



BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TIONÓL PARLAIMINTEACH NA BREATAINE AGUS NA HÉIREANN

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

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EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2013

Introduction

1. This is the eighteenth annual report of the Assembly since it was decided at the Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Assembly during 2013.

Membership of the Assembly

2. Following the significant turnover in membership in the 2010 and 2011, arising from general elections to the two sovereign parliaments and to the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly, 2013, like the preceding year, was a period of stability in membership, with only minor changes. A list of Members and Associate Members is set out at Appendix 1.

Political developments

General Overview

3. Relations between Britain and Ireland continued to deepen in 2013, remaining close and cordial and extending right across government, business and cultural activity.
4. A significant moment in this close relationship was the announcement in November 2013 of a return State Visit by President Higgins to Britain. This first State Visit to Britain by an Irish President will take place from 8 – 11 April 2014. This visit will be immensely important for the Irish in Britain and marks a further milestone for the peace process in Northern Ireland. It reflects an economic, social and cultural relationship that has grown steadily closer.
5. This close engagement is anchored at the political level by the annual summit meeting in London between the Taoiseach and the PM, shortly before St Patrick's Day. This practice began after the May 2011 visit to Ireland of Queen Elizabeth and the second such Summit took place in London on 11 March 2013. Following the historic Joint Statement from the 2012 Summit, there has been an extensive programme of follow up and implementation. That statement set out the key areas for British-Irish cooperation over the next decade, recalling the success of the Queen's visit and noting the 'uniquely close political relationship' between Britain and Ireland. It also provided for formal structured engagement at the Secretary General/Permanent Secretary level across the civil service. The most recent meeting in this format took place in London in September 2013.
6. The Joint Statement called for deeper economic cooperation and part of the follow up saw the two governments commission a joint evaluation of the British-Irish economic

relationship. The British Irish Joint Economic Study Report was published on 18 July 2013 and outlined opportunities for closer collaboration between the UK and Ireland in Research and Development, the Agri-food sector, Energy Professional and Financial Services, Construction, Tourism and Transport. The report is an important contribution to the broader process of collaborative work between the two Governments and their administrations and provides an input into supporting policy development in both jurisdictions.

7. The Joint Statement also committed both governments to marking upcoming centenary anniversaries in a spirit of historical accuracy, mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation. The Decade of Commemorations marks events which affected all the people of these islands, and shaped the relations between Britain and Ireland for the century which followed.
8. At the 2013 Summit the leaders agreed to visit together some First World War sites on the continent. The first such visit took place in Flanders in December 2013. Participation from London, Dublin and Belfast at services marking the 97th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in July 2013 contributed to a spirit of remembrance, respect and reconciliation throughout the commemoration. Marking a more recent event, Sir John Major delivered an Iveagh House Commemorative Lecture in Dublin in December 2013 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Downing Street Declaration; a pivotal moment in the deepening of British-Irish relations.
9. The British-Irish Council held two summit meetings in 2013: in Derry in June and in Jersey in November.
10. Following from the Edinburgh Agreement between the British and Scottish Governments, providing the terms for a referendum on Scottish independence, it was announced in March 2013 that the referendum would take place on 18 September 2014. 2013 saw extensive debate on the issues implicated by the referendum with both the British Government and the Scottish Executive publishing numerous consultation papers.
11. The North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association, established in 2012 in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement, and jointly chaired by the Ceann Comhairle Deputy Seán Barrett and the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly Mr. Willie Hay MLA, provides a forum for regular and formal discussions between Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas on issues of mutual interest and concern. The Association in plenary session met on 26 April 2013 in Parliament Buildings in Belfast on the theme of Health. Members heard from a range of speakers on Positive Mental Health Strategies, Suicide, Type 2 Diabetes and Caring for an Aging Population. The Association held a further plenary meeting on 8 November 2013 in Leinster House in Dublin and members received presentations on the subjects of Emergency (Ambulance) Services; GP Out of Hours Services; and Energy Security. The next Meeting will take place on 4 April 2014 in Belfast.
12. Some areas of work relating to the Good Friday and St. Andrew's Agreements remain to be implemented. These include a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, which was

considered by the Forum for a UK-wide Bill of Rights which recommended that the UK-wide process not interfere with or delay a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The issue of an Irish Language Act, as agreed at St. Andrews, remains unresolved, although some progress has been made in securing measures to promote and protect the Irish language and Ulster Scots. Establishment of the North South Consultative Forum also remains outstanding, as does the completion of the Review of North/South bodies.

13. The Panel of Parties talks on parades, flags and contending with the Past under the Chairmanship of Richard Haass and the Vice-Chairmanship of Meghan O'Sullivan concluded without agreement between the NI Executive Parties in the early hours of New Year's Eve. The Panel of Parties was created following the launch in May 2013 of the "Together: Building a United Community Strategy" by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Strategy is intended to improve community relations and build a reconciled society, with a strong focus on young people.
14. The NI Executive Party leaders have continued consideration of the compromise proposals presented by Haass and O'Sullivan on 31 December 2013.
15. On Parades, the proposals provide for devolution of responsibility for Parades to the Northern Ireland Executive. A new Code of Conduct would be enshrined in legislation. The proposals recognise parading as an important cultural and historical tradition for many in Northern Ireland. They note the wide variety of other rights potentially affected by parades and call for a new consensus based on rights, responsibilities, and relationships.
16. There was no agreed approach reached in the talks on the flying of flags on official buildings or the unofficial display of flags and emblems in public spaces. The proposals recognise that these issues are closely linked to larger debates about sovereignty, identity, and related matters which were judged to be beyond the remit of the Talks. The proposals provide for a Commission on Identity, Culture, and Tradition to hold public discussions on those issues throughout Northern Ireland.
17. During the period of the Talks, substantial progress was made on agreeing an approach to dealing with the legacy of the past. The final proposals make special provision for victims and survivors, affirming that their individual choices should be paramount wherever possible.
18. They propose to establish a Historical Investigations Unit (HIU), with the full investigative powers of the PSNI, to take over the Troubles-related deaths' cases at present within the remit of the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) and the historical unit of the Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (PONI). The proposals call for an Independent Commission for Information Retrieval (ICIR) to enable victims and survivors to seek and privately receive information about conflict-related events. The ICIR would provide those coming forward with limited immunity, also known as inadmissibility, for statements given to the ICIR. The ICIR would also use information it recovers, as well as public records and interviews it conducts independently, to assess the presence of certain patterns or themes involving paramilitary organisations or governments in conflict-related cases.

Dealing with the Past

19. The Smithwick Tribunal established by the Irish Government as recommended by Judge Cory in 2004, in line with the Weston Park Agreement, reported on 3 December 2013. It found on the balance of probability that there had been collusion with the IRA from within an Garda Síochána in the murders of RUC Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Robert Buchanan. The Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality apologised to the families of the victims on behalf of the State.
20. On 12 September 2013, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced that the British government had decided not to hold a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the 1998 Omagh bombing on the grounds that there are not sufficient grounds to justify a further review or inquiry above and beyond those that have already taken place or are ongoing. She was responding to a call by the Omagh Support and Self Help Group for a cross-border, public inquiry into the actions of the police and security for

Current Ministerial Assignments: Northern Ireland Executive:

Department	Minister	Party
OFMDFM-First Minister	Peter Robinson	DUP
OFMDFM-Deputy First Minister	Martin McGuinness	SF
Finance and Personnel	Simon Hamilton	DUP
Education	John O'Dowd	SF
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Arlene Foster	DUP
Regional Development	Danny Kennedy	UUP
Agriculture and Rural Development	Michelle O'Neill	SF
Environment	Mark H. Durkan	SDLP
Social Development	Nelson McCausland	DUP
Culture, Arts and Leisure	Carál Ní Chuilín	SF
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Edwin Poots	DUP
Employment and Learning	Stephen Farry	Alliance
Justice	David Ford	Alliance
Junior Minister OFMDFM	Jennifer McCann	SF
Junior Minister OFMDFM	Jonathan Bell	DUP

North South Cooperation

21. There was a full round of 25 North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meetings during 2013 covering all sectors and including two Plenary meetings, and one Institutional meeting. At these meetings Ministers discussed the challenges facing both jurisdictions and opportunities for cooperation. It was clear from their discussions that all Ministers North and South are very aware of the need to use every opportunity given to them to focus on getting better economic outcomes and putting in place policies that will lead to growth on the island.
22. Progress was made in 2013 on advancing the forward-looking elements of the St Andrews Agreement Review, with Ministers North and South agreeing at the NSMC Plenary meeting in November 2013 that they would consider their priorities in their

sectoral areas and especially focus their efforts where it could lead to economic recovery, job creation, the best use of public funds and the most effective delivery of services. This work will be taken forward in 2014.

23. In addition, Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2013 provided a unique opportunity to engage with the Northern Ireland Administration on EU issues and thus deepen North South cooperation. The Presidency laid the foundations for further constructive collaboration in coming years. Also during the Presidency, the European Council decided to include a special allocation of €150 million for a new PEACE Programme in the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Security Situation

24. The overall security situation in 2013 remained of concern. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland outlined that the threat level remains severe in a recent statement at Westminster. As well as the murder of Prison Officer David Black in November 2012, dissident republicans were responsible for the murder of alleged drug Dealer Kevin Kearney in October 2013, as well as a number of high profile attacks on the PSNI, most notably in Derry, Fermanagh and in Belfast.
25. Dissident republicans were also responsible for a number of bomb attacks in the run up to Christmas 2013, most notably an attempted attack on the Victoria shopping centre in Belfast city centre.
26. A number of arrests have been made by the PSNI in relation to the serious incidents. Most notably a man has now been charged with the murder of David Black and is awaiting trial. The Gardaí and the PSNI continue to cooperate very closely to combat dissident activity on both sides of the border.
27. Tensions between dissident prisoners and staff in Maghaberry Prison remain high, and recently letter bombs were discovered in a sorting office addressed to members of the Prison staff there.
28. There has been a serious increase in tension within the UDA in 2013, which is still ongoing. Several of the pro-peace process leaders in the UDA have been told their lives are under threat. Separately 2013 saw an increase in UVF activity particularly in East and North Belfast. There has been a marked increase in punishment attacks and intimidation attributed to loyalist groups, including the shooting of a 15 year old boy in Coleraine, and of a 23 year old woman in Belfast.
29. Following the flag dispute demonstrations early in the year, the marching season saw some of the worst violence for some time with outbreaks of violence around the 12th July when an evening return march was banned from the Ardoyne area. Since then there has been a protest camp established, with nightly parades during the week and a larger parade on Saturday afternoons. The protestors continue to seek permission for the return parade to take place. In addition there were also incidents of violence in Carrickhill and Short Strand over the summer months.

Work of the Assembly

Forty-sixth Plenary Conference (Letterkenny)

30. The 46th Plenary Conference was held in Letterkenny, County Donegal, between 3 and 5 March 2013. Its overall theme was Energy. The conference began in the morning of Monday 4th March with a welcome from Mr Paul Hannigan, President of Letterkenny Institute of Technology in whose premises the plenary was held.
31. The first speaker at the plenary was Dr Brian Motherway, Chief Executive of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Dr Motherway said that sustainable energy was central to economic recovery in Ireland. Ireland was heavily dependent on imported oil and gas which meant a major flow of euros out of the State. Climate change was another driver of the case for renewable energy. Ireland was now getting a fifth of its electricity generation from wind, which was contributing hugely to reducing imports of gas. It was a thriving sector and Ireland hoped to be able to provide other countries with clean power. Dr Motherway then spoke about energy efficiency. Many homes had now upgraded their energy efficiency through better insulation and modern heating systems with improved controls. Not only were these steps reducing the costs of imported energy but were also creating thousands of jobs in the construction sector. He acknowledged that there were concerns about the infrastructure and the siting of wind turbines; care had to be taken to ensure they were not placed in areas of natural beauty.
32. The costs of all these developments were large and the question of where the funding should come had to be considered. His organisation was looking at ways in which they could attract investment, recognising that it could be many, many years before there was a return and before the new forms of energy paid for themselves.
33. The Assembly next heard an address by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte TD. Mr Rabbitte began by saying that the long-term strategy of both Britain and Ireland was to establish a secure, competitive and sustainable energy policy. The British-Irish Council was heavily involved in this cooperative venture. Energy policy was also governed by European Union requirements for renewables. Both countries had set targets for the percentage of energy produced by renewables but it was allowable to export green energy and so assist the receiving country to meet its target. However, while there had been a physical flow of electricity across borders, the renewable element currently remained in the producing country. Ireland wished to make the export of renewable energy a significant component of its export sector.
34. There remained unresolved policy issues. First, the benefits of establishing an export market had to be clearer. Second, what part should the State play in these developments or should it be left to the private sector? Third, whether or not the State participated, commercial exploitation of wind should always bring a benefit to the people.
35. Work was underway to prepare for the inter-governmental agreement. There were some very complex engineering and market issue to be examined but the ambition was to settle on the agreement early in 2014. There would be major economic benefits for Ireland. Significant job opportunities would arise during the construction phase alone and there would be additional jobs in the maintenance of the turbines over a

twenty year period. All State agencies would have to co-ordinate their efforts to maximise the employment prospects; the Industrial Development Authority of Ireland and Enterprise Ireland had already identified these opportunities in their clean technology growth strategies.

36. Some concerns had been expressed about possible impacts on the environment and it was vital that the public should accept renewable energy. The industry would have to do its utmost to mitigate human, environmental and landscape impacts, Public authorities should have transparent planning, construction and licensing procedures. Many companies were already doing what was necessary but best practice had to be followed across the board.
37. Wind energy had a great future in Ireland and would provide employment as well as delivering clean energy. Investment in the necessary infrastructure would be necessary in both Britain and Ireland. The European Council had endorsed the goal of achieving a single integrated energy market by 2014, although Ireland had a two year derogation from this target. It would take time to develop interconnection for every single European customer but when it did happen, Ireland would be a very small player in the market. It was therefore necessary now to confront the challenges such changes in the market would mean for Irish companies.
38. He ended by saying that no challenge was greater than the possible material change in Britain's trading relationship with the European Union; it was no secret that the Irish Government wanted the UK to remain in the European Union. Both Ireland and Britain were firm supporters of the Single Market and wished to see it completed in every area of trade and policy. Ireland's energy policy remained firmly set in a European and global context.
39. Sean Conlon TD, Chris Ruane MP, Jim Dobbin MP, Paul Murphy MP, Michael Connarty MP, Senator Jimmy Harte, Kris Hopkins MP, William Powell AM, Senator Jim Walsh, Lord Dubs, Arthur Spring TD, Peadar Toibin TD, Senator Cait Keane, Senator John Crown, Oliver Colville MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Steve Rodan SHK, Deputy Roger Perrot and John Scott MSP all asked questions to which Minister Pat Rabbitte replied.
40. After the Minister had replied, the Assembly considered reports from Committees A and C. Frank Feighan TD, Chair of Committee A, reported on the work of the Committee since the Glasgow plenary. The committee had begun work on the implementation of the Good Friday and the St Andrew's Agreements.
41. Jack Wall TD, Chair of Committee C, said that the Committee had made two reports, one on credit unions which was before the plenary for consideration and another on energy. Credit unions were more developed in Ireland than in the UK but those in the UK had been innovative in ways that had not been tried in Ireland. It was important that those involved in Credit Unions learnt of best practice in the various BIPA jurisdictions. The expertise required of volunteers was not easy to maintain and there was always the risk that credit unions would end up imitating banks. Community initiatives should be nurtured and not stifled by regulation.

42. John Robertson MP agreed that there was a complete difference between credit unions in Ireland and those elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In the island of Ireland three million people were members of credit unions compared to only one million across the rest of Britain. However, it appeared that the Irish influence in the West of Scotland had resulted in Glasgow having 17% of the UK's credit union membership. He drew attention to the growing position of pay-day loan companies which were causing problems for the less well off; credit unions should learn from the tactics of pay-day loan companies to market themselves more effectively. Lord German urged that the report should be considered by the British-Irish Council and he was supported in that by Patrick O'Donovan TD and David Melding AM. Mr Melding said it was very important that credit unions were able to support local communities and small businesses by loans where banks had become reluctant to lend. Darren Millar AM also spoke of the part credit unions could play in supporting small businesses in a period when credit was tight.
43. Ann Phelan TD then reported briefly on the work Committee C was doing in respect of energy.
44. A panel discussion on the Opportunities for Growth and Employment in the Energy Sector followed. The panellists were Brian Britton, Chair of the National Offshore Wind Association of Ireland; David Manning, Director of SSE Ireland; Neil Stewart, Managing Director of Renewable Business, Glen Dimplex; Ms Sue Barr, Environment and External Affairs Manager, OpenHydro; and Tim Cowhig, Chief Executive Officer of Element Power.
45. The first panellist to speak was Brian Britton who told the plenary about developments in the renewable energy sector. Ireland enjoyed exceptional wind resources. The government had set the ambitious target of 42% of electricity from renewable but this was limited to that percentage only by grid capacity; there was potential for a much higher percentage. The east coast of Ireland had many advantages in building off-shore wind farms and this gave Ireland a competitive edge over the UK. The creation of a route for energy across the Irish Sea would kick-start a new export opportunity. The Energy Bill going through the Westminster Parliament was an important step in the process; this together with the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Ireland would bring about a regional partnership in the generation and sharing of renewable energy. However it was important that the intergovernmental agreement is signed by the end of 2013, so that investment in the infrastructure could begin.
46. David Manning spoke next about the role SSE Ireland was playing. Since entering the Irish market in 2008 SSE had created 150 new jobs every year and was now the largest inward investor over the past five years. The company saw energy integration between the UK and Ireland as a very positive development in terms of jobs and the economy. He spoke of the export potential for energy and welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding but pointed out that transmission infrastructure on land and across the Irish Sea was crucial.
47. Mr Manning went on to say that the future held out the promise of "smart" energy where heating could be remotely controlled thus achieving savings to householders. New partnerships could help innovation and these in turn could lead to high-

efficiency heating systems. He gave one or two examples of cooperation. But the important thing was to ensure that market arrangements were integrated and that all the players in the market understood the implications.

48. The next speaker was Neil Stewart who said that 70% of domestic electricity consumption went on heating, cooling and hot water. His company, Glen Dimplex, were confident that the cost of this usage was capable of a 20% reduction. The cost of imported fossil fuel from countries like Russia could be replaced by renewable energy created within the islands, thus helping the balance of payments. If commercial and public sector buildings were included he was confident that the overall costs to the British and Irish economies would be reduced by 10 billion euros. He asked the question: How could this be done? Firstly, the technology already existed to reduce consumption but needed to be deployed in homes and businesses. Secondly, policies had to allow the energy revolution to move away from fossil fuel generation to renewable. Targets had to be set and policy makers had to ensure that the aim of moving to green energy production was maintained. Thirdly, the issue of funding had to be tackled. Consumers were obviously attracted to the idea of cheaper, home-produced energy but were not happy with the up-front costs of the necessary infrastructure. The energy revolution could be a driver for growth and employment.
49. He was followed by Sue Barr from OpenHydro, an Irish tidal technology company. Although an Irish company, they were based in Scottish waters and were the first to develop a project at the European Marine Energy Centre. The work they were doing was in Orkney where they first began experiments in 2006, since when they had contributed considerably to the Orkney economy. The company now felt that they were moving from an experimental stage to becoming an embryonic industry. She spoke of the employment opportunities as tidal energy moved from being at the research stage to making a contribution to renewables. The industry would require a range of skills ranging from engineering, electrical, financial and insurance but the interest in tidal energy was a global one and the waters around Scotland were always mentioned when she travelled to other parts of the world.
50. The last panellist to make a presentation was Tim Cowhig of Element Power. He spoke about inshore wind power. His company was developing wind energy in the midlands of Ireland which was cheaper than off-shore sites and already available. The opportunities to export clean energy to the UK were clear. The British Government had set a target of 30% clean energy by 2020 and the present percentage was only 8%. Bridging the difference would be cheaper and quicker if the UK imported wind energy from Ireland. But this needed a bigger grid interconnection between Ireland and Britain. His company was in negotiation with National Grid about building a 5,000 megawatt interconnector ten times the size of the one opened only the previous September at a cost of 650 euros. He spoke of the range of benefits to both the UK and Ireland in developing inshore wind power.
51. Many members asked questions of the panellists. The first was Jim Wells MLA, followed by David Melding AM, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Darren Millar AM, Ken Skates AM, Connétable Daniel Murphy, Seamus Kirk TD, Robert Walter MP, Paul Flynn MP, Senator Cait Keane, Lord Empey, Willie Coffey MSP, Martin Heydon TD, Arthur Spring TD, Senator Terry Brennan, John Scott MSP, Steve Rodan SHK, Jim Dobbin MP, Frank Feighan TD and Sean Conlan TD. The questions and

points raised were extensively answered by the panellists, beginning with Tim Cowhig, followed by Sue Barr (who had the majority of questions to answer), David Manning and Brian Britton.

52. The afternoon session began with a presentation on The Future Vision for Clean Energy in Europe by Eddie O'Connor, Chief Executive of Mainstream Renewable Power. Mr O'Connor began by explaining what his company was delivering in terms of green energy. It had developments in Canada, the United States, Chile, South Africa, Germany, Ireland and the UK and was the largest independent developer of wind and solar power in the world. His vision was that by 2050 all power generation would have been completely decarbonised. He stated that decarbonising could not be avoided because the reality of climate change was clear and was a significant threat to the human species. The situation is already bad and was getting worse. In 2006, Lord Stern had called for urgent action but the World Bank, the International Energy Agency and the United Nations Environment Programme all confirmed that the necessary action had not been taken.
53. He said that the supergrid was the answer to a number of challenges. It was a means of distributing power generated over vast areas such as the oceans and it was the answer to the variability inherent in all forms of renewables. It could also be applied to solar generation in southern Europe. He understood the potential in tidal power but it was some way in the future but he did not have much faith in biomass or clean-coal.
54. He was encouraged by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Ireland and the UK. It was important that the supergrid should be constructed to harness the enormous potential of wind power in northern Europe. If the wind was not blowing in one country, it was likely to be blowing in another. It would, of course, be very expensive but in terms of employment and the potential for the export of the developed technologies it would undoubtedly be beneficial. But investment on the scale required needed certainty and this was where Governments and parliamentarians had to take the right decisions and support the investment, despite the risks inherent in very large projects.
55. He recognised the difficulty of raising equity at the present time but a clean energy future required bold thinking, motivated by a sense of foreboding as to the consequences of failure. Democracy had to rise to the challenge and look further into the future than the five year parliamentary cycle and the next election.
56. Lord Skelmersdale, Arthur Spring TD, Jim Wells MLA, John Scott MSP, Seamus Kirk TD, Peadar Toibin TD, Sean Rogers MLA and Ann Phelan TD asked a series of short questions to which Mr O'Connor replied briefly.
57. Philip Lowe, Director-General for Energy at the European Commission, then spoke about energy from a European perspective. The Commission was strongly in favour of a supergrid because it was in the interest of all member states to be able to have access to safe, secure and affordable energy. The Commission favoured allowing market forces to determine what customers wanted but at the same time there was pressure from the other direction with climate change. He pointed out that the targets of 20% reduction in CO2 emissions; 20% in the use of renewables and 20% improvement in energy efficiency had been set by member states and had not been

imposed by the Commission. The fall in economic activity as a result of the recession meant that the 20% target for CO2 emissions would be met.

58. Unfortunately a European trading system designed to provide a carbon price that incentivised renewable low carbon energy had not worked because of the recession and therefore would have to be re-calibrated. The integration of markets across Europe was now substantial, although not in the case of the Iberian peninsula nor between Ireland and the UK. Independent national decisions on electricity markets created difficult decisions for countries which have a high level of interconnection. While there was a great deal of understandable concern about the cost of electricity, the actual rise in wholesale prices across the EU had been half the rise in the commodity price used to make the electricity.
59. He asked how people could be persuaded to invest in a low carbon economy. This could be achieved with improvements in the infrastructure and grids to ensure a more stable delivery system. The European Parliament had recently agreed a regulation to achieve some basic objectives. The first was to establish priorities for supergrids and the second was to establish projects of strategic and common interest. The average project could take between ten and twelve years from conception to implementation. If key projects were identified it should be possible to speed up the process by keeping local communities fully informed. He mentioned the number of different regulators even within the British Isles. Three in Ireland alone! It was different in Scandinavia where the regulators looked at projects on a cross-border basis.
60. The European Commission were concerned that there were too many different targets which did not encourage investors in renewables. If there was greater interconnectivity in Europe to allow for the variations in generation by different forms of green energy, it would increase stability and make renewables more cost-effective. It would not be helpful to the energy market if countries gave different levels of support to renewables.
61. He ended his speech by saying that fossil fuels still had a part to play in Europe with exploration for gas and oil in a number of different areas. Shale gas and coal bed methane might also play a part if they could be extracted environmentally.
62. The final speaker of the day was the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, who was warmly welcomed by Joe McHugh TD, Co-Chair. Mr Kenny began by acknowledging the positive contribution made by the Assembly to better understanding between parliamentarians from all the legislatures represented. He spoke of the challenges his government had faced in the two years since they were returned to office with a very strong mandate to fix the economy. He said that the economy had now stabilised but unemployment remained too high and that job creation was at the core of his policies.. He welcomed the focus on energy which was theme of the Assembly's conference and spoke of the cooperation between the UK and Irish governments in this area. Both governments were committed to working together to build a better future for both countries. A peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland would have a positive impact, especially in Donegal.
63. He deplored the activities of dissident groups but he praised the work of the Gardai and the PSNI for all they did to stop the outrages. The full cooperation and sharing of

information was critical to preventing a return to the dark old days of the Troubles. His Government would maintain its commitment to vital infrastructure projects like the North/South gateway. North/South cooperation was helping the economy on both sides of the Border.

64. He realised that some Unionists didn't feel that the benefits of the Good Friday agreement had been spread evenly and at the same time, many nationalists felt that there had been only limited progress on pivotal issues such as parades, housing and education. Since September 2012, he had initiated a series of meetings with families on all sides of the community in Northern Ireland in an effort to heal the deep hurts of the past. He had attended the Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen and been at St Macartin's cathedral where he had heard a powerful sermon by the former Archbishop, Lord Eames, on the need for, and importance of, reconciliation. The Good Friday agreement had moved Northern Ireland on but there was still much to do and as co-guarantors of the agreement, the British and Irish governments were keenly aware of this. Sectarianism was a blight affecting the lives of many, many families in the North; respect for other traditions and openness of discussion were the only ways of reducing this blight. There had been welcome progress in securing funds from the European Union for programmes to address sectarianism. This still had to be approved by the European Parliament, something he hoped to achieve during the Irish Presidency.
65. He gave a number of examples of communities and organisations challenging sectarianism. In Derry, there were the Leafair Community Association which brings together former combatants and YouthAction Northern Ireland which builds life skills for young people on the edge of the sectarian divide.
66. Mr Kenny then referred to the series of events during the coming decade where the two governments would be cooperating. In 2011, there had been a series of events across the whole island of Ireland and in Britain marking the centenary of the Ulster Covenant. He also referred to the forthcoming centenary of the First World War in which British and Irish soldiers fought and died.
67. In conclusion, Mr Kenny acknowledged the work of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly in bringing the people of the British Isles closer together and he wished to say how much pleasure it gave the whole of Ireland that Derry/Londonderry had been chosen as the UK's City of Culture for 2013.
68. The Taoiseach's arrival had been met by a demonstration against the Irish Government's austerity programme; this continued throughout his speech and could be clearly heard in the plenary hall. Peadar Toibin TD, in questioning the Taoiseach, voiced support for the substance of the demonstration. Mr Kenny explained the importance of eliminating the huge debts with which the Government had been faced on taking office. Among others who raised questions were Senator Paul Coghlan, Robert Walter MP, Barry McElduff MLA, William Powell AM, Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, Lord Mawhinney, Lord Empey, Frank Feighan TD, and Patrick O'Donovan TD. The Taoiseach replied at some length to all the points raised.
69. The business on Tuesday began with consideration of the Report from Committee B on The Atlantic Strategy: Benefits for Britain and Ireland, introduced by Robert

Walter MP, the Chairman. The committee had travelled to Brussels for two days of meetings and had met the Irish Permanent Representative to the European Union, Mr Rory Montgomery, as well as representatives from the United Kingdom, Scottish, Northern Ireland, Welsh and Irish Governments and a number of MEPs. They asked the question: What is the Atlantic Strategy? There was no clear definition but it might be defined as a macro-regional strategy in which the five countries could pin-point projects where multilateral action could add value. The Irish Government had used its Presidency to push the benefits but he regretted that the UK Government was less enthusiastic. He hoped this would change. In a time of fiscal austerity there was no additional money available for the Strategy but there were likely to be benefits if financed within existing programmes.

70. Committee B would continue to follow the Atlantic Strategy through the publication of the action plan on which the European Commission was currently working and on into 2014 when projects would be implemented. This should be a key focus for the British-Irish Council when Committee B's report was sent to them.
71. Lord German, Deputy Roger Perrot, Michael Connarty MP, John Scott MSP and Connétable Daniel Murphy all spoke in a short debate on the Report.
72. Following this, there was a presentation by Lord Dubs of Committee D's interim report on People Trafficking. Lord Dubs informed the plenary that a final report would be made when further evidence had been accumulated. However, after visiting Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh (and before taking evidence in Dublin and London), the Committee's findings were likely to relate to the need for better co-ordination between organisations. One problem was that the police tended to see those who had been trafficked as illegal immigrants and this deterred NGOs from reporting the traffickers. NGOs were closest to the problem but other organisation such as the police, the health service and local authorities all had a part to play. Exchange of information was key. The Committee was concerned to understand that some people were given visas even though, on all the evidence, they had been trafficked. The Committee would discuss this with the UK and Irish border authorities.
73. Jim Wells MLA, Siobhan McMahon MSP, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Michael Connarty MP, Ann Phelan TD, Senator Cait Keane and Jim Dobbin MP all spoke on the report and Lord Dubs said the Committee D would take all the points made into account when preparing their final report.
74. The Plenary approved the Seventeenth Annual Report for 2012 without debate.
75. The plenary then heard a presentation on Energy in the Next Decade. The presentation was made by Pat O'Doherty, Chief Executive of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and Fintan Slye, Chief Executive of EirGrid.
76. The first to speak was Pat O'Doherty who began by questioning the subject title. The provision and development of energy sources could not be considered within one decade but had to be considered over several. He gave as an example a power station planned in the early 1970s, constructed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, commissioned in the mid 1980s and remaining productive up to and beyond 2025. In addition, the energy landscape was going through a huge transition, driven by the

need to address climate change and the introduction of new technologies. In the past electricity was produced in large-scale fossil dominated centralised generators and delivered by radial distribution networks. The dominant policy was to keep prices as low as possible.

77. But things had moved on and policy makers now had to keep three things in mind--- security of supply, protection of the environment and making energy affordable. It was now evident that market forces were not delivering the outcomes that policy makers wanted. Climate change was the biggest challenge of our time and all European Union countries had signed up to binding carbon-reduction targets. The electricity industry was one of the biggest producers of carbon and was expected to lead the way in decarbonising itself. ESB was investing heavily in renewables, with a view that by 2030, within the period of current investment, they would have a generation mix of high efficiency unabated gas, existing renewables like wind and hydro, and finally a mix of new technologies still being developed.
78. He explained that, unlike thermal generation where the costs are half up-front and half over the life of the plant, in the case of renewables all the investment cost was up-front because the fuel was free. Inevitably this meant that investing in the infrastructure required for renewables was very expensive.
79. The economic argument for wind depended on future assumptions about gas prices but there was no certainty about the dynamics of the gas market. The shale gas revolution could bring down the cost of gas. Nuclear power and clean-coal could also impact on the price of gas.
80. ESB was investing in wind generation on both sides of the Irish Sea and a British-Irish agreement on renewable exports would be hugely helpful in harmonising the electricity market. He was very excited by projects to build on-shore wind farms in Ireland and export the green energy to Britain. Two key things were needed to achieve these projects. First, a significant physical interconnection between the two markets was required and secondly, a common institutional framework across all markets was necessary.. At present there was no common regulatory approach, even within the British Isles where ESB operates.
81. In conclusion, Mr O’Doherty said that the energy sector was more uncertain, more complex and more global than ever before. The availability of fossil fuels was declining, yet the investment required to transform the electricity sector towards renewables was enormous. Governments and parliamentarians must take the long view and invest in the short and medium term.
82. Fintan Slye explained that EirGrid operated and controlled electricity across the island of Ireland. Although energy was entering a new phase, the pillars of energy policy remained as sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. There were three requirements in this regard. The first was the need to expand the grid. EirGrid had major plans to do this and were already investing many millions of euros in developing the network. He recognised that the transmission grid was a major infrastructure project and would impact on people and communities. The company was working hard to explain the grid and its purpose. Consultation was extensive and a school programme and an agricultural programme were part of the process of

involving all stakeholders. He added that it was also important that public representatives were also briefed on a continual basis.

83. Mr Slye then spoke about further interconnection with Europe. In 2012, EirGrid completed the new interconnector between Ireland and Britain. This would increase competition, push down prices, increase security of supply and provide an export link for the vast renewable energy resources of Ireland. Feasibility studies were being undertaken on an Ireland-France interconnector. There had been significant interest in additional connections between Ireland and the UK to facilitate the export from Ireland of green energy. Where wind farms were not connected to the Irish grid this would not be possible.
84. He turned his attention to “smart grids”. The electricity system was becoming increasingly complex as renewable levels increased and as more consumers deployed smart devices, smart meters and electric vehicles. EirGrid had developed a comprehensive “smart grid” programme with four distinct strands. The first was changing how the power system is operated. The second was about technology and infrastructure in ensuring that the infrastructure is used to as effectively as possible. The third strand was a smart grid innovation hub and the fourth was the demonstration projects. This involved testing new commercial technologies for their applicability to the energy sector.
85. Lord Dubs, John Robertson MP, Seamus Kirk TD, Jim Wells MLA, Martin Heydon TD, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Senator Jim Walsh, Paul Flynn MP, Frank Feighan TD, Peadar Toibin TD, William Powell AM, John Scott MSP and Ken Skates AM all contributed to a discussion and Pat O’Doherty and Fintan Slye replied to the points made.
86. Patrick O’Donovan TD then moved a motion in the following terms:- *That the Assembly examines its relationship with the British-Irish Council with a view to deepening the engagement and interaction between both.*
87. Patrick O’Donovan spoke of the need for the plenary to know the fate of the reports prepared with great expertise by the four Committees. It was important to learn whether the reports were properly considered by Ministers and then to have responses. The British-Irish Council should at least show some regard for the work of the Assembly and he urged that a better relationship between the two bodies should be developed.
88. Paul Murphy MP, Lord Empey, Senator Cait Keane, Lord Mawhinney, David Melding AM, Robert Walter MP, Lord German, Frank Feighan TD and John Scott MSP all strongly supported the Motion. Laurence Robertson MP, Co-Chair, asked Patrick O’Donovan to draft a paper for the Steering Committee which would then take the matter up and see what progress could be made with the Council.
89. The Motion was agreed to and communicated to the two Governments.
90. Martin Heydon TD then moved a motion in the following terms:- *That the Assembly recognises the close trading relationship between the Irish and UK Food industries and supports the ministerial agreement that the FSAI and the UK Food Standards*

Agency will work closely together and jointly agree an approach for protecting the authenticity of meat ingredients used in the manufacture of meat based products.

91. Martin Heydon TD spoke of the recent discovery of horsemeat in beef products and the need for confidence in the authenticity of meat ingredients. The beef industry was enormously important to the Irish economy, with exports to Great Britain alone totalling 216 tonnes in 2012 at a value of 800 million euros.
92. William Powell AM, Frank Feighan TD and Patrick O'Donovan TD all spoke in support, as did Jim Wells MLA, who said he spoke as the only vegetarian! He expressed his gratitude to those in the Irish Republic who had tested the DNA and had first identified the horsemeat, something not done elsewhere in Europe. He added that companies like Tesco had announced that for the future they would only source their meat ingredients from within Ireland and Great Britain. In reply, Martin Heydon TD said he was not prepared to let the supermarket chains off the hook; they had been selling burgers at prices so low that the ingredients must have been of questionable origin.
93. The Motion was agreed to.
94. The final business of the plenary was a presentation by Madeline Boughton of Culture Ireland on developing cultural links between Ireland and Britain. Madeline Boughton explained the role of Culture Ireland, a very small agency within the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Its core remit was to promote the arts and had no educational or governance role. Culture Ireland achieved its objectives in three main ways. First, it gave grants on a quarterly basis to artists and international presenters. Second, it ran showcase programmes where artists could present their work and develop their opportunities. Examples of these would be the London Book Fair, the Venice Biennale or the Edinburgh Festival. Third, it operated a funded scheme called See, Hear, whereby international delegates were brought to Ireland to see artistic work so they could programme that work into their festivals and venues. Culture Ireland also ran special initiatives, such as Imagine Ireland which was a year of Irish arts in America during 2011.
95. Ms Boughton told the plenary of the significant levels of funding for Irish arts across England, Wales and Scotland and gave examples of areas of artistic co-operation between the UK and Ireland, mentioning the co-production of Juno and the Paycock by the Abbey Theatre and the National Theatre among other examples. The Edinburgh Festival provided a wonderful global stage for Irish artists and writers and Culture Ireland seized the opportunity to promote Irish art through the Festival, the Fringe and the International Book Festival. The Irish consulate in Edinburgh was critical in this, as was the presence of an Irish minister. Culture Ireland reciprocated by bringing Scottish partners to Ireland to help promote the work of Scottish artists in Ireland.
96. Ms Boughton then mentioned WOMEX, a world music expo which takes place every year. It is the largest showcase in the world for folk and traditional music. WOMEX travels to different cities every year. Dublin, Cardiff and Glasgow competed to host WOMEX in 2013 with Cardiff being successful. Cardiff had asked Culture Ireland and Creative Scotland to help make their city the best possible host for WOMEX, a

wonderful showcase for artists across the islands. This and the Edinburgh Festival were examples of the developing cultural relations with partners in other countries.

97. She ended her presentation by mentioning the cultural initiatives Culture Ireland was promoting in 2013 and she reassured the plenary that the Irish government was very committed to the work it was doing and saw that it could enable artists to build sustainable careers.
98. At the conclusion of her address, she answered questions from Frank Feighan TD, Michael Connarty MP and Ann Phelan TD.

47th Plenary Conference (London)

99. The 47th Plenary Conference was held in London in Church House, Westminster, between 20th and 22nd October 2013. Visiting delegates were accommodated in the Crowne Plaza-St James' Hotel, a short distance away.
100. The conference proceedings began with an address by Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Mrs Villiers began by thanking the Assembly for the contribution it had made in creating a better understanding between parliamentarians from Dublin and Westminster. Relationships between the two countries had never been better; the two economies were closely connected with combined trade between the two accounting for 400,000 jobs. According to one survey, Ireland was expected to overtake France in the next fifteen years as the United Kingdom's third largest export market for goods and services. She explained the British Government's approach to ensuring that this success was sustained by a three-stand approach of fiscal responsibility, monetary activism and structural reform. This approach was now beginning to bear fruit.
101. The United Kingdom's recovery was being felt in Northern Ireland where business activity was now at its highest level for six years, unemployment had fallen for eight months in a row and was now at 7.3%, below the UK average; the property market was stabilising and the construction sector was picking up. However, Northern Ireland was still heavily dependent on the block grant, with public spending 20% higher per capita than in the rest of the United Kingdom. Economic recovery in the Province still lagged behind that of the rest of the UK and was heavily reliant on public sector employment and subsidy. In June, the British Government and the Northern Ireland Executive had jointly published "Building a Prosperous and United Community" to help Northern Ireland compete in the global race for investment and jobs. Northern Ireland had retained its 100% assisted area status and a start had been made in assisting businesses acquire finance. A potential visa waiver scheme had been piloted so that visitors entering Ireland did not need a separate visa for Northern Ireland.
102. She reported to the Assembly on a financial contribution to Bombardier for research and development and the very successful and exciting international investment conference held at Titanic, Belfast a week earlier. In terms of investment, Northern Ireland's biggest ambassadors were those who had already set up business in the Province, for instance Bombardier, Home Box Office and Allstate. It should be no surprise that with more than eight hundred foreign investors, Northern Ireland was

now second only to London as the top UK destination for inward investment and was now the destination of choice for all sorts of reasons, business, culture and tourism. But she acknowledged that, sadly, Northern Ireland would not fulfil its economic potential unless community divisions were healed. The consequences of the flag protests, parades and sectarian violence were there for all to see.

103. She had no doubt that the street disorder and continuing protests were taking a heavy toll on the police service. She expressed the British Government's support and admiration for all those protecting the community; she was particularly grateful to the Garda whose cooperation with PSNI was unprecedented. The Government took the situation very seriously, as did the Irish Government; it was vital that community divisions were addressed.

104. She then went on to say a few words about the negotiations chaired by Dr Richard Haas, a former American diplomat. This was an initiative of the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government themselves were not part of the negotiations on flags, parades and the legacy of the past (all these were now handled by the Executive) but they were fully engaged with the process. Her officials had met with Dr Haas and his team, and Dr Haas had attended constructive meetings at 10 Downing Street. The negotiations were dealing with some of Northern Ireland's most deep-rooted problems and there was no guarantee of success.

105. She had been very encouraged by the fact that it had been possible for a politician from the Unionist tradition to address the Gaelic Athletic Association dinner at Queen's University, Belfast, a week ago, as Peter Robinson, the First Minister, had done. She was sure that everyone would welcome his call for all politicians to resist the temptation to retreat to safe ground and fight old battles and, instead, to reach out beyond their own community.

106. Mrs Villiers concluded her address by acknowledging that 2013 had seen some real setbacks for Northern Ireland but there had been some positive moves forward. Derry/Londonderry's year as the UK's City of Culture had exceeded all expectations; the holding of the World Police and Fire Games had brought thousands of visitors to Northern Ireland; and the holding of a G8 Summit in Fermanagh would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

107. The Secretary of State then answered questions from Baroness Harris of Greenwich, Martin Heydon TD, Lindsay Whittle AM, Senator Paschal Mooney, Aengus O Snodaigh TD, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator John Crown, Lord Skelmersdale, Senator Jim Walsh, William Powell AM, Lord Empey and Joyce Watson AM.

108. The question and answer session was followed by a motion moved by Barry McElduff MLA in the following terms:- *In this, the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, this 47th plenary of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly: Reaffirms its support for the underlying principles of the Good Friday Agreement, including equality, mutual respect and parity of esteem, and calls for a renewed focus, on the basis of the above principles, by the two governments and the parties to the Executive on the need to give effect to the GFA provisions with respect to the establishment of a Bill of Rights for the north of Ireland and the creation of a charter, open to signature by all democratic political parties,*

reflecting and endorsing agreed measures for the protection of the fundamental rights of everyone living in the island of Ireland.

109. Barry McElduff reminded the Assembly of the main elements of the Good Friday Agreement and said how much frustration there was at the lack of progress towards a Bill of Rights. He believed that a Bill of Rights was neither a nationalist nor a unionist issue but one which concerned everyone. The onus lay with the two Governments to move the process forward. Paul Murphy MP supported the idea of a Bill of Rights but made the point that the two Governments were only the guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement; they had no power to implement a Bill of Rights, which needed the agreement of all the political parties in Northern Ireland. He proposed that the matter should be referred to Committee A as part of their consideration of progress since the Good Friday and St Andrew's Agreements. Robert Walter MP said that Committee B had looked at the whole aspect of human rights in the context of the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights across the British Isles. He had originally thought that the motion should be referred to the Commission on Human Rights but the Commission had been stood down; accordingly he supported Paul Murphy's proposal to leave this to Committee A as part of their consideration of the Good Friday Agreement.
110. Frank Feighan TD, as Chair of Committee A, assured the Assembly that the Committee would take into account the views expressed in the debate. Aengus O'Snodaigh TD and Danny Kinahan MLA supported the proposal to refer the motion to Committee A. Lord Empey agreed but said that the Committee should also examine core issues of the St Andrew's Agreement which had been distorted and changed without consensus. Lord Mawhinney said that the real problem was "sectarianism" and unless that was tackled there would be little chance of a Bill of Rights.
111. The motion was referred to Committee A for consideration.
112. At the conclusion of the debate, all those attending the conference walked over to the House of Commons for a tour of the Palace of Westminster, followed by a drinks reception in Speaker's House by kind permission of Mr Speaker. Visiting parliamentarians were impressed by the splendour of the State rooms but disappointed that Mr Speaker had been unable to attend.
113. Lunch was held back in Church House and after the usual photograph had been taken, the session resumed with a debate on the Irish Presidency of the European Union which had concluded in July.
114. Robert Walter MP, Chair of Committee B, introduced the Committee's report on The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Mr Walter began by outlining the Committee's work programme and the meetings held. He said that the Irish Presidency had taken place at a time of serious economic problems across Europe and with Ireland still under bail-out conditions. The Irish Government's approach to the presidency had seized the opportunity to restore the country's reputation. Stability, jobs and growth were the priorities. The Committee had been interested in the challenges and opportunities which followed the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. The Trio presidency was apparently not operating as effectively as hoped and he would be interested to hear the Minister's views on the idea of a "team

presidency” operating on an annual basis where two member states could share resources. On the headline priorities, banking stability would provide the environment for growth, while growth would help create jobs particularly for young people.

115. The development of trade links with areas outside the European Union where economic growth was stronger than in Europe was emphasised. The most onerous challenge of the presidency had been conducting negotiations over the EU budget for 2014-20, known as the multi-annual financial framework. Failure to reach agreement would have led to serious problems. Agreement facilitated a political agreement with the Council of Ministers on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. Finally the Irish Presidency had made significant progress on enlargement; a start date for negotiations with Serbia was agreed and progress was also made on an association agreement with Kosovo and on the stalled negotiations with Turkey.
116. Mr Walter concluded by saying that the detailed planning undertaken by the Irish Government in the three years before assuming the presidency had ensured that they were able to focus on core priorities; consequently, significant decisions were made.
117. Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for European Affairs in the Irish Government, addressed the plenary. He began by thanking Committee B for their report on the Irish Presidency. He said he would concentrate his speech on three inter-connected themes. The first was the nature of the Irish relationship with the European Union; second was his response to Committee B’s report and third was the importance of the relationship between Ireland, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Underpinning all three was the concept of “sharing”; membership of the Union was a “shared asset”.
118. He believed that membership of the European Union had been crucial to Ireland’s development and had allowed it to come through its present economic crisis. The EU had been a decisive factor in the modernisation of Ireland’s society, economy and politics. Ireland would not be the society it had become without the support and encouragement of the European Union. Indigenous industries had developed through access to common markets; the EU had also played a part in the peace process. Ireland believed in a shared sovereignty where sovereignty was enhanced and strengthened. The European institutions offered the best way of developing a shared response to problems. The Commission was the guardian of the treaties and responsible for protecting the interests of all member states, large or small. In his view, a European framework offered the best platform for the advancement of the Irish national interest.
119. Paschal O’Donohue spoke then about the Irish Presidency which Ireland had assumed while responding to their financial difficulties and during the final year of their bail-out programme. The presidency was not a distraction but central to their efforts. Ireland invested very heavily in their presidency and there were huge achievements. The first was in relation to banking union, something which would have been impossible for any individual state. Another example was an agreement on the multi-annual financial framework. The recent tobacco products directive was agreed overwhelmingly by the European Parliament after being pushed by the Irish Presidency.

120. He then turned his attention to the relationship between Ireland, the United Kingdom and the European Union. The former Irish Ambassador in London, Bobby McDonagh had written that Ireland and the UK had participated in the two greatest peace projects in modern history, the European Union and the Northern Ireland peace process. The European Union had been hugely supportive of the peace process and during the Irish presidency significant investment was allocated to Northern Ireland, including the £150 million peace programme funding. The difference in size of Ireland and the UK was of no account within the European Union; the two countries enjoyed a multilateral partnership. He was certain that the Union was stronger with the United Kingdom as a full and committed member. Any change in that would have consequences for relationships between the UK and Ireland. Ireland was committed to working closely with other states but any change in the UK's engagement with the Union would necessarily affect Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom. For instance policies for fighting crime and terrorism relied on strong cooperation between states and the Commission; that would be seriously weakened if discussions had to be held on an altogether different basis.
121. He concluded by saying that relations with the United Kingdom had never been stronger. This was evident in the close cooperation between senior civil servants from the two countries; a joint training mission to Mali by the two armed forces; the historic visit of the Queen to Ireland in 2011; energy policy; the peace process and in many other areas. Membership of the European Union strengthened efforts in all these areas.
122. Lord German, Joe O'Reilly TD, Paul Murphy MP, Arthur Spring TD, David Melding AM, Patrick O'Donovan TD, Willie Coffey MSP, John Scott MSP, Senator Paschal Mooney, Stephen Lloyd MP and Frank Feighan TD all asked questions of the Minister to which he responded with care and in great detail.
123. Howard Hastings, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Simon Gregory, Director of Markets, Tourism Ireland spoke about the Tourist industry in Northern Ireland. During the 1950s and 1960s, Northern Ireland had a vibrant tourist business. The Troubles had ensured a huge fall in the number of visitors from one million in 1969 to 400,000 in 1972. There were some who thought that the ending of the troubles would ensure the recovery of tourism but there were then no other compelling reasons to visit Northern Ireland. Tourism Ireland was born out of the Good Friday Agreement and led to the establishment of "signature projects", such as the promotion of St Patrick, the most famous patron saint in the world, the Giant's Causeway, the walled city of Derry/Londonderry and finally Titanic, Belfast. The unifying factor in all four projects was that they were all authentic and not based on fantasy stories like Harry Potter. On top of these signature projects, there was much more; 200 additional tourist-based developments had happened in the period 2007 to 2012. All these were improving Northern Ireland's image to the outside world, but also helping the country's self-confidence.
124. Dr Hastings then spoke about a number of events across Northern Ireland which had been enormously popular, ranging from major pop concerts and literary festivals, to the Irish Open being held for the first time in the Province and the stop-over of the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race at the Derry quayside. The Giant's Causeway had been visited by 750,000 people in the first year since its reopening

after the fire which had destroyed the visitor centre. 2012 saw visitor spending per night and hotel occupancy increase by 7%. He asked the rhetorical question, whether this was a flash in the pan? The answer was that 2013 was building on what had been achieved in the previous years---Derry-Londonderry was the UK's City of Culture in 2013, the G8 summit had been held in Fermanagh and had proved to be the most peaceful summit ever. The World Police and Fire Games in August had attracted 15,000 visitors. The Crumlin Road Gaol had opened as a new Belfast visitor attraction.

125. In 2014, the Giro d'Italia would start in Northern Ireland, in 2015 the Tall Ships would return and 2016 would see the restoration of HMS Caroline marking the centenary of the Battle of Jutland. So all this was looking very positive but the "flag protests" had introduced damaging negative publicity; there was no doubt that rioting and protests had an effect on the tourist industry. It was a matter of persuading those who indulged in these activities that their economic well-being would be better served by engaging in an increasingly vibrant economy.

126. He ended his address by mentioning three factors where the support of the Westminster Members would be helpful. The first was Air Passenger Duty (APD) where he said it was "daft" that APD was lower between London and Dublin than between London and Belfast. The recent Irish budget had promised to abolish APD altogether, Westminster Members should consider the impact of APD on access to Northern Ireland. His second point was on visas; Dublin recognised UK visas but this was not reciprocated in Northern Ireland. Visitors to the island of Ireland required two separate visas, with all the additional costs and delays which this entailed. Consequently, tour operators did not programme Northern Ireland into itineraries. The third issue was VAT; VAT in the Irish Republic was 9%, while in the UK it was 20%. This was a huge disadvantage to the Northern Ireland tourist industry. A lowering of VAT on accommodation and visitor attractions could be cost-neutral (or even a fiscal advantage) over a ten year period. And there would be many new jobs created in the tourist industry.

127. Darren Millar AM, Danny Kinahan MLA, Willie Coffey MSP, Senator Paul Coghlan, Lord Bew, Sean Rogers MLA, Senator Paschal Mooney, John Scott MSP, David Melding AM, Barry McElduff MLA, Joe Benton MP, William Powell AM and Frank Feighan TD all asked questions to which Dr Hastings replied.

128. Tuesday's business began with an address by Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Ms Gillespie began by saying how much had changed since she had joined the police force in 1982 when she could never have expected a G8 meeting to be held in Northern Ireland or that Derry/Londonderry would be the UK's City of Culture for 2013. Things had changed enormously. Belfast had been placed eighth in Trip Advisor's top European destinations and crime was lower than in most other areas of the United Kingdom. The Good Friday Agreement had led to a power-sharing coalition government but also to reform of the criminal justice system and to policing; the vast majority of the Patten recommendations had been implemented.

129. Policing had worked tirelessly to create a context where politics could succeed. She said that policing had been part of the problem but was also part of the

solution. 30.7% of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) was now Catholic and 27% female. It was recognised as the most accountable police service in the world. It now policed the whole Province without military assistance, something which would have been impossible before 2007. Community support for the police was vital and independent surveys showed that confidence in the service was increasing, although loyalists and nationalists had different perceptions.

130. Paramilitary activity remained a threat in certain areas but the combined total for deaths, bombings, shootings and assaults in 2012 could have been fitted into one day in 1972, the peak year. The devolution of policing and criminal justice to a locally elected Minister afforded opportunities for better relationships with the other devolved jurisdictions and with the Republic.

131. The legacy of the past was an important consideration for policing. Families were entitled to have answers to questions about the deaths of loved ones. The Historical Enquiries Team (HET) was set up in 2005 but HET was never intended to provide all the solutions to the past. There were all sorts of tensions in play. Although there had been more than twice the number of deaths caused by Republicans than by Loyalists, there were some Loyalists who perceived HET as biased against them. The police were criticised by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for adopting a different approach to killings by the British Army, while Unionists saw a one-sided process for dealing with the past. The legacy of the past posed a huge challenge for policing and the wider criminal justice system. The total annual spending on the past by PSNI was 70% more than on policing organised crime; it was conservatively estimated to be around £27 million a year. PSNI certainly wanted to provide bereaved families with answers but it was a time-consuming exercise and very labour-intensive, with more than forty reopened inquests. She welcomed the involvement of the United States envoy, Richard Haas, in attempting to find a solution to the complexity of dealing with the past.

132. She then spoke about public order. Since the flag protests had begun, the PSNI had had to utilise significant resources to keep order. The police actions were interpreted in different ways by the two sides of the argument but the outcome was that many officers had been injured. The failures of politics created problems of public order, which in turn could become the failures of policing. Only a small proportion of parades had led to public disorder but when they had done, the police had to deal with them sensitively and with an even hand. But the costs were enormous; in the summer of 2013 the cost was £18.5 million, compared with £4.1 million in 2012. The resources required in policing public order meant that there were fewer arrests for drug dealing, burglary and other community concerns. Police had become the human shock absorbers for political failure.

133. So far as the security situation was concerned, she said that there remained a very significant dissident republican terrorist threat aimed particularly at the police and prison officers. She always checked under her car every morning and police officers had to be careful when responding to calls in certain areas. Constable Carroll was killed as he was responding to a call and this sort of event created political tension. There were also criticisms that low level crime was “over-policed” because those police officers responding had to be protected by their colleagues. The threat from dissident republicans remained severe in Northern Ireland, although reduced

now in Great Britain. Disparate groups had emerged which claimed legitimacy for their violence towards young people believed to be involved in anti-social activities and alleged drug dealers. People were frightened to speak to the police which made these crimes difficult to investigate.

134. Many of the terrorist plans had been thwarted by the PSNI and the number actually carried out was slightly lower in 2013-14 than in the same period a year earlier. Cooperation with the Garda was enormously helpful and the PSNI was indebted to them. Paramilitary assaults and shootings continued at much the same level as before. Sectarian attacks remained a daily occurrence in Northern Ireland but policing could not deal with the deep-seated causes of this problem. She expressed the hope that the Haas mission might find some solution.
135. Peace had not raised Northern Ireland prosperity to the levels enjoyed elsewhere in the United Kingdom and unemployment remained high. Poverty and a sense of disengagement were breeding grounds for paramilitary recruitment.
136. Mrs Gillespie ended her address by speaking of the challenges which lay ahead. The peace process remained a delicate flower and politics was still in its early stages of development. There had been successes but issue like flags, parades and protests exposed how polarised Northern Ireland society remained. She paid tribute to her colleagues in PSNI who delivered a normal policing service in the most difficult and challenging situations. She appealed to the leaders and members of communities to come forward with information about crimes which blighted their lives.
137. There remained very significant financial challenges. The Treasury had provided additional funding to deal with the terrorist threat but PSNI had to find £135 million efficiency savings in the current spending review period and a further £48 million by March 2015. 80% of the costs were the staff and there would come a bottom line when any further reduction in numbers would affect the resilience of the force which was constantly faced with threats. In particular, dealing with the legacy of the past was stretching the force to its limits. Inevitably, some people questioned whether PSNI was sufficiently independent to deal with the past. Policing in a politically polarised environment was a huge challenge but she remained optimistic for the future.
138. Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie then answered questions from members of the Assembly. Danny Kinahan MLA, Baroness Harris of Greenwich, Lord Bew, Senator Cait Keane, Aengus O Snodaigh TD, Sean Rogers MLA, Lord Dubbs, Chris Ruane MP, Senator Paul Coghlan, Darren Millar AM, Senator Paschal Mooney, Viscount Bridgeman and Joe O'Reilly TD all asked questions and received substantial replies.
139. Senator John Crown then moved the following motion:- *That the Assembly examines the proposed EU General Data Protection Regulation 2012/0011(COD) and its potential impact on cancer and other health research with a view to ensuring that health research specifically conducted via patient and disease registries remains possible and with a view to urging the health units of each of our Governments to actively review and support the concept of 'broad consent' as proposed in the amendments of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee to the*

Regulation, and to ensure that access to data from patient and disease registries, for the purposes of conducting health research, remains possible.

140. He explained that he was a supporter of the European Union but recently issued regulations on data protection would have unintended consequences so far as his field of expertise, cancer, was concerned. The regulations could end vital research by their impact on bio-banking and tumour registries. He asked for the support of the Assembly to his proposal that “broad consent” for all research purposes should be enshrined and that there should be a specific derogation from the regulations for tumour registries.
141. Ann Phelan TD supported the arguments of Senator Crown and the motion was agreed to.
142. The Assembly then turned its attention to the work of Committees. Frank Feighan TD gave a brief update on the progress of Committee A’s enquiry into the implementation of the Good Friday and the St Andrew’s Agreements. Jack Wall TD reported on the work of Committee C into renewable wave and tidal energy. The Committee had held meetings in London and Dublin and had visited Orkney to see developments in this field. As a result, the Committee recommended that increased efforts should be made to ensure that the United Kingdom and Ireland maintain a position at the forefront of marine energy development. It should be a priority for the British-Irish Council; the Committee also had in mind the setting up of a formal structure between the two Governments to take matters forward. Jack Wall TD was supported by Ann Phelan TD and Joe O’Reilly TD.
143. The report was agreed.
144. Lord Dubs then introduced Committee D’s report on Human Trafficking. He said that the issue of trafficking had become more prominent lately and it was good that the British Home Secretary had indicated that penalties for the crime were to be increased. The Committee had visited Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh and London. Their main conclusions were a need for improved data collection, an increase in awareness and better cooperation between jurisdictions to tackle trafficking. In Wales, the Committee had seen the way in which coordination of the various agencies (police, local government, the health service and the voluntary sector) could work effectively. It was also important that the victims of trafficking were seen as victims and not as illegal immigrants. Finally, Lord Dubs said that conviction rates for traffickers must be improved.
145. Joyce Watson AM supported what Lord Dubs had said. She said that she had set up the Cross-Party Group on Human Trafficking in Wales and this had resulted in the appointment of the only national human trafficking coordinator in the UK. She agreed that data collection was critical and that it had to be properly put together. Training was essential in this regard. Cooperation had to be cross-border and European. It also had to be international, since trafficking was the second largest criminal activity by organised gangs in the world. She spoke particularly about children and the importance of identifying and then supporting those trafficked. Currently traumatised children have to tell their stories time and again to different agencies; she hoped that one thing to emerge from the debate would be a call to allow

recognised advocates to speak on behalf of these children. Children were the easiest victims for traffickers and the crime could not be solved by suggesting that they should be sent back to the people who had trafficked them and to families which did not want them. She hoped that the report would be properly considered and that all the jurisdictions would take steps to do whatever was needed to help.

146. Michael McMahon MSP spoke about the problem of prostitution and trafficking. He said that the demand for such sex workers had to be tackled. Senator Cait Keane supported the need for international cooperation and hoped that the European Union, through Commissioner Marstrom, would agree to release funding to continue the cooperation between thirty-one countries and non-governmental organisations. Chris Ruane MP supported the points made by Joyce Watson and Senator Keane and said it was important to keep drawing attention to the evils of human trafficking. There should be meetings with Ministers to discuss the 144 recommendations made in the report. Darren Millar AM referred to the role faith groups were playing in highlighting the evils of trafficking. Ann Phelan TD and Senator Maurice Cummins also spoke in support of the report.

147. The report was agreed and sent to the Governments in all the jurisdictions represented in the Assembly.

The Steering Committee

148. The Steering Committee met on the occasion of the two plenary sessions, and also in Belfast in July, at the Parliament Buildings in Stormont.

149. The Steering Committee reviewed the future of media-handling arrangements for the Assembly and its Committees. The Assembly's contract with the Dublin-based media consultants, Q4 Public Relations, expired in May. At its Belfast meeting, the Steering Committee approved a draft invitation to tender for the provision of future media-handling services. The two Co-Chairs were authorized to take any necessary decisions on this matter before the next meeting of the Committee. Tenders were subsequently invited and received from a number of media consultants in Britain and Ireland. These were given careful consideration. However, on grounds of cost, the Co-Chairs decided that they did not wish to accept any of them. They therefore invited the communications services of the two sovereign parliaments to provide media cover for the October 2013 and March 2014 plenary sessions, an invitation which was accepted by the communications services. At its London meeting the Steering Committee endorsed these decisions, and agreed to review the situation after the Dublin plenary.

150. Other matters discussed in the Steering Committee during the year included the organization of plenary sessions, the work of the committees, a proposal for an committee on devolved matters (it was decided not to proceed with this), appropriate ways of marking the centenary of outbreak of the First World War in 2014, relations with the British-Irish Council, and the Assembly's strategy for the next three years.

Committees

151. The work of the Committees during the year is set out in Appendix 3.

Staffing of the Assembly

152. Details of the staffing of the Assembly can be found at Appendix 4.

Prospects for 2014

153. The theme of the Irish Plenary taking place from 30 March to 1 April in Dublin will focus on employment issues and developments in public administration. The British plenary, to be held in Ashford, Kent, from 19 to 21 October, will include a full-day visit to the Ypres area of Belgium, comprising commemorative events to mark the contribution and sacrifice of Irish and British soldiers in the First World War. The Assembly's Committees are likely to continue the high levels of activity of recent years.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

Members of the Assembly

< Ireland January 2013 and December 2013 to be inserted >

The UK Parliament—January 2013

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP	Sir Tony Baldry
Rt. Hon Paul Murphy MP	Lord Bates
Mr. Robert Walter MP	Mr. Neil Carmichael MP
Mr. Joe Benton MP	Mr. Michael Connarty MP
Lord Bew	Miss Rosie Cooper MP
Baroness Blood MBE	Mr. Ian Davidson MP
Viscount Bridgeman	Baroness Doocey OBE
Mr. Conor Burns MP	Mr. Paul Farrelly MP
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr. Jim Dobbin MP	Mr. Richard Graham MP
Lord Dubs	Mr. Brandon Lewis MP
Lord Empey OBE	Lord Lexden
Mr. Paul Flynn MP	Mr. Jack Lopresti MP
Lord German OBE	Mr. Jim McGovern MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond	Baroness O’Loan DBE
Mr. Kris Hopkins MP	Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Mr. Stephen Lloyd MP	Rt. Hon Lord Shutt of Greetland
OBE	
Rt. Hon Lord Mawhinney	Lord Tugendhat
Mr. John Robertson MP	
Lord Rogan	
Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP	
Mr. Chris Ruane MP	
Mr. Jim Sheridan MP	
Lord Skelmersdale	
Mr. Gavin Williamson MP	

The UK Parliament—December 2013

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP	Sir Tony Baldry
Rt. Hon Paul Murphy MP	Lord Bates
Mr. Robert Walter MP	Mr. Neil Carmichael MP
Mr. Joe Benton MP	Mr. Michael Connarty MP
Lord Bew	Miss Rosie Cooper MP
Baroness Blood MBE	Mr. Ian Davidson MP
Viscount Bridgeman	Baroness Doocey OBE
Mr. Conor Burns MP	Mr. Paul Farrelly MP
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr. Jim Dobbin MP	Mr. Richard Graham MP

Lord Dubs
Lord Empey OBE
Mr. Paul Flynn MP
Lord German OBE
Baroness Harris of Richmond
OBE
Mr. Stephen Lloyd MP
Mr. Jack Lopresti MP
Rt. Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Mr. John Robertson MP
Lord Rogan
Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP
Mr. Chris Ruane MP
Mr. Jim Sheridan MP
Lord Skelmersdale

Mr. Brandon Lewis MP
Lord Lexden
Mr. Jim McGovern MP
Baroness O’Loan DBE
Rt. Hon Lord Shutt of Greetland

Lord Tugendhat
Mr. Robin Walker MP

The Scottish Parliament – January 2013

Mr. John Scott MSP
Mr. Willie Coffey MSP
Ms. Alison McInnes MSP
Mr. Michael McMahon MSP
Ms. Mary Scanlon MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Mr. David McLetchie MSP
Ms. Siobhan McMahon MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2013

Mr. John Scott MSP
Mr. Willie Coffey MSP
Ms. Alison McInnes MSP
Mr. Michael McMahon MSP
Ms. Mary Scanlon MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Ms. Siobhan McMahon MSP

National Assembly for Wales – January 2013

Mr. David Melding AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Mr. William Powell AM
Mr. Ken Skates AM
Mr. Lindsay Whittle AM

Ms. Elin Jones AM
Ms. Antoinette Sandbach AM
Mrs. Joyce Watson AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2014

Mr. David Melding AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Mr. William Powell AM

Ms. Elin Jones AM
Ms. Rebecca Evans AM
Ms. Antoinette Sandbach AM

Mrs. Joyce Watson AM
Mr. Lindsay Whittle AM

Northern Ireland Assembly- January 2013

Mr. Willie Clarke MLA
Mr. John McCallister MLA
Mr. David McClarty MLA
Dr. Alasdair McDonnell MLA
Mr. Jim Wells MLA

Mr. Alex Atwood MLA
Mr. Sam Gardiner MBE, MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly- December 2013

Mrs. Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr. Danny Kinahan MLA
Mr. Barry McElduff MLA
Mr. Sean Rogers MLA
Mr. Jim Wells MLA

Mrs. Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mrs. Brenda Hale MLA
Mrs. Dolores Kelly MLA

States of Jersey – January 2013

Connétable Daniel Murphy

Deputy Alan Breckon

States of Jersey – December 2013

Deputy John Le Fondre

Deputy Alan Breckon

States of Guernsey – January 2013

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

States of Guernsey – December 2013

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

Tynwald – January 2013

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Alex Downie MLC

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Ales Downie MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Assembly

Forty-sixth plenary, Letterkenny, 4 and 5 March 2013

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

BRITISH-IRISH COUNCIL

That the Assembly examines its relationship with the British-Irish Council with a view to deepening the engagement and interaction between both.

FOOD STANDARDS

That the Assembly recognises the close trading relationship between the Irish and UK Food industries and supports the ministerial agreement that the FSAI and the UK Food Standards Agency will work closely together and jointly agree an approach for protecting the authenticity of meat ingredients used in the manufacture of meat based products.

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

That the Assembly takes note of the Seventeenth Annual Report (Document No 202).

THE ATLANTIC STRATEGY

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee B on The Atlantic Strategy: Benefits for Britain and Ireland.

CREDIT UNIONS

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee C on credit unions.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

That the Assembly takes note of the following Government responses to Committee reports:

- Response from the Minister for Justice and Equality re issues raised in relation to co-operation between Ireland and the UK in the context of the common travel area;

- Response from the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the report of Committee A on The Decade of Commemorations.

Forty-seventh plenary, London, 21 and 22 October 2013

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED EU REGULATION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

That the Assembly examines the proposed EU General Data Protection Regulation 2012/0011(COD) and its potential impact on cancer and other health research with a view to ensuring that health research specifically conducted via patient and disease registries remains possible and with a view to urging the health units of each of our Governments to actively review and support the concept of ‘broad consent’ as proposed in the amendments of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee to the Regulation, and to ensure that access to data from patient and disease registries, for the purposes of conducting health research, remains possible.

IRELAND’S PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee B on Ireland’s Presidency of the European Union.

RENEWABLE WAVE AND TIDAL ENERGY

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee C on renewable wave and tidal energy.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee D on human trafficking.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

That the Assembly takes note of the following Government responses to Committee reports:

- Response from Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to Committee A’s report on the Decade of Commemorations
- Response from Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to Committee B’s report on The Atlantic Strategy
- Response from Minister for Finance to Committee C’s report on Credit Unions
- Letter dated 19 July 2013 from the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Scottish Government, commenting on Committee C’s report on credit unions
- Letter dated 20 August 2013 from the UK Minister for Welfare Reform commenting on the same report

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Committee A Sovereign Matters

1. The Committee had a busy year in 2013 meeting formally on seven occasions. As well as meeting during the plenary sessions in Donegal and London, the Committee met in Belfast three times, and in Dublin and London once each.
2. All the meetings in 2013 were dominated by the Committee's inquiry into the Implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and St Andrews Agreement, which was launched at the first meeting of the year in Dublin in January. The Committee heard from a range of academics, government officials, national and local politicians, and community organisations and representatives. The Committee also met with Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eamon Gilmore TD, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Therese Villiers MP. The Committee Chair also travelled to Edinburgh in November 2013 to meet the British-Irish Council Joint Secretaries.
3. The Committee's report will be presented at the plenary held in Dublin in late March 2014.

Attendance at meetings of Committee A in 2013:

Dublin 4 February 2013: Mr. Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Mr Martin Heydon TD, Mr. Jim Sheridan MP

Donegal 4 March 2013: Mr. Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Mr Michael Connarty MP, Mr Patrick O'Donovan TD, Mr Andrew Rosindell MP, Senator Jim Walsh

London 13 May 2013: Mr. Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, Mr Patrick O'Donovan TD, Mr John Paul Phelan TD, Mr. Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

Belfast 24 June 2013: Mr Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Bew, Mr Conor Burns MP, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, Mr Patrick O'Donovan TD, Senator Jim Walsh

Belfast 7 October 2013: Mr Conor Burns MP (Vice-Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

London 21 October 2013: Mr Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Martin Heydon TD, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, Patrick O'Donovan TD, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

Belfast 2 December 2013: Mr Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Baroness Blood, Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Mr Martin Heydon TD, Mr Patrick O'Donovan TD, Mr John-Paul Phelan TD, Mr Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

Committee B
European Affairs

1. During 2013, Committee B met formally at the plenary meetings in Letterkenny and London as well as holding a meeting in Dublin for its inquiry into *The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*.
2. At the Letterkenny plenary in March 2013, the Committee discussed its previous Report on *Human Rights Legislation in a European Context*, and agreed to await future developments. This Report had been agreed in Committee in October 2012, but it had not been possible to reach consensus on the report at the Glasgow plenary. The Committee agreed its Report on *The Atlantic Strategy: Benefits for Britain and Ireland*. The Report was presented to the plenary which was followed by a short debate on the Report. The Committee considered options for its next inquiry, and agreed to do a short report on *The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, with Jo-Anne Dobson and William Powell as co-rapporteurs.
3. In July 2013, the Committee travelled to Dublin as part of its inquiry on *The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union* which had recently concluded. The Committee took evidence then Minister of State Lucinda Creighton TD, then Permanent Representative of Ireland to the European Union, Ambassador Rory Montgomery, and officials from the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union, the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Committee agreed to present the final report at the BIPA Plenary meeting in London in October 2013.
4. At the London plenary in October 2013, the Committee agreed its Report on *The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. The Report was presented to the plenary and Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for European Affairs in the Irish Government, responded in an address to the plenary. The Committee agreed the terms of reference for its next inquiry into the *European Investment Bank*. Lord German and Sean Conlan TD would be co-rapporteurs. It was also agreed that the Committee would visit the Bank in Luxembourg in January 2014.

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2013

Letterkenny, 4 March 2013: Mr. Robert Walter MP, (Chairman), Senator Terry Brennan, Willie Coffey MSP, Sean Conlan TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, Lord German, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Senator Imelda Henry, Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, Joe O'Reilly TD, William Powell AM, Peadar Tóibín TD.

Dublin, 8 July 2013: Mr Robert Walter MP (Chairman), Senator Terry Brennan, Sean Conlan TD, Noel Coonan TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, Lord German, Senator Imelda Henry, Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, Joe O'Reilly TD.

London, 20 October 2013: Mr. Robert Walter MP, (Chairman), Willie Coffey MSP, Sean Conlan TD, Noel Coonan TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD, William Powell AM, Peadar Tóibín TD.

Committee C Economic Affairs

Committee C presented a report on credit unions to the Assembly's 46th Plenary session in Letterkenny in March 2013. The report examined the different places of credit unions in the financial landscape in the UK and Ireland, current plans for reforming the structure, governance and regulation of the sector, and the issue of financial sustainability.

The Committee agreed to focus for its next inquiry on the subject of marine renewable energy, a topic which had been a feature of the Committee's work and discussions in the past. The terms of reference for the inquiry focussed on wave and tidal energy. Evidence-gathering began in London on 20 May 2013, when the Committee heard from representatives of Renewable UK, The Carbon Trust and officials from the Department for Energy and Climate Change.

On 24 June 2013 the Committee met in Dublin and held discussions with representatives of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and with Professor Anthony Lewis from the Hydraulics and Maritime Research Centre, University College Cork (including Mr Eoin Sweeney, formerly Head of Ocean Energy Programme in Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland).

In order to inform itself about current technologies and research and development "on the ground", the Committee undertook a fact-finding visit to Orkney in Scotland in July 2013 to view the development of wave and tidal energy in the Orkney Islands off the north Scottish coast. The delegation received briefings from the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), Orkney Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Orkney Islands Council and Pelamis Wave Power. The delegation visited Billia Croo substation and wave test facility, Hatston pier and the Orkney Islands Council Marine Services Headquarters.

At the Assembly's 47th Plenary in London in October 2013, the Committee agreed and presented its report on marine renewable energy. The report noted the exceptional marine resource around these islands and the great opportunity this resource presents both for energy generation and industrial development, and urged the administrations to collaborate and remove barriers to development in areas such as grid connections. The report also noted the need for structures to be put in place for sharing ongoing policy and technological development, experience, resource assessments and other aspects of development.

Youth unemployment was adopted as the topic of the Committee's next inquiry. At its meeting in London on 24 February 2014, the Committee held discussions with officials from the Department for Work and Pensions and with representatives of the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). A programme for the remainder of the inquiry will be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee during the Assembly's 48th Plenary Session in Dublin.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2013-14

Letterkenny on 4 March 2013:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), John Robertston MP (Vice-Chairman), Oliver Colvile MP, Lord Empey, David McClarty MLA, Connétable Daniel Murphy, Ann Phelan TD, Sean Rogers MLA, Mary Scanlon MSP.

London on 20 May 2013:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), John Robertson MP (Vice-Chairman), Oliver Colvile MP, Lord Empey, Paul Flynn MP, Senator Paschal Mooney, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Dublin on 24 June 2013:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Senator John Crown, Lord Empey, Senator Paschal Mooney, Ann Phelan TD, Sean Rogers MLA, Arthur Spring TD, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Orkney on 7-8 July 2013:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Lord Empey, Senator Paschal Mooney, Ann Phelan TD, Lord Rogan, Arthur Spring TD, Mary Scanlon MSP.

London on 21 October 2013:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), John Robertston MP (Vice-Chairman), Senator John Crown, Lord Empey, Senator Paschal Mooney, Ann Phelan TD, Sean Rogers MLA, Arthur Spring TD, Lindsay Whittle AM.

London on 24 February 2014:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), John Robertson MP (Vice-Chairman), Oliver Colvile MP, Senator John Crown, Paul Flynn MP, Senator Paschal Mooney, Ann Phelan TD, Andrew Rosindell MP, Mary Scanlon MSP, Arthur Spring TD, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Committee D
Environmental and Social Issues

Committee D met four times during 2013: two meetings during plenary sessions; and two meetings taking evidence.

In January 2013 the Committee took evidence in Edinburgh as part of its inquiry into human trafficking. It heard from representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Equality and Human

Rights Commission, and the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance Project at Glasgow Community and Safety Services.

The Committee took stock of the evidence it had heard to date at its meeting during the plenary in Letterkenny in March 2013. A report would be prepared in time for debate at the plenary meeting in London in October. The Committee also discussed possible future inquiry topics.

The Committee met in London 13-14 May 2013 to take evidence to its human trafficking inquiry. It had meetings with the Metropolitan Police, representatives of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking and Mark Harper MP, Minister of State for Immigration.

The Committee's report on human trafficking was agreed by correspondence. It was then agreed at the plenary meeting in London in October 2013. The Committee met during the plenary and agreed to make Travellers and Roma the subject of its next inquiry. Meetings would be held, in the first instance, in Dublin, Belfast and London. The inquiry would focus on community relations, and access to housing, education and healthcare services.

Kris Hopkins MP left the Committee following his appointment as Minister for Housing at Communities and Local Government in October 2013. The Committee welcomed Mark Pritchard MP as a new member. The chairman would like to thank the members of Committee D for their work during the year.

Attendance at meetings of committee D in 2013:

Edinburgh on 20 and 21 January 2013

Lord Dubs (chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (vice chairman), Sean Crowe TD, Senator Cait Keane, John Lyons TD, Michael McMahon MSP, David Melding AM, Lord Skelmersdale, Jim Wells MLA.

Letterkenny on 4 March 2013

Lord Dubs (chairman), Joe Benton MP, Senator Cait Keane, John Lyons TD, David Melding AM, Chris Ruane MP, Lord Skelmersdale, Jim Wells MLA.

London on 13 and 14 May 2013

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Sean Crowe TD, Senator Jimmy Harte, Kris Hopkins MP, Senator Cait Keane, Michael McMahon MSP, Lord Skelmersdale, David Melding AM, Chris Ruane MP, Jim Wells MLA.

London on 20 October 2013

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Senator Cait Keane,

John Lyons TD, David Melding AM, Chris Ruane MP, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2012

Ireland:

Clerk: Ms Sinéad Quinn

Policy Adviser:

Ms Olive Hempenstall

Clerk, Committee A:

Ms Sighle Doherty

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Ms Jullee Clarke

Clerk, Committee C:

Ms Jullee Clarke

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Ms Jillian O'Keeffe

Irish Secretariat:

Ms Jullee Clarke

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Dr Robin James

British Consultant:

Sir Michael Davies KCB

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr Marek Kubala

Clerk, Committee B:

Ms Alison Groves (until June 2013)

Mr John-Paul Flaherty (from June 2013)

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Ms Judith Boyce

Clerk, Committee D:

Mr Mark Davies (until Oct 2013)

Mr Chris Atkinson (from Oct 2013)

UK Secretariat:

Mrs Amanda Healy