



MANIFESTO - November 2012

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2		
1 ECONOMY	3	10 JUSTICE AND LAW REFORM	15
- Ecological Economics	5	-Equality Agenda	15
2 BANKING REFORM	6	-Recreational Drug Use	15
-NAMA & the Banking Crisis	6	-Corruption and Whistle-	
-Bankruptcy & Debt Easing	7	blowing Protection	15
3 -Withdrawal from the Euro	7	-Crime	16
TAXATION AND PENSION REFORM	8	-Road Safety	16
-Taxation	8	-Electronic Tagging of	
-Basic Income	8	Sex Offenders	16
-Pensions	8	11 ENVIRONMENT	16
4 -National Pension Entitlements	8	-Environmental Protection	16
ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT	8	-Wildlife and Biodiversity	17
5 -Tourism	8	-Waste	17
POLITICAL REFORM	9	-Planning	17
-Local Agenda 21	10	-Agriculture & Forestry	17
-State and Semi-State	10	-Animal Welfare	18
-Board Restructuring	10	-National Emergency Plan	18
6 -All Ireland co-operation	10	- Reform of the water sector	
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	11	in Ireland	18
-Health	11	- Bog Management	19
-Mental Health Reform	11	12 HERITAGE & CULTURE	19
-Child Care	11	- National Monuments	19
-Children	12	-Arts, Culture & Language	20
-Older People	12	13 INTERNATIONAL	20
-Carers	12		
7 -Disability	12		
8 EDUCATION	12		
9 HOUSING	13		
ENERGY AND TRANSPORT	13		
-Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions	13		
-Irish Resources	14		
-Science & Technology	14		
-Broadband	14		
-Transport	14		

Introduction

Of all the environmental threats faced by humankind, global warming has the potential to be one of the most devastating. We are a new type of political organisation that recognises the need to act collectively, locally and globally, to reduce the factors that are causing climate disruption.

The current banking crisis has underlined the dissatisfaction with today's high consumption and high debt society and exposed the vast opportunities for corruption and clientelism within our present political system. We envision a new, lower-consumption world of decentralized, clean energy and politically empowered communities. A shift of political emphasis is required across all aspects of local and national government to decentralise decision-making and provide more power to local democratic institutions. National and local government bodies should concentrate on creating effective structures to better serve the needs of communities with better public transport services, improved public housing, health service, schools and community facilities and support to small and medium sized businesses and co-operatives, particularly those seeking to develop new solutions to renewable energy production, energy saving measures, waste reduction and recycling. This will ensure that jobs, shops, schools and hospitals are provided close to where people live and job creation occurs in useful and fulfilling trades and services. Not only would these policies reduce carbon emissions and reduce our dependence on oil, they would produce a better quality of life for everyone.

Climate change is a social justice issue, and people in the global South face severe consequences from droughts, wildfires and major floods

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are the most energy-wasting activity on the planet today and yet the Irish government continues to allow the use of Shannon airport to support US involvement in those wars.

We would reaffirm Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality and non-alignment and aim to get it enshrined in the constitution. We would stop the use of Shannon airport by foreign military personnel.

Economy

The Irish government should provide grants to help establish local currency / complementary currency schemes. These schemes should also be linked together through a national network and local councils should accept payments in local currencies.

The Irish government should also establish a National Redevelopment Community Fund to make available loans or advance payments to community organisations, small start-up enterprises, and existing small businesses to use as seed capital to make use of NAMA sites and ghost estates. Facilities, which currently lie vacant, should be made available to them at reasonable rates for the purpose of developing their businesses or for development as community or educational resources. The initial loan could either be repaid over time on a pre-agreed basis or the resulting finished facility could be part-owned by the state on completion of the development.

Those organisations in receipt of the National Redevelopment Community Fund should be encouraged to employ those currently unemployed and to encourage the use of local currencies, wherever possible, in sourcing local materials and payment for services.

Fís Nua supports the creation of Steady State Economies and is the first Irish Political Party to sign up to the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State (CASSE) Economy Position Statement On Economic Growth. This has already been done by several political parties in North America and Europe.

The Center for the Advancement of The Steady State Economy (CASSE) Position Statement is as follows:

Whereas:

1. Economic growth, as defined in standard economics textbooks, is an increase in the production and consumption of goods and services, and;
2. Economic growth occurs when there is an increase in the multiplied product of population and per capita consumption, and;
3. The global economy grows as an integrated whole consisting of agricultural, extractive, manufacturing, and services sectors that require physical inputs and produce wastes, and;
4. Economic growth is often and generally indicated by increasing real gross domestic product (GDP) or real gross national product (GNP), and;
5. Economic growth has been a primary, perennial goal of many societies and most governments, and;

6. Based upon established principles of physics and ecology, there is a limit to economic growth, and;

7. There is increasing evidence that global economic growth is having negative effects on long-term ecological and economic welfare...

Therefore, we take the position that:

1. There is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and environmental protection (for example, biodiversity conservation, clean air and water, atmospheric stability), and;

2. There is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and the ecological services underpinning the human economy (for example, pollination, decomposition, climate regulation), and;

3. Technological progress has had many positive and negative ecological and economic effects and may not be depended on to reconcile the conflict between economic growth and long-term ecological and economic welfare, and;

4. Economic growth, as gauged by increasing GDP, is an increasingly dangerous and anachronistic goal, especially in wealthy nations with widespread affluence, and;

5. A steady state economy (that is, an economy with a relatively stable, mildly fluctuating product of population and per capita consumption) is a viable alternative to a growing economy and has become a more appropriate goal in large, wealthy economies, and;

6. The long-run sustainability of a steady state economy requires its establishment at a size small enough to avoid the breaching of reduced ecological and economic capacity during expected or unexpected supply shocks such as droughts and energy shortages, and;

7. A steady state economy does not preclude economic development, a dynamic, qualitative process in which different technologies may be employed and the relative prominence of economic sectors may evolve, and;

8. Upon establishing a steady state economy, it would be advisable for wealthy nations to assist other nations in moving from the goal of economic growth to the goal of a steady state economy, beginning with those nations currently enjoying high levels of per capita consumption, and;

9. For many nations with widespread poverty, increasing per capita consumption (or, alternatively, more equitable distributions of wealth) remains an appropriate goal.

Ecological Economics

Fís Nua supports the introduction of ecological economics and three foundations to a long-term, healthy economy: (1) sustainable scale, (2) fair distribution, and (3) efficient allocation. Fís Nua will also:

1. First and foremost, adopt the right macro-economic policy goal – a steady state economy that features sustainable scale, fair distribution of wealth, and efficient allocation of resources. A prerequisite to adopting this macro-economic policy goal is a cultural shift from the pursuit of lifestyles driven by endless economic expansion and unsustainable consumerism to lifestyles driven by the search for long-term prosperity and sustainable consumption that fulfils people’s needs.
2. Maintain an exemplary network of conservation areas, sufficient in size and diversity to ensure the long-term provision of vital ecosystem services.
3. Encourage voluntary population stabilisation, and aim for a long-term population size that enables a high standard of living for everyone without undermining ecological systems and the life-support services they provide.
4. Gradually reset existing fiscal, monetary, and trade policy levers from growth toward a steady state. For example, manage the money supply and redevelop the tax system with the new macro-economic policy goal as a guide.
5. Limit the range of inequality in income and wealth, including both a minimum and maximum allowable income. Implement tax reforms to tax “bads” (e.g., pollution and depletion of natural resources) rather than goods (e.g., income from wages).
6. Develop a commons sector to accompany the public and private sectors. Within this commons sector, assign property rights for commonly held resources (e.g., the atmosphere, mineral resources, and forests), and establish public trusts to manage those resources for maximum long-term public benefit.
7. Employ cap-auction-trade systems in the commons sector for allocating basic resources. Set caps based on biophysical limits. Use auctions to distribute rights to extract resources. Equitably redistribute auction payments through public trusts. Implement a trading system for extraction rights to achieve efficient allocation of resources to those uses with the highest demand.
8. Establish a more flexible working day, week, and year to provide more opportunities for people to decide how to use their own time and to alleviate employment pressures.
9. Overhaul banking regulations, starting with gradual elimination of fractional reserve banking, such that the monetary system moves away from a debt structure that requires continuous economic growth.
10. Adjust zoning policies to limit sprawl and promote energy conservation.
11. Continue to monitor GDP, but interpret it as a measure of the size of the economy. Use other indices to measure economic welfare and social progress, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW). Use the Steady State Economy Index to indicate proximity to a sustainable steady state.

12. Prevent unconstrained capital mobility so that financial resources are more directly tied to the real assets they represent.
13. Work toward full internalisation of costs in prices (e.g., costs associated with environmental protection and fair labour laws), and adopt compensating tariffs to protect efficient national policies of cost internalisation from standards-lowering competition from other countries.
14. Institute policies that move away from globalisation and toward localisation to conserve energy resources, provide high-quality local jobs, and maintain local decision-making authority.
15. Limit the scope of advertising to prevent unnecessary demand stimulation and wasteful consumption.

European Union Fiscal Treaty

Fís Nua will campaign against the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)/Fiscal Treaty

Banking Reform

NAMA & the Banking Crisis

The need to prevent financial collapse has been used as a justification to prop up corrupt business dealings of property speculators and the financial community with the introduction of the blanket banking guarantee and the *National Asset Management Agency (NAMA)*. We would stop the transfer of assets from banks to NAMA at above current market values and implement the structured wind down of non-systemic and non-performing banks. We would instigate a full public and transparent enquiry into the current crisis. We would introduce effective controls of credit and investment instruments and introduce restraints against any system of bonus payments to employees of financial institutions which encourage short term risky financial management. We would encourage the pursuance of legal action against those who have contributed, through financial mismanagement, to the current financial crisis. We would also support prosecutions against those property developers who fraudulently obtained loans or illegally disposed of assets, and those who helped or encouraged them in so doing.

Property developments seized by NAMA will be completed as ecologically friendly social or affordable housing or other health, educational, social and community projects and vertical, hydroponic farming wherever possible.

We would:

- ◆ Demerge banks that are “too big to fail” to reduce the risks of systemic failure.
- ◆ Segregate financial markets by separating activities such as trading and retail banking.
- ◆ Gradually eliminate all “exotic” financial instruments.
- ◆ Create secure, accessible and ethical local banking systems for people by growing the role of post offices and credit unions.

- ◆ Enhance support for the local economy by expanding the range of smaller-scale “friendly” sources of finance.
- ◆ Introduce complementary, multilevel currencies to provide credit in tune with the needs of regions, towns, cities and neighbourhoods, whilst helping to inoculate the economy from systemic financial shocks.
- ◆ Create new public money, free of interest, to cope with unprecedented financial emergencies, and as the basis for loans to rebuild the infrastructure of productive local economies.
- ◆ Encourage the introduction of time banking, LETS systems and other measures to enhance the core social economy.
- ◆ Introduce / extend moratoria for housing crash victims, overhaul social housing and establish Community Land Trusts.
- ◆ Increase stability and raise resources with currency and financial transaction taxes e.g. a Tobin Tax or a Robin Hood Tax.”
- ◆ Create asset-backed finance for investment, including Limited Liability Partnerships

Fís Nua supports an immediate and structured debt-equity swap in relation to the debts of the banks of The Republic of Ireland owed to bondholders.

Bankruptcy & Debt Easing:

We would support the modernisation of bankruptcy legislation to enable people with overwhelming debts to obtain easier access to the protection of the courts. This would include the reduction of the bankruptcy period from the current 12-year period to six years and the introduction of individual voluntary arrangements as an alternative to bankruptcy.

Fís Nua supports all ‘innocent’ victims of the banking crisis i.e. those people who were encouraged by financial institutions to take on mortgages or debt that could easily become (and did in fact become) unsustainable. No one should become burdened with a life of debt or lose their homes because of the government and financial institutions fuelling of the property bubble.

Withdrawal from the Euro

Fís Nua supports the future withdrawal from the Euro as long as, in so doing, there would not be caused any further destabilisation of the economy. The government would first need to attempt to resolve issues around the banking crisis and repudiate **the** legacy debt created by the government adoption of private banking debt. If negotiations fail to remove the banking debt from the government debt burden then there should be a referendum on the issue of withdrawal from the Euro and, if withdrawal is confirmed, then a national unit of currency should replace the Euro.

Taxation and Pension Reform

Taxation

We support a broadly progressive tax system and bands to protect workers from inflation and avoid taxation by stealth. We would:

- ◆ Structure corporate tax reliefs and capital allowances in such a way that Research and Development, employment-generating activities, socially responsible activities, and sustainable and environmentally friendly activities are rewarded.
- ◆ Reduce both VAT rates by 3%.
- ◆ Phase out VRT over 5 years, scrap motor tax and replace with a fuel surcharge.
- ◆ Clamp down on corporate tax evasion by clamping down on tax loopholes and corporate financial reporting.
- ◆ Hold accountancy firms accountable with respect to the economic welfare of the nation.
- ◆ Pay for energy transition and fuel poverty with a windfall tax on the unearned profits of the fossil fuel companies to provide a safety net for those in fuel poverty and to help finance the country's transition to clean energy.
- ◆ Reappraise pension fund allocation to manage future energy supply risks and build resilience by investing in asset-backed energy infrastructure in Ireland.
- ◆ Fís Nua supports the **Campaign Against the Household and Water Taxes** and the boycott of the Septic Tank registration.

Basic Income

Our aim is to introduce a basic income for all. Basic Income guarantees an income to each individual irrespective of personal circumstances. The Basic Income payment is tax free and all other income is taxed. The basic income amount should be sufficient so that everyone can afford food and shelter and other daily needs.

Pensions

Abolish tax relief for private pensions and establish a task force to look at pension provision.

National Pension Entitlements

We would retain the retirement age at 65 years, and abolish the practice of pension entitlement for all State pensions before age 65, including those of TDs and Senior Civil Servants. Similarly, all State employees, including Politicians, would only qualify for one pension - at the highest level of their achievement - multiple pensions would be abolished.

Enterprise and Employment

In the past, there have been lucrative incentives for multinational investment in Ireland. However, due to cheaper wages in third world countries, many of these multinationals pulled out when the tax incentives expired, leaving families and communities decimated in their wake. We propose that similar type tax incentives would be applied to support and encourage home-grown SMEs, Co-operatives, and local indigenous industries and crafts persons who produce for both the home market and export. Similarly, we should be concentrating our highly educated workforce's energies on the green tech industries, pharmaceuticals and research & development, with emphasis on the particular needs of third world countries.

Ireland has a reputation for high quality food produce. We have prime agricultural land - we should be using it to our advantage instead of paying our farmers not to farm. We should be supplying the home market with good quality home produced food at local market prices.

Tourism

- ◆ Develop a tourism industry by the skilful management of our natural resources and by promoting outdoor activity holidays such as cycling, walking, hill walking, angling, sailing, surfing and bird watching. Develop policies that promote the very essence of Irish country living including promoting small, local accommodation providers, warm hospitality and food supplied by fresh home produce.
- ◆ Free Travel passes for all visitors over 65, to include free ferry travel.

Political Reform

- ◆ Reduce the number of TDs from 166 to 130 and more than double Dáil sitting time. Abolish the un-elected Seanad. Cap elected representatives including the President's pay to a maximum of 2.5 times the national average wage. Complete overhaul of expenses provision to elected representatives that should be capped at an appropriate level.
- ◆ Free National Travel Passes on public transport to be issued to all public representatives in lieu of travel expenses throughout the country.
- ◆ Ban corporate, institutional or foreign-based donations to political parties.
- ◆ Immediately scrap the positions of Garda drivers for all TDs, except for An Taoiseach and the Minister for Defence, and instead set up a Bureau for Corporate Crime, to speed up the process of bringing white collar criminals, including bankers, developers and politicians involved in the bankrupting of this country, to swift justice.
- ◆ Develop and encourage public participation in political decision making by putting in place legislation and systems to hold People's Conventions (public information and debates) in every town and city, whenever major government decisions needed to be taken. The actions of our politicians would be informed by public consensus decisions taken nationally at official People's Conventions.

- ◆ FIS NUA will adhere to the proposal that any members elected will be required to agree to immediate recall and replacement if they are deemed to have failed to honour their solemn pledge of service to the people.
- ◆ Support legislation and systems of Direct Democracy, whereby the signatures of a % of the population could call for a constitutional referendum, or by-election to replace or recall a public representative.
- ◆ Removal of Party Whip System - Fís Nua would support the inclusion into the Irish Constitution of a provision which would make it an offence for there to be any interference with the exercise by deputies of their conscientious, autonomous decision on any vote in parliament.
- ◆ Decisive Minority - Fís Nua would support an amendment to the rules of the operation of the Dáil which would allow a minority in parliament of 33% to insist on an inquiry into any matter and a debate on any matter, without guillotine.
- ◆ We would bring in legislation to compel all T.D's, Senior Civil and Public Servants and Members and Senior Staff of Semi-State Boards to declare all their assets including assets and properties held in trust, and liabilities, including all loans and any guarantees on loans

Local Agenda 21

- ◆ We fully support the agreement reached in Rio in 1992 better known as Local Agenda 21 and call for The Aarhus Agreement to be transposed into Irish law immediately.
- ◆ A town/village/parish to be given the possibility to create a community council where a portion of some locally raised taxes such as rates, second home taxes, property taxes, will be given to that community to spend locally on educational, cultural, sporting and amenity issues.
- ◆ Community councils to be elected every year, basic remuneration per councillor to cover expenses phone, petrol etc.

State and Semi-State Board Restructuring

- ◆ We would review the necessity of all State and Semi-State Boards, and the number of people required to sit on such Boards. With high unemployment in the country, it is not feasible that one person would hold multiple positions on various state and semi-state Boards and Committees. We propose that any one individual can only hold one committee position on such boards. Appointment to State Boards must be made in an open and transparent manner, by advertising and interviewing for such positions. There will be equal representation from Social, Environmental and Economic interests, to include representatives selected from NGO and CDP organisations.

All Ireland co-operation

Fís Nua advocates continued progress toward the full implementation of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. We advocate ever closer co-operation on economic and environmental issues between both political jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, and believe that this will be best achieved in the context of an all-Ireland basis.

Health and Social Care

Health

- ◆ Introduce a universal public and free health service in Ireland with no private practice use of public resources.
- ◆ Open 24-hour primary care centres - multi-disciplinary health clinics staffed by GPs, nurses, midwives, and specialist practitioners.
- ◆ We seek to review mental health services and facilities to ensure the highest standard of care and services for people affected by mental health issues. We include in this a national strategy to deal with suicide, depression, dementia, community and hospital care facilities, and issues of mental health relating to children and young people.
- ◆ We would immediately remove fluoride from our main water supply
- ◆ We would seek to overturn the EU ban on the use of herbal medicines and home remedies

Mental Health Reform

Fís Nua calls for the immediate implementation, within the Health Service Executive (HSE), of the 5-point plan of the Campaign group Mental Health Reform as follows:

1. Establish an Accountable Structure: Establish a dedicated executive position at the highest level of the HSE that is responsible for implementing A Vision for Change. This should be led by a Director for Mental Health Services who has executive powers, an implementation budget and responsibility to report publicly on progress.
2. Publish a Plan: Publish a comprehensive implementation plan for A Vision for Change setting out deliverables, a timeline and who is responsible.
3. Financial Commitment: Commit to raising funding of mental health services from 5% to 8% of the health budget by 2016 and to clear reporting on mental health spending.
4. Enact Legislation: Enact legislation to improve the health service's accountability for planning and financing mental health service reform.
5. Promote Cross-departmental Action: Promote specific cross-departmental action on mental health and the implementation of the National Disability Strategy to effectively combat social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination against people with mental health problems.

Child Care

- ◆ We must have independent inquiries into the social services that are responsible for childcare, and have so very much let our children down. There must be legislation introduced immediately to protect our children.

- ✦ Introduce a Guardian Ad Litem service for all children at risk. This would be a voluntary position, where at least one individual citizen would act as an advocate for those children, to ensure that their needs and rights are met by state provision. This service would also extend to immigrant children alone in this country.
- ✦ At present, only qualified Social Workers can become Guardians. This needs to change. Anybody with a concern, a willingness and who has been Garda vetted could do it.
- ✦ Further to this, there has to be a Redress Board within our judicial system, which recognises and compensates all those who were mistreated, abused, neglected or lost their lives while in the care of the State.

Children

- ✦ Have a referendum within 12 months to amend the Constitution to include the specific rights of children and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Irish legislation.
- ✦ Establish the Register of Persons considered unsafe to work with children and ensure that the Gardaí Vetting Unit is extended and adequately resourced and incorporates a suitable appeal system.
- ✦ Introduce legislation prohibiting the advertising, marketing and promotion of 'junk' foods to children under 12.

Older People

- ✦ Introduce a Care of the Elderly Act, with regulations to include registration and inspection of care facilities, qualification of staff and Garda vetting of care personnel.
- ✦ Establish an Ombudsman for Older Persons and initiate a National Positive Ageing Strategy across Government Departments.
- ✦ Establish a National Care and Repair Scheme for Senior Citizens living at home to alleviate some of the major expenses of home maintenance.

Carers

- ✦ Abolish means testing of the carers' allowance.
- ✦ Develop a National Strategy for Carers within 12 months.

Disability

- ✦ Ensure a rights-based approach to disability.
- ✦ Introduce a Cost of Disability payment of approx. €40 per week.

Education

- ◆ Invest €1 billion in additional current and capital funding for education for the first year of the next Government's term of office, to front-load educational priorities.
- ◆ Review of teacher training and continuous professional development.
- ◆ Ensure that student- teacher ratios do not exceed 15:1 at primary and secondary levels.
- ◆ Enactment of the EPSEN Act for special needs pupils.
- ◆ Examine the needs of education in Irish speaking areas, including the possibility of establishing a specific Education Board to deal with such matters.
- ◆ Abolish the registration fee for third level education. No 3rd Level Fees: We have a world renowned standard of education in Ireland. Students from all walks of life come here not only to study their subject, but also to improve their English and to absorb the Irish culture. We would build on our reputation by developing and encouraging a world class Education system for International and European students, and by enticing European students with a no-fees policy. The knock-on effect of this would be a huge boost to our economy, services and rental property market.
- ◆ We would support options of alternative Senior Cycle programmes at Secondary School level, including Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the addition of FETAC Module options, Levels 1-5 inclusive, with Certification of individual modules achieved.

Housing

- ◆ With the absolute over abundance of property on the market all building permission on green field sites will be forbidden until these properties have at least been examined for the purpose of social housing.
- ◆ With over three hundred thousand dwellings unoccupied in the state this can provide and ensure the delivery of 30,000 social and affordable housing units a year until the housing waiting lists are cleared.
- ◆ Housing schemes should incorporate a mixture of private and public development.

Energy and Transport

Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- ◆ Seek an all-party approach to cut Ireland's carbon emissions by 5% annually.
- ◆ The technologies already exist for a locally controlled, renewable based alternative energy supplies. We need to ensure that opportunities to develop those technologies are supported by all levels of government.
- ◆ Remove limits on the fixed price tariff for wind farms, biomass and anaerobic digester power plants.
- ◆ A tax on industrial scale carbon dioxide & other greenhouse gas emissions.
- ◆ Expose false solutions to global warming, particularly the use of nuclear power and seek to reduce the use of nuclear power in neighbouring countries.
- ◆ We support the Shell to Sea campaign in their endeavours to have the gas refinery moved out to sea and we oppose all new licensing for oil and gas exploration on Irish land or waters. Royalties on existing licences should be renegotiated.
- ◆ We would review the Foreshore Act 1933 to ensure tighter controls in the granting of Foreshore Licences, to ensure that the coastal environment and the greater good of the Irish Citizens will be the uppermost priority
- ◆ We oppose any development and practice of Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking) for the extraction of Shale Gas. We would revoke any and all exploration licences previously granted for Hydraulic Fracturing and Shale Gas Extraction.
- ◆ No use of destructive bio fuels.

Irish Resources

- ◆ Our lands, our forestry, our lakes, rivers and oceans are our most precious resource, and our guarantee of food sources and a sustainable future on the Island of Ireland. This includes everything above ground and below - any oil, gases, minerals or ore.
- ◆ We would introduce a complete ban on this state selling off any of our land or the resources of this land to private investors.
- ◆ Place the Corrib gas field, our forests and other natural resources under the control of the state where possible.

Science & Technology

- ◆ Graduate tax credits depending on the R&D being undertaken, for example a 50% credit for original technology; a 25% credit for improving existing technology.

Broadband

- ◆ Ensure universal broadband availability nationwide and broadband availability should be integrated into the planning of all new building developments.

Transport

- ◆ Prioritise the Dublin Metro and Luas extensions, provide Luas-type lines in Cork, Limerick and Galway and introduce commuter services on existing railway lines in Limerick and a line to Shannon. Open the western rail corridor from Galway to Derry with terminals going through Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal to facilitate passenger & freight transport.
- ◆ Investigate the introduction of *Bus Rapid Transit* (BRT) buses as a more cost efficient mode of transport.
- ◆ Introduce and assist a scheme for community buses in rural areas, possibly incorporating the use of school buses in hours when they are not needed.
- ◆ Introduce a new cycling framework using the 2009 Draft National Cycle Manual as a basis along with submissions from cycling organisations in Ireland.
- ◆ Encourage cycling and public transport as alternatives to car transport, especially in urban areas.

Justice and Law Reform

Equality Agenda

- ◆ All of our policies strive to achieve an equality of opportunity for all people in all walks of life and to cherish all people regardless of gender, race, belief, sexual orientation, age, wealth or ability

Recreational Drug Use

- ◆ Decriminalisation of recreational drug users, in line with the Portuguese model. Drug users would be treated sympathetically within the medical model with access to clean needles, health checkups and advice from medical personnel, access to counselling and rehabilitation programmes. Socially, this would go a long way to preventing backstreet dealership, robberies, health problems etc. We would also seek legislation in favour of the medicinal use of cannabis.

Corruption & Whistle blowing Protection

- ◆ We would instigate immediate ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Eradication of corruption would be a high priority with severe penalties, including jail, loss of job (without a golden handshake) and loss of all pension entitlements.
- ◆ We would introduce a single law that would protect citizens and employees and allow for fair and transparent follow up of all reports of suspected corruption.

- ◆ To this end Ireland should adopt a generic whistleblower protection law covering whistleblowers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. This law would be similar to the generic UK Public Interest Disclosure Act which runs to a mere nine pages and applies to the entire private and public sectors in the United Kingdom.
- ◆ Amendments should also be made to Health Act whistleblower provisions that remove the “ought to know” clause. This clause means that a healthcare worker may be sentenced to three years imprisonment for innocently making a false claim.
- ◆ The level of awards to whistleblowers that have been subject to reprisal should be of an amount that is "just and equitable in the circumstances". This is the case under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and Employment Permits Act 2006.
- ◆ Investigate introducing financial rewards for whistleblowers, once the case has been proven, and the possibility of legal action to be taken against those who are knowingly complicit in white-collar crime.

Crime

- ◆ Amend the constitution so that the Government of the day has a legal responsibility to protect the nation’s wealth - with failure resulting in jail sentences and heavy fines.
- ◆ Establish a Policing & Justice Agency and an Organised Crime Agency.
- ◆ Provide for a systematic increase in Garda numbers – at least 15,000 are currently needed.

Road Safety

- ◆ Support random breath testing and invest in enforcement so people who speed or drink drive know they will be caught.
- ◆ Increase education about the dangers of speeding with strong enforcement of speed limits, particularly in areas of high population.
- ◆ Bring road safety into the school curriculum. In 2nd Class every child should be aware of how to walk to school safely. By 5th Class, every child should know how to cycle to school safely, and in Transition Year every young person should acquire a Road Safety Certificate

Electronic tagging of Sex Offenders

- ◆ We would introduce legislation to provide for electronic tagging for sex offenders.

Environment

Environmental Protection

- ◆ Call upon the Environmental Protection Agency to draft, with public participation, a National Environmental Action Plan with short, medium and long-term targets to be approved by the Dáil and social partners.
- ◆ Enact the provision in the Environmental Protection Act to subject local authorities' sewage treatment activities to an EPA licensing regime.
- ◆ All licenses granted by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaelteacht should be reviewed in light of the Mahon Tribunal findings of political impropriety, and in particular the granting of license for the Corrib oil and gas refinery. Furthermore, any future granting of licenses should be inclusive of a vote from a committee of lay people (working class), stakeholders and experts in the field, to reflect total public involvement, a non – quango to give transparency, economic democracy and service firstly to the country, and a reflection of our commitment to Local Agenda 21. All Environmental Protection Agency licenses to follow the same remit.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

- ◆ We would establish a special dept. within the Dept of Environment for all matters concerning Birds, Wildlife, Habitat and Biodiversity. Far too little consideration has been given to these life-sustaining, but threatened natural resources.
- ◆ We would ensure an up-to-date National Biodiversity
- ◆ To use Hemp instead of short rotation plantations to supply the needs for wood pulp factories and allow the forest lands presently under the control of Coillte to either regenerate naturally or be managed by the Local Community.
- ◆ Fís Nua call for the reintroduction of the “Native Woodland Scheme”

Waste

- ◆ Set up a National Zero Waste Agency to achieve Zero Waste within 10-years and actively oppose incineration of all waste.
- ◆ The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a 24-hour enforcement phone line and 24 hour monitoring.
- ◆ Increase spending on capital investment for sewage treatment infrastructure in key towns and villages under development pressure.

Planning

- ◆ Require local authorities to have overall plans to specify the forecasted transport, education, and community service capacity requirements and to inform the Department of Education of new zoning decisions and changes to County Development Plans that have implications for future educational, community and recreational needs.

Agriculture & Forestry

- ◆ Support unified quality and health standards for agricultural production globally. Support Fair Trade and ethical projects worldwide and work towards the removal of farm subsidy programmes in the wealthier nations.
- ◆ Promote the clean green image of Ireland abroad creating a 'green Ireland' brand for food products and ensure Ireland becomes a GM-free zone and ban farming of cloned animals.
- ◆ Set a target for 10% of national acreage to be organically converted by 2018 and 20% by 2025.
- ◆ We endorse and seek to promote all types of farming, fishing and agricultural industries as a primary source of food supply for the home market. We include in this the stealth management of wild animals as a native food source.
- ◆ Call for an investigation into the closure of our sugar plants with the view of reopening the Carlow plant as soon as possible. Re-introduce the growing of Hemp as a sustainable crop to supply the present insulation needs in the building industry. Open a plant to produce Sheep's wool as an insulation.
- ◆ Launch an investigation into the failure of the Forestry industry to supply the Irish needs for timber suitable for the building industry.

Animal Welfare

- ◆ We denounce all forms of animal cruelty and terrorisation, and hunting animals for sport.

National Emergency Plan

We would immediately commence a multi- departmental National Emergency Plan to include risk assessment and management of national crises such as climate change, peak oil, national and food security, chemical and viral health threads and natural disasters.

Reform of the water sector in Ireland

Fís Nua opposes the proposed introduction of water metering and calls for the following measures in relation to conservation and improvement of water supply:

1. Conserve the usage of potable water by encouraging home & business environmental improvements e.g. dual flush toilets, rainwater harvesting, and recycling of recycling of water from sinks/baths/showers by using water buttresses, reed beds etc. This should be implemented by:
 - a) Offering grants and public works support for water conservation and wastewater treatment improvement projects, where appropriate
 - b) Introducing a system of tax credits for businesses offering services in the field of sustainable and environmentally friendly building improvements including water conservation.
 - c) Introducing a system of tax credits for individuals & businesses that undertake environmentally positive changes to their homes & business premises.

It should be noted that funding via tax credits has the additional advantage of spreading any cost to the state over a longer period of time.

2. Promote organic systems of wastewater treatment in the countryside such as reed beds
3. Raise the level of the water table and the quality of ground water by conserving trees and encouraging the planting of trees. .
4. Construct dams. Stop paying farmers to drain land, and instead pay them to dam up the old marshes (those which were not built on). These natural marshes would hold back billions of litres of water, and, for a tiny cost, Ireland would have water for generations to come. One single small dam would save more water than 2 million water meters.
5. An immediate end to the practise of water fluoridation in Ireland
6. Full and enforced implementation of the best practice recommendations in the EPA's Water Treatment Manual on Disinfection 2011 to reduce the levels of over-chlorination water and the presence of harmful trihalomethanes (THMs) in the water supply.
7. Maintain existing Local Authority responsibility for water supply with additional support from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to encourage liaison and communication across authorities to promote environmental improvement projects.

Bog Management

Fis Nua believe that the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in relation to bog management was ill advised because proper consultation did not take place which we would consider a breach of the Aarhus Convention. We believe:

- a) ALL the bogs in Ireland should be managed to an agreed management plan.
- b) Each bog should have an elected management committee from within the local community and monitored by representatives of that community.
- c) We propose those turf cutters inside and outside the present SAC designation be allowed cut their turf for an interim period until other acceptable arrangements have been found.
- d) The possibility of allotting Coillte managed lands, as compensation to turfcutters in order to allow them to plant trees suitable for coppicing should be explored. This would have the potential to give them a sustainable fuel supply.
- e) The idea should also be explored of leasing allotments of Coillte land to other residents who wish to become self sufficient for fuel.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

National Monuments

1. The party seek to undo the amendment [National Monuments \(Amendment\) Act 2004](#) and return to the National Monuments act as originally drafted
2. The party seek to add a rotating council structure to the National Monument Act to include a council / committee of up to 30 people and to include members of the public so removing one person from deciding on national monuments and in many cases our environment.
3. The party seek to define either by judicial review or procedural changes within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to define an Archaeological area as larger than just a "monument" and at least 500 metres around its outer edge in connection with other monuments and areas of interest either archaeologically, wildlife and to include urban areas.

4. That all of the above (1-3) are encapsulated into new legislation defining conservation plans away from developer led heritage or management plans and the conservation plans are included in all local, county and national development plans with the ethos, that Conservation plans come before development plans, management plans, heritage plans (so called) and are not developer led, and conservation plans are themselves a legal document.

Currently in draft the [New National Monuments Act](#) is proceeding. Further to motions from Peadar Ó Ceallaigh which called for conservation plans to be made a statutory instrument, and for licenses granted by (currently) Minister Philip Hogan Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Minister James Deenihan, Minister for the Arts Heritage and Gaelteacht, Minister Patrick Rabbitte Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, and the Environmental protection agency, (EPA) can become a part of a larger public committee decision. We ask if the new National Monuments Act removes the right of the state to destroy a national monument as in the current National Monuments Act 1930 – 2004 (amended), and further more provides statutory protection measures such as statutory conservation plans and licensing of major works to be a public body decision, to sustainably protect the environment, landscape and national monuments (and people upon these estates and areas). We ask that these stipulations are included in the new National Monuments Act.

Arts, Culture and Language

Artistic innovation and cultural heritage play a crucial part in enriching the lives of our people and also in attracting tourism to our island.

Fís Nua supports adequate investment in, and promotion of, art, crafts and culture.

Specifically, we:

- ◆ Support the National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA)
- ◆ Call for the arts portfolio to be held by a full Cabinet Minister and to be a substantive part of any new government department.
- ◆ Seek to establish appropriate social protection and other key supports for artists and craft workers and those who work in the arts and craft industry.
- ◆ Call for the establishment of a coordinated support network to aid local cultural centres and local history initiatives
- ◆ Call for greater support for the Irish language, bi-lingual signage (or Irish only signage in Gealtacht regions), official recognition of the language and full state support to residents who wish to conduct their business in Irish.
- ◆ Call for the full implementation of the Official Languages Act 2003 in the Republic and support the campaign for the Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland.
- ◆ Seek to introduce adequate measures for the protection of minority cultures and languages such as Ulster Scots.

INTERNATIONAL

Palestine

We support Palestine's bid for recognition as an Independent State and membership of the United Nations.