

Fís Nua
PROPOSED MANIFESTO 2010
As agreed by steering group 26 June 2010¹

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¹ Some agreed amendments are still pending for this document as of 27/1/2010

1 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.

2 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.

3 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 wherever possible.

4 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.

No use of destructive biofuels.

5 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.

Prioritise cycling schemes and lanes.

6 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.

7 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.

8 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.

9 Recreational Drug Use

Regulation of recreational drug use including the decriminalisation of the user, and the removal of dealers by having recreational drugs dispensed by GPs and clinics. The user would have access to pure drugs, clean needles, health checkups and advice from medical personnel, access to counselling and rehab progs. Socially, this would go a long way to preventing backstreet dealership, robberies, health problems etc.

10 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.

Abolish the registration fee for third level education.

Examine the needs of education in Irish speaking areas, including the possibility of establishing a specific Education Board to deal with such matters.

11 Tax

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

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.

12 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 necessities and such that no one would be subjected to poverty. This policy would minimize government bureaucracy and intrusiveness into people's lives.

13 Crime

Amend the constitution so that the Government of the day has a legal responsibility to protect the nations 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.

14 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

15 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.

16 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.

17 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.

18 Agriculture

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.

19 Animal Welfare

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

20 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 foreign investors.

21 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.

22 Tourism

Develop a tourism industry that places greater emphasis on activity holidays such as cycling, walking, angling, sailing, etc. – a policy that promotes the very essence of Irish country living including promoting small, local accommodation providers.

Free Travel passes for all visitors over 65, to include free ferry travel.

23 Broadband

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

24 Carers

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

25 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.

26 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. .

27 Pensions

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

28 Disability

Ensure a rights-based approach to disability.

Introduce a Cost of Disability payment of approx. €40 per week.

29 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.