



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

**COMHLACHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH
NA BREATAINE AGUS NA hÉIREANN**

THIRTY-SECOND PLENARY SESSION

24 and 25 April 2006

Brehon Suite, Brehon Hotel, Killarney

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

(Produced ALDA BARRY & EOIN FAHERTY, Clerks to the Body)

(26 July 2006)

1. Monday 24 April 2006

**The sitting was opened in public at 9.30 am in the Brehon Suite, Brehon Hotel,
Killarney, with Mr Pat Carey, TD, in the Chair**

The Chairman announced that, pursuant to Rule 2(a), from the UK Mr Joe Benton, MP, Mr Jim Dobbin, MP, Lord Gordon, Baroness Harris, Ms Julie Kirkbride, MP and Mr Jim Sheridan, MP, from Ireland Senator Paul Coghlan and Mr Paudge Connolly, TD, Senator Paul Coghlan and Senator Geraldine Feeney, for the United Kingdom Mr Kevin Brennan, from Scotland Mr Michael McMahon, MSP, and Mr Robin Harper MSP, had accepted the invitation of the Steering Committee to assume the powers and responsibilities of Members for all of the session.

2. TRIBUTES

The Body paid tribute to the late Mrs Margaret Ewing, MSP, a Member of the Body,
and to Lord Merlyn Rees, a former Member of the Body.

3. ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ordered, That the proposed Programme of Business for the current Session be approved. **(Mr Pat Carey.)**

4. RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Resolved, That this Body: acknowledges that significant progress has been made over
the past year including decommissioning of IRA weapons; notes that the two Governments are convinced that the IRA no longer poses a terrorist threat; recognises that ongoing concerns about criminality need to be addressed and urges all communities to support policing structures; calls on loyalist and dissident republican paramilitary groups to cease all paramilitary and criminal activity and decommission their arms, underlines the need to avoid a prolonged political vacuum; welcomes, in this context, the 6 April initiative by the two Governments to set out an agreed strategy for the restoration of the Assembly and devolved Government; recognises that the prospects for a peaceful and prosperous future for Northern Ireland are best served by devolved, powersharing government as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement; looks forward to the recall of the Assembly on 15 May; urges the parties to take full advantage of this opportunity to
engage in dialogue with a view to an early agreement on the election of a First and Deputy First Minister, formation of an Executive and restoration of the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement; and encourages and fully supports the ongoing work to develop North/South co-operation in the best interests of both parts of the island and East/West relations for the benefit of all the people on these islands.—**(Mr Seymour Crawford.)**

The sitting was suspended at 12.58 pm

The sitting was resumed at 2.33 pm with Mr Pat Carey, TD, in the Chair

5. ADDRESS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEMOCRATIC

UNIONIST PARTY

Mr Peter Robinson, MP, MLA, Deputy Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, addressed the Body.

Mr Peter Robinson, MP, MLA, Mrs Iris Robinson, MP, MLA, Mr Nigel Dodds, MP, MLA and Mr Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA, answered questions from the floor.

The sitting was suspended at 3.53 pm.

The sitting was resumed at 4.32 pm with Mr Pat Carey, TD, in the Chair

5. STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR DERMOT AHERN

Mr Dermot Ahern, TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, addressed the Body.

7. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

Mr Dermot Ahern, TD, replied to Questions for oral answer put by Members of the Body.

The sitting was adjourned at 6.01 pm, until tomorrow.

2. Tuesday 25 April 2006

The sitting was opened in public at 10.04 am in the Brehon Suite, Brehon Hotel.

Killarney, with the Rt Hon Paul Murphy, MP, in the Chair

1. BUSINESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr Jim O’Keeffe, TD, made a statement about the work of Committee A.

Senator Paschal Mooney made a statement about the work of Committee B.

Mr Seamus Kirk, TD, made a statement about the work of Committee C.

Lord Dubs made a statement about the work of Committee D

2. INTERIM REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (SOVEREIGN MATTERS) : “ THE

IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF BRITISH IDENTITY CARDS FOR THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA”

Resolved, That the Body take note of the Interim Report of Committee A on “ The Implications of the Introduction of British Identity Cards for the for the Common Travel Area” [Doc. No. 119] and to the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments for their observations.—(**Mr Jim O’Keeffe.**)

3. EUROPEAN FUNDING IN SOCIALLY DEPRIVED AREAS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolved, That the Body take note of the progress report of Committee B on “European Funding in socially deprived areas in Northern Ireland” [Doc. No. 116] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments and to the devolved administrations for their observations.—(**Mrs Rosemary McKenna.**)

4. TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BODY

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Tenth Annual Report of the Body [Doc. No. 118].---(**Mr Paul Murphy.**)

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE SMALL FIRMS SECTOR

Resolved, That the Body take note of the report of Committee C on “Challenges and Opportunities facing the Small Farm Sector” and the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both Governments and devolved administrations for their observations [Doc. No. 117].—(**Mr Seamus Kirk.**)

6. ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That the Body do now adjourn.—(**Lord Brooke.**)

The session concluded at 12.16 pm