

Hybrid Meeting of the Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations

Wednesday, 7th December 2022, at 1pm

Minutes

Attendees:

Dr Maurice Manning (*Chair*)
Dr Martin Mansergh (*Deputy Chair*)
Dr Sandra Collins
Professor Mary Daly
Mr Francis Devine
Mr Gabriel Doherty
Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
Professor Patrick Geoghegan
Dr Mary Harris
Mr Jerry Kelleher
Comdt. Stephen MacEoin
Dr Sinéad McCoole
Professor Eunan O'Halpin
Ms Pauline Kiernan *D/Taoiseach*
Mr Conor Falvey *D/TCAGSM*
Ms Sinéad Copeland *D/TCAGSM*

Orlaith Lochrin *D/TCAGSM*
Ms Muirne Lyons *D/TCAGSM*

Apologies:

Dr Anne Dolan
Dr Leeann Lane
Dr William Murphy

Guest Attendees:

Ellie Farrell, *Director for Engagement, Ireland, United Kingdom and Americas Division*
Eóin Duggan, *Deputy Director, UNSC Task Team*

Key Points:

The Chair and Deputy Chair led warm tributes to the late Dr Éamon Phoenix, a deeply valued member of the Expert Advisory Group since its inception in 2012. Members of the Group reflected on his immense contribution to the Decade of Centenaries and public history, noting his thoughtful and skilful engagement with local communities on potentially divisive and difficult issues. Dr Phoenix created common bonds of trust and offered sound advice and encouragement to diverse local groups, which has been most helpful in achieving balanced remembrance of very complex events. Dr Phoenix is greatly missed and the Chair will write to his family, on behalf of the Group, to express our deepest sympathies.

The Chair congratulated and commended UCD for organising an excellent conference to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Irish State. The conference, which took place on 2nd and 3rd December, was very well received and a very significant event in informing and encouraging broad public discourse on this key event in our modern history. The Taoiseach delivered the opening address and the conference was supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Colleagues from the Department of Foreign Affairs gave an overview to the Group on planned initiatives to mark the centenary of Ireland's admission into the League of Nations. A number of public facing and accessible initiatives are under consideration to highlight the historical significance of this event and also to look to the future in the context of the *Global Ireland 2025* multi-annual, whole of Government, strategic initiative.

The Expert Advisory Group welcomed these initial proposals. They offered advice and assistance to ensure that this very symbolic centenary moment is marked in an appropriate way and set within the proper context that reflects the enormity of this achievement and engages the public. The Group is very supportive of the plans and suggested that this centenary be marked in the context of an event of national significance, as Ireland took her place among the nations – a positive and uplifting ending to the Decade of Centenaries. The Department of Foreign Affairs will further consider their plans in light of the Group's advice and provide an update to the Group then.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, with one amendment – noting that '*A further element of recognition is required...*' to mark the centenary of the civil war. This matter will be considered further at the next meeting of the Group.

Comdt. Stephen MacEoin noted that many sites of execution during the Civil War period are barracks that are currently in use by the Defence Forces. The Defence Forces are very conscious of the historical and personal significance of these sites. A number of requests have been received from family members of those who were executed seeking permission to facilitate personal visits to the barracks if possible – formal ceremonial events are not envisaged to mark these centenaries. The Defence Forces would like to facilitate these requests if this would be appropriate and have sought guidance from the Expert Advisory Group in this regard. The Group is supportive of this approach and the Chair invited Comdt. MacEoin to provide further briefing for discussion at the next meeting of the Group.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Ends.