



NORTHERN IRELAND
WOMANS EUROPEAN
P L A T F O R M

24th October 1994

John Alderdice
Alliance Party of NI
88 University Street
Belfast 7

Dear John

The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation will soon begin its important work which is aimed at creating the conditions for a lasting peace on this island and the development of long-term trusting relationships between the people. The Forum in the context of the ceasefires which have been called both by the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries represents a crucial moment in the history of this island. The nature of how it works, the openness of its discussions and the degree to which it is in every sense inclusive will determine, in many respects, the quality of the deliberations and conclusions which may be reached.

The Northern Ireland Women's European Platform together with its sister organisation the Council for the Status of Women, supports the steps which are being taken to achieve a peaceful settlement and future. When we talk about building a new future where there is respect between different traditions, and parity of esteem, we have to recognise that these admirable qualities must also apply to the relationship between men and women. We share the responsibility for the future.

First and foremost the creation of a new way forward requires that both men and women are involved and in that context we are concerned that with the representation already agreed for political parties there will be balanced representation of women as well as men.

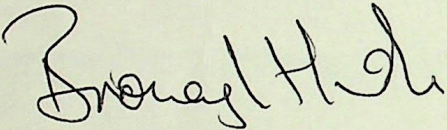
Secondly, the indication that the Forum will not be exclusive to political representation is welcome and we trust that this broader approach will allow important voices representing women, business, the trade unions, the voluntary and community sector, the unemployed, the churches and others to participate.

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We feel sure that we can count on you in both areas and look forward to hearing who will represent the Alliance Party at the Forum. In addition we look forward to the Forum providing new thinking and ideas for the future through the broad representative nature of the participants.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bronagh Hinds". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

BRONAGH HINDS
Chair