



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

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

THIRTY-FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

26 and 27 November 2007

Heythrop Park Hotel and Country Club

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

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

(11 July 2007)

1. Monday 26 November 2007

The sitting was opened in public at 9.30 in the Heythrop Park Hotel and Country Club, with Rt Hon Paul Murphy, MP, in the Chair

The Chairman welcomed the new Irish Co-Chair, Mr Niall Blaney, TD. He also welcomed new delegations from Scotland, from Northern Ireland and from Wales.

The Chairman announced that, pursuant to Rule 2(a) the following Associate Members had accepted the invitation of the Steering Committee to assume the powers and responsibilities of Members for all of the Session: from Ireland, Senators Martin Brady and Cecilia Keaveney; from the UK, Mr Jim Dobbin MP and Baroness Harris; from Northern Ireland Mr Alex Atwood MLA; and from Wales Ms Jenny Randerson AM.

1. ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Ordered, That the proposed Programme of Business for the current Session be approved. —(**Mr Paul Murphy**.)

2. RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Motion made and Question proposed, That the Body welcomes the historic transformation of politics in Northern Ireland; welcomes the formation of a power sharing Executive on 8 May which is taking forward its work in a spirit of co-operation for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland; encourages the continuing support of the British and Irish Governments and the continued engagement, of the international community, in particular the US and the EU, in the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland; notes the success of the North South Ministerial Council Plenary and the British Irish Council Summit in July of this year, and encourages all parties to work together to promote and develop North/South and East/West linkages for the benefit of all these islands and to advance the full implementation of the Belfast /Good Friday Agreement; welcomes the all-party support for policing and criminal justice and calls on all members of the community to co-operate fully with the institutions of policing and justice; agrees to initiate consultations with the Northern Ireland Assembly, the governments and the other relevant elected institutions with a view to making recommendations as to the formation of the inclusive East-West interparliamentary framework which will embrace all interests, as envisaged in the St Andrews Agreement; encourages the development of the North-South parliamentary forum, also as contained in that agreement; and accepts that that the changed circumstances will necessitate changes to the Body's own arrangements—(**Mr Michael Mates**);

The sitting was suspended at 11.09 am.

The sitting was resumed at 11.43 am.

And the Question being put;

Resolved, That the Body welcomes the historic transformation of politics in Northern Ireland; welcomes the formation of a power sharing Executive on 8 May which is taking forward its work in a spirit of co-operation for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland; encourages the continuing support of the British and Irish Governments and the continued engagement, of the international community, in particular the US and the EU, in the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland; notes the success of the North South Ministerial Council Plenary and the British Irish Council Summit in July of this year, and encourages all parties to work together to promote and develop North/South and East/West linkages for the benefit of all these islands and to advance the full implementation of the Belfast /Good Friday Agreement; welcomes the all-party support for policing and criminal justice and calls on all members of the community to co-operate fully with the institutions of policing and justice; agrees to initiate consultations with the Northern Ireland Assembly, the governments and the other relevant elected institutions with a view to making recommendations as to the formation of the inclusive East-West interparliamentary framework which will embrace all interests, as envisaged in the St Andrews Agreement; encourages the development of the North-South parliamentary forum, also as contained in that agreement; and accepts that that the changed circumstances will necessitate changes to the Body's own arrangements.

The sitting was suspended at 1.18 pm

The sitting was resumed at 2.37 pm with Mr Seymour Crawford, T.D., Vice-Chair of the Body, in the Chair.

3. THE INTERREG PROGRAMME

Resolved, That the Body notes the success of the INTERREG III Community Initiative as a mechanism for co-operation across national boundaries; looks forward to the new cross border co-operation programmes to further develop community links across boundaries, building on the strengths of INTERREG III and learning from the good practice of other programmes across Europe; and calls on the managing authorities to promote the programmes with vigour to raise awareness about the opportunities they provide, to encourage participation and support the development of innovative projects--(Mrs Rosemary Butler.).

The sitting was suspended at 3.35 pm

The sitting was resumed at 4. pm, with Mr Paul Murphy, M.P., in the Chair.

4. STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, THE RT HON SHAUN WOODWARD, M.P.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Shaun Woodward, M.P., addressed the Body.

5. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Shaun Woodward, M.P., replied to Questions for oral answer put by Members of the Body.

The sitting was suspended at 5.38 pm, until to-morrow.

2. Tuesday 27 November 2007

The sitting was opened in public at 10.05 am in the Heythrop Park Hotel, with Mr Paul Murphy, M.P., in the Chair

1. BUSINESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr Jim O’Keeffe, T.D., made a statement about the work of Committee A.

Mr Robert Walter, M.P., made a statement about the work of Committee B.

Mr Sean O’Fearhail, T.D., made a statement about the work of Committee C.

Lord Dubs made a statement about the work of Committee D.

Mr Sean O’Fearghail, T.D., Vice-Chair of the Body, took the Chair

2. GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

Resolved, That the Committee takes note of the response of the Irish Government to the Report of Committee A entitled “Barriers to Trade” (Doc No 130)—(**Mr Jim O’Keeffe.**)

4. THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee D on The Irish Community in Britain [Doc 131] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.— (**Lord Dubs.**)

5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

Resolved, That the Body welcomes the progress that has been made towards the development of draft regulations for the mutual recognition of UK and Irish driving qualifications; notes that a feasibility study focused on the penalty point systems for road traffic offences in Ireland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the possibility of mutual recognition of lesser infringements of road traffic law is continuing; further

notes that it is four years since the submission by Committee A of the report of mutual recognition of penalty points; and reiterates that there remains a pressing need to implement a system of mutual recognition between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in order to improve road safety and driving behaviour and reduce the number of traffic fatalities and serious injuries suffered on the island's roads—**(Lord Dubs.)**

6. ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That the Body do now adjourn.—**(Mr Michael Mates.)**

The session concluded at 12.14 pm