

Manifesto by the Irish Council of the European Movement concerning the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty (1992)

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A Manifesto Calling on the Irish People to Vote for Citizenship of the European Union in the Referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, June 18 1992

The Irish Council of the European Movement (ICEM) urges the people of Ireland to approve the Treaty on European Union and affirm their citizenship of the European Union with a resounding "YES" vote

INTRODUCTION

20 years after the Irish people voted to join the European Community by an impressive majority, the Community is embarked on a process of transforming itself into a European Union. This historic development, which extends the legal bases of the 1957 Treaty of Rome and the 1987 Single European Act, was agreed by the 12 EC leaders at Maastricht last December. The issues have been explained in a White Paper published by the Government. On June 18th the Irish people will be invited to approve this Treaty on European Union in a constitutional referendum.

The Irish Council of the European Movement supports wholeheartedly the creation of the European Union, because Ireland's experience of EC membership has been overwhelmingly positive in the political and economic, as well as the social and cultural spheres of the nation's life.

The Irish Council of the European Movement believes that membership of the European Union will enable Ireland to tackle the major economic challenges of the 1990s. The Treaty provides Ireland with a stable framework to plan policies for increased employment and for the development of our infrastructure, our natural environment and our resources. It will help us meet the twin challenges of planning our cities in accordance with new life-style patterns for men and women, and revitalising our rural areas at a time when changes will be introduced in the Common Agricultural Policy. Tackling effectively this enormous agenda in the 1990s requires not just strong national measures but also a coordinated approach at EC level. Community policy will continue to complement but not replace national effort.

As well as being a source of strength for the Irish economy, membership of the European Union will guarantee Ireland's secure and respected place on the international stage. The Maastricht Treaty is being presented for approval by the Irish people in a world vastly different from that which existed in 1972 and 1987. We have witnessed on our television sets the tumultuous events which brought about the collapse of Communism in the former Iron Curtain countries of East and Central Europe and, most remarkably, in the former Soviet Union.

The Irish Presidency of the EC in the first half of 1990 won widespread international recognition for its handling of the Community's response to the newly emerging world order. It is inconceivable for Ireland to renege on citizenship of the European Union especially when the Nordic countries and the former East and Central European Communist States are bidding for membership.

Having played an acknowledged part in shaping Community responses to world events over the past two decades, we should take our place in the EC's enhanced world status. With vigour and pride, we should contribute to strengthening the Community's relationships with other countries in the interests of global peace and prosperity. This is the true exercise of Irish sovereignty.

The Maastricht Referendum provides a timely opportunity to debate the kind of Europe which the Irish people want and the type of contribution which Ireland can — and will — make to the creation of "the New Europe".

The Irish Council of the European Movement hopes that the debate will be conducted with openness and honesty but also with courtesy and without rancour. It is in this spirit that we offer our Vote "Yes" Manifesto.

A "YES" VOTE TO MAASTRICHT WILL MAKE IRISH PEOPLE CITIZENS OF THE

EUROPEAN UNION AND WILL ENABLE OUR NATION TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

IRELAND'S EC BALANCE SHEET

Before examining the advantages to be gained by Ireland from the Maastricht Treaty, the Irish Council of the European Movement invites voters to consider the balance sheet of the country's EC membership thus far. In our view, our membership has increased economic growth and employment; enhanced and diversified our trade; supported national income and investment through resource transfers; and enabled Ireland to make a distinctive political contribution on the European and world stage.

Our views are shaped by the following facts:

- Between 1971 and 1991 the growth rate in the Irish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) exceeded that of the rest of the Community by 25 per cent. EC membership has secured for Ireland a faster rate of economic growth than could otherwise have been possible.
- It is estimated that there are 72,000 more people employed in the Ireland of 1991 compared to 1971. Despite this growth, unemployment has remained a problem throughout the period. The task of creating sufficient jobs has been accentuated by the large numbers coming onto the job market and the structural changes in the Irish economy over the past two decades. However difficult the job situation has been and is, it would be far worse were we not members of the EC.
- Ireland lives by trade. In 1970, 63% of our exports went to the U.K. and 11% to the other countries, now members of the EC. By 1990, the percentages were 34% and 41% respectively. This more diversified trade pattern is a major indicator of greater economic independence achieved through EC membership.
- For every £1 Ireland pays into the EC budget, it gets back £6. In 1991, Ireland paid £348 million in return for £2,200 million. Ireland receives proportionately more EC funds than any other Member State.
- Financial transfers from the Common Agricultural Policy and the Structural Funds (i.e. Regional, Social and Agricultural Guidance) account for 6 per cent of national income.
- Structural Funds worth £3,000 million were earmarked for Ireland for 1989–93 to prepare us for the completion of the Single Market at the end of this year. These Funds have been used for such diverse projects as the Athlone bypass, a new container terminal at Dublin Port, the reopening of the Ballinamore/Ballyconnell canal and the renovation of the Temple Bar area of Dublin. About two-thirds of the £1,200 million cost of the programmes of the Industrial Development Authority, the Irish Tourist Board, Udaras na Gaeltachta, Eolas, SFADCO and FAS will be met by Structural Funds for the 1989–93 period. These programmes allow for training, the development of small and medium-sized businesses, research and development for industry as well as regional development.
- EC funding of education and training for Irish students, young workers and the disabled is of major importance to Ireland. For example in 1991 alone, it is estimated that over 22,000 students in Regional Technical Colleges and third level VEC Colleges directly benefited from EC grants. This number is set to increase. Between 1989 and 1993 over 220,000 people will have received training under FAS.
- As a result of EC law on equal pay and equal working conditions, the rights of Irish women have improved considerably.
- It was Ireland which promoted and developed the EC Poverty Programme, whose goals are reflected in the section of the Maastricht Treaty on social policy.
- Irish development agencies, such as Concern and Trocaire, have played key roles in channelling EC aid to developing countries and in educating public opinion about the structural nature of world poverty and

deprivation.

- EC membership has brought Ireland into the mainstream of European life and has enabled our young people to avail of educational, training and work opportunities in other Community countries.
- Summing up the balance sheet, the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) observed that **"Ireland's future lies in the fullest participation in the European Community ... full economic, monetary and social integration is in Ireland's best interest"**.

ICEM seconds this judgement.

THE MAASTRICHT TREATY

The Maastricht Treaty builds on previous Treaties in defining the areas of competence of the European Community, and in providing the legal basis for its future work. It charts an ambitious programme for achieving Economic and Monetary Union; separate "pillars" are put in place for a Common Foreign and Security Policy, and for Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs. All three are within the single institutional framework of the European Union.

Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)

We endorse EMU as one of the most significant steps in the Community's history. It constitutes a logical extension of the completion next year of a Single Market for goods, services, capital and persons. EMU, with a single currency (the ecu) is scheduled for introduction by January 1, 1999. The Maastricht Treaty provides for the creation of a European System of Central Banks, comprising a European Central Bank and the Central Banks of the Member States. The system will be built on price stability and the observance by Member States of strict economic disciplines.

The Irish Council of the European Movement believes that the overall benefit to the Community will be substantial, both internally and internationally, through establishing the ecu as a world currency. A single currency will help Ireland's industries and services by reducing the transaction costs for business as well as removing the frustrations of currency transactions for travellers. EMU will foster economic growth and, most significantly, will create employment-generating conditions.

The goal and timetable for EMU will pose ambitious targets for Member States. ICEM believes that the balance of advantage lies in Ireland meeting the conditions laid down in terms of the debt/GDP ratio and the other conditions. It will cement the existing consensus that it is in the national interest to reduce the national debt level and to continue a prudent fiscal policy.

A VOTE FOR THE TREATY IS A VOTE FOR STRENGTHENED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INCREASED BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Cohesion

The Treaty confirms that cohesion — the principle of narrowing the wealth gap between the more prosperous and less well-off regions — is fundamental to the policy of the Union, and must be taken account of in the various Community policies. Proposed measures include the setting up of a Cohesion Fund by the end of 1993 to finance environment and transport infrastructure projects. The Commission has proposed a doubling of Structural Funds for 1994–97. Over that period, Ireland stands to receive a substantial increase, possibly a doubling, in the £3,000 million in Structural Funds which it will receive over the 1989–93 period.

The increase in Funds will be of importance to all sectors of the Irish economy. The Treaty specifically mentions rural areas as part of its commitment to cohesion. This is of particular importance to Ireland in view of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which will be implemented in the coming years. Additional Structural spending in rural areas should go hand in hand with CAP reform and thus maintain the

viability of rural communities.

A VOTE FOR THE TREATY IS A VOTE FOR EXTRA FUNDING TO BENEFIT THE IRISH PEOPLE.

New Policy Initiatives

ICEM commends the Treaty for providing a legal basis for fresh policy initiatives. This will allow for progress to be made in education, vocational training, youth work, public health, the environment, consumer protection, industry, insurance, culture and conservation.

A "YES" VOTE WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR IRISH PEOPLE.

Closer Political Ties

In parallel with these momentous moves towards EMU, the Treaty outlines the closer political ties that will be forged in a European Union. These include new rights of European citizenship and more effective democratic decision-making at Community level.

European Citizenship

The Irish Council of the European Market applauds the Treaty clause affirming that "every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union" Citizens of the European Union will therefore have rights:

- to move freely and reside freely within the territory of the Member States: the Council of Ministers to take the necessary measures by unanimous decision.
- to vote and stand as a candidate in local elections if residing in another EC country: detailed arrangements to be made by the end of 1994.
- to vote and stand as a candidate for the European Parliament while residing in another EC country: subject to rules to be agreed by the end of 1993 for application in the next elections.
- to be entitled to diplomatic or consular protection by any Member State if residing in a non-EC country: rules to be agreed between Member States and international negotiations to begin by the end of 1993.
- to petition the European Parliament or to apply the Ombudsman appointed to investigate complaints about alleged maladministration by any of the Community institutions with the exception of the Court of Justice.

Subsidiarity

The Irish Council of the European Movement welcomes the enunciation of the subsidiarity principle that "any action by the Community shall not go beyond that which is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty". In other words there will be no Euro-centralisation for the sake of centralisation, and all decisions should be taken at the most appropriate level.

The Irish Council of the European Movement also welcomes the decision to establish a Committee of the Regions to which Ireland will send nine representatives. This body is a step towards achieving "a Europe of the Regions".

A VOTE FOR THE TREATY IS A VOTE FOR A MORE DEMOCRATIC EUROPE.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

The core motivation for the establishment of the Community was to make warfare unthinkable among the

Member States. As a result of the successful attainment of this aim, the Community has enjoyed an unparalleled period of peace and prosperity. Since 1970, prior to Ireland's accession, the Community has operated a policy of foreign policy coordination. Ireland has played a full part in this coordination.

The Irish Council of the European Movement agrees with the Government's recommendation that Ireland should be part of the evolving security and foreign policy arrangements designed to allow the Community to adapt to recent fundamental changes in the international scene. The Union undertakes to respect fundamental rights, and to preserve peace in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. The pursuit of these objectives will enable the Community to act as a cohesive, positive force in international relations. Ireland, with its proud U.N. peace-keeping role, can build on that in the European context.

Ireland's position on neutrality is recognised by the Treaty's pledge that it does not prejudice "the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States". The Treaty allows the Member States to refer any issue with defence implications to the Western European Union. (WEU is an alliance of nine of the twelve EC Member States: Ireland, Greece and Denmark are not members. WEU has neither independent military forces nor equipment).

Under the Treaty, any decision to refer an issue to WEU must have unanimous support. Ireland would thus retain a veto. Nor is Ireland under obligation to join the WEU. Contrary to claims from groups opposing the Maastricht Treaty, ICEM categorically states that the Maastricht Treaty on European Union does NOT contain any commitment that Ireland should join a military alliance.

Nowhere in the Treaty is there a provision for the introduction of conscription as part of the duties of European Citizenship.

The drawing-up of a possible common defence policy is a matter for future discussion at an Intergovernmental Conference in 1996. Any such policy would have to be decided unanimously by the Member States and be subject to referendum by the Irish people.

It is significant and should be noted that Sweden, Austria and Finland — three notable neutral countries — have applied for post-Maastricht membership of the Union: they clearly see the EC as a force for peace. With like-minded partners, and with the prospective newcomers, the Treaty provides Ireland with an opportunity to develop its traditional foreign policy concerns of peace-keeping, disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and human rights.

A VOTE FOR THE TREATY IS A VOTE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY.

Internal Affairs

In a free market that offers greater mobility to persons and capital, it could become easier for criminals to escape the law. The Treaty, therefore, formalises cooperation arrangements already existing between the police forces and Departments of Justice of the Member States.

THIS TREATY PROVISION WILL ALLOW THE COMMUNITY TO COMBAT MORE EFFECTIVELY TERRORISM, SMUGGLING, DRUG TRAFFICKING AND LAUNDERING OF ILLICIT FUNDS.

The Protocol on Article 40.3.3

The Irish Government, at its own instigation, asked for a Protocol to be inserted in the Maastricht Treaty regarding Article 40.3.3. of the Irish Constitution. The issue of Protocol 17 is essentially a national one to be resolved by the Irish people and legislators.

Abortion is not, and never has been, a policy area for the Community. The Maastricht Treaty contains

nothing that would seek to impose social values on the Irish people that they did not want.

THE MOMENT OF CHOICE

The Maastricht Treaty looks forward to an expanded Community rooted in peace and prosperity, it offers Ireland new options and opportunities. To vote against the Treaty would have incalculable effects on employment and economic growth. To vote against the Treaty would be a vote against our membership of the New European Union and the benefits we would derive from it.

A vote for the Treaty is a renewed endorsement of our commitment to Europe and its future development. It will lead to increased trade opportunities and facilitate economic growth, investment and employment generating conditions. It will maximise our political influence within Europe and enable us to make a distinctive contribution towards peace and prosperity in the wider Europe.

Sovereignty means controlling what we do and what happens to us, and being at the top table where the decisions are being made. The Treaty will enhance our sovereignty by ensuring that Ireland has a voice in all the major political, economic and social decisions which will shape Ireland and Europe in the years to come.

A "YES" VOTE IS A VOTE FOR A FORWARD-LOOKING IRELAND IN AN ONWARD-MOVING EUROPE. IT IS A VOTE FOR AN IRELAND COMMITTED TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITIES NOT JUST FOR THIS GENERATION BUT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF IRISH PEOPLE.