

## Republic of Ireland – moves towards more direct democracy?

Referendums are part of how the 4.8 million people of the Republic of Ireland (Population. 4.8m) govern themselves. The Constitution (adopted by referendum in 1937) can only be changed following approval (by a simple majority of those voting on the issue) in a referendum. Since then, there have been 38 referendums, 35 of which have been taken place since Ireland joined the European Communities in 1973. As the EU developed, a series of referendums followed a 1987 Supreme Court decision on ratifying the Maastricht Treaty. These arose because of significant transfers of governmental powers to the European Union, beyond what was approved in the 1972 referendum on joining the European Communities.

However, citizens cannot initiate a referendum by gathering signatures. Citizens do not have the means to exercise, directly, the right to *decide all question of national policy, in accordance with the common good*, as set out in Article 6.1 of the 1937 Constitution<sup>i</sup>.

Over the past few years, movements have emerged which aim to have citizen-initiated referendums as part of the normal way of government. In 2013, a Constitutional Convention voted 83% in favour of direct democracy (see Appendix 1)

During 2015, two movements (*One Year Initiative, Reinstate48*) started, independently of each other, with the same aim ie. to introduce people-initiated referendums. Both movements relied heavily on the web and social media although one also organised many small local meetings and took part in protest marches.

Direct democracy was a low-key issue during the campaign for the February 2016 general election<sup>ii</sup>. However, it is now on the political agenda and may become a bigger issue in future elections.

This article describes these developments, including the response of the new government and parliament to the campaigns for modern direct democracy. It is an update on the November 2013 report<sup>iii</sup>.

## One Year Initiative (1Yi)<sup>iv</sup>

Widespread anger at the inept implementation of a new plan for water/wastewater services, led Mark McAuley, a businessman, to start this campaign for *people-initiated referendums* so that citizens could call for a binding vote on government legislation<sup>v</sup>.

The One Year Initiative asked all election candidates to pledge that, if elected, they would support a process by which Irish people would be asked whether or not they wanted to

have people-initiated referendums. The movement also distributed leaflets (Figure 1 is one example) and organised meetings in many parts of the country. During the election campaign, about 25% of the 551 parliamentary candidates signed this pledge.

The pledge committed elected candidates to vote for a two-stage process:

1. *within six months of the next government taking office, a People's Assembly will be formed for a period of one year to devise a modern mechanism for people-initiated referendums. There would be two types of people-initiated referendums.*
  - a) *Public/Citizen power to Veto: the Irish people would have the power to initiate/trigger a referendum to prevent / block / stop poor legislation if necessary.*
  - b) *Public/Citizen Initiatives; this provide the Irish people with the power to initiate/trigger a referendum to introduce new legislation or a constitutional amendment without waiting on government consent.*
2. *A referendum be held once the People's Assembly completed its work.*

*When the assembly finishes after the year, a referendum will be held. The purpose of the referendum is to allow the Irish people to vote and decide if the mechanisms proposed by assembly should be put into the Irish Constitution.*

Figure 1 1Yi leaflet used in Ireland's 2016 General Election



**Do you wish Ireland to become a truly democratic society?**

**TAKE THE TEST**

**Public Veto**

- 1 Would you like to have a way to prevent - stop a government decision if you did not agree with it?
- 2 To do so, you would gather enough signatures in a petition and as a result, the government must hold a national 'veto' referendum to decide the issue
- 3 If the majority of people who vote in the referendum also disagree, then the government under the constitution and law must cease or reverse their actions

**Public Initiative**

- 1 Would you like to have a way to personally put forward an idea - initiative for a better society?
- 2 To do so, you would gather enough signatures in a petition and as a result, the government must hold a national 'initiative' referendum to decide if the country supports the initiative
- 3 If the majority of people who vote in the referendum agree with the initiative, then the government under the constitution and law must adopt and introduce the initiative

**1Yi**  
THE ONE YEAR INITIATIVE  
#people2rule

If you agreed with the above, congratulations and welcome onboard, you support the 1Yi campaign

For more info, [www.1Yi.ie](http://www.1Yi.ie) & [www.Facebook.com/1Yi.ie/](http://www.Facebook.com/1Yi.ie/)

Ireland's 1937 Constitution has a very limited provision for referring ordinary legislation (excluding Constitutional amendments) to the people. It is very restrictive and has never been used<sup>vi</sup>. In contrast, the Constitution of the Irish Free State (set up in 1922) provided that a petition of one-twentieth of the voters could call for a referendum on ordinary legislation, within 90 days of that legislation being passed.<sup>vii</sup>

## Reinstate48<sup>viii</sup>

Stephen Mulcahy, a businessman, set up this movement to insert the text of article 48 from the 1922 Constitution into the 1937 version and thus restore the provision for people-initiated referendums. Reinstate48 collected nearly 4,000 signatures from supporters before the 2016 general election. It had a limited campaign budget and advertised on a small scale (see Figure 2).

In 1922, most of Ireland left Britain to set up an independent state. The Constitution of the new Irish Free State provided for citizens' initiative<sup>ix</sup>. However, in 1928 this article was removed, under a provision which allowed the Government to make changes without directly consulting the people during an initial period of 8 years (extended later to sixteen years)<sup>x</sup>.

In 1937, a completely new Constitution was adopted which had no provision for a citizens' initiative. Although referendums are an essential part of the process for amending this Constitution, only the directly elected lower house of parliament (known as the Dáil) can formally initiate proposals for change. This Constitution remains in force today.

**Figure 2 Reinstatement48 posters outside major newspaper office Feb 2016**



## **New government May 2016**

At the general election of February 2016, the 2.1m voters (65% turnout) returned a parliament with a diverse membership<sup>xi</sup>.

The new government's programme includes a number of measures on constitutional reform<sup>xii</sup>. But these did not include those sought by the One Year Initiative and Reinstatement48. Even so, there have been some developments which give scope for more moves towards modern direct democracy. These are the setting up of a Citizens' Assembly and the placing of a motion on the parliament's order paper.

After the 2016 general election, no single party had an absolute majority in the Dáil. Following several months of difficult negotiation, the outgoing Taoiseach (Prime Minister, leader of the centre-right Fine Gael party allied to the European People's Party EPP) formed a minority government on the 16<sup>th</sup> May last. In addition to Fine Gael members, there are three independent Ministers in the 15 member Cabinet. The new government depends on an agreement with the next largest party (Fianna Fáil, a member the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe ALDE) for conditional support in parliament.

The new government has set up a Citizens' Assembly to consider a number of issues.

*We will establish a Citizens' Assembly, within six months, and without participation by politicians, and with a mandate to look at a limited number of key issues over an extended time period. These issues will not be limited to those directly pertaining to the constitution and may include issues such as, for example how we, as a nation, best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population. That said, we will ask the Citizens Assembly to make recommendations to the Dáil on further constitutional changes, including on the Eighth Amendment, on fixed term parliaments **and on the manner in which referenda are held (e.g. should 'super referendum days', whereby a significant number of referenda take place on the same day, be held).***

*None of this, of course, subverts the right, and the ability of an elected member of Dáil Éireann to have a referendum on any issue, provided that member can secure majority support in parliament. (My emphasis)*

The most contentious issue for the Citizens' Assembly is the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the 1937 Constitution. This effectively banned abortion and was introduced in 1983<sup>xiii</sup>. Major difficulties have arisen in drawing up and implementing legislation to give effect to this amendment. Rather than wait for the outcome of the Citizens' Assembly, some members of parliament (known as TDs) have proposed a Private Members Bill to hold a referendum to repeal this Amendment<sup>xiv</sup>.

## Citizens' Assembly

In July 2016, the Dáil and Senate (the houses of the legislature) passed a resolution setting up a Citizens' Assembly<sup>xv</sup>. There are 5 topics, among which is *the manner in which referenda are held*.<sup>xvi</sup>

This Assembly consists of 99 people, randomly selected by a polling company to be representative of gender, age, social class and region<sup>xvii</sup>. The Government appointed Ms. Justice Mary Laffoy of the Supreme Court to chair the Assembly. The members meet one weekend during each month (excluding December) in a hotel near Dublin. Apart from travel/hotel/meal expenses, the members are not paid.

The Assembly is to complete its work within a year from the date of its first meeting. The first item on the Assembly's programme is to consider the abortion issue. The Assembly

held its first meeting on this topic over the weekend 25-27<sup>th</sup> November and will spend three further weekends discussing it.

It is not yet clear when this Citizens' Assembly will consider how referendums are held.

## **Motion for Parliament (Dáil) Sept 2016**

After the General Election, it was clear that about 25% of the newly elected TDs (Teachta Dála, members of lower house of parliament) supported people-initiated referendums. One Year Initiative followed up by seeking support from these TDs for a draft motion to be tabled when the Dáil met. This motion called for the setting up of a One Year Citizens' Assembly, the only purpose of which was to *devise a new mechanism that will enable citizens to robustly scrutinise proposed legislation, assess and advocate for citizens' initiatives, and table amendments and counter proposals to Government sponsored legislation*<sup>xviii</sup>.

This motion referred to the 83% vote in favour of direct democracy at a Constitutional Convention in June 2013 (see Appendix 1). As thirty six TDs (all opposition TDs, most with a left perspective) supported the motion, it is now is part of the agenda for this parliament. The motion will remain on the Order Paper until such time as it is formally tabled for debate, probably by those in opposition. Whether this will happen or when it might happen depends on the willingness of opposition parties or groups to bring in forward during Private Members Business.

Should it be brought forward, it is likely that the motion would be defeated given that the terms of reference for the recently established Citizens' Assembly includes consideration of the manner in which referendums are held.

## **The right of the citizen**

As in other countries, people in Ireland are searching for better governance, not just at elections but between elections. The emergence of the One Year Initiative and Reinstatement48 suggests the people are becoming aware of the need to have a means of directly exercising their right to *decide all questions of national policy, in accordance with the common good*.

The 2007/8 financial crisis led to a bail-out of the Republic of Ireland by the EU-ECB-IMF. In the immediate aftermath of that crisis, the Irish governing elite admitted their failure to manage in an ever changing and complex world.

*In the past decade, Ireland's approach to fiscal policy, prices, costs and financial regulation were not sufficiently adapted to the disciplines of a single currency*<sup>xix</sup>.

Before that crisis, the people of the Republic of Ireland have only re-elected an outgoing government once since 1969. This suggests that Irish voters have been reminding politicians that the people are the source of power. During that ~50 year period, three new small parties emerged and formed part of coalition governments. Despite Ireland's undoubted successes (eg. joining the EU, a rising population and workforce) over these years, the people of the Republic have lived through two major social, economic and fiscal crises brought on by bad governance.

In Ireland, as elsewhere, there is a growing awareness of the need to find new ways for enhancing democratic governance, given the influences of new communications media in a globalised economy. People want to have the power to put a brake on developments which are seen to increase vulnerabilities of getting secure work in good conditions, with reliable public services sustained by a fair tax system which multinational corporations cannot easily avoid.

In Ireland, as elsewhere, the major constraints on bringing in modern direct democracy are that those in power do not want to share that power, together with a lack of awareness of modern direct democracy on the part of citizens, political parties and academics. Many in positions of power and influence do not trust of the people's capacity to decide on issues, big and small.

Apart from the developments described above, there are other straws in the wind which indicate that modern direct democracy, to complement to representative democracy, is being taken seriously, in different forums. The two most significant events were

1. In June 2012, the 83% vote in favour of direct democracy at a Constitutional Convention in 2013. This was very encouraging as the members of that convention (66 citizens, 33 politicians) came up with this themselves, when considering a reform of the electoral system (See Appendix 1);
2. In November 2015, the College of Business and the School of Law in the largest university in the Republic held a workshop on direct democracy. Bruno Kaufmann and Andreas Gross were among the speakers. The complete podcast of this seminar is publicly available<sup>ex</sup>. Although it was not heavily advertised, many Irish activists for direct democracy attended. (See Appendix 2)

## **Back to the future?**

This year, the Republic of Ireland (population 4.8m) marks the centenary of the 1916 Rising, the key event which led to a war of independence against Britain and the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. During this year, people have been reminded of the ideas and actions which led to most of Ireland breaking away from the United Kingdom.

Unfortunately, the founding treaty was not accepted by the whole population and a civil war broke out which ended in 1923. Nevertheless, the new parliament (Dáil) adopted a written constitution which provided for direct democracy (see Reinstated<sup>48</sup> above).



Donal O'Brolchain

In voting for this, the new parliament showed extraordinary confidence in the democratic process and in the right of the people to participate directly in governing themselves, through popular initiative, at a time violent conflict within the new state.

Over the next few years, attention will continue to be drawn to the ideals of those who struggled to set up a new Irish state. Already there is much discussion on how the Republic of Ireland will respond to the changes arising from Brexit, given the long-established and deep interaction between Ireland and Britain. Given the presence of

direct democracy in the first constitution, attention will be paid to how a people can sustain and enhance legitimate government.

Political and economic events in Ireland, Europe, the Middle East and the United States have reinforced the need to find new ways of enhancing democracy, just as in the aftermath of WW1. In 2010, the then Swiss President Doris Leuthard summarised the challenges which we in Ireland face as do people in many other countries.

*"Democracy is hard work – sweat and often uncomfortable confrontation. As former journalist Ulrich Kägi noted, democracy lives in "the conflict of interests and opinions – but also in the wisdom to recognise the limitations of this conflict".....*

*Democracy is never easy – especially in an increasingly globalised world, in which state borders become more and more porous, where commerce and trade are possible everywhere and the exchange of goods can be carried out at any time. Nowadays – with few exceptions – and thanks to the latest electronic communications technology, doubt, distrust and criticism of government decisions can be viewed and downloaded by anyone anywhere in the world around the clock.*

*The result is that Modern Direct Democracy as a necessary part of representative democracy is forced to engage more strongly than ever before in arguing its case – in convincing people of its merits – and in the perpetual search for compromise.....*

*In our country democracy is not "the rule of the politician" as defined by Joseph A. Schumpeter. In Switzerland there is a direct trade-off and active participation in shaping policy between the political establishment and the voters via the right of initiative. Here the initiative and referendum process has become a direct political feedback loop".<sup>xxi</sup>*

**Donal O'Brolchain** has taken an active interest in how democratic governance can be enhanced over the last 30 years. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) re-kindled his interest in citizens' initiatives as one the key checks and balances to limit the scope for excess by the powerful. Although he participates in civil society groups, he has never been a member of a political party. Democracy International cordially thanks him for his contribution.





## Appendix 1

### Constitutional Convention 2012-2014

Following the 2011 General Election, the then incoming government set up a Constitutional convention to consider eight specific issues. Among that Convention's 100 members were 33 politicians, including four from the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly.

Although it was not on the agenda, the members of this Convention voted in June 2013, very decisively, in favour of direct democracy.

*On the question as to whether 'direct democracy' (i.e. citizens' initiatives) with adequate safeguards be introduced, the Convention voted as follows:*

*83% - YES · 16% - NO · 1% - No opinion*

*In that the Convention votes in favour of direct democracy, it was decided that this would apply as follows:*

*Placing items on, or removing them from, the legislative agenda:*

*80% YES, 19% NO, 1% No opinion*

*Requiring constitutional referenda to be held –*

*78% YES, 17% NO, 4% No opinion.<sup>xxii</sup>*

In setting up this Convention, the Government stated that it would respond to the convention's reports within four months of receiving them<sup>xxiii</sup>. The Convention's report the Dáil electoral system which included the decisions on direct democracy was issued in late August 2013.<sup>xxiv</sup>

In December 2014, the government responded to this report. In short, the response stated that the government was going to implement those things that were part of its policy prior to setting up the Convention, but ignore everything else<sup>xxv</sup>. The very strong recommendations in favour of direct democracy did not feature in the debate.

Prof. David Farrell was Research Director of the Academic and Legal Support Group for the Constitutional Convention's chairman<sup>xxvi</sup>. Before the February 2016 General Election he pointed out that the government response to the Constitutional Convention was not impressive<sup>xxvii</sup>. In May 2015, he analysed the outcome of the constitutional Convention as follows:

*To date, of the 40 recommendations of the Convention:*

- *5 have been accepted (two of these, resulting in last week's referendums)<sup>xxviii</sup>*
- *8 have been parked*
- *4 have been ignored*
- *2 have been given an ambiguous response, to put it at its most charitable (voting age and blasphemy)*
- *5 have been rejected*
- *16 have yet to be responded to (mostly relating to the final two reports of the Convention that have been awaiting – for a very long time, indeed – any kind of government reaction)*

*So, to what extent is the government following the recommendations of the Convention? There are two ways of judging this:*

- 1. The most charitable reading of governmental reaction (adding together the accepted+parked+ambiguous) is 15 out of the 40 recommendations, or 37.5%.*
- 2. But probably a more realistic reading is to focus just on those matters that have been formally accepted, resulting in a miserly 5 out of 40, or 12.5% of the Convention's recommendations.*

*One more thing to note in the attached table is the level of Convention support for each of its recommendations. It is instructive that of the 40 recommendations the one that attracted least support was the age of presidential candidates. The vote could not have been closer: a bare 50% of the Convention members supported this proposal; 47% were against; and 3% had no opinion. Why the government selected this as the only additional item for a referendum (together with marriage equality) remains a puzzle.<sup>xxix</sup>*

## Appendix 2

### Direct Democracy Workshop University College Dublin. Nov 2015

On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the College of Business and the School of Law in University College Dublin (UCD -the largest university in the country) held an afternoon workshop on direct democracy which was focused on Irish, Scottish, Swiss and transnational European perspectives on the use of referendums . The programme was

Gavin Barrett – *The Experience of Direct Democracy in the Ireland: Why Do We Have It, How Have We Used It (including in the European Union Field)*

Andreas Gross – *The Experience of Direct Democracy in Switzerland. Why Do We Have It, How Have We Used It (including in the European Union Field)*

Katie Boyle – *The Scottish Independence Referendum: Process, Outcome and Deliberative Democracy*

Roland Erne – *Direct Democracy, Euro-Scepticism and EU Integration. The Swiss Votes on European Integration and the Free Movement of Workers (1992-2017).*

Bruno Kaufmann – *The Idea of Transnational Direct Democracy: Is There Anything to it?*

## NOTES

---

<sup>i</sup>The source of governmental power in the Republic of Ireland is set out very clearly in the Article 6.1 of the 1937 Constitution:

*All powers of government – legislative, executive and judicial, derive, under God from the people whose right it is to designate the rulers of the State and in final appeal, to decide all question of national policy, according to the requirements of the common good.*

[Constitution of the Republic of Ireland adopted in 1937 and as amended up to 2015.](#)

<sup>ii</sup>For my pre-election view, see [After fixing the economy, Ireland now looks at its democracy](#)

<sup>iii</sup> See [Direct Political Participation in the Republic of Ireland 23Nov2013 Democracy International](#)

<sup>iv</sup> For more information see [www.1yi.ie](http://www.1yi.ie) , [www.facebook.com/1YI.ie](https://www.facebook.com/1YI.ie)

<sup>v</sup> Until 2015, water and wastewater services to most domestic residences were supplied by local authorities without metering and paid for from general taxation. As part of the EU-ECB- IMF bailout programme in 2010, the government agreed to change the basis on which water services are supplied. This involved setting up a new utility (Irish Water), installing meters and charging most domestic residences based on usage. This gave rise to protests all over the country.

<sup>vi</sup> [Constitution of the Republic of Ireland adopted in 1937 and as amended up to 2015.](#) See Articles 27 and 47.2.2

<sup>vii</sup> [Irish Free State Constitution adopted in 1922](#)

*Article 47. Any Bill passed or deemed to have been passed by both Houses may be suspended for a period of ninety days on the written demand of two-fifths of the members of Dáil Éireann or of a majority of the members of Seanad Éireann presented to the President of the Executive Council not later than seven days from the day on which such Bill shall have been so passed or deemed to have been so passed. Such a Bill shall in accordance with regulations to be made by the Oireachtas be submitted by Referendum to the decision of the people if demanded before the expiration of the ninety days either by a resolution of Seanad Éireann assented to by three-fifths of the members of Seanad Éireann, or by a petition signed by not less than one-twentieth of the voters then on the register of voters, and the decision of the people by a majority of the votes recorded on such Referendum shall be conclusive. These provisions shall not apply to Money Bills or to such Bills as shall be declared by both Houses to be necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety.*

<sup>viii</sup> For more information see [www.reinstate48.ie](http://www.reinstate48.ie), [www.facebook.com/Reinstate48/](https://www.facebook.com/Reinstate48/)

<sup>ix</sup> [Irish Free State Constitution adopted in 1922](#)

*Article 48. The Oireachtas may provide for the Initiation by the people of proposals for laws or constitutional amendments. Should the Oireachtas fail to make such provision within two years, it shall on the petition of not less than seventy five thousand voters on the register, of whom not more than fifteen thousand shall be voters in any one constituency, either make such provisions or submit the question to the people for decision in accordance with the ordinary regulations governing the Referendum. Any legislation passed by the Oireachtas providing for such Initiation by the people shall provide (1) that such proposals may be initiated on a petition of fifty thousand voters on the register, (2) that if the Oireachtas rejects a proposal so initiated it shall be submitted to the people for decision in accordance with the ordinary regulations governing the Referendum; and (3) that if the Oireachtas enacts a proposal so initiated, such enactment shall be subject to the provisions respecting ordinary legislation or amendments of the Constitution as the case may be.*

<sup>x</sup> see Ruane, Bláthna Democratic Control and Constitutional Referenda – the failure of the popular initiative mechanism for Constitutional Referenda under the Irish Free State Constitution in Ruane, Bláthna;

O'Callaghan Jim; Barniville, David (2014) : Law and Government: A tribute to Rory Brady . Dublin. Round Hall pp.185-213

<sup>xii</sup>The Dáil (lower house of parliament) consists of 158 members (Teachta Dála – TD) elected from 40 multi-member constituencies (each of which has a minimum of 3 seats) using a non-party open list proportional system in which voters rank their preferences for individual candidates using a single transferable vote. The outcome of the February 2016 General Election (with European Parliamentary party links) was

Fine Gael (European People's Party - EPP)	50 seats
Fianna Fail (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe - ALDE)	44
Sinn Féin (Confederal Group of European United Left-Nordic Green Left – GUE-NGL)	23
Labour (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats S&D)	7
Anti-Austerity Alliance –People Before Profit (No MEP at present but oriented to GUE-NGL)	6
Indepedents4Change	4
Social Democrats	3
Green Party (no MEP at present. Allied to Group of Greens/European Free Alliance Greens- -EFA)	2
Non-Party Independents	19

Direct Democracy Ireland did not win any seats, with 0.3% of the total vote spread over 19 candidates in 17 constituencies.

<sup>xii</sup> [Programme for a Partnership Government RofIreland May2016](#) see p.154

Three issues on which referenda are promised (ie. woman's life within the home, blasphemy, the office of the Ceann Comhairle (who chairs the Dáil) were among 40 measures which a Constitutional Convention recommended during the period 2012-2014 (see Appendix 1).

<sup>xiii</sup>In 1983 the 8th Amendment effectively introduced a constitutional ban on abortion. The resulting Article 40.3.3° reads: "*The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right*". Two other clauses (Amendments 13 and 14) were added in referendums 1992, guaranteeing the right to travel for abortion services and the right to information on services lawfully available in another state. In practice many women travel to the UK and other EU countries for abortion services

<sup>xiv</sup> [Dáil Debate 25October2016 on Second Stage of bill to Repeal the 8th amendment to Constitution](#)

<sup>xv</sup> [Citizens' Assembly Ireland 2016 Terms of Reference](#)

<sup>xvi</sup> The five topics are *(i) the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution;*  
*(ii) how we best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population;*  
*(iii) fixed term parliaments;*  
*(iv) the manner in which referenda are held; and*  
*(v) how the State can make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change;*

<sup>xvii</sup> for details of how the members were selected see [Citizens, Assembly RofIreland 2016 Membership](#)

<sup>xviii</sup> For the full text see [Dáil motion calling for a Citizens' Assembly to introduce direct democracy 20Sept2016](#)

<sup>xix</sup>Press Release from National Economic and Social Council (NESC) on a report "The Euro: an Irish Perspective" 17th August 2010. NESC is 30-person social partnership body made up of representatives of government (senior civil servants), business, trade unions, agriculture, community and environment civil society organisations. The Secretary General of the Government (a civil servant) chairs NESC. Among the seven Government nominees were the Secretaries-General of five Government Departments.  
<http://www.nesc.ie/dynamic/docs/The%20euro%20MEDIA%20RELEASE%20from%20NESC.pdf>

<sup>xx</sup> UCD Workshop podcast here [Workshop on Direct Democracy University College Dublin 30Nov2015](#)

---

<sup>xxi</sup> *No fair and decent globalisation without direct democracy.* Foreword to Kaufmann, Bruno, Buchi Ralf, Braun Nadja Guidebook to Direct Democracy in Switzerland and beyond. Marburg. Initiative and Referendum Institute. 2010.

<sup>xxii</sup> [Constitutional Convention 2012-2014 RofIreland Press Release 9June2013](#)

<sup>xxiii</sup> *The Government will provide in the Oireachtas a response to each recommendation of the Convention within four months and, if accepting the recommendation, will indicate the timeframe it envisages for the holding of any related referendum.* [Constitutional Convention 2012-2014 RofIreland Terms of Reference](#)

<sup>xxv</sup> [Dáil Debates 18Dec2014. Response to Constitutional Convention Fourth Report on Dáil Electoral System](#)

<sup>xxvi</sup> [Constitutional Convention 2012-2014 RofIreland Academic & Legal Support Group](#)

<sup>xxvii</sup> [Prof David Farrell Final report card on the Government's reactions to the Irish Constitutional Convention 23Jan2016](#)

<sup>xxviii</sup> On 22 May 2015, the people voted in referendums to amend the Constitution

- i. In favour of providing that two persons may marry without distinction as to their sex;
- ii. Against lowering the age of Presidential (the Head of State) candidates from 35 to 21.

<sup>xxix</sup> [David Farrell The Government continues to slight the work of the Constitutional Convention 27May2015](#)