



Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland



2019 Irish Studies Guest Lecture Series

Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci

11 December, 16.15-17.45 (Room F-230)

Prof. John O'Brennan (Maynooth University, Ireland)

'Ireland and the European Union: Challenges and Opportunities Arising from Brexit'

The 23 June 2016 'Brexit' referendum did not just change the political landscape of the United Kingdom. Almost overnight, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland were faced with very significant constitutional and policy challenges. In particular Brexit challenges the integrity of both the political institutions and constitutional arrangements put in place to underpin the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) which has underpinned peace on the island of Ireland since 1998. Brexit has also damaged UK-Irish relations in a myriad of ways. It is the deterioration of the relationship between Dublin and London that is the primary focus on this paper. It employs an *East-West* frame which examines both the relationship between the UK and Ireland and Ireland's relationship with the European Union. It argues that Brexit reinforced Ireland's geopolitical 'Choice for Europe' and accelerated impulses towards deeper Irish engagement with European integration.

Prof. John O'Brennan holds the Jean Monnet Chair of European Integration at Maynooth University and is Director of the Maynooth Centre for European and Eurasian Studies and Vice-President of the Association for Contemporary European Studies (IACES). His research focuses on EU Enlargement policy and the EU relationship with Eastern and South Eastern Europe. He also works on Ireland's experience of EU membership and, more recently, Brexit. He is a member of the Irish government's Brexit Stakeholder Group and the 'Future of Europe' group of the Irish Institute for European and International Affairs (IIEA). He is the author of a number of books on EU enlargement and is a regular commentator on European integration for Irish and international media outlets. Most recently, he has edited a special issue of *Irish Political Studies* (November 2019, with Prof. Mary C. Murphy) examining Ireland's relationship with the European Union.