



An Bille um Pleanáil le haghaidh Athrú Bunreachtúil, 2026
Planning for Constitutional Change Bill 2026

Mar a tionscnaíodh

As initiated



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ACTS REFERRED TO

British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 (No. 1)

Citizens' Assemblies Act 2019 (No. 25)



AN BILLE UM PLEANÁIL LE hAGHAIDH ATHRÚ BUNREACHTÚIL, 2026
PLANNING FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE BILL 2026

Bill

entitled

An Act to provide for planning and preparation for the possibility of constitutional change on the island of Ireland, in accordance with the right of self-determination of the people of the island of Ireland as recognised by the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 and as provided for in the Multi-Party Agreement reached at Belfast on the 10th day of April 1998; to require the Taoiseach to prepare and publish a Green Paper; to provide for the convening of a Citizens' Assembly from within such resources as are available under the Vote for the Department of the Taoiseach; to require periodic reporting to the Houses of the Oireachtas on progress; and to provide for related matters. 5 10

WHEREAS in accordance with Article 3 of the Constitution, it is the firm will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions, recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island; 15

AND WHEREAS the Government of Ireland, as co-guarantor of the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland done at Belfast on the 10th day of April 1998, has an obligation to support and, where appropriate, implement the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement annexed thereto; 20

AND WHEREAS the Multi-Party Agreement recognises the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, and recognises that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish; 25

AND WHEREAS there is a growing national and international discussion around the possibility of constitutional change, with people from diverse backgrounds exploring the implications of Irish unity;

AND WHEREAS the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, in its report entitled “Perspectives on Constitutional Change: Finance and Economics” published in July 2024, which received cross-party support, recommended that planning and preparation begin for the possibility of change to constitutional arrangements, including through the publication of a Green Paper, the convening of Citizens’ Assemblies, and extensive public engagement; 5
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AND WHEREAS responsible governance requires that the State plan and prepare for the possibility of constitutional change in an orderly, inclusive, and informed manner, so that the people of the island of Ireland may exercise the right of self-determination, should they choose to do so, on the basis of reliable and accessible information;

Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows: 15

Interpretation

1. In this Act—

“Act of 1999” means the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999;

“Act of 2019” means the Citizens’ Assemblies Act 2019;

“British-Irish Agreement” has the meaning assigned to it by section 2 of the Act of 1999; 20

“Citizens’ Assembly” means a citizens’ assembly convened in accordance with the Act of 2019 and established by resolution of the Houses of the Oireachtas;

“civil society organisations” includes business and trade union representative bodies, academic and research institutions, community organisations, voluntary organisations, religious bodies, cultural organisations, youth organisations, sporting bodies, and any other organisation or body representative of the interests of the people of the island of Ireland; 25

“Green Paper” means a document prepared by or on behalf of the Government setting out policy proposals for public consultation;

“Multi-Party Agreement” has the meaning assigned to it by section 2 of the Act of 1999; 30

“Vote” means the Vote for the Department of the Taoiseach, being a coherent area of Government expenditure which is the responsibility of that Department and which is in turn accountable to Dáil Éireann for the expenditure shown, as set out in the Revised Estimates for Public Services for the relevant financial year.

Green Paper on planning and preparing for constitutional change

2. (1) The Taoiseach shall, within 18 months of the commencement of this section, prepare and publish a Green Paper on planning and preparing for the possibility of change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and the exercise by the people of the island of Ireland of the right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, as recognised in the British-Irish Agreement and the Multi-Party Agreement. 5
- (2) The Green Paper shall address, without limitation—
- (a) the economic and fiscal implications of the reunification of Ireland, including for public finances, taxation, and the subvention currently provided by the United Kingdom Government in respect of Northern Ireland, 10
 - (b) the implications for public services, including health, education, social protection, policing, and justice,
 - (c) the institutional and governance arrangements that may be required, founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities, 15
 - (d) the implications for relationships within the island of Ireland and between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, including the maintenance and development of the totality of relationships provided for in the British-Irish Agreement and the Multi-Party Agreement, 20
 - (e) the protection and vindication of the human rights of all persons on the island, and
 - (f) such other matters as the Taoiseach considers relevant. 25
- (3) In preparing the Green Paper, the Taoiseach shall consult with—
- (a) civil society organisations,
 - (b) representatives of all political traditions and communities on the island of Ireland, including those from Unionist and Protestant backgrounds,
 - (c) persons or bodies with particular expertise in the matters addressed in the Green Paper, and 30
 - (d) such other persons as the Taoiseach considers appropriate,
- and in so doing shall have particular regard to ensuring that arrangements are made to facilitate participation by those whose voices are traditionally underrepresented in policy-making, including women, young people, older people, ethnic minorities, and new communities. 35
- (4) The Taoiseach shall cause copies of the Green Paper to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Citizens' Assembly

3. (1) The Government shall, from within such resources as are available under the Vote, 40

convene a Citizens' Assembly to consider the implications of, and matters arising from, the possibility of the exercise by the people of the island of Ireland of the right of self-determination and the reunification of Ireland, within 12 months of the publication of the Green Paper under *section 2*.

- (2) The Citizens' Assembly convened under this section shall, in so far as is practicable, be representative of the people of the island of Ireland and shall include perspectives from across all communities and traditions on the island. 5
- (3) The Citizens' Assembly shall operate in accordance with the practices and procedures established for citizens' assemblies previously convened by the Oireachtas.
- (4) The Citizens' Assembly shall, on completion of its deliberations, prepare a report setting out its findings and recommendations and the Taoiseach shall cause copies of the report to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas. 10
- (5) The Government shall provide a response to the recommendations contained in any report laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas under *subsection (4)*, within 6 months of the report being so laid. 15

Engagement with communities

4. (1) In the course of planning and preparing for constitutional change under this Act, the Government shall engage with communities and political traditions across the island of Ireland, including in particular with members of the Northern Protestant and Unionist community, with a view to building understanding, mutual respect, and consensus. 20
- (2) In carrying out its functions under *subsection (1)*, the Government shall have regard to the principles underpinning the British-Irish Agreement and the Multi-Party Agreement, including—
 - (a) that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination, 25
 - (b) the principle of consent,
 - (c) parity of esteem for, and the equal legitimacy of, the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities, 30
 - (d) the protection and vindication of the human rights of all persons on the island, and
 - (e) the importance of reconciliation and the fostering of mutual understanding.

Annual report to Oireachtas

5. (1) The Taoiseach shall, on an annual basis commencing not later than 12 months after the commencement of this Act, prepare a report on the progress made in implementing the provisions of this Act. 35
- (2) A report under *subsection (1)* shall include—
 - (a) a summary of progress in the preparation or publication of the Green Paper under

section 2,

- (b) a summary of progress in the convening and conduct of the Citizens' Assembly under *section 3,*
 - (c) a summary of the engagement undertaken under *section 4,* and
 - (d) such other information as the Taoiseach considers relevant. 5
- (3) The Taoiseach shall cause copies of each report under this section to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Regulations

6. (1) The Taoiseach may make regulations prescribing any matter referred to in this Act as prescribed or to be prescribed. 10
- (2) Regulations under this Act may contain such incidental, supplementary and consequential provisions as appear to the Taoiseach to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the regulations.
- (3) Every regulation made under this section shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after it is made and, if a resolution annulling the regulation is passed by either such House within the next 21 days on which that House has sat after the regulation is laid before it, the regulation shall be annulled accordingly, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder. 15

Short title and commencement

7. (1) This Act may be cited as the Planning for Constitutional Change Act 2026. 20
- (2) This Act shall come into operation on such day or days as the Taoiseach may by order appoint either generally or with reference to any particular purpose or provision and different days may be so appointed for different purposes or different provisions.

An Bille um Pleanáil le haghaidh Athrú
Bunreachtúil, 2026

BILLE

(mar a tionscnaíodh)

dá ngairtear

Acht do dhéanamh socrú chun pleanáil agus ullmhú a dhéanamh i ndáil leis an bhféidearthacht go ndéanfaí athrú bunreachtúil ar oileán na hÉireann, de réir an chirt féinchinnidh atá ag muintir oileán na hÉireann a aithnítear leis an Acht um Chomhaontú na Breataine-na hÉireann, 1999 agus de réir mar a fhoráiltear sa Chomhaontú Ilpháirtí ar thángthas air i mBéal Feirste an 10ú lá d'Aibreán 1998; dá cheangal ar an Taoiseach Páipéar Uaine a ullmhú agus a fhoilsiú; do dhéanamh socrú maidir le Tionól Saoránach a chomórath de réir na n-acmhainní sin atá ar fáil faoin Vóta i gcomhair Roinn an Taoisigh; dá cheangal go ndéanfar dul chun cinn a thuairisciú do Thithe an Oireachtais ar bhonn tréimhsiúil; agus do dhéanamh socrú i dtaobh nithe gaolmhara.

An Teachta Máire Laoise Mhic Dhomhnaill a thug
isteach,

16 Meitheamh, 2026

Planning for Constitutional Change Bill
2026

BILL

(as initiated)

entitled

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Introduced by Deputy Mary Lou McDonald,

16th June, 2026

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR

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