



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

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

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT

No. 118 — March 2005

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY

Introduction

1. This is the Tenth Annual Report of the Body since it was decided at the 11th Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Body during 2005.

Membership of the Body

2. The General Election in the United Kingdom in May resulted in a number of changes to the British delegation, the most significant of which was the replacement of Mr David Winnick, MP as Co-Chair by Mr Paul Murphy, MP. Mr Winnick had announced at the Bundoran Plenary session that he would leave the Body, although he was not standing down from the House of Commons. Lord Dubs replaced Mr Kevin McNamara (who left the House of Commons) on the Steering Committee. Mr John Hume of the SDLP also retired from the Commons at the General Election and his presence is much missed. Other notable departures were those of Mr Harry Barnes and Mr William O'Brien. The other changes to the British Delegation can be found in Appendix 1. Hon Tony Brown MHK succeeded Mr Donald Gelling, who has again become Chief Minister of the Isle of Man. The Body expressed its congratulations to Mr Gelling.

Political Developments

3. The Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly remained suspended throughout 2005. During the year, the two Governments continued their efforts to move the process forward and to restore the devolved power-sharing institutions. Regular meetings were held between the Governments at political level and discussions with the parties intensified in the latter half of the year. The British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) met on 3 occasions in 2005, on 2 March, on 27 June, and again on 19 October 2005. In the course of their efforts, the two Governments consistently underlined their determination to work with the political parties to restore confidence and to rebuild political momentum. The two Governments continued to pursue increased North/South Cooperation across a range of areas for the mutual benefit of people in both parts of the island, as well as cooperating on an East/West basis.

4. Following the Northern Bank raid in December 2004, the Irish Government met with the Sinn Féin leadership on 25 January and advised them that the IRA constituted the primary obstacle to fully implementing the Agreement. On 6 April, Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin made a statement in which he appealed to the IRA to consider "initiatives which will achieve your aims

by purely political and democratic activity". The IRA subsequently launched a process of internal consultation and on 28 July issued a statement indicating that an end to the armed campaign had been ordered by the leadership, with effect from 4pm that day. The statement also confirmed that the IRA leadership had authorised their representative to engage with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) to complete the process to verifiably put its arms beyond use.

5. On 26 September the IICD released a report to the two Governments confirming that IRA decommissioning had been completed. In a Joint Statement, the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair said that the IICD's findings provided the "clearest signal ever that the IRA's armed campaign is over." In the Statement, they looked forward to the reports of the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC), scheduled for October and January, which would address the question of paramilitary and criminal activity.

6. On 19 October the two Governments published the seventh report of the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC), which addressed the issue of paramilitary and criminal activity in the six month period to the end of August. While the report could only make a limited assessment of the effect of the IRA statement of 28 July, it indicated that the initial signs were encouraging. (The IMC reported to the Governments four times in all in 2005. The preceding reports dealt with the UVF/LVF feud (22 September), paramilitary activities (24 May) and the Northern Bank Robbery (10 February) respectively).

7. Voting for candidates for 18 seats at Westminster and a total of 582 seats on Northern Ireland's 26 local councils took place on 5 May. The DUP gained three seats, bringing to 9 their total number of seats at Westminster. Lady Sylvia Hermon retained the UUP's only seat and the leader of the UUP, David Trimble resigned following his loss of the Upper Bann constituency. Sinn Féin won 1 additional seat in Newry and Armagh from the SDLP, bringing their total number of MPs to 5; and the SDLP held two seats, and gained the South Belfast seat from the UUP. The Ulster Unionist Council, the governing body of the UUP, elected Sir Reg Empey as new leader of the party on Friday 24 June.

8. On 3 June two men were charged with the murder of Robert McCartney, a Belfast Catholic, who was killed in a violent incident on 31 January. His partner and family continued to campaign throughout the year for all those involved in his murder to be held accountable before the courts.

9. On the security front, a programme of normalisation was announced by the British Government on 1 August. This is to involve the vacation and demolition of a number of observation posts and bases, as well as a reduction in the overall numbers of British Army soldiers in Northern Ireland

to approximately 5,000. The Northern Ireland-based battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) will also be disbanded as part of this move.

10. There was a regrettable upsurge in loyalist violence over the summer months, with a number of deaths attributed to the ongoing feud between the loyalist paramilitary group, the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). On 10 September a decision to reroute the contentious Whiterock Orange march sparked a weekend of serious violence by loyalist protesters. The Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, said the disturbances amounted to one of the most serious riot situations ever faced by a police force in the UK.

11. The British Government then announced on 14 September that it had decided to specify the UVF (i.e. cease to recognise the organisation as being on ceasefire) on the basis of the feud with the LVF and an assessment that the violence in Belfast during the week beginning 10 September had been UVF-orchestrated. Subsequently, in a statement on 30 October, the LVF announced that it was standing down its military units. The organisation said that the decision was being taken in direct response to the IRA's decision to decommission its arms. A formal end to the feud between the LVF and the UVF was announced on the same day. These statements were welcomed by both Governments. Soon afterwards, on 13 November, the UDA announced it wanted to discuss its future with the British Government in a statement to supporters at a Remembrance Day ceremony. This followed the shooting dead on 4 October, of one of Belfast's most senior loyalist paramilitary figures, Jim Gray. In addition, the overall security situation in Northern Ireland calmed down considerably in the latter months of the year - this was underlined by the peaceful nature of the Love Ulster Rally on 29 October.

12. During his visit to Belfast on 3 November, when he also visited the Somme Heritage centre in Newtownards, the Taoiseach restated his wish to see an early return to devolved Government. He also said that the Constitutional question was settled and that a united Ireland would not happen without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland, as set out in the Good Friday Agreement. Also in November, Secretary of State Hain announced his proposals on the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland. Most media and political attention following the announcement focussed on the proposals to reduce the number of District Councils from 26 to 7.

13. The British Government published the Northern Ireland Offences Bill on 9 November. This was introduced arising from the commitments of both Governments at Weston Park, and in the Joint Declaration of 2003, to address the issue of the 'on the runs' (or people who, if they had been serving sentences for particular offences at the time of the Good Friday Agreement, would have been released under the terms of the Agreement). Simultaneously, the Irish Government announced proposals for dealing with

cases that might arise in that jurisdiction to operate in tandem with the provisions in the UK. The proposed UK legislation was the subject of intense parliamentary debate (reflected in the Body's debate at the Edinburgh plenary session) and has not been proceeded with.

The work of the Body

14. In accordance with the Rules of the Body, two Plenary Sessions were held in 2005; in Bundoran, Donegal from 6th to 8th March and in Edinburgh between 27th and 29th November.

Thirtieth Plenary

15. The Thirtieth Plenary session was held at the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, Donegal.

16. The main debate took place on the Monday morning on the motion: That the Body reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and for the ongoing efforts of the two Governments to protect and develop its achievements; regrets that in spite of substantial progress it was not possible to reach agreement last December on the two key issues of decommissioning and ending all forms of paramilitary and criminal activity; abhors the brutal murder of Robert McCartney; is greatly disappointed by the damage caused to the peace process by recent attacks and ongoing criminality, including the Northern Bank raid; re-emphasises that all parties to the Agreement undertook to pursue their political objectives by exclusively peaceful and democratic means; recognises that sustainable, inclusive government in Northern Ireland requires a complete cessation of paramilitarism, including all forms of criminal activity; and, in the belief that informal dialogue can play an important part in promoting these objectives, looks forward to the possibility of inviting representatives of the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly as guests to future meetings of the Body.

17. The debate was the first opportunity for the Body to debate the situation in Northern Ireland following the two examples of criminal behaviour referred to in the motion. The murder of Robert McCartney and the Northern Bank raid were constantly referred to in debate and the Body expressed the almost unanimous view that it was now time for the IRA to stop engaging in criminal activity. The Good Friday Agreement was the only way forward and under its terms much had been achieved, particularly in cross-border co-operation and economic activity.

18. This debate was followed by a short one on the report by Committee B on cross-border European Funding Programmes. The debate was introduced by Mr Mike German AM who described the contents of the report, which

examined INTERREG, a funding programme which covers tourism, transport and economic and social development. He told the Body that an important strand of the programme was to develop new maritime links between countries. Committee B urged that Ireland and the UK should make use of the funds available under the INTERREG programme rather than rely solely on the structural funds which would become increasingly unavailable as the two countries become richer.

19. In the debate, Mr William O'Brien MP spoke of the CULTURE aspect of the programme and pointed out that "culture plays an important part in our communities (he said he was from a mining community) and in passing on the activities, projects, developments and successes of our ancestors". Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD spoke about regional air services and the fishing industry. Senator Paschal Mooney replied to the debate and expressed the hope that the report would "act as a catalyst for further and deeper investigation and encouragement of the whole concept of INTERREG as a progressive move towards developing deeper links between our two sister islands".

20. On Monday afternoon, the Scottish delegation selected as the topic for debate the importance of international promotion of the work of the devolved institutions and of the Crown Dependencies. There were speakers from the Scotland Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and Jersey. Mr John Swinney MSP made the main speech, attending by invitation of the Body. He gave the Body a detailed account of the work done in the Scottish Parliament by the European and External Relations Committee. The Committee had recommended a number of steps which the Scottish Executive should take to improve the promotion of Scotland, including an encouragement to people to come and work in Scotland.

21. Later, the Body heard an address by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan TD, who also answered questions from Members. Ms Coughlan is the local Deputy and expressed her pleasure that the Body was meeting in Donegal. She told the Body that she had a particular interest in the peace process since she represented a border constituency and consequently she understood the problems as well as anyone. She spoke of the difficulties with the North/South Ministerial bodies where the North could not be represented by local politicians. Agriculture was one economic activity where it was most important to work on an all-Ireland basis and this was happening already. She discussed the implications of the European Union Luxembourg Agreement and the decoupling of direct payments from production. This would have significant implications for farmers but she was confident that the farming sector would adapt to the needs of the new environment. She said that "as farmers on these islands accommodate the outworkings of the Agreement, it will be important to share experiences. The Body can play a very useful role in that regard". She went on to say that an animal health strategy was being developed for the island as a whole and she

also mentioned a specific issue in relation to sheep. On a broader level she told the Body that total cross-border trade had grown by over 35% in the past 10 years and mentioned the work of InterTradeIreland which had developed a range of activities aimed at facilitating trade and business contacts across Ireland.

22. Ms Coughlan then answered a range of questions from Members of the Body, including on progress to implement an all-Ireland ban on smoking in public places, the Sellafield reprocessing plant and on the Good Friday Agreement. She also was asked about the inclusion of Sinn Fein in the peace process in the light of the Northern Bank robbery and the murder of Robert McCartney. She replied that "any arrangement that seeks to exclude the largest Nationalist or Unionist party is inherently unstable". But she condemned paramilitary and criminal activity.

23. On Tuesday the Body debated two reports from Committee D. The first was a Report on Truth and Reconciliation. The debate was introduced by Mr Kevin McNamara MP, the Chairman of the Committee. He said that the Committee recommended that the British and Irish Governments should produce a progress report stating how far they have gone towards meeting victims' needs. He applauded the actions of the Chief Constable of Northern Ireland in promising families that he would reopen the files on those who had been murdered but for whose deaths no-one had been brought to trial. Mr McNamara said there were concerns over legislation recently introduced into the Westminster Parliament to limit the length and expense of an inquiry such as the Saville inquiry into Bloody Sunday, concerns which Lord Saville himself shared. Finally the Committee urged the British Government to establish a fully independent inquiry into the death of Pat Finucane.

24. The Report was fully supported by those who spoke. Mr Seymour Crawford TD said that some years ago he would have been totally opposed to such action but he now realised that those affected by bombings place great importance on "inquiry and truth building". Senator Mansergh expressed his dissatisfaction at how the Finucane case had been handled and said it was "reprehensible for agents of the state to intimidate lawyers because of whom they represent". Mr Kevin Brennan MP doubted whether the sum of £17 million provided to the Chief Constable to reopen old files was anywhere sufficient. It was a drop in the ocean compared to the cost of the Saville inquiry.

25. The second report was on Special Needs Educational Provision with Special Reference to Autism. The debate on the report was introduced by the Chairman of Committee D, Mr Kevin McNamara MP who spoke of the "absolute dedication of the teachers in the classroom" who have to deal with some very difficult children. But the Body was told that almost none of the universities on either side of the Irish Sea offered specific training for teachers on how to handle very difficult children. Not enough was being done

to improve early diagnosis. Mr McNamara gave a number of examples of weaknesses in the present situation but commended the way different jurisdictions are learning from each other and drew attention to legislation in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland which built on experience gained in the United Kingdom. The debate attracted several well-informed speakers, including Ms Margaret Ewing MSP who was able to describe what is happening in Scotland and Deputy Mike Torode spoke about developments in Guernsey. Several Members, including Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD and Mr Chris Ruane MP, contributed from their experience as former teachers. Mr Dai Lloyd AM, who is a General Practitioner, wound up the debate and was able to speak about the provision of special facilities in Wales.

26. On a more domestic front the Body briefly debated its Ninth Annual Report and agreed an amendment to its Rules to allow the devolved institutions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (when it sends a delegation to the Body) each to have a permanent representative on the Steering Committee.

Thirty-First Plenary

27. The Thirty-First plenary session was held at the Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club, Edinburgh. The wish of the Body strongly expressed at the Thirtieth plenary session had been that the Body should hold its Thirty-First plenary session in Belfast and plans to do this were well advanced. However, after the General Election, the Northern Ireland Office advised the British Steering Committee Members that it would be politically unwise to hold the plenary session there at that time. The British delegation was very grateful to the Scottish Parliament for suggesting the Dalmahoy Hotel as an alternative conference venue and for assisting with the change of plans. The Body would also wish to record its appreciation for the invitation from the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament to hold its formal Monday evening dinner in the new parliamentary building. This was a splendid occasion which all Members of the Body greatly enjoyed.

28. Although the Body had met previously in Edinburgh in 1992, this was the first occasion it had met in Scotland since devolution. While it is, of course, a matter of pride that the Body has now met in both Wales and Scotland since devolution, it is a matter of great regret that it has not yet met in Northern Ireland.

29. The first item of business on Monday morning was an address by Mr Steven Kingon of PriceWaterhouse Coopers on the economy of Northern Ireland. He then answered questions. His thesis was that the political troubles have prevented investment in the Province and that the lack of investment meant high unemployment which in turn created the present political instability. Over 530,000 people—41% of the working-age population—are not economically active. The greater part of the economy of Northern Ireland

is driven by the public sector with very little contribution from the private sector. There must be a transition, At present Northern Ireland receives an annual subvention from the British Government of £5 billion, an equivalent of £3000 a head. This level of support was not sustainable when the British Treasury was looking at all levels of public expenditure However, Northern Ireland is one of the few parts of the European Union where there is a growing workforce, something essential for economic growth.

30. The main debate took place on the motion: That the Body, recognising that economic and political progress go hand in hand, welcomes recent developments in Northern Ireland, including the independently verified statement by the IRA that it has decommissioned all its weapons and the indications by loyalist groups that they were prepared to consider a positive response; urges all paramilitary groups to complete the process of decommissioning; notes the particular potential of deeper North/South economic co-operation to deliver real benefits for all the people of Ireland; trusts that the January report of the Independent Monitoring Commission will be favourable to the early restoration of the devolved institutions so that a renewed devolved government may play a central role in linking communities with the political and economic decision-making process; and calls on all appropriate authorities and political parties to work for the social and economic development of all communities in Northern Ireland.

31. The debate was influenced by Steven Kingon's address, and indeed the Motion had been drafted to concentrate the debate on economic and social issues but recent political developments at Westminster meant that most speeches were directed at political concerns. It was acknowledged by many speakers that the emergence in the General Election of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) as the largest Loyalist political party at Westminster was a political event, the implications of which were not yet apparent. The squeezing of the more moderate parties in Northern Ireland by Sinn Fein and the DUP had to be recognised. Another issue which dominated the debate was the wish of the British Government to legislate for an amnesty for the so called "on-the-runs". Many members described the bill and the possible complementary use of Presidential pardons in the Republic as indefensible.

32. On Monday afternoon, the Body heard an address by Professor Paul Bew of Queen's University, Belfast who gave a Loyalist perspective of the current situation. He described the present demoralised state of the Unionist population. He described the Good Friday Agreement as the "sow that ate its parents: it ate the SDLP and it ate the Ulster Unionist Party". He went on to say that there is no sign that the spirit that animated the agreement between 1998 and 2002 or 2003 can be revived. He was particularly critical of the British Government's policy on policing which he said was giving more and more ground to the Nationalist community and had undermined David Trimble's position. He questioned whether it would be possible to achieve the spirit of the motion discussed in the morning session. He predicted a

DUP/Sinn Fein carve up of one sort or another and that it would include devolution of policing and justice. But he doubted that the Unionist community would agree to the devolution of policing, saying that the British Government's policy on policing had destroyed David Trimble.

33. Professor Bew was followed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, who delivered a speech setting out the British Government's attempts to get the Northern Ireland Assembly set up again. He described the challenges ahead and said that one challenge was that of "parades". He praised the Derry initiative for regulating parades which he said was a model which should be followed. He was also extremely positive about the economy—"Northern Ireland now has more prosperity, a higher level of employment and a lower level of unemployment than ever in its history". But he agreed that it was not sustainable to have 60% of jobs dependent on the public sector. He answered a wide range of questions on subjects such as pardons for those executed in the First World War, the ban on smoking and the proposed introduction of identity cards in the United Kingdom. He also answered a question about developing links between the north of Ireland and Scotland, a subject which the Body itself debated on Tuesday. However, Members were primarily interested in matters such as the peace process and the role of the Body in the present situation. Mr Hain recognised that the Body plays a valuable role in furthering progress towards normalising politics in Northern Ireland. Additionally, he was left in little doubt of the wish of the Body to hold its next British plenary in Belfast and he said he would have to reflect on what had been said.

34. On the peace process itself, in answer to questions by Mr Mates and others, he was optimistic that the IRA's statement on decommissioning would pave the way for the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and for a power sharing executive. If in January the Independent Monitoring Commission confirmed that the IRA's commitments have been translated into action, progress could be possible. He said that there were only two options in the mind of the British Government—direct rule or a devolved administration based on the Good Friday agreement. The Government was eager to return power to the Province as soon as possible, because the present arrangement was an affront to democracy.

35. Mr Hain was able to meet briefly with members of the Body at the end of the session and talk informally with some before leaving to return to London.

36. On Tuesday morning, the Body debated a motion on the work of the Irish Societies, representatives of the Federation of which were present to hear the debate. The previous day Committee D had met these representatives and had heard their concerns. Lord Dubs, Chair of Committee D, explained the role and work of the Irish Societies. The Federation of Irish Societies has 150 affiliated membership groups and works to raise the profile of the Irish community in the United Kingdom. During the debate, the following main

points were made. It was pointed out that the last Census recorded the Irish population in the United Kingdom as only 700,000; it was widely felt that this was well under the true figure. Consequently, many Irish immigrants in the UK suffered deprivation and because of the under-recording their health, particularly among the elderly, were generally poorer than the majority of the population. The Irish minority did not enjoy the profile given to the problems of the Afro-Caribbean or Asian minorities. It was important that the next Census in 2011 should include questions about Irish origins. There were also difficulties for some of those Irish who wished to return to Ireland. Ireland has changed from the romantic Ireland that they remembered and many also face problems on their return with finding housing. The Plenary welcomed the intention of Committee D to widen their present study of deprivation in Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland to include the problems of deprivation faced by many Irish in the United Kingdom.

37. The second item of business was a debate on the COOPERATION programme which aims to enhance links between the North of Ireland and South-West Scotland, so as to create improved economic growth. Funding was available from the European Union under its cross-border co-operation budget since the two countries are geographically so close. The debate was a short one but the report of Committee B on which the motion was based was fully supported. It was agreed that improved transport links were of high priority on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Steering Committee

38. At the beginning of the year, the Members of the Steering Committee were Mr Pat Carey, TD and Mr David Winnick, MP, Co-Chairmen, and Mr Seamus Kirk TD, Mr Michael Mates MP, Mr Kevin McNamara MP and Mr Seymour Crawford TD, Vice-Chairmen. Mr Murray Tosh MSP represented the devolved institutions. The Crown Dependencies were represented first by Senator Maurice Dubras of Jersey and then by Hon Tony Brown MHK of the Isle of Man. After the United Kingdom General Election, Mr Paul Murphy MP succeeded Mr David Winnick as British Co-Chair and Lord Dubs succeeded Mr Kevin McNamara as a Vice-Chairman. Following the decision of the Body at the Thirtieth Plenary to allow both the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to be represented on the Steering Committee, Dr Dai Lloyd AM joined the Committee. The Committee met on four occasions, once in Edinburgh at the invitation of Mr Murray Tosh MSP.

39. The Steering Committee and the Co-Chairs were keen to persuade representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party to attend one or both of the plenary sessions of the Body and to make presentations without any commitment to become participating members. No success had been achieved by the end of 2005. The Steering Committee also gave considerable thought to ways in which the work of the Body could be re-invigorated at a time when the political process was seen by some as

stalled. It was as a result of this that the Edinburgh plenary had a number of outside speakers addressing it (see above)

Committees

40. The work of the Committees during the year is outlined in Appendix 3.

Staffing

41. There were some changes to the Irish secretariat during the year. Mr Eoin Faherty succeeded Mr John Hamilton as Irish Clerk to the Body at the conclusion of the Edinburgh plenary session; previously Miss Dearbhla Doyle succeeded Miss Maeve Clery as policy adviser to the Irish side. The Body wished both the departing staff members well in their new responsibilities and thanked them for the work they had done.

Prospects for 2006

42. Following the Edinburgh plenary, the Steering Committee agreed that the Body should definitely meet in Belfast for the next British plenary and plans have now been finalised. A formal invitation to the Democratic Unionist Party to attend and speak at a plenary session has been extended and at the time of writing has been accepted for the 32nd session, bringing to fruition a long-held hope of the Body.

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body Members of the Body

Ireland -January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Pat Carey TD (*Co-Chairman*)

Mr Seamus Kirk TD (*Vice-Chairman*)

Mr Seymour Crawford TD (*Vice-Chairman*)

Mr Johnny Brady TD

Mr John Carty TD

Dr Jerry Cowley TD

Dr Jimmy Devins TD

Mr John Ellis TD

Mr Damien English TD

Senator Brian Hayes

Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD

Senator Joe McHugh

Senator Martin Mansergh

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Barry Andrews TD

Mr Niall Blaney TD

Senator Paul Bradford

Ms Joan Burton TD

Senator Paul Coughlan

Mr Paudge Connolly TD

Mr John Curran TD

Senator John Dardis

Senator Geraldine Feeney

Senator Michael Kitt

Senator Terry Leyden

Senator Michael Mulcahy TD

Mr Sean O Fearghail TD

Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Ms Liz O'Donnell TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Senator Mary O'Rourke
Mr Seámus Pattison TD (*Leas-Cheann Comhairle*)
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Mr Trevor Sargent TD
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Diarmuid Wilson
Senator Mary White

Ireland- December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Pat Carey TD (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Seámus Kirk TD (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Seymour Crawford TD (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Mr John Carty TD
Dr Jerry Cowley TD
Dr Jimmy Devins TD
Mr John Ellis TD
Mr Damien English TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Senator Joe McHugh
Senator Martin Mansergh

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Barry Andrews TD
Mr Niall Blaney TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator Paul Coughlan
Mr Paudge Connolly TD
Mr John Curran TD
Senator John Dardis
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Michael Kitt
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Sean O Fearghail TD

Ireland- December 2005 - continued

FULL MEMBERS

Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Senator Francie O'Brien

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Mr Trevor Sargent TD

Ms Liz O'Donnell TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Senator Mary O'Rourke
Mr Seamus Pattison TD (*Leas-Cheann Comhairle*)
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Diarmuid Wilson
Senator Mary White

United Kingdom - January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David Winnick MP (*Co-Chairman*)
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Kevin McNamara MP (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Harry Barnes MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Rt Hon the Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH
Mr Alistair Carmichael MP
The Lord Dubs
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
The Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Mr John Hume MP MLA
Ms Helen Jackson MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Rt Hon Sir Brian Mawhinney PC MP
Mr John McFall MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Mr William O'Brian MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
The Lord Smith of Clifton
The Lord Temple-Morris
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr John Battle MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Kevin Brennan MP
Mr Tony Colman MP
Mr Tony Cunningham MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Mr John Grogan MP
The Baroness Harris of Richmond
Mr Andy King MP
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mr John McWilliam MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Hugo Swire MP
Mr Gareth Thomas MP

United Kingdom- December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
Baroness Blood MBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP

*United Kingdom- December 2005 - continued***FULL MEMBERS**

Rt Hon Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH PC
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Baroness Goudie
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Ms Meg Hillier MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Mr Lembit Opik MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
The Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Hugo Swire
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Joe Benton MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoughue
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

*The Scottish Parliament - January 2005***FULL MEMBERS**

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
Ms Helen Eadie MSP
Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP

Mr Iain Smith MSP

The Scottish Parliament- December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
Ms Helen Eadie MSP
Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP

National Assembly for Wales - January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Dr John Marek AM
Mr Mike German OBE AM
Mr John Griffiths AM
Mr David Melding AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Dr Brian Gibbons FRCGP AM
Mr Glyn Davis AM

National Assembly for Wales- December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Dr John Marek AM
Mr Mike German OBE AM
Mr John Griffiths AM
Mr David Melding AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Dr Brian Gibbons FRCGP AM
Mr Glyn Davis AM

Northern Ireland Assembly - membership suspended October 2002

States of Jersey - January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Maurice Dubras

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

States of Jersey- December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Maurice Dubras

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

States of Guernsey - January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

States of Guernsey - December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

Tynwald - January 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Donald J. Gelling MLC

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Edgar Quine MHK

Tynwald - December 2005

FULL MEMBERS

Hon J. Tony Brown SHK (Mr Speaker)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Eddie Lowey MLC

APPENDIX 2

**Reports and other documents approved by the Body
Thirtieth Plenary, Bundoran, 7 and 8 March 2005**

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions :

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That this Body reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and for the ongoing efforts of the two Governments to protect and develop its achievements; regrets that in spite of substantial progress it was not possible to reach agreement last December on the two key issues of decommissioning and ending all forms of paramilitary and criminal activity; abhors the brutal murder of Robert McCartney; is greatly disappointed by the damage caused to the peace process by recent attacks and ongoing criminality, including the Northern Bank raid; re-emphasises that all parties to the Agreement undertook to pursue their political objectives by exclusively peaceful and democratic means; recognises that sustainable, inclusive government in Northern Ireland requires a complete cessation of paramilitarism, including all forms of criminal activity; and, in the belief that informal dialogue can play an important part in promoting these objectives, looks forward to the possibility of inviting representatives of the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly as guests to future meetings of the Body.

EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING ACROSS BORDERS

That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee B (European) on European Funding Programmes and Developing Understanding across Borders [Doc No 102] and the conclusions and recommendations of the report which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

PROMOTION OF IRELAND, THE UK, THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS, THE CROWN DEPENDENCIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Resolved, That the Body notes the activities of Ireland, the UK, the Crown Dependencies and Ireland in promoting themselves on the international stage.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environment and Social) on Truth and Reconciliation [Doc No 103] and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Ninth Annual Report of the Body [Doc No 104]

RULES (STEERING COMMITTEE)

Resolved, that the Amendment to Rule 8 (Steering Committee) contained in Document No 105 be made with immediate effect.

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AUTISM

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee D (Environment and Social) on Special Needs Educational Provision in Britain and Ireland, with Special Reference to Autism [Doc No 106] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

Thirty-first plenary, Edinburgh, 28 and 29 November 2005

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Resolved, That the Body, recognising that economic and political progress go hand in hand, welcomes recent developments in Northern Ireland, including the independently verified statement by the IRA that it has decommissioned all its weapons and the indications by loyalist groups that they were prepared to consider a positive response; urges all paramilitary groups to complete the process of decommissioning; notes the particular potential of deeper North/South economic co-operation to deliver real benefits for all the people of Ireland; trusts that the January report of the Independent Monitoring Commission will be favourable to the early restoration of the devolved institutions so that a renewed devolved government may play a central role in linking communities with the political and economic decision-making process; and calls on all appropriate authorities and political parties to work for the social and economic development of all communities in Northern Ireland.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

Resolved, That the Body notes that it is two years since the submission by Committee A of the Report on the mutual recognition of penalty points and expresses its concern that no action appears to have been taken by the two governments .

THE WORK OF IRISH SOCIETIES

Resolved, That the Body notes the useful work done by the Federation of Irish societies among ex-patriate Irish people.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

That the Body takes note of the 'CO-OPERATION' programme, the successor to INTERREG 111A, which will encourage co-operation between the North of Ireland and South-West Scotland

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees Committee A: Sovereign Matters

As in previous years when general elections took place, Committee A found its work necessarily disrupted by the process of re-establishing the British membership following the election in May. Consequently the Committee met formally on only three occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions and once on a working visit.

The Committee reported to the Bundoran Plenary on its visit to Dublin in December 2004 to meet with the Human Rights Commission. This followed its meeting with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in Belfast October 2004.

At its meeting during the Bundoran plenary, the Committee decided to undertake an inquiry into the implications of the introduction of the British Identity Cards Bill for the Common Travel Area between the UK and Ireland. The Committee later received memoranda on the subject from both Governments.

The Committee met next on a visit to Belfast on 24 October to assess the general political situation. The Committee met the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, the PSNI Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan, and representatives of the Equality Commission, the Community Relations Council and the NI Policing Board.

At its meeting during the Edinburgh plenary in November, the Committee considered the memoranda submitted by the two Governments on the implications of the Identity Cards Bill and resolved to pursue the matter further with meetings with the relevant Ministers. The Committee also considered how it might best respond to the Steering Committee's request that Committees conduct inquiries relevant to the pockets of economic deprivation which exist in Northern Ireland, in addition to continuing with its general monitoring role in respect of the political and security situation in Northern Ireland. It was proposed that, on completion of the ID Cards Inquiry, the Committee might look at barriers to trade across the border.

At Edinburgh the Committee also discussed the lack of progress on the mutual recognition of penalty points since their report to the Chepstow Plenary in October 2003. Concluding that very little progress had been in the intervening period, the Committee brought forward an emergency motion to the plenary session, which was passed, noting "that it [was] two years since the submission by Committee A of the report of mutual recognition of penalty points and [expressing] its concern that no action appear[ed] to have been taken by the two Governments." The Rapporteurs to the Committee (Lord Dubs and Senator Hayes) agreed to request an update from their respective administrations.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2005

Monday 7th March 2005, Bundoran: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Lord Smith of Clifton, Senator Brian Hayes, John Carty TD.

Monday 24th October 2005, Belfast: Pat Carey, TD (Co-chair, BIIPB), Jim O'Keefe TD (Chairman), Baroness Blood, John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O'Donnell TD, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 28th November 2005, Edinburgh:

Jim O'Keefe TD (Chairman), Mr Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP, Senator Brian Hayes, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Senator Brendan Ryan, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Committee B: European Affairs

The full Committee held two formal meetings in 2005, both during the Bodys Plenaries; in addition, the sub-committee, (set up in 2004 to inquire into *European Funding Programmes and Developing Understanding Across Borders*), held two meetings, and members of the Committee took part in an informal meeting during the Edinburgh Plenary.

During its meetings in Brussels and in Copenhagen, the sub-committee again utilised video-conferencing to enable Members to participate in meetings which they would not have otherwise been able to. The sub-committee's inquiry was completed in time for a Report from the full Committee to be debated at the Bundoran Plenary in March 2005, with the Irish Government's response available at the Edinburgh Plenary.

At Edinburgh, members of the Committee attended a meeting with Inishowen Rural Development Limited (IRDL) and the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN). The two organisations submitted a presentation on the challenges and opportunities they face in relation to CO-OPERATION, the successor programme to INTERREG. Drawing on a "report back" by those Members attending this meeting, the Committee agreed a Report on *The CO-OPERATION Programme* the following day, which was reported to, and debated by, the Body within hours of it being agreed.

Due to the continuing uncertainty over the fate of the Polish Government, and of the General Election in the United Kingdom, the inquiry into *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy* did not progress any further. However, the Committee does intend to continue with this inquiry in 2006.

At the request of the Steering Committee, the Committee will also undertake an inquiry, to be completed during 2006, into *Economic Deprivation in Northern Ireland*. The inquiry will concentrate on European funding programmes - in particular, why it seems to be the case that people and organisations in unionist areas are less likely to apply for EU funds than those in nationalist areas.

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2005

Monday 7 March, Bundoran: Senator Francis O'Brien (called to the Chair in the absence of the Chairman); Rt Hon the Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville; Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP; Mr Michael German AM; Mr Kevin McNamara MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Diarmuid Wilson.

Tuesday 29 November, Edinburgh: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Damien English TD; Baroness Goudie; Miss Julie Kirkbride MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Mr Murray Tosh MSP; Senator Diarmuid Wilson. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Jim Dobbin MP attended also.

Committee: Environmental and Social

Committee D met formally as a full Committee on four occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions, once in Committee working on report and once on a working visit.

The Committee's primary interest during 2005 was the completion of their inquiry into Special Educational Needs. The Committee visited a school for autistic children in Barnsley in early 2005. The report was debated and formally adopted at the Bundoran plenary in March. The Committee also presented a report at that plenary on Truth and Reconciliation. The report on Special Educational Needs was publicised in June and received coverage in specialist magazines and the broadsheet press. Following the inquiry, the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Science invited members of Committee D to give evidence; Jeff Ennis MP travelled to Dublin to join Senator O'Rourke and Jim Glennon TD to give evidence. The Education and Skills Select Committee in the House of Commons also began an inquiry into this subject on the recommendation from Committee D member Jeff Ennis MP.

The British General Election prevented the Committee from meeting until the Edinburgh plenary in November. In Edinburgh, the Committee heard evidence from the Federation of Irish Communities following which a debate was held at the Plenary. The Committee decided to conduct a new inquiry into life chances for young people from the economically deprived areas of Belfast, and commenced taking evidence early in 2006. The subsequent inquiry will investigate some of the issues facing the Irish community in Britain.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2005

Barnsley, 10 January 2005

Kevin McNamara (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), Jeff Ennis MP, Chris Ruane MP, Joe Sherlock TD and Iain Smith MSP.

Westminster, 21 February 2005

Mr Kevin McNamara MP (Chair), Mr Jeff Ennis MP, Senator Geraldine Feeney, Mr Jim Glennon TD, Senator Michael McCarthy and Mr Iain Smith MSP.

Bundoran, Co Donegal, 8th March 2005

Mr Kevin McNamara MP (Chair), Mr Johnny Brady TD, Mr Tony Brown MHK, Senator Paul Coughlan (Substitute), Mr Jeff Ennis MP, Deputy Maurice Dubras, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Mr Chris Ruane, Mr Joe Sherlock TD and Mr Iain Smith MSP.

Edinburgh, 28th November 2005

Lord Dubs (Chair), Mr Johnny Brady TD, Mr Tony Brown MHK, Mr Jeff Ennis MP, Mr Jim Glennon TD, Senator Terry Leyden, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Mr Arthur Morgan TD, Mr Chris Ruane MP, Mr Joe Sherlock TD, Mr Iain Smith MSP, Mr John Austin MP(Substitute) and Senator Paul Coughlan (Substitute).

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Body in 2005

Irish Clerk: Mr John Hamilton, Mr Eoin Faherty

British Clerk: Ms Alda Barry

Counsellors/Advisers:

Ms Maeve Clery, Ms Dearbhla Doyle

British Consultant:

Sir Michael Davies

Clerks , Committee A:

Ms Maeve Clery, Ms Dearbhla Doyle

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr Huw Yardley

Shadow Clerks, Committee B:

Ms Elaine Hollowed

Clerk, Committee B:

Mr Mike Clark

Clerks, Committee C:

Ms Maeve Clery

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Mr Mike Hennessy

Shadow Clerks, Committee D:

Ms Elaine Hollowed

Clerk, Committee D:

Ms Audrey Nelson

Irish Administrator: Mrs Veronica Carr,

British Administrator: Miss Amanda Hay

Irish Assistants:

Ms Brigid Byrne, Mr David Keating

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns