

Text 9. Botox, Big Macs and Mayo

Facts and figures

Ireland was colonised by the English in the 17th century. In 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty gave dominion status to the 26 southern counties as the Irish Free State (Eire), the six northern counties remaining part of the United Kingdom (Ulster). In 1948 the 26 counties declared their independence as the Irish Republic. Between 1968 and 1994, several thousand civilians were killed in Ireland and Britain as a consequence of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

Its rapid growth between 1995 and 2008 caused the Republic of Ireland to be dubbed the Celtic Tiger: the population increased by almost 15%, employment soared from 1.1 million to 1.9 million and its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was the second within the European Union (after Luxembourg). It achieved this success through a combination of economic openness to global markets and low taxes to attract foreign investors (IBM, Lotus, Microsoft, Allergan, Bausch & Lomb...). Foreign investment represented 17% of the GDP in 2003. But since 2008, Ireland has been in recession with GDP contracting by 14% and unemployment levels rising to 14% in 2010. With considerable efforts from the population, the economy picked up again in 2012.

Globalisation means that goods, capital, labour, technology and ideas are easily moved across national borders. Low-cost communications, the Internet and digitalisation have made it possible to reorganise production abroad and to provide services from a distance. **The anti-globalisation movement** exposes inequality between countries: the most globalised nations achieve economic growth, low inflation, higher incomes and greater economic freedom. The least globalised countries suffer from economic stagnation, inflation and diminished competitiveness.

Today, the preoccupation is the **growing inequality within each country**: while a **happy few** are getting richer, the income of the median family is lower than it was five years ago. The gap damages social cohesion and holds back the economy. People enjoy neither equal opportunities nor equal outcomes.

Ireland in figures (2011)

The Republic of Ireland (Eire)	Northern Ireland (Ulster), United Kingdom
President : Michael D. Higgins	Monarch : Queen Elizabeth II,
Taoiseach (Prime Minister) : Enda Kenny	First Minister : Peter Robinson
Area : 70,273km ²	Area : 13,843km ²
Population : 4,6 million	Population : 1,8 million
Capital : Dublin (1.8 million)	Capital : Belfast (580,000)
Official languages : English, Irish	Official language : English, Ulster Scots
Religion : Roman Catholicism (92 %)	Religions : Catholics 60 %, Protestants 35 %
GDP : \$ 2217 billion	GDP : £ 33.2 billion

Words you might need

Globalisation : la mondialisation

abroad : à l'étranger
overseas : outre-mer
worldwide : dans le monde entier
the global economy : l'économie mondiale
a global network : un réseau mondial
the global village : le village planétaire
trade : les échanges commerciaux
free trade : le libre-échange
fair trade : le commerce équitable
protectionism : le protectionnisme
tariffs : les droits de douane
trade barriers : les barrières douanières
trading partners : des partenaires commerciaux
standardization : l'uniformisation
a budding economy : une économie naissante
foreign investment : les investissements étrangers
the free circulation of goods : la libre circulation des marchandises
an antiglobalisation activist : un altermondialiste
developing countries : les pays en voie de développement
emerging countries : les pays émergents
a borderless world : un monde sans frontières
an exporter : un exportateur
imports : les importations
cheap labour : la main-d'œuvre bon marché
child labour : le travail des enfants
unfair competition : la concurrence déloyale
relocating : la délocalisation
a sweatshop : un atelier où les ouvriers sont exploités
the West : l'Occident
Western countries : les pays occidentaux
the Far-East : l'Extrême-Orient

the Middle East : le Moyen-Orient
the International Monetary Fund (IMF) : le Fonds Monétaire International (FMI)
the World Trade Organization (WTO) : l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce (OMC)
the World Bank : la Banque Mondiale
outsource jobs : délocaliser des emplois

The corporate world : le monde de l'entreprise

a company : une société
a multinational (company) : une multinationale
a firm : une entreprise
a corporation (US) : une firme, une société
jobs : des emplois
work : le travail
a worker : un travailleur
the workforce : la main-d'œuvre
the labour force : la main-d'œuvre
a manager : un dirigeant
an executive : un cadre
a top/chief executive : un cadre dirigeant
the President : le Président
the Chairman : le Directeur général
the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) : le Secrétaire général
a supervisor : un contremaître
a workshop : un atelier
the staff : le personnel
the personnel (US) : le personnel
a partner : un associé
a competitor : un concurrent
competitiveness : la compétitivité
productivity : la productivité
prosperity : la prospérité
to thrive, thrive, thriven : prospérer
revamping : la modernisation
a merger : une fusion
restructuring : la restructuration

downsizing : la réduction des effectifs
to slash : réduire radicalement
to streamline : dégraisser, rationaliser
to trim the fat : dégraisser
the pay slip : la feuille de paye
subcontracting : la sous-traitance
a sub-contractor : un sous-traitant
an occupation : une profession
the professions : les professions libérales
the pay/the wages : la paye
a salary : un salaire

Social unrest/strife : les conflits sociaux

the economic crisis (plur. crises) : la crise économique
recession : la récession
to crash : s'effondrer
to go bankrupt : faire faillite
bankruptcy : la faillite
to dismiss/to lay off : licencier
to fire/to sack : virer
job flexibility : la flexibilité de l'emploi
job insecurity : la précarité de l'emploi
long-term unemployment : le chômage de longue durée
the dole : l'indemnité chômage
to be on the dole : être au chômage
pay cuts : des réductions de salaire
redundancy : le chômage technique
to be made redundant : être en chômage technique
a strike : une grève
industrial action : des actions revendicatives
to resign : démissionner
resignation : la démission
a severance pay : l'indemnité de licenciement
a golden handshake : une prime de départ
a trade union : un syndicat
a union leader : un dirigeant syndical
a shop steward : un représentant syndical
the unemployed : les chômeurs
unemployment : le chômage
moonshining : le travail au noir

The distribution of wealth : la répartition de la richesse

the affluent society : la société d'abondance
a billionaire : un milliardaire
wealth : la richesse
wealthy/well-off/affluent : à l'aise
deprived/disadvantaged/underprivileged : défavorisé
an impoverished neighbourhood : une banlieue défavorisée
underpaid : sous-payé
badly-paid : mal payé
poverty : la pauvreté
riches : des biens, des richesses
below/above the poverty level : en-dessous/au-dessus du seuil de pauvreté
equality of opportunity : l'égalité des chances
extreme poverty : la misère
to get out of poverty : sortir de la misère
in dire straits : le dos au mur
in need : dans le besoin
the happy few : les heureux élus
the haves and the have-nots : les nantis et les démunis
the standard of living : le niveau de vie
the income : le revenu
inequalities : les inégalités
social mobility : la mobilité sociale
upward mobility : l'ascenseur social
to share out : répartir
move up the social ladder : monter dans l'échelle sociale
the gap between the rich and the poor : le fossé entre les riches et les pauvres
to strive, strove, striven : s'efforcer de
to tighten one's belt : se serrer la ceinture
to toil : peiner
toil : le dur labeur

Botox, Big Macs and Mayo

Last week I travelled back in time. Specifically to a land that the rest of Ireland has almost forgotten ever existed; to an Arcadia where there is prosperity, jobs, optimism, hope. But this is not a long-lost idyll and I didn't need a time machine to transport me there. It just took a gruelling four-hour car journey westward to the town of Westport in County Mayo. Unlike the rest of Ireland this coastal town, famous for its tourist attractions, appears to be recession-proof. While most of the republic's high streets are suffering from a collapse in consumer demand and remain in a depressed state, Westport seemed to be thriving.

The reason is down to one word: *Botox*. The anti-ageing, wrinkle-busting treatment that is injected into the face is manufactured at the Allergan plant on the edge of the town. Westport is the only place on the planet where *Botox* is made and exported all over the world. Last month the company announced it was expanding its workforce to 1,000 and building a new research and development centre. The knock-on effects of this investment and the presence of such a large employer are obvious. It is a template for the one sector of the Irish economy that has grown while all others have contracted: the multinational, hi-tech, big pharma, export-driven industrial base.

However, you only have to go up the road a bit on the same coast in the same county to time-travel forward to the depressed days of 2012. In Ballina, another town that has always relied on tourism, they are getting desperate, so desperate in fact that they will welcome any foreign multinational corporation to their town, even the one with the big gold arches. Normally in a rural idyllic setting the locals would throw their hands up in horror at the prospect of McDonald's setting up in their territory. Yet in recession-stricken Ireland the world is turned upside down. When Mayo county council blocked a planning application by McDonald's to open a drive-thru restaurant in Ballina the people rebelled – in favour of the burger chain. A petition has been gathered with more than 1,000 signatures demanding that the council reverse its decision and LET the fast food giant build its proposed takeaway. The pro-McDonald's lobby argues that it will bring construction and retail jobs at a time when both these parts of the Irish economy are in the doldrums.

So it's a tale of two towns in the same county but with very different stories to tell about how the crash of the Celtic Tiger has impacted on their citizens' lives during the global downturn.

By H. McDonald, adapted from *The Guardian* April 7th, 2012.

Note: this correspondent has no family connections of any kind with either the makers of the Big Mac or anyone in Mayo.

Exercises

1. Pick out the equivalents of the following terms from the text

- a. punishing, exhausting
- b. toward the west
- c. able to resist an economic crisis
- d. to prosper, develop
- e. making facial creases disappear
- f. positive effects
- g. a pattern, model
- h. suffering from the economic crisis
- i. selling in small quantities
- j. in a period of stagnation or slump

2. Exploring the text

1. Say on which occasion this column was written.
2. Why can Westport be said to be an Arcadia (an idyllic place)?
3. Give the reason why Westport knows such economic success.
4. Say why the journalist finds the attitude of the inhabitants of Ballina unusual.
5. How can this attitude be accounted for?
6. What is the journalist trying to point out by using irony?
7. Do you think the tale is realistic or would you say it is overstated?

3. Essay (200 words + or - 10 %)

What does the article reveal about economic opportunities in today's economic downturn?

4. Translate the text into French from

"While most of the republic's high streets are suffering..." down to "...the multinational, hi-tech, big pharma, export-driven industrial base."