC won't we give up a lot of control over our own affairs and be over-ruled by the big countries and the Brussels bureaucracy?

No. Community decisions are taken by the Council of Ministers on which each member country is represented by a minister. The voting arrangements were designed to protect the interests of the smaller powers. We can ensure in the Council that our interests are protected. It must be remembered that Community decisions concern only the economic, trading and related social matters covered in the EEC treaty. We will have, in common with all other members, a veto power for all major decisions.

Doesn't Irish membership of the EEC mean membership of NATO and conscription will follow?

No. There are no defence or military obligations in the Treaty of Rome and we won't be taking on any as a member of EEC. NATO is a completely different organisation to the EEC. The question of conscription does not arise.

Isn't it wrong to join something you can't get out of?

In the sense in which the question is asked, we would remain free to opt out of the EEC if we so wished. Membership of the EEC will always rest on the consent of the Government and Oireachtas.

FAMILY

Will we lose our way of life by joining the EEC?

No. Our way of life can be strengthened and enriched through contacts with other peoples. Every country makes its own morality. We've had the fibre to stand up to the domination of our nearest neighbour, Britain. The possibility of European domination is more remote. Article 36 of the Treaty of Rome allows a country to prohibit imports on ground of public morality.

What will be the increased the cost of living when we join EEC?

The increase has been grossly exaggerated by opponents of EEC entry. Removal of customs duties on imports into Ireland will lower some prices and because our farmers will get higher prices some food prices will increase. The over-all effect of these food increases on the cost of living will be about 1p increase, in each of the five years of the transition period, for each £1 of our normal spending. Standard of living is more important than cost of living. EEC membership should bring a substantial increase in prosperity.

Won't the EEC mean much higher prices for essential foodstuffs such as eggs, tea, butter, meat?

The prices of food items like eggs or tea will not be affected. If we were fully members of the EEC today, the prices of butter, beef, mutton and lamb would be up to 40% higher than they are now, but the average Irish urban family spends only 6% of its income on these items. This means an increase of about 2½p in the £ in the cost of living due to these items. Again, this would be spread over five years.

Couldn't we avoid these cost of living increases by staying out of EEC?

No. If we stay out farmers lose the higher prices.

They would still need to have their incomes raised. The only way to do this would be more subsidies. It would take about £120 millions in subsidies — equal to a Turnover Tax increase of 12% — to compensate farmers for the loss of the higher EEC prices. So outside the EEC food prices might be lower, but the cost of living would still rise because taxes would have to be increased. And we would be poorer as a country because we would have to find the tax money ourselves, whereas inside the EEC the other member countries

would pay the bulk of the extra money in higher prices for our agricultural exports.

Will wages keep up with the cost of living in the EEC?

Yes. Free collective bargaining on wages will continue on a national basis. The history of the EEC countries is encouraging. Wages have not only kept pace with the cost of living, they have risen, much faster, giving a rise in the standard of living. This better standard of living, or rise in real wages, comes from greater output. Since the community was formed, the increases in real wages in the member countries have doubled or trebled in comparison with Ireland and Britain.

What happens to rates and to differential rents in the EEC?

Nothing. They will be dealt with as at present. There is no EEC measure affecting them.

What happens to people on fixed incomes, (widows, pensioners, social welfare recipients, etc.) when food prices go up in the EEC?

The Government has clearly stated that people on fixed incomes will be its first concern on EEC entry. An immediate saving to the Exchequer on agricultural supports of from £30 — £35m. in the first year of entry will enable the Government to increase social welfare benefits immediately.

EMPLOYMENT

If Ireland enters the EEC, what will happen to my job?

There will be no nett loss of employment in existing industry. Free trade is both a challenge and an opportunity. Access to the EEC market of 250 m. people should bring a rapid growth in the creation of new jobs, reducing emigration and unemployment. There will be 50,000 new jobs by 1978. Export and service industries should thrive. Protected industry must adapt itself for free trade. No canvasser — for or against EEC entry — can forecast the future facing specific firms. Even in the weakest sections there are many firms which through good management and imaginative marketing will prosper.

How can Irish industry survive in free trade with the great countries of Europe?

It has proved it can. Already there are 35,000 industrial jobs at home directly involved in successful exporting.

What place can there be for the small firm?

Small firms can have an increasingly important role. In Italy, for example, 93 per cent of firms employ less than 100 people. The great strength of the small firm lies in specialised and quality production and local service. The EEC's developing industrial policy makes special provision for the small firm.

What are we doing to prepare people for the 50,000 new jobs promised in the White Paper on EEC?

The growing AnCO training programme is suitable for support from the Community's Social Fund. The Regional Technical Colleges will also have a major part to play. A pool of available trained workers is a major attraction to the investor setting up a new industry here.

Irish products must be at a disadvantage in the EEC because of transport costs to the continent. Can this be overcome?

The increase in Irish industrial exports shows that transport costs are not a major factor. They work both ways, protecting some of our firms from imports. The Treaty of Rome permits subsidies for transport costs in regions where such costs prevent fair competition.

If we stayed outside the EEC how would the Common External Tariff on all goods exported to EEC countries affect us?

Disastrously. Many of our existing export industries, particularly those exporting to Britain, could not compete across the new tariff barriers. At best the tariffs would force exporters to cut wages as an alternative to closing.

In the EEC, will not Irish producers be swamped by dumping of all kinds?

No. Ireland has successfully negotiated special procedures to counteract dumping during the critical five years transition period.

If there is free movement of labour in the EEC, won't this mean foreigners coming to take Irish jobs?

No, The Government negotiated a five-year period during which we can operate our present controls. There is no real future danger either. British workers have always been free to come here, few have. Inside the existing Community, because of increased prosperity, the migration of workers has diminished even though the barriers impeding free movement between member countries have been progressively abolished.

What guarantee have we that we can continue to attract new industries?

The Protocol on the Economic and Industrial Development of Ireland which was the major achievement in the negotiations is the guarantee. Under the Protocol we are free to continue granting State aids for industrial development. This will make Ireland even more attractive to industry and will boost industrial employment.

AGRICULTURE — FISHING — LAND

What is the Common Agricultural Policy and the Mansholt plan?

The aim of the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy is to give farmers a standard of living comparable with that of the rest of the population. What is called 'the Mansholt Plan' is in fact the Community's programme for reforming the structure of agriculture. Under the programme grants and other forms of aid are given to farmers to help them develop their farms and to bring their incomes up to the level enjoyed by people in non-farming jobs in the same locality.

Does 'the Mansholt plan' for agriculture mean rural depopulation?

No, the reverse. Increased farm incomes and greater opportunities for farming on a full or part-time basis will slow down the flight from the land and bring increased security, stability and prosperity to rural areas.

How will farm incomes increase?

Allowing for higher prices and increased output farm incomes should double by 1978, the end of the transition period. Under the Common Agricultural Policy farmers will be guaranteed 50% higher prices for Cattle and Milk. Although Sheep and Lamb are not covered by the Common Agricultural Policy they are expected to do equally well. Barley will fetch 15% more. To maintain profitability Pigs, Poultry and Eggs and Horticulture must be handled efficiently. The Sugar quota negotiated will maintain our record sugar beet acreage, growers' earnings and employment in the sugar industry.

Isn't it true that the EEC policies do not permit the continuance of farms under a certain size?

No. Participation in the Common Agricultural Policy's farm development schemes is completely voluntary. The only condition of participation is that a farmer should be able to show promise of being able to produce a minimum income equal to the average income in comparable non-farming jobs in his area.

But how can the small farmer survive in the EEC?

The small farmer will benefit from the higher EEC prices and from financial aids. If he does not wish to or is not eligible to avail of the variety of aids and incentives, he will have the option at any time of giving up farming and selling or renting his land and getting an outright cash grant plus an annual payment. If Ireland stayed outside the EEC with Britain inside, the loss of markets and the drop in farm prices would destroy the small farmer.

But hasn't Fianna Fail already started to write off the small farmer, the Party's greatest traditional vote, by getting rid of the tiered price of milk?

No, quite the contrary. It was necessary to raise the price of milk and abolish the tiered system to ensure that all farmers would benefit to the maximum from EEC price arrangements.

What guarantee have we about the future of our fishing industry after ten years?

The Government has negotiated full protection for some 92% of our total national catch of fish. This agreement will be subject to a 'fair and open-ended' review by the Community within an initial ten-year period. The review, in which we will participate, will take account of the economic and social development of our coastal areas and the state of fish stocks. The review will also be subject to the Protocol which commits the Community to use all its resources to help us solve our problems of economic development and under-employment. In the meantime our fishermen can avail of the advantages of the Community's Fisheries Policy, which includes aids for modernising and improving boats and facilities. The fishing industry will continue to be a growth sector for the foreseeable future.

How can we protect the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland inside the EEC?

No existing EEC directive on the purchase of land creates problems for us. If at any future date conditions change, it will always be possible to alter Irish laws in order to safeguard our interests. There is nothing in the Treaty of Rome to prevent us stopping land falling into the hands of speculators — Irish or foreign.