



EMBASSY OF DENMARK



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DUBLIN



The Nordic Models: Resilience in Changing Times

Croke Park, 17th November 2011

In the run-up to Budget 2012, much of the debate is about the immediate choices facing us. However, it is also useful to take a step back and think about our longer-term choices – choices about different economic and social models and how they can be applied to Ireland.

The Nordic countries are often viewed as being enviably successful, enjoying economic efficiency and growth combined with peaceful labour relations, social cohesion, a fair distribution of income and high quality of life. Although critics have questioned the sustainability of this success, not least due to the challenges of globalisation, the models of development adopted by the Nordic countries (generally referring to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have proven to be relatively resilient in the face of the global economic and financial crisis. It should, of course, be noted that there are some important differences between these models.

This seminar is intended to bring a greater understanding of the Nordic Models to an Irish audience and to explore the challenges facing their sustainability in an increasingly global economy. The effects of high social investment and taxes on their economies and societies will be examined, as well as lessons that can be exchanged between Ireland and the Nordic countries.

09:15-10:00 Registration, tea/coffee

10:00-10:15 Welcoming remarks

Ambassador Niels Pultz (Danish Ambassador to Ireland)

10:15-11:00 The Nordic Models and the Challenges They Face

Chair: Dr Niamh Puirseil (historian and author)

Prof. Torben M. Andersen (Professor of Economics, University of Aarhus, Denmark)

Dr Jukka Pekkarinen (Director General, Economic Department, Finnish Ministry of Finance)

Mr David Begg (General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions)

11:00-11.45 Q&A / discussion

11:45-12:30 The Economic Return on Social Investment

Chair: Dr Sara Cantillon (Director of the Equality Studies Graduate Programme, UCD School of Social Justice)

Mr Stein Reegård (Chief Economist, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)

Dr Tom Healy (Director, Economic Research Unit)

Dr Kara McGann (Policy Executive, Irish Business and Employers Confederation)

12:30-13:15 Q&A / discussion

13:15-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:00 Lessons that can be Exchanged between Ireland and the Nordic Countries

Chair: Dr Mary Murphy (Lecturer in Irish Politics and Society, Department of Sociology, NUI Maynooth)

Dr Robin Wilson (independent researcher and member of TASC Council)

Ambassador Pertti Majanen (Finnish Ambassador to Ireland)

Prof Peadar Kirby (Professor of International Politics and Public Policy, University of Limerick)

Dr Baldur Thorhallsson (Jean Monnet Professor of Political Science, University of Iceland)

15:00-16:00 Q&A / discussion

16:00-16:15 Closing Remarks

Dr Nat O'Connor (Director, TASC)

Biographical notes

Prof **Torben M. Andersen** is Professor of Economics at the University of Aarhus, and affiliated to CEPR (London), CESifo (Munich) and IZA (Bonn). He is a former chair of the Danish Economic Council and the Welfare Commission. Recent advisory activities include: vice-chair of the Swedish Fiscal Policy Board, member of a Norwegian government commission on migration and the welfare state, and chair of a Tax- and Welfare Commission for Greenland. His main research interests include the economics of the welfare state, labour economics, public economics and business cycle theory. Prof Andersen has published extensively in international journals.

Mr **David Begg** became General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 2001. For five years prior to that he was Chief Executive of Concern Worldwide, an international humanitarian organisation working in 27 countries and with offices in Dublin, London, Belfast, New York and Chicago. He a Governor of the Irish Times Trust, a non-Executive Director of Aer Lingus, and a member of the National Economic and Social Council (NESCC). From 1995 to 2010, he was a Director of the Irish Central Bank. He also sits on the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). He holds a Master's Degree in International Relations from Dublin City University.

Dr **Sara Cantillon** is Director of the Equality Studies Graduate Programme, UCD School of Social Justice. Her main areas of research are poverty and gender, intrahousehold resource allocation and the economics of inequality. She is co-author of *Equality from Theory to Action* (Palgrave, 2009), has published in the *Journal of Social Policy*, *Radical Statistics*, *Res Publica* and *Feminist Economics*. She is the Irish Expert on the EU Network on Socio Economic Discrimination.

Dr **Tom Healy** is Director of the Economic Research Unit located in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Unit has recently been established with the support of a number of trade unions affiliated to Congress and with the aim of developing economic analysis and progressive policy options and alternatives for both economies on the island of Ireland. He has previously worked in the Economic and Social Research Institute, the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the National Economic and Social Forum and the Department of Education and Skills. His research interests include areas such as the impact of public expenditure, education, social capital and measures of well-being.

Prof **Peadar Kirby** is Professor of International Politics and Public Policy at the University of Limerick and Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Iceland. Among his recent books are *'Towards a Second Republic: Irish Politics after the Celtic Tiger'* (with Mary P. Murphy), Pluto Press, 2011 and *'Celtic Tiger in Collapse: Explaining the Weaknesses of the Irish Model'* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). He is co-author, with Baldur Thorhallsson, of *'Financial crises in Iceland and Ireland: Does EU and Euro membership matter?'* (TASC and University of Iceland Institute of International Affairs).

Ambassador **Pertti Majanen** has been the Ambassador of Finland in Dublin since 2009. He has had a long career in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including considerable experience of development co-operation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He was Under-Secretary of State in development policy and Chairman of the Board of FINNFUND, the Finnish development finance company (2000-2005). Previously he was Ambassador in Manila (1997-2000) and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland to OECD and UNESCO, Paris (2005-2009).

Dr **Kara McGann** is a policy executive at the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC). She provides advice and support on diversity, education, training and labour market activation policy and practices to IBEC member organisations. She represents Irish employers in Europe on the European Social Fund Committee. Prior to joining IBEC in 2008, Kara worked for a number of years as an organisational psychologist and human resources manager in industry and lectured at undergraduate, postgraduate and executive level in leadership, organisational behaviour and organisational change.

Dr **Mary Murphy** is a lecturer in Irish Politics and Society in the Department of Sociology, NUI Maynooth. Her research interests include the politics of redistribution, gender, power and civil society. Prior to academic life Mary worked full time in social justice campaigning groups, and she continues to be an active advocate for an equal and sustainable Ireland through the Claiming our Future movement. She has recently published (with Peadar Kirby) *Towards A Second Republic, Irish Politics After the Celtic Tiger* (Pluto).

Dr **Nat O'Connor** is Director of TASC. Nat has a background in social science research. He previously led the research team in the Homeless Agency. He has acted as a consultant to local government and has been retained as an occasional lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth. Nat holds a PhD in

Political Science from Trinity College Dublin and an MA in Political Science and Social Policy from Dundee University.

Dr **Jukka Pekkarinen** is Director General of the Economic Department in the Finnish Ministry of Finance. He previously served in the Prime Minister's Office as State Under-Secretary for Economic Affairs and Secretary General of the Economic Council. Other positions held by Dr Pekkarinen have included Director of the Labour Institute for Economic Research.

Dr **Niamh Puirseil** has written extensively on Irish history and particularly on modern Irish political history. Her books include academic monographs and edited collections as well as popular histories, and she is a former editor of the Irish Labour History journal, *Saothar*. Her specialties include politics in the republic of Ireland; left wing political movements and labour history, and British-Irish relations.

Mr **Stein Reegård** graduated with a degree in Economics from the University of Oslo in 1976. Among other positions, he has worked as a State Secretary at the Ministry of Industry and economic adviser to the Labour Party Parliamentary Group. He has served on a number of government committees, most recently the Government Finance Crisis Committee. Stein Reegård is currently Chief Economist with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions.

Dr **Baldur Thorhallsson** is Jean Monnet Professor of Political Science and founder of the Centre for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland. His research focus is primarily on small-state studies, European integration and Iceland's foreign policy. He has published a number of articles on small states in Europe, European integration and Iceland's foreign policy. He has written two books on small states in Europe: *Iceland and European Integration: On the Edge* and *The Role of Small States in the European Union*.

Dr **Robin Wilson** is an independent researcher and a member of the TASC Council. He was commissioned to contribute a paper on the Nordic model for the TASC project on a 'Flourishing Society'. He has been heavily involved in the international debate sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on the 'good society', and recently jointly authored *Building the Good Society*, published by Compass. He represents TASC on a project in Cyprus replicating an earlier TASC project in Ireland assessing the democratic adequacy of the two jurisdictions on the island. He is the author of *The Northern Ireland Experience of Conflict and Agreement: A Model for Export?* (Manchester University Press, 2010).