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Desk research on the Irish “No” campaign, 16 May 2008

- **What organisations and parties are campaigning for a No vote in the Irish Referendum?**

All political parties with representation in the Dáil (Irish House of Representatives) are campaigning for a Yes vote, with the notable exception of Sinn Fein. Besides them, the key actors in the No vote are individuals and small organisations and parties, such as former Green MEP Patricia McKenna’s “People’s Movement”, veteran eurosceptic Anthony Coughlan’s “National Platform”, and several very small left-wing, pro-life and anti-immigration groups.¹ By far the most important organisation in the No campaign in terms of funding and press coverage is Libertas, which was set up in summer 2005² by Irish entrepreneur Declan Ganley.

- **Who is Declan Ganley?**

Declan Ganley is an Irish entrepreneur with an estimated personal fortune of €300 million.³ He has long-held views on European integration: far from being a traditional right-wing Eurosceptic, he is actually in favour of greater European integration, but based around pro-business, free-market and libertarian ideals.

He considers himself politically centrist: he has been a major financial backer of the pro-Treaty ruling party Fianna Fail, and has also donated to the Progressive Democrats,⁴ a free-market liberal party who are campaigning on the Yes side.

Ganley has **strong ties to the United States**: his wife is American and they have a home in Washington DC as well as in Ireland.⁵ He is also sympathetic to the military in general, and is a reservist in the Irish Army and a member of the Naval and Military Club in London.⁶

¹ <http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/story.aspx-qqqt=NEWS+FEATURES-qqqm=nav-qqqid=32590-qqqx=1.asp>

² Telephone conversation with John McGuirk, Libertas’ Director of Communications, 14/05/08.

³ http://www.ganleygroup.com/declanganley_europeanbusiness_profile.pdf

⁴ http://www.tribune.ie/article.tvt?_scope=Tribune/News/Comment&id=81885&SUBCAT=Tribune/News&SUBCATNA ME=News

His company Rivada Networks, which he has described as “a cross between Vodafone and Lockheed Martin – a telco plus defence contractor”⁷, has contracts with the US Department of Defence, the Department of Homeland Security and several US states.⁸ It has a board dominated by American nationals, several **with strong US military or government connections at the highest level**. These include:

- James Tackett, who spent 20 years in the United States Air Force (USAF) as a Communications-Computer Officer.
- Don N. De Marino, who served under the Reagan and Bush Senior administrations, working particularly on US economic co-operation with countries in the Middle East.
- John J. Kelly, Jr, a former US Air Force Captain with a background in industries relating to homeland security.
- Admiral James M. Loy, who was Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security from 2003-2005.
- Lt. General Dennis M. McCarthy, a retired General with a long history of service in the US Marines.⁹

According to Ganley, “...these guys aren’t decorative board members. They’re roll-up-your-sleeves, get-stuck in; they’re as executive as any non-exec ever got.”¹⁰

- **What other organisations support Libertas?**

The mainstream Irish business community is broadly in favour of the Lisbon Treaty,¹¹ and Libertas’ No campaign is by no means supported by a consensus among US interests in Ireland either. The American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland supports the Treaty and maintains that a No vote would seriously damage Ireland’s economy.¹²

Libertas has not formally joined with the other organisations on the No side, but its staff are briefed on their activities and meet with them in discussions.¹³

Libertas describes itself as a “pan-European think tank” and claims to have members and connections across the EU.¹⁴ However, these members cannot legally make donations to the organisation (see below) and do not appear to be significant in numbers.

⁵ <http://www.rivada.com/about/keypersonnel/declanjanley.htm>

⁶ http://www.ganleygroup.com/declanganley_europeanbusiness_profile.pdf

⁷ http://www.ganleygroup.com/declanganley_europeanbusiness_profile.pdf

⁸ <http://www.albca.com/aclis/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=889>

⁹ <http://www.rivada.com/about/keypersonnel.htm>

¹⁰ http://www.ganleygroup.com/declanganley_europeanbusiness_profile.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/lisbon-treaty-no-threat-to-low-taxes-says-corporate-ireland-1367542.html>

¹² <http://www.sbpost.ie/post/pages/p/story.aspx-qqqt=NEWS+FEATURES-qqqm=nav-qqqid=32590-qqqx=1.asp>

¹³ Telephone conversation with John McGuirk, Libertas’ Director of Communications, 14/05/08.

The most notable personality to publicly support Libertas is Ulick McEvaddy.¹⁵

- **Who is Ulick McEvaddy?**

Ulick McEvaddy is an Irish aviation tycoon who previously worked as an intelligence officer in the Irish Army for 10 years.¹⁶ He is a **keen proponent of NATO membership for Ireland**.¹⁷ McEvaddy's company Omega Air has **contracts with the US military**,¹⁸ and when asked in an interview about the possibility of Knock airport, of which he is a board member, being used as a stopover for US troop flights, he said:

*"I have huge connections with the US military and if it came to using them I would."*¹⁹

From 1999 onwards Omega Air was involved in a legal battle with the European Commission over legislation which limits noisy aircraft and therefore threatens the company's key business; the company now faces a further threat from the Commission's Trading Emissions Directive.²⁰ This may go some way to explaining McEvaddy's personal opposition to the Lisbon Treaty.

- **How is Libertas funded?**

Libertas has been widely quoted in the press as estimating that it will spend **€1.5 million** on its campaign.²¹ Director of Communications John McGuirk confirmed that this is indeed the target, but stated that the organisation has only spent €300,000 to date.²² Under Irish law, Libertas qualifies as a "third party" which means that it must register with the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO). Under their regulations, it is prevented from accepting:

- any donation, or donations from the same person, in the same year exceeding **€6,348.69**;
- a donation from any individual who is **not an Irish citizen or resident** in the Republic of Ireland;
- a donation from an organisation which does not have an office in the Republic of Ireland from which one or more one of its primary activities is directed;

¹⁴ Telephone conversation with John McGuirk, Libertas' Director of Communications, 14/05/08.

¹⁵ <http://www.libertas.org/content/view/264/127/>

¹⁶ <http://integrator.hanscom.af.mil/2006/July/07132006/07132006-16.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.irigov.ie/debates-99/2nov99/sect5.htm>

¹⁸ "Why McEvaddy will vote No", The Phoenix, May 2 2008.

¹⁹ <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/knock-director-eyes-military-flights-59449.html>

²⁰ "Why McEvaddy will vote No", The Phoenix, May 2 2008.

²¹ <http://archives.tcm.ie/businesspost/2008/01/27/story29928.asp>

²² Telephone conversation with John McGuirk, Libertas' Director of Communications, 14/05/08.

- any anonymous donation exceeding the value of **€126.97**.²³

According to the Standards Commission, there is **no restriction on third parties taking out loans to fund campaign activities**, and this would not be monitored by the body.²⁴ Furthermore, the law only requires that a third party submit a statement of their donations, and this would only be followed up in the case of a complaint of “sufficient gravity to warrant investigation”.²⁵

A statement by Communications Director John McGuirk claims that Libertas received two donations at the maximum level of €6,348.69 in 2007, from Declan Ganley and his wife, Delia Ganley, and that no other donor crossed the €4,999.99 threshold which would legally require their identity to be made public.²⁶ There has been speculation in the press that €1.5 million appears an extremely ambitious amount to fundraise under these regulations, but Libertas refuses to comment on its sources of funding other than to state that it is in compliance with the SIPO regulations.

Considering Ganley and McEvaddy’s business connections, however, it is not unfeasible that they could find 300 Irish residents or US-resident Irish citizens wealthy and willing enough to contribute €4,999.99 each, which would produce their target of €1.5 million without requiring that any of these donors be publicly named. Only 60 donors paying €4,999.99 each would be required to produce the €300,000 Libertas already claim to have spent on their campaign. This level of fundraising would likely require more than the two staff (besides Ganley himself) listed on the Libertas website;²⁷ however the contact address for the organisation is the same as that of Ganley Group²⁸, Declan Ganley’s private equity firm, and calling the Libertas contact number reveals that Ganley Group employees are apparently working on the campaign.

Is it therefore entirely possible for Libertas to raise the kind of sums projected in full compliance with the SIPO legislation from **a combination of loans and fundraising**, or even solely by fundraising given the extensive personal connections that multi-millionaire businessmen such as Ganley and McEvaddy would naturally possess.

What are Ganley’s long-term aims for Libertas?

²³ <http://www.sipo.gov.ie/en/Guidelines/ExplanatoryNotes/ThirdParties/120308-ExplanatoryNotefor3rdpartiesatreferendum/>

²⁴ Telephone conversation with Jacqueline Moore of the Standards in Public Office Commission, 14/05/08.

²⁵ <http://www.sipo.gov.ie/en/GeneralPublications/InvestigationProtocol/Name,2279,en.htm>

²⁶ Letter to Irish Times, posted on: <http://www.politics.ie/viewtopic.php?f=172&t=32979&st=0&sk=t&sd=a&start=120>

²⁷ <http://www.libertas.org/content/view/81/88/>

²⁸ http://www.libertas.org/component/option,com_contact/Itemid,3/

In a December 2003 article entitled "Europe's Constitutional Treaty: A Threat to Democracy and How to Avoid It" published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, an American think tank "devoted to bringing the insights of scholarship to bear on the development of policies that advance U.S. national interests"²⁹, Ganley wrote:

*"Rather than try to define itself in contradistinction to the United States, this new Europe must be an equal partner and influence for the worldwide extension of justice and liberty. Such a political party— I will for the sake of discussion call it "Libertas"—will need to challenge the engrained composition of the convention in local and regional elections, as well as running candidates at member-state and EU levels."*³⁰

In November 2006, Ganley further expounded his idea for a pan-European organisation called Libertas "that might morph into **a powerfully-funded pro-business, pro-free trade, pro-accountability, anti-corruption European political party**".³¹

At present however, Libertas appears to be concentrating its activities almost exclusively on campaigning against the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland. The only other interest mentioned on their website is the creation of free-market incentives for the research and development of alternative energies.³² This appears to be little more than a "pet project" of Declan Ganley's at present, but he clearly has ambitions to develop it in the future.

²⁹ <http://www.fpri.org/about/>

³⁰ <http://www.fpri.org/ww/0405.200312.ganley.euconstitution.html>

³¹ http://www.ganleygroup.com/declanganley_europeanbusiness_profile.pdf

³² <http://www.libertas.org/content/view/188/107/>