

Young People's Futures

Young people from Northern Ireland want to be able to continue to travel freely in Europe after Brexit – *if restrictions have to be put in place, any EU visa scheme should be simple and user-friendly.*

Young people from Northern Ireland want to keep the right to work in the EU as it gives them access to greater job opportunities – *if this is not possible, an easily accessible work permit scheme should be agreed between the UK and EU.*

Having UK qualifications recognised in Europe makes them more valuable and helps to get work in the EU – *we want the UK and the EU to continue to recognise each other's qualifications, with the UK remaining part of the European Qualifications Framework.*

The European Health Insurance Card Scheme, which allows people access public healthcare when travelling and working abroad in the EU, is an important support for young people – *we want the UK to continue to take part in the EHIC scheme.*

The Erasmus Programme helps students develop language skills and gives them experience of other cultures – *we want the UK and EU to agree that the UK can continue as a full member of Erasmus+.*

Being able to study in the EU gives young people from Northern Ireland access to wider education opportunities – *we want UK and EU students to continue to be entitled to reduced fees when studying in each other's universities.*

Identity and Citizenship

Under the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, people in Northern Ireland are entitled to both British and Irish citizenship – *after Brexit, Irish citizens born in Northern Ireland should remain full EU citizens.*

EU citizenship gives people important rights and benefits – *we want Irish citizens in Northern Ireland to be able to continue to enjoy these rights after they leave the EU.*

Economy and EU Funding

EU workers contribute to economic growth in the UK and play important roles, including in the health service – *we want EU citizens to be allowed to continue to come to the UK and work in sectors where they are needed.*

EU funding has provided a wide range of economic and social benefits for Northern Ireland, including, especially, support for peace building – *we want the UK to promise to replace EU funding for youth and community peace building projects after Brexit.*



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Community Foundation
NORTHERN IRELAND



thank you fund



5N Weavers Court Business Park
Linfield Road
Belfast
BT12 5GH

T: +44 (0)28 9032 1462

W: www.cooperationireland.org
E: info@cooperationireland.org
@CooperationIreland
@cooperationirl

1 The Court
Bridgefoot Street
Dublin 8
D08 CC63

T: +353 (0)1 819 7692

Together Apart: Our Future after Brexit

Views of Young People
from Northern Ireland and
the Republic of Ireland



INTRODUCTION

Young people growing up across the island of Ireland today are among those who are going to be most affected by the UK's decision to leave the European Union. They are uncertain about what the future holds and have many questions about the meaning of Brexit for their future choices and opportunities.

What impact will Brexit have on the economy and jobs? Will young people from Northern Ireland be able to work and study in Europe? What will Brexit mean for the border and relations between North and South?

While these are all issues of direct concern to young people, their views are not getting heard in the ongoing debate over the future relationship between the UK and the EU. Public conversations are focused on the politics and economics of Brexit and, in Northern Ireland, debate has increasingly tended to divide along community lines.

THE TOGETHER APART PROJECT

In response, Co-operation Ireland created the *Together Apart* project to provide young people from North and South with a platform to get their voices heard in the Brexit debate.



Between October 2017 and February 2018, we worked with six groups from across the island – five from Northern Ireland and one from the Republic – to explore what Brexit might mean for their futures, identify their concerns and priorities, and develop possible solutions to these issues. The first stage of the project reached a conclusion in February, when the young people went to Stormont to discuss their messages and recommendations directly with Northern Irish politicians and policymakers.

Over 60 young people from the following groups took part:

- ♦ Amazing the Space Northwest Steering Group (Derry/Londonderry)
- ♦ Bishopstown Youth Project (Cork City)
- ♦ Colin Glen Youth Group (West Belfast)
- ♦ R City (North Belfast)
- ♦ Resurgam Trust Youth Initiative (Lisburn)
- ♦ Strabane Youth Council

An initial pilot was also delivered with our Lurgan NI NCS Team, some of whom went on to take part in the other stages of the project.

This leaflet gives a summary of the young people's messages and presents their ideas for building a positive future after Brexit.

OUR MESSAGES

Shaping the UK's Withdrawal from the EU

We want a say in the final outcome of Brexit - *a second referendum should be held on the EU withdrawal deal, with young people aged 16 and over allowed to vote.*

People need to have correct information to make a meaningful choice - *a public information campaign needs to be carried out before any second referendum, challenging false claims and 'fake news'.*

Young people need help to understand the issues – *education programmes should be carried out in schools and youth clubs before any second referendum.*

Brexit is deepening existing divisions in Northern Ireland and creating new ones - *all the political parties need to co-operate with each other and with the British and Irish governments to ensure that the interests of everyone in Northern Ireland are represented.*

Northern Ireland faces unique challenges because of Brexit but we feel there is no one to speak up for it - *the Assembly and Executive need to be restored to provide a voice for Northern Ireland.*

Everyone's views about Brexit need to be taken into account - *a public consultation and dialogue should be held with people across Northern Ireland to gather their opinions and concerns.*

The Irish Border and Cross Border Relations

A hard border would disrupt people's everyday lives and risk damaging relations between communities – *special arrangements should be agreed for Northern Ireland's future relationship with the European Union to protect the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and keep the border open.*

We want to be able to continue to travel freely, study, work, and access services across the United Kingdom and Ireland - *the Common Travel Area must be maintained.*

North-South co-operation in providing health services benefits people across the island, especially in the border region – *we want both governments to make sure that people in Northern Ireland and the Republic will still be able to access healthcare across the border.*

We want to be able to continue to study across the border as this gives us access to wider third level options – *cross-border students should not face higher fees and should still be eligible for support grants.*

Co-operation between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána is very important in dealing with cross-border crime – *to help them, we want the UK and Irish governments to agree a replacement for the European Arrest Warrant.*