

**OLLSCOIL na hÉIREANN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND**

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

PROFESSOR BRIAN NOLAN, College Principal, College of Human Sciences, University College Dublin, on 2 December 2013 in the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa*, on **PROFESSOR BRIGID LAFFAN**

A Sheansailéir, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle,

Professor Brigid Laffan is an outstanding scholar of European affairs whose impact goes well beyond the academy, in recognition of which the award of Degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa* is entirely appropriate.

Professor Laffan has recently taken up the position of Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute, one of the most prestigious academic posts for a scholar focused on the study of the European Union. Prior to this appointment she held a chair in the School of Politics and International Relations at University College Dublin, where from 2004-2011 she was Vice-President and Principal of the College of Human Sciences.



Professor Laffan was in the first class to graduate from what was then NIHE Limerick, studied with Basil Chubb in TCD for her doctorate awarded in 1987, and lectured in Limerick before moving to UCD, where she was appointed Jean Monnet Professor of European Politics in 1991. She was the founding director of the Dublin European Institute at UCD in 1999, and a visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges from 1991 to 2004. She was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2004, and served on its Council in 2009-10. In 2010 she was awarded

the French National Order of Merit, and in 2012 received the THESEUS Award for Outstanding Research on European Integration.

She is a member of the Board of the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice and the Institute of International and European Affairs, and has served as a member of the Fulbright Commission, the National Economic and Social Council, and the Irish Government's High Level Asia Strategy Group.

Professor Laffan has produced central research contributions on the dynamics of European integration and on EU governance and europeanization. She has participated in and led major international collaborative research projects under EU Framework Programmes, including on 'Organizing for EU enlargement' and 'New Governance in Europe'. A highly prolific scholar, she has published over 80 journal articles and book chapters and numerous official reports, including numerous articles in leading journals in her field such as the *Journal of Common Market Studies* and the *European Journal of Public Policy*. Her books include *Integration and Co-operation in Europe* (Routledge, 1992), *The Finances of the European Union* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), *Europe's Experimental Union* (with Rory O'Donnell and Michael Smith, Routledge, 2000); *Renovation or revolution?: new territorial politics in Ireland and United Kingdom*, (with John Coakley and Jennifer Todd, UCD Press, 2005), and *Ireland and the European Union* (with Jane O'Mahoney, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Her academic expertise and stature, combined with an exceptional degree of commitment and energy, have also equipped Professor Laffan to make very substantial contributions to national debates about Ireland in Europe. This has been both through her writings and through active engagement, notably in the campaigns around EU treaty referenda where she played a key role in both the *Irish Alliance for Europe* in 2001/02 and *Ireland for*

Europe in 2008. The same combination of expertise and engagement has made her a major contributor to core debates on the European stage, most recently in the recent economic crisis as Europe struggles to respond effectively to the challenges posed.

Professor Laffan has also played a substantial leadership role within the university sector while maintaining her scholarly activity and making such a major contribution to national and international debates. As first Principal of the College of Human Sciences in UCD she successfully oversaw the implementation of new structures and built up the Schools and disciplines in her area of responsibility, leaving a very significant legacy in that regard, while also contributing substantially to the strategic direction of the university as a member of its management team and to debates about the future of the third-level sector more broadly.

In a country that is not always receptive to the notion of the public intellectual, Brigid Laffan has shown that scholarly excellence and active engagement in working towards a better society can indeed go together and reinforce one another. As proud of her Kerry roots as she is committed to the European project and Ireland's place within it, her achievements are suitably recognised in the award of this honorary degree by the National University of Ireland.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

**Praesento vobis hanc meam filiam, quam scio tam moribus
quam doctrina habilem et idoneam esse quae admittatur,
honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in Litteris, idque tibi fide
mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae**