

WORKING TO STOP BREXIT

The SDLP is the most pro-Europe party on this island. We were the only party that registered to campaign against Brexit in the 2016 referendum and we've consistently fought to remain in the EU ever since. After the referendum we took the UK government to court to protect the GFA and the will of people here. We believe there is no such thing as a good Brexit. There are only degrees of devastation to economic and social life on this island. Our first preference, therefore, is to remain in the EU.

The European Union remains the single most successful peace project in human history and the people of the North of Ireland have benefited directly from this. An ongoing construction in democracy, human rights, rule of law, solidarity, economic development, climate crisis mitigating policies and all of our futures. The European Union is a global benchmark for social justice, dialogue, multilateralism, human rights, decent work, the rule of law, sustainable development and gender equality. It is the gold standard in corporation, collaboration and building partnerships. Europe's drive for peace and prosperity for many decades has given us a modern peaceful and stable world.

This election is critical. It is much bigger than a political party, bigger than personalities, it's about people. It's about defending and fighting for our place in Europe. The EU has given us so much, it has supported projects totalling millions of pounds benefiting our communities and our peoples. It was Europe that helped us build the peace bridge in Derry. The Northern Ireland PEACE program ongoing since 1995 has had investment targeted at children and young people from European Council. The PEACE programme has been implemented as a cross-border cooperation programme which has sponsored cohesion between communities and aided economic and social stability.

Europe has given us so much and that is why this is a critical election. It is the most important European election ever held in Northern Ireland. It is our opportunity to assert our voice, defend our interests and protect our people here. For three years, the voice of the pro-Europe majority in Northern Ireland has been silenced, side-lined and ignored.

This campaign is an opportunity to reassert our demand to remain in the European Union. It is an opportunity for us to take back John Hume's seat in the European Parliament for a progressive, pro-remain candidate. We are asking people to lend us their vote to ensure the will of people here is respected. And we're asking our voters to transfer down the ballot to other progressive, pro-European parties.

Sending a clear message to London and sending more pro-remain MEPs to Brussels than pro-Brexit MEPs will show Theresa May that we do not want to leave the European Union. It will allow the case to be made stronger in Europe that we want to stop Brexit. With the UK Government already missing their own deadlines from

Exiting the EU we have a genuine opportunity to stop Brexit – that is clear, since after three years the UK Government could not deliver Brexit. A vote for the SDLP will be a vote to say you want to stop Brexit.

We will use all of our power if elected to stop Brexit in Brussels. We want to restore power-sharing and get Stormont back working again – so MLAs, as well as MEPs can work to stop Brexit. We want to revoke Article 50 by keeping the pressure on London and if needed a second vote, a people's vote where citizens can vote to remain and to reject Brexit. There are options and ways to stop Brexit – but that can only happen if people vote on the 23rd May to send a message to the Brexiteers even more strongly – Northern Ireland wants to stay in the European Union.

SECURING A PEOPLE'S VOTE

The SDLP believe if we cannot remain in the EU – or achieve special status to effectively remain via the backstop, that Brexit must be stopped in Westminster by revoking article 50. However, after witnessing the crisis and chaos that has engulfed Westminster politics, the SDLP know that we, the people also need to take back control. That is why we are also supportive of the people's vote campaign. As the only local party that registered to campaign against Brexit, we'll put our shoulder to the wheel and use all options at our disposal to defend the will of people here.

Politics in London is frozen in failure. After multiple votes on the Prime Minister's deal, Parliament has rejected it. There is no agreement on how the UK exits the European Union. It is time that politicians in London and the DUP started listening to the people. There is no such thing as a good Brexit. It must be stopped.

The EU referendum was categorized by lies and scaremongering. Many people now have changed their minds and they want a second say. The DUP and others profess to be democrats yet they will not allow the people a chance to change their minds, what are they afraid of? The answer is that people now know the truth, that Nigel Farage lied to them and that Brexit is disastrous for our economy and for our communities, that is why the final decision should now be handed back to the people – with remain on the ballot paper.

Any referendum must allow citizens the right to exercise their view, if they wish, to remain in the European Union. That is why the SDLP believes strongly that people in Northern Ireland should also view this election as their chance to have a say and reaffirm that we want to remain. Electing a second pro-European MEP to Brussels is the way to send that message.