

BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY
COMHLAHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH NA BRETAINE
AGUS NA hÉIREANN

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TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY

Introduction

This is the twelfth annual report of the Body 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 Body during 2007.

Membership of the Body

The elections held in Ireland, Scotland and Wales in May resulted in a number of changes to the relevant delegations, the most significant of which was the replacement of Mr Pat Carey (who was made a Minister) by Mr Niall Blaney. In one significant development, the restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland resulted in the nomination of a partial delegation from Northern Ireland, and in another the Body welcomed its first majority female delegation, from Wales, led by Ms Rosemary Butler. Losses included the former leader of the Scottish delegation, Mr Murray Tosh, who lost his seat.

The work of the Body

Thirty-Fourth Plenary

The Thirty-Fourth plenary session was held at the Castleknock Hotel, Dublin on 5th and 6th March 2007.

The main debate took place on the Monday morning on the motion: *“That the Body reiterates its welcome for the St Andrew’s Agreement of 13 October last and commends the two Governments and the political parties for their efforts to restore the political institutions and restore devolution for the people of Northern Ireland; welcomes the decision by Sinn Fein to join with the other political parties in supporting policing and the rule of law in Northern Ireland; notes that elections in Northern Ireland are to be held on Wednesday 7 March, and reiterates the importance of this opportunity to establish a devolved power-sharing government for the benefit of the whole community; encourages the parties to work after the election period towards the establishment of devolved government by 26 March 2007 in accordance with the St Andrew’s Agreement; and resolves that upon restoration of devolved government, it will initiate consultations with the newly elected Northern Ireland Assembly to agree an inclusive East-West inter-parliamentary framework which will embrace all interests, as envisaged in that agreement.”*

The shorter than normal political debate (because of the imminent Northern Ireland elections) was opened by Mr Seymour Crawford, TD who spoke of the great progress

which had been made since the Body had last met in Belfast. But he stressed the problems which remained, notably the need to recognise in practice the law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland. He welcomed Sinn Fein's decision to accept and support the policing structures but more was required, notably information about the murder of Robert McCartney. He emphasised the importance of funding from both Westminster and Dublin to improve the road infrastructure.

Following Seymour Crawford's opening speech, Members were careful to say nothing overtly political and instead they concentrated on practical concerns. Mr Andrew Mackinlay, MP, asked that Whitehall Departments should not forget their responsibilities towards Northern Ireland, for instance on fisheries. And he drew attention to the arrangement of business in the House of Commons where important votes on constitutional issues were scheduled for the day Northern Ireland MPs were required to vote in the elections for the Assembly. Lord Smith of Clifton spoke of his hope that the universities of the North and the Republic would collaborate more. Mr Seamus Kirk, TD, reiterated the need for the road network to be improved across the whole island of Ireland. Ms Cecilia Keaveny, TD, was concerned that Donegal students were unable to get bursaries or scholarships to attend Derry University and had to travel to Dublin or Cork. She described that as unnecessary discrimination. Several speakers referred to the impeccable way in which spectators had behaved at the recent Ireland/England rugby match played at Croke Park, the home of Gaelic football. This was a tangible sign of the breaking down of barriers between the peoples of Ireland.

Mr Quentin Davies, MP, mentioned the disadvantages of direct rule and said that legislation affecting the Province was hardly discussed at all by the House of Commons. Lord Glentoran made the same point about Northern Ireland legislation being contained in very large statutory instruments which received no real scrutiny at Westminster. Both looked forward to the restoration of devolved government where legislation affecting the North would be discussed and agreed by local politicians. Mr Chris Ruane, MP, paid tribute to all the politicians who had contributed to the improvements in the political atmosphere, particularly to Dr Ian Paisley. Mr Michael Mates, MP, in closing the debate, spoke of the way in which the Body had contributed to a greater understanding of the difficulties faced by politicians on both side of the Northern Ireland problem. He was less concerned about the outcome of elections in two days time than about what might happen between then and the formation of a power-sharing Executive three weeks later. He concluded by wishing all those involved well in the days and weeks to come

Following the successful experiment in Belfast where the Body was assisted by experts on the economy of Northern Ireland and the difficulties faced by businesses, a similar format was arranged for the two sessions before and after the lunch adjournment. The subjects considered by the Body on this occasion were Sectarianism and Racism. The outside contributors were Mr Paul Bradley, formerly Vice-Chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Mr Gerry Carson, Vice-Chairman of the Sports Council of Northern Ireland, Mr Nick Harkness, the Director of the Participation Unit of the Northern Ireland Sports Council, Mr John Hughes, also of the Sports Council of Northern Ireland and Ms Lesley Irving of the Race, Religion and Refugee Integration Team of the

Scottish Executive Development Department. Mr Bradley praised the difference which the Anglo-Irish Agreement had made in these areas. He suggested that it had been the bedrock on which every other change in society in Northern Ireland had been built. He pointed to the change which had taken place in the Police Service of Northern Ireland. At the time of the Good Friday Agreement its membership had been 90% Protestant and 10% Catholic. The percentages were now getting closer although there was still a long way to go. Mr Bradley spoke also of the importance of sport and commended the institution of the Setanta Cup as a way of breaking down barriers between the football clubs of both parts of Ireland.

Mr Gerry Carson emphasised the difficulty faced by sport in a divided community but said there had been dramatic improvements in behaviour---the recent Croke Park match was a shining example. He urged politicians to recognise the benefits that sport can bring to lifestyles by improving health, enriching education, aiding community cohesion and building a vibrant economy. Mr Harkness also spoke of the great benefits which sport could bring but stressed the importance of shared spaces for sport, rather than spaces belonging to one side or the other. He said that less time is devoted to sport in schools in Northern Ireland than in other regions and the home countries. He added that there had been a social cost to living separately which could be reduced by enhancing sport participation. 85% of people in Northern Ireland believed that sport could project a positive image of the province and that is what the Northern Ireland Sports Council was striving to achieve.

Mr Bradley, Mr Carson, Mr Harkness and Mr Hughes then replied to questions from members of the Body.

Immediately after the lunch adjournment, the Body heard from Ms Lesley Irving, who spoke from the Scottish perspective. She said that the perception had been that racism did not exist in Scotland but increased immigration meant there were now people with different coloured skins living there and a strategy had to be developed to ensure that all those living in Scotland were treated equally. There was also a growing problem of refugees which had to be addressed. She acknowledged that sectarianism was a more deep-seated problem than racism but that many people believed that it was a west coast one, particularly prevalent in Glasgow. Much was being done in schools to educate students on the evil of sectarianism and her unit was active in bringing together “faith” groups. These had an annual meeting with the First Minister. Other initiatives included new procedures governing marches and parades aimed at tackling abusive behaviour. After she had spoken, she replied to a series of questions from Members of the Body.

The Body was then privileged to hear an address by the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, TD, who had last addressed the Body in 2000 in Galway. Mr Ahern spoke very appreciatively of the role the Body had played over the years in ensuring that both sides of the Irish question understood the other side’s point of view. He didn’t want to say too much about the immediate political process because elections in the North for the new Assembly were being held later in the week and the formation of a power-sharing Executive would, hopefully, be formed in three weeks time. But he understood from campaigners that this time voters were more interested in “bread and butter” issues than in sectarian ones. He

wished politicians in the North every success for the future and spoke of the way in which his government could help the economy of Northern Ireland, once a devolved administration was in place.

In reply to Michael Mates, MP he was absolutely clear that if political agreement on a power-sharing Executive could not be reached by 26th March 2007, the British and Irish governments would have to act so as to ensure that no political vacuum existed. But he stressed that neither government wanted to contemplate failure by Northern Ireland politicians. In answer to a question by Jim O’Keeffe, TD, about the need for a major cross-border effort to target crime and the proceeds of crime, the Taoiseach assured the Body that co-operation between the relevant crime prevention agencies of both Governments was close and effective.

Other questions from members of the Body were answered by Mr Brian Lenihan, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. He was first asked by a number of members about the expected timetable for the establishment of the Northern Ireland Executive. His replies were to reiterate the dates established in the St Andrews Agreement and made plain by the Taoiseach. He also replied to questions on the Health Service, the Northern Ireland economy and what support the Irish government was giving, road safety, Higher Education Grants and whether the two Governments might facilitate the transmission throughout the whole of Ireland programmes made by the BBC in the North and RTE in the South.

Thirty-Fifth Plenary

The Thirty-Fifth plenary session was held at the Heythrop Park Hotel and Country Club, Chipping Norton on 27th and 28th November 2007. For the first time in several years those attending included Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, but regrettably the two Unionist parties were unrepresented.

As usual, the main political debate took place on the Monday morning on the following motion. *“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 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 inter-parliamentary 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 the changed circumstances will necessitate changes to the Body's own arrangements."

The debate was opened by Michael Mates, MP, who spoke of the immense changes he had seen in the working of the Body since its establishment eighteen years ago. He described the suspicions which had existed among its first members and the hostility shown at the first meeting. All this had changed in the intervening years as members got to know each other. The changed atmosphere in the Body itself was a reflection of the changes now apparent in the political situation in Northern Ireland. But Mr Mates didn't spend much time on the motion itself and concentrated instead on possible developments in the work of the Body itself. He suggested that they might hold "themed" sessions on subjects other than Northern Ireland with Ministers other than the Northern Ireland Secretary of State speaking at meetings in the UK. He expressed himself strongly in favour of a change in the name of the Body. The St Andrews Agreement visualised the establishment of an east/west parliamentary tier---the Body was the obvious institution on which to build such a tier. He referred to the present unsatisfactory relationship with the British-Irish Council---the Council did not appear to welcome any parliamentary oversight. He suggested that members of the Body should bring pressure on Ministers to change this approach.

Thirty other speakers took part in the debate. Mr Arthur Morgan, TD and Baroness Blood spoke of the waste of resources in having two different systems in Ireland, in health, education and housing. They urged a streamlining of the systems. Many speakers agreed that a change of name for the Body would be desirable. Others regretted the absence of the Unionist parties at the plenary and expressed the hope that a change of name might persuade them to attend. Various ideas were put forward for future themes which the Body might debate if the suggestion made by Michael Mates was adopted. Several speakers mentioned the underlying fragility of the peace in Northern Ireland and urged that every possible support should be given to ensuring its success. Even if the Body found another role for itself, it should not forget its prime purpose of ensuring stability and peace among the people of Northern Ireland. Many referred to the isolated but significant shootings which still occurred. Mr Jim O'Keeffe, TD, winding up the debate, highlighted the role which the Body had played in the peace process and should continue to play. He suggested, as one possible change in procedure, the introduction of a 'topical' debate on Tuesdays to ensure better attendance at the end of each plenary.

The afternoon session began with a debate on the INTERREG III Community Initiative which was introduced by Rosemary Butler, AM. She described the programme, which is wholly financed by the European Community and provides for cross-border co-operation, as hugely successful for Wales and also, she was certain, for the other parts of the British Isles. She described the projects which Wales and Ireland had co-operated over such as measuring water quality in the Irish Sea and promotion of tourism between the two countries. Other speakers included Dr Dai Lloyd, AM and Senator Cecilia Keaveney, who both spoke about the importance of links between Wales and Ireland.

During the second part of the afternoon, the Body heard an address by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Shaun Woodward, MP. He described 2007 as “an extraordinary year” and the photograph of Dr Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness together as “astonishing”. He reported that a deep trust is building between these two men, the First minister and the Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive. He spoke of the many problems which still lie ahead, including the dependence of the Northern Ireland economy on the public sector. The public sector in Northern Ireland makes up 70% of the economy compared to 34% in the Republic. Mr Woodward also spoke of the need to end all para-military activity and to accept the policing and justice institutions of the state. He paid tribute to the work of his predecessors as Secretary of State, including Paul Murphy, and to the influence of the Body in bringing about the present situation of a power-sharing Executive.

He then answered questions from Members of the Body for over an hour. This in itself was surprising since many of the questions which Members wished to ask are now the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. The Body had not previously had such an extensive Question and Answer session and were extremely grateful for the time which the Secretary of State gave. One matter which was of particular concern was the murder of 21 year old Paul Quinn, who was lured over the border and killed. Mr Woodward spoke of the unparalleled co-operation the police were getting from the public. He also told the Body of the unprecedented levels of co-operation between the police forces of the two parts of Ireland over the investigation. He also pointed out that murders such as that of Paul Quinn were now isolated events compared to the situation only a few years ago.

The Body was delighted that the Secretary of State was able to stay for the formal dinner at Blenheim Palace and so extend the time he had to meet Members.

On Tuesday morning the Body held a very well attended debate on a report from Committee D on the Irish Community in Britain. The debate was opened by Lord Dubs, the Chairman of Committee B, who outlined the Committee’s main concerns and findings. Another twenty members spoke, which indicated the wide interest the Body had in the subject. Many spoke of the need to ensure that Irish culture should be recognised in Britain but that those Irish who wished to return home should be assisted by the Irish Government. The work of the Federation of Irish Societies was commended. Several speakers spoke of the desirability of RTE broadcasts being available in Britain to provide Irish programmes for the Irish community. Health and housing issues were of particular concern to many of those who spoke. Both Governments were urged to respond to the recommendations made in the Report.

The session ended with a much shorter debate on the importance of mutual recognition of penalty points and other road traffic regulations. Once again the debate was introduced by Lord Dubs. He told the Body that the issue was now before the British-Irish Council. The Body approved a resolution welcoming the progress which has been made towards the development of draft regulations for the mutual recognition of UK and Irish driving

qualifications but regretting how many years it is since Committee A recommended mutual recognition of penalty points. The Body reiterated the importance of this as a way of reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

The Steering Committee

There were significant changes in the membership of the Steering Committee during 2007 and immediately after the end of the year. Both the Co-Chairs during the first half of 2007 have been replaced. Following the Irish general election in the summer, Mr Pat Carey, TD, was appointed to the Government and in January 2008, consequential on a Government reshuffle in the United Kingdom, Mr Paul Murphy, MP was appointed Secretary of State for Wales. The Body congratulated both on their appointments but regret their loss; the loss of Paul Murphy, whose experience as a recent former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was a great asset, is particularly regretted. Mr Niall Blaney, TD was appointed Irish Co-Chair in place of Mr Carey and the Rt Hon Peter Hain, MP was appointed to succeed Mr Murphy. The Body looks forward confidently to working under the leadership of them both. Other changes between the 34th and 35th Plenary Sessions were the appointment of Mr Sean O’Fearghail, TD in place of Mr Seamus Kirk, TD as a Vice-Chairman, Mr Alasdair Morgan, MSP, in place of Mr Murray Tosh, MSP to represent the Scottish Parliament and Mrs Rosemary Butler, AM, in place of Dr Dai Lloyd, AM as the representative of the National Assembly of Wales. These changes followed elections in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In addition, Mr Steve Rodan SHK succeeded Deputy Alan Breckon of Jersey as the representative of the Crown Dependencies on the Committee. In addition Mr Jim O’Keeffe, TD and Mr Robert Walter MP were invited to attend all meetings of the Steering Committee to represent the views of Committees A & B. Northern Ireland is represented alternately by Mr Barry McElduff and Dr Alasdair McDonnell.

The Steering Committee met on the occasion of each of the two plenary sessions and also in March at Carlingford in the Republic of Ireland. The Committee has begun to consider what role the Body should play now that devolved government has been re-established in Northern Ireland. It has decided to recommend that the plenary’s main debate should no longer concentrate exclusively on the political situation in Northern Ireland and the Committee is considering how the Body should work in future. It intends to propose at the 36th Plenary a change in the name of the Body to reflect any change in its methods of working.

Committees

The work of the Committees during the year can be found in Appendix 3.

Staffing

Ms Maire Flanagan was succeeded as political adviser to the Irish side by Mr Pat Curran. Mr Mike Clark was replaced as Clerk to Committee B by Ms Rhiannon Hollis. The long serving Irish administrator, Mrs Veronica Carr, also left the Body to work in another

capacity at the Dail. The Body wished the departing staff well in their new responsibilities and thanked them for all the work they had done.

Prospects for 2008

The future role of the Body will continue to be discussed both by the Steering Committee and the Plenary, particularly at the forthcoming meeting in Wexford.

The Northern Ireland Assembly sent members to the last plenary at the Heythrop House Hotel but both Unionist parties have yet to take up the places allocated to them. It is hoped that any doubts about the purpose of the Body will gradually erode and that these parties will attend plenaries before very long.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Members of the Body

Ireland - January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Pat Carey TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Mr John Carty TD
Dr Jerry Cowley TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Dr Jimmy Devins TD
Mr John Ellis TD
Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Senator Martin Mansergh
Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Ms Liz O'Donnell TD
Senator Mary O'Rourke
Mr Seamus Pattison
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock TD
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

ASSOCIATES

Mr Barry Andrews TD
Mr Niall Blaney TD

Senator Joe McHugh
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr Paudge Connolly TD
Mr John Curran TD
Senator John Dardis
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Michael Kitt
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Sean O'Fearghail TD
Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Mr Trevor Sargent TD
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Mary White

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Niall Blaney TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Mr Sean O'Fearghaill TD
Senator Dan Boyle
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator John Carty
Senator Donie Cassidy
Senator John Ellis
Senator Dominic Hannigan
Senator Eoghan Harris
Mr Brian Hayes TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Dinnie McGinley TD
Mr Joe McHugh TD
Dr Martin Mansergh TD
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O'Brien TD
Mr Charlie O'Connor TD
Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD
Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Mr Michael Ring TD
Mr Emmett Stagg TD
Mr Noel Treacy TD

ASSOCIATES

Mr Barry Andrews TD
Mr Chris Andrews TD
Ms Aine Brady TD
Senator Martin Brady
Mr Dara Calleary TD
Senator Ivor Callely
Mr Joe Carey
Mr Sean Connick
Mr Michael Darcey
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Mr Frank Feighan
Senator John Hanafin
Senator Cecilia Keaveney
Senator Alan Kelly
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Joe O'Reilly
Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Phil Prendergast
Senator Eugene Regan
Senator Shane Ross

United Kingdom – January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Baroness Blood MBE
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 Öpik MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATES

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Mr Quentin Davies 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

United Kingdom – December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Baroness Blood MBE
Mr Alastair Carmichael MP
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
Baroness O’Cathain
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATES

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Mr Quentin Davies 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 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ms Helen Eadie MSP
Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP
Mr Brian Adam MSP
Mr Hugh Henry MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alasdair Allen MSP
Mr Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Ms Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

National Assembly for Wales – January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Mr Glyn Davies AM
Mr Mike German AM
Mr John Griffiths AM
Dr John Marek, AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alun Cairns AM
Mr Jeff Cuthbert AM
Ms Jocelyn Davies AM
Ms Jenny Randerson AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Ms Rosemary Butler AM
Ms Joyce Watson AM
Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Mr Alun Cairns AM
Mr Michael German AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alun Davies AM
Ms Bethan Jenkins AM
Mr Darren Millar AM
Ms Jenny Randerson AM

Northern Ireland Assembly- January 2007 membership suspended

Northern Ireland Assembly- December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Sean Neeson MLA

ASSOCIATES

Mr Alex Atwood MLA

States of Jersey- January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATES

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Jersey- December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATES

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Guernsey – January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATES

Deputy Graham Guille

States of Guernsey – December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

ASSOCIATES

Deputy Jack Honeybill

Tynwald – January 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eddie Lowey MLC

Tynwald – December 2007

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eddie Lowe

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other documents approved by the Body

Thirty-fourth Plenary, Dublin, 5 and 6 March 2007

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions :

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That the Body reiterates its welcome for the St Andrew's Agreement of 13 October last and commends the two Governments and the political parties for their efforts to restore the political institutions and restore devolution for the people of Northern Ireland; welcomes the decision by Sinn Fein to join with the other political parties in supporting policing and the rule of law in Northern Ireland; notes that elections in Northern Ireland are to be held on Wednesday 7 March, and reiterates the importance of this opportunity to establish a devolved power-sharing government for the benefit of the whole community; encourages the parties to work after the election period towards the establishment of devolved government by 26 March 2007 in accordance with the St Andrew's Agreement; and resolves that upon restoration of devolved government, it will initiate consultations with the newly elected Northern Ireland Assembly to agree an inclusive East-West inter-parliamentary framework which will embrace all interests, as envisaged in that agreement.

BARRIERS TO TRADE

That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee A on Barriers to Trade [Doc 124] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

That the Body take note of the responses to the Report of Committee A entitled 'The Implication of the Introduction of British ID Cards for the CommonTravel Area' [document No. 122], the Report of Committee C entitled 'Challenges and Opportunities facing the Small Farm Sector' (document No.125), and the Report of Committee D entitled 'Life Chances for Young People from the economically deprived areas of Belfast' [document No.126].

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

That the Body takes note of the Eleventh Annual Report of the Body [document No 123].

STEERING COMMITTEE)

That Rule 8 (Steering Committee: constitution, quorum and duties) be amended as set out in document No 127 [to allow all Committee Chairmen to sit on the Steering Committee].

Thirty-fifth Plenary, Chipping Norton, 27 and 28 November 2007

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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 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 inter-parliamentary 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 the changed circumstances will necessitate changes to the Body's own arrangements.

THE INTERREG PROGRAMME

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.

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

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]

THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

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.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

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.

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 Irish membership following the election in May. Consequently the Committee met formally on only four occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions, once on a working visit and once it met jointly with the Steering Committee on a working visit.

At its meeting with the Steering Committee in January, the Committee discussed the implications of the St Andrews Agreement on the work of the Body, and the Committee has continued to maintain an interest, particularly in the implications for the Committee itself.

The Committee's primary interest during the first half of 2007 was its inquiry into barriers to trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In January, the Committee had a briefing from InterTradeIreland and met members of the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council. The Committee's report was agreed and debated at the Dublin plenary in March.

The Committee continued to keep a watching brief on progress on matters connected with its report on the mutual recognition of penalty points. The Committee received an update from David Cairns MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office. A motion on progress towards the mutual recognition of driving disqualifications and penalty points was debated at the Dublin plenary. A further update from Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of the Environment, Northern Ireland, was received in November.

The Committee also kept under review progress on matters connected with its report on ID Cards. Liam Byrne MP, Minister for Borders and Immigration was reminded that a full response from the UK Government to its Report on ID Cards, in respect of e-borders, remained outstanding.

Although the Committee had initially considered climate change and the devolution of policing and justice as potential future inquiries, it decided against further consideration of these two matters, although it agreed to recommend to the Steering Committee that climate change was an important subject that ought to be the subject of an inquiry by a Committee of the Body.

A further meeting would be held in the New Year to agree its future programme of inquiries.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2007

Wednesday 17 January 2007, Carlingford, Louth (together with the Steering Committee):

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt. Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP (Associate Member) and Liz O’Donnell TD.

Thursday 18 January 2007, Newry, Newry and Mourne:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP (Associate Member), Senator Martin Mansergh and Liz O’Donnell TD.

Monday 5 March 2007, Castleknock Hotel, Dublin:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP (Associate Member), Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O’Donnell TD and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 26 November 2007, Heythrop Park Hotel, Oxfordshire:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP, Mr Brian Hayes TD, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Mr Martin Mansergh TD and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Committee B: European Affairs

The full Committee held two formal meetings in 2007, both held during the Body's Plenaries; in addition, the Committee held several informal meetings in February during a two-day visit to Brussels as part of its inquiries into *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy* and into *Economic Deprivation in Northern Ireland*.

On the inquiry into *Economic Deprivation in Northern Ireland*, the Committee met the EU rapporteur for the International Fund for Ireland and the Commission's desk officers for the PEACE programme. In connection with the inquiry into *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy*, the Committee held a series of meetings with the Irish and the UK Ambassadors, other diplomatic representatives, and civilian and military staff from both NATO and the EU.

The Committee had intended to take evidence from the Ministry of Defence (UK) and the Department of Defence (Ireland) to round off the evidence taking sessions on the latter inquiry. In the event, this was not possible due to the uncertainty over the date of the Irish general election, but the Committee intends to complete its report in early 2008.

The Committee agreed to undertake a new inquiry, into *Economic migrants*, which would focus on economic migration into the UK and Ireland as a consequence of EU enlargement. Evidence taking on this inquiry would start in early 2008

Attendance at formal meetings of Committee B in 2007

Monday 5 March, Dublin: Mr Robert Walter MP (in the Chair), Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman), Mr Jim Dobbin MP, Mr Damien English TD, Mr John Griffiths AM, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Senator Paschal Mooney and Senator Francis O'Brien.

Monday 26 November, Enstone: Mr Robert Walter MP (in the Chair), Mr Jim Dobbin MP, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Senator Celia Keaveney, Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP, Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP, Mr Sean Neeson MLA, Mr Charlie O'Connor TD, Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD and Ms Jenny Randerson AM.

Meetings in Brussels

The following Members took part in the meetings in Brussels on 26-27 February: Mr Robert Walter MP (Chairman), Mr Jim Dobbin MP, Mr Damien English TD and Baroness Harris of Richmond.

Committee C: Economic Affairs

Committee C met formally three times during the year, twice during plenary sessions, and once on a working visit.

In 2007 the Committee continued its work on its report entitled “Renewable Energy except Nuclear”. The Committee visited Donegal and Derry in February 2007, meeting representatives of Airtricity at Ballybofey Wind Farm, Rural Regeneration in Derry where willow is grown as bio-mass fuel and hearing a presentation from Inishowen Rural Development. The Committee plans to continue its inquiries in 2008.

The Irish membership and chairmanship of the Committee was unestablished during the period of the Irish General Elections, from March to November 2007. The new Irish members of Committee C were announced in November 2007 and Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail was appointed Chairman of the Committee at the same time.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2007

26 February, Donegal/Derry, Ireland: Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Seymour Crawford TD, Helen Eadie MSP, John Ellis TD, Meg Hillier MP, Lord Gordon of Strathblane (substitute), Cecilia Keaveney TD, John Marek AM.

5 March, Dublin, Ireland: Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), John Austin MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, Helen Eadie MSP, John Ellis TD, Lord Gordon of Strathblane (substitute), Meg Hillier MP, Cecilia Keaveney TD, John Marek AM.

27 November, Oxford, England: Seán Ó Fearghail TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), John Austin MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Senator Dominic Hannigan, Alasdair McDonnell MLA, David McLetchie MSP, Arthur Morgan TD, Baroness O’Cathain OBE, Joyce Watson AM.

Committee D: Environmental and Social Issues

Committee D met formally as a full Committee on three occasions during the year; twice during plenary sessions and once on a two-day working visit. The elections in Ireland, Scotland and Wales prevented the Committee from meeting at any other time.

The Committee’s interest during 2007 was primarily on completing their inquiry into the Irish Community in Britain. The Committee visited Leeds and Manchester in January 2007 and took evidence from community groups and charities as well as local politicians. The report on the Irish Community in Britain was formally adopted an enthusiastic debate at the Cotswolds plenary in November 2007. At the November plenary the Committee agreed to begin an inquiry into the integration of newly arrived migrants to Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales. The Committee plan to take evidence on this inquiry in 2008 with visits to Northern Ireland and Ireland before the summer to be followed by a visit to Wales.

The Chairman would like to thank the members of Committee D for the efforts they have made to attend meetings and for their commitment to work of the Committee.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2007

North England (Leeds and Manchester) 15-16 January 2007:

Lord Dubs (Chair), John Austin MP, Jeff Ennis MP, Mr Jim Glennon TD and Chris Ruane MP. Senator Paschal Mooney was co-opted onto the Committee for the Irish Communities inquiry and attended the meeting.

Members attending the meeting at the Dublin Plenary 5 March 2007:

Lord Dubs (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), John Austin MP, Tony Baldry MP, Senator Paul Coughlan, Jeff Ennis MP, Mr Jim Glennon TD, Lord Glentoran, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chris Ruane MP, Mr Joe Sherlock TD and Iain Smith MSP. Senator Paschal Mooney was co-opted onto the Committee for the Irish Communities inquiry and attended the meeting.

Members attending the meeting at the Cotswold Plenary 26 November 2007 and approved the report:

Lord Dubs (Chair), Johnny Brady TD (Co-Chair), John Austin MP, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Lord Glentoran, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Joe McHugh TD, Senator Francis O'Brien, Michael Ring TD, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Body in 2007

Ireland:

Clerks: Mr Eoin Faherty

Counsellors/Advisers: Ms Maire Flanagan,
Mr Pat Curran

Clerks, Committee A: Ms Marie Flanagan,
Mr Pat Curran

Shadow Clerks, Committee B:
Ms Deirdre Clerke

Clerks, Committee C: Ms Maire Flanagan,
Mr Pat Curran

Shadow Clerks, Committee D:
Ms Deirdre Clarke

Administrators: Mrs Veronica Carr,
Ms Jullee Clarke

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Ms Alda Barry

British Consultant: Sir Michael
Davies

Shadow Clerk, Committee A: Ms Nerys
Welfoot

Clerk, Committee B: Mr Mike Clark,
Ms Rhiannon Hollis

Shadow Clerks, Committee C: Ms Tracey
Garratty

Clerk, Committee D: Ms Audrey
Nelson

Administrator: Miss Amanda Hay

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns