## The Future of Northern Ireland: Opinion Poll Exclusive

Establish a Northern Ireland Assembly with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An elected Assembly</td>
<td>Protestant: 48% Catholic: 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An appointed second chamber of senate</td>
<td>Protestant: 17% Catholic: 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers of administration</td>
<td>Protestant: 35% Catholic: 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers to initiate and develop new policies</td>
<td>Protestant: 39% Catholic: 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers to make new laws</td>
<td>Protestant: 40% Catholic: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers to alter taxes</td>
<td>Protestant: 36% Catholic: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees that shadow and monitor the departments of the Northern Ireland office</td>
<td>Protestant: 23% Catholic: 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Why Ulster now wants to have new assembly

Today, the Belfast Telegraph publishes exclusively the second of a four-part series from an opinion poll carried out by the Queen’s University/Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the survey’s author, DR COLIN IRWIN, (pictured) examines support for a local assembly.

Wide cross section quizzed for views on regional organisations

Today the political parties returned to the Stormont Talks after a six-week post-Christmas break. The last time they met was on 12 December, when a deal was announced creating a new power-sharing executive that is intended to last for three years, while a normal legislature is put in place.

The poll was carried out by Political and Administrative Research Associates and consisted of interviews with 500 adults in Northern Ireland, split equally between the two main traditions. The poll was conducted in December and January.

**Conclusions**

The reform of local bodies is favoured by both traditions

When asked to choose between local government or a power-sharing executive, 57% of Catholics and 56% of Protestants said they would prefer a new assembly to be created. A majority of both traditions was in favour of a new assembly.

Executive to be only from parties committed to non-violence

Catholics would prefer the appointment of a new executive to be based on equal representation by both traditions, with a majority of both parties in the assembly. Protestants were more inclined to accept a minority with a majority of one party in the assembly. Catholic parties were more likely to accept the introduction of new laws by a majority of both Catholic and Protestant parties.

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### Talks record a blueprint for present day?

By Donald Kennedy

**DESPITE CLICKERS of politicians and the liberal left, inter-party talks leading to the new Stormont talks have been in progress for more than a year and a half.**

Belfast Taoiseach Martin McGuinness, once a leader of the Northern Ireland assembly, has said that the talks are a "darker possibility."

A survey of 1,000 adults in Northern Ireland, conducted by The Telegraph, found that 43% of respondents believed that the talks were a "darker possibility."

An official record of the talks, released by the Northern Ireland Office, showed that the talks were in progress, but it was not clear when they would be completed.

While the negotiations continue, the future of the Northern Ireland assembly is uncertain. The assembly was originally set up in 1998, but it has struggled to function effectively. The assembly has been divided by political differences, and the lack of an executive has caused significant delays in implementing policies.

**Is the nationalist side, therefore, courting disaster by becoming too weak to break?**

As the talks continue, the prospects for a successful conclusion to the talks remain uncertain. The talks have been characterized by divisions among political leaders, and there is a risk that the talks could fail to produce a meaningful result.

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### Surprise in the latest findings

**Conclusion:**

Given the reservations politicians have about the talks, it is not surprising that a majority of both communities are willing to accept a new assembly. However, the talks must be conducted in a way that ensures both traditions have a say in the decision-making process.

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**TOMORROW: WHO EXACTLY WANTS NORTH-SOUTH BODIES?**

By Dennis Kennedy

**Patrick Mayhew: Earlier talks.**

The Union Project, DSD, and the Ulster Unionists are working on a blueprint for present day. Over 600,000 people have signed up to the Union Project, which aims to establish a new assembly for Northern Ireland.

On the EU front, the Union Project has won over 30% of the vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. The project has been supported by a wide range of political parties, including the DUP and Sinn Fein.

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