

## Christmas and New Year Message 2012/13

By President Michael D. Higgins

**Christmas provides an opportunity for us all to pause, reflect, and celebrate the things that we rightly cherish.** It is a time when we, as citizens, as families, and as communities turn our minds to what is really important – family, friendship, neighbourliness and homecoming. At Christmas we have an opportunity to renew our appreciation of these gifts, gifts which we hope will sustain us through the coming year.

At this time especially, those of us who are fortunate enough to have a joyous Christmas should be mindful of the need to reach out to others who – due to loss, emigration, illness or financial circumstances are going through a difficult time.

We should be mindful too of those who maintain essential services during this time – our Gardaí, prison officers, Defence Forces, emergency services and medical staff. As President, I thank all these public service personnel for their dedicated service to our community.

May I offer my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all the people of Ireland and to the members of the Irish family wherever they may be.

As our economy has contracted in recent times, many people are feeling the consequences, in terms of employment or income. However, our economic condition does not, on its own, define who we are. We are, for example, a country with a network of communities, that are increasingly active in responding to their own, and their society's, difficulties.

We also have the resource of our scattered people around the world, who support each other, and who value their connection with their homeland. A major priority during my first year in office was to engage with, and listen to our young people. That engagement confirmed for me that our young people have a very positive vision for the future of Ireland, and are determined to make their contribution to positive change.

There is much to be proud of, and much to build on, as we prepare for the New Year and look forward with hope and courage to realising all the possibilities



that it presents. Possibilities such as Ireland's seventh Presidency of the European Union which coincides with European Year of Citizens in 2013, and the opportunity that represents to renew the founding idealism of Europe – a Europe of citizens, of social solidarity, of cohesion, and of shared cultures.

May I wish all the Irish at home and abroad, and those who live and work with them, a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a New Year full of promise, health and fulfilment.

Beannachtaí na Nollag agus athbhliain faoi shláinte, faoi dhóchas agus faoi shéan dhíbh go léir.

**Guím beannachtaí na Nollag agus na hA-thbhliana ar phobal na hÉireann agus ar ár ndaoine muinteartha ar fud an domhain.**

Tugann an Nollaig deis dúinn go léir, anáil a tharraingt, smaoinemh a dhéanamh, ar na rudaí sin a cheapaimid atá luachmhar inár saol, agus iad a cheiliúradh. Is am é dúinne – saoránaigh, clanna agus pobail – ár n-aird a dhíriú ar na rudaí sin atá ríthábhachtach inár saol – an chlann, an cairdeas, an muintearas agus an filleadh ar an mbaile. Bíonn deis againn ár meas ar na fiúntais sin a athnuachan i rith na Nollag, agus cothaíonn sé sin muid i rith na bliana amach romhainn.

Ag an am seo ach go h-áirithe, ní mór dúinne a bhfuil sé d’áth orainn Nollaig shona a bheith againn, cuimhneamh ar an tábhacht atá ag baint le cabhrú leo siúd a bhfuil cruatan á fhulaingt acu – de thoradh ar chaillteanas, ar eisimirce, ar bhreiteacht nó ar chúinsí airgeadais.

Is cóir dúinn, freisin, smaoinemh orthu siúd a choimeádann seirbhísí riachtanacha ar siúl le linn

an ama seo – ár nGardaí, ár n-oifigigh príosúin, ár bhFórsaí Cosanta, ár seirbhísí éigeandála agus ár bhfoirme leighis. Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, glacaim buíochas le pearsanra uile na seirbhíse poiblí as a seirbhís dhílis dár bpobal.

Tá sé soiléir go bhfuil an cúlú eacnamaíochta ag goilliúint ar go leor daoine, maidir le fostaíocht nó le hioncam. Ach tá níos mó na staid na heacnamaíochta i gceist lenár bhféiniúlacht.

Is tír í seo ina bhfuil saibhreas ar leith againn; gréasán de phobail ghníomhacha atá á n-athrú féin chun feabhais de réir a chéile; agus tá acmhainn in ár muintire atá scaipthe ar fud an domhain, atá cabhrach lena chéile, agus atá ag iarraidh athcheangal a dhéanamh ar bhealaí éagsúla lena dtír dhúchais.

Chuir mé romham, i mo chéad bhliain san oifig seo, tús áite a thabhairt do theagmháil lenár n-óige agus cluas éisteachta a thabhairt dóibh. Dheimhnik an teagmháil sin dom go raibh fíis dhearfach de thodhchaí na hÉireann ag ár n-óige agus go

bhfuil siad beartaithe go diongbháilte ar a gceion tairbhe a dhéanamh chun athrú dearfach a chur i gcrích.

Tá an oiread sin ar féidir linn a bheith bródúil as, agus ar cheart dúinn tógáil air, agus muidne ag ullmhú don Bhliain Nua agus ag féachaint chun cinn le dóchas agus le misneach chun na féidearthachtaí a chuirtear inár láthair a fhíorú.

Ceann de na féidearthachtaí sin is ea seachtú Uachtaránachta na hÉireann ar an Aontas Eorpach agus Bliain Eorpach na Saoránach 2013 (dhá mhíle agus a trí déag) ag tarlú le chéile, agus an deis a thugann sé sin dúinn idéalachas bunaidh na hEorpa a athnuachan – Eoraip na saoránach, an aontais, na dlúthpháirtíochta agus na gcultúr comhroinnte.

Guím Nollaig shona shíochánta ar mhuintir na hÉireann i gcéin is i gcóngar agus orthu siúd atá ina gcónaí agus ag obair leo, agus Athbhliain faoi shláinte, faoi dhóchas agus faoi shéan.



*Alle Reden von Michael D. Higgins – viele davon auch als MP3 oder als Video – Aufsätze und jede Menge so genannter „remarks to...“, also zu aktuellen gesellschaftlichen Fragen oder Problemstellungen – all das findet man auf der erstaunlichen Webseite dieses erstaunlichen Präsidenten (siehe auch Seiten 140-144): [www.president.ie](http://www.president.ie) Noch besser: Wie er uns versichert hat, darf man all das verwenden und auch weiter benutzen. Ja, er bittet sogar darum.*

DIE REDAKTION