



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

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

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

No. 98 — March 2004

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY

Introduction

1. This is the eighth Annual Report of the Body since it was decided at the 11th Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. The current Report summarises the work of the Body in 2003.

Political developments

2. The devolved Northern Ireland institutions remained suspended throughout 2003. In early 2003, there were extensive consultations and dialogue between the British and Irish Governments and pro-Agreement parties on the way forward.

3. Following this process, the British and Irish Governments published on 1 May a Joint Declaration setting out their joint approach on securing the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Declaration addressed the issues of the requirements of peace and stability; acts of completion; political institutions; paramilitarism; normalisation; policing and justice; rights, equality, identity and community; and the review of the operation of the Good Friday Agreement.

4. On the same day, the British Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair MP announced that elections in Northern Ireland, which had previously been postponed until 29 May, would now be postponed until the autumn.

5. In September 2003, the British and Irish Governments published the draft International Agreement establishing the Independent Monitoring Commission. The IMC will oversee the fulfillment of commitments in regard to the ending of paramilitary activity, security normalisation and full participation in the political institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, as outlined in the Agreement on Monitoring and Compliance, published by the two Governments on 1 May 2003. Following completion of the necessary legislative process in the Oireachtas and the Westminster Parliament, the Commission began work in January 2004.

6. Talks between the two Governments and the pro-Agreement parties in Northern Ireland resumed in the autumn. Following weeks of intensive discussions between the two Governments and the pro-Agreement parties, the Taoiseach Mr. Bertie Ahern and the Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair met in Belfast on 21 October. The Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair announced that elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly would take place on 23 November.

7. The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair received a report from General de Chastelain, Chairman of the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning indicating that he had witnessed a further act of decommissioning by the IRA. In a public statement General de Chastelain said that this was a bigger act of putting arms beyond use than the previous two acts, and comprised automatic weapons, ammunition, explosives and explosive materials. Mr. David Trimble, the

Ulster Unionist Party leader, stated that the IICD report had not been sufficiently transparent to enable his party to enter into a power-sharing executive.

8. The result of the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly held on 23 November saw the Democratic Unionist Party emerge with 30 seats, making it the largest party in the Assembly. The Ulster Unionist Party secured 27 seats, Sinn Féin 24 seats, the SDLP securing 18 seats, and the Alliance party 6 seats. The Progressive Unionist Party and the UK Unionist Party both won one seat and an independent candidate also won a seat. Shortly after the election, three Members transferred their allegiance from the Ulster Unionist party to the Democratic Unionist Party.

9. Following these results, the Governments announced that a Review of the Good Friday Agreement would begin in January 2004.

10. Other events which had an impact on the Body were the elections to the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly of Wales, which meant that representatives of the devolved assemblies also were unable to take part in the work of the Body from April until the appointment of their delegations in October.

11. The new delegation from the Scottish Parliament comprised Mr Murray Tosh, Mr Alasdair Morrison, Mr David McLetchie, Mrs Margaret Ewing and Mr Iain Smith as full Members and Ms Helen Eadie, Mr Robin Harpur, Mr Bruce Crawford and Mr Michael McMahan as alternates. New or re-appointed Welsh representatives were Mr Michael German, Mr John Griffiths, Dr Dai Lloyd, Mr David Melding and the Presiding Officer or his representative as full Members and Mr Glyn Davies and Mr Brian Gibbons as Associate Members.

12. The States of Jersey nominated Senator Frank Harrison Walker as a full Member and Senator Terence Augustine Le Sueur as Associate Members.

13. Other changes of membership during the year were the replacement in the Westminster delegation of Mr Lembit Öpik by Mr Alistair Carmichael and Lord Alderdice by Baroness Harris of Richmond.

The work of the Body

14. In accordance with the Rules of the Body, two Plenary Sessions were held in 2003: from 23 to 25 March in Kilkenny and from 19 to 21 October in Ware.

Twenty-sixth Plenary

15. The Kilkenny plenary was overshadowed by the military action in Iraq and at times in the run-up to the meeting it looked as if the UK Members might be unable to attend owing to commitments in the House, which might well have meant cancelling the session for lack of quorum. Fortunately it proved possible to avoid this. Members of all delegations, irrespective of their views on the justice of the action expressed sympathy to the service personnel involved (drawn, as they were, from all parts of the islands) and to their families, and a number of Members drew

parallels between the likely post-war situation in Iraq and that in Northern Ireland, in terms of the need to rebuild communities.

16. The main debate of the session took place on the Monday morning on the motion:

"That the Body reaffirms its support for the Good Friday Agreement, which was democratically endorsed by the people of Ireland, both North and South; believes that the full implementation of the Agreement is necessary to ensure peace, stability and sustainable political institutions in Northern Ireland; welcomes the intensive efforts of the two Governments, in consultation with political parties in Northern Ireland, to secure rapid and full implementation of the Agreement, including the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve a successful outcome to this process; and looks forward to the prospect of the Agreement being fully operational and in place before the Assembly elections on 29 May".

17. The debate was lively and covered a number of subjects, including the on-the-runs, policing, education and electoral registration in Northern Ireland, as well as matters of more local interest. There was not unanimity on the desirability of holding elections in the current political climate, and Lord Glentoran suggested but did not move an amendment calling on the paramilitaries to 'disarm and go away for ever', but in the end the motion was carried without a vote.

18. On the Monday afternoon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Brian Cowen TD, made a statement to the body and answered Oral Questions. This was, as usual, an interesting session and a wide range of issues were covered.

19. An innovation was a debate on the adjournment (on the subject of fishing and fisheries) which was informed by briefing papers from all the administrations represented.

20. Other debates were held on the Annual Report of the Body and on reports from Committee C, on Tourism, and Committee A, on the mutual recognition of penalty points.

21. The plenary made several amendments to the rules of the Body. It shortened the notice period for questions to Ministers from twenty days to ten working days, in the hope of making the questions more topical; it recognized formally the position of the Shadow Chairs of Committees; and it provided for the appointment of sub-committees and committee rapporteurs. It is to be hoped that these last changes will encourage committee activity by allowing for greater flexibility, but in moving the change Mr McNamara stressed that as a concomitant committees would need to exercise greater budgetary discipline.

Twenty-Seventh Plenary

22. The Twenty-Seventh Plenary took place in Ware in Hertfordshire on 20th - 21st October.

23. The customary debate on recent political developments, held on Monday morning, took place in the context of the intensive discussions referred to in paragraph 5 (the announcement that the postponed Assembly elections would take place on 23 November came after the close of the plenary. The timing was such that the Secretary of State, Mr Paul Murphy, was unable to attend and it was with difficulty that the Minister of State, Mr John Spellar, was freed to deliver a speech to the body and to answer questions on Monday afternoon. It was, accordingly, with great sadness that Members heard the news the next morning that his wife had died suddenly.

24. The text for the political motion (drafted at the last minute because of the uncertainty as to what was happening in terms of the situation in Northern Ireland) was, "That the Body remains fully supportive of the Good Friday Agreement as the only way forward for the people of Northern Ireland; recognises the political progress brought about by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, benefiting all the people of these islands; acknowledges the collective responsibility of all concerned, including the two governments and the pro-Agreement parties, to make the Agreement work; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve the restoration of the devolved institutions; trusts that the elections to the Assembly, postponed from May 2003, will be held before the end of the year; and looks forward to welcoming a full delegation of Assembly Members to its spring plenary in 2004."

25. The notion provided the framework for a debate on the political situation and allowed for the expression of disparate views. Most speakers were cautiously optimistic about the future of post-Agreement Northern Ireland (mention was made more than once of the relative peacefulness of the past marching season), but warning voices were heard about disillusionment among the young. Again, while a clear majority of those speaking were in favour of holding the elections in the existing political climate, there were dissenting voices who felt that they would merely increase polarisation.

26. As always, the debate covered a variety of subjects. There was discussion of the relative importance of the decommissioning of weapons and of hearts and minds and the symbolism of handshakes; condemnation of the intimidation of members of the District Policing Partnerships and an insistence on the importance of Sinn Fein participation in the new policing system; regret that pro-agreement parties other than the UUP and Sinn Fein (and in particular the SDLP) seemed to have been marginalised in the continuing negotiations); sorrow that the major, unresolved, political issues meant that issues of great local importance, from the fisheries crisis to car crime, were not being addressed.

27. Lord Glentoran moved and withdrew an amendment calling specifically 'on Sinn Fein/IRA to do what Prime Minister Blair had said would be necessary for the resumption of the peace process', and the motion was carried unamended.

28. On Tuesday morning, in a departure from the Body's usual rule that only elected parliamentarians should address it, at the invitation of the Steering Committee the Body was addressed by Professor Paul Bew, Professor of Irish Politics at Queen's University, Belfast. While it was accepted that he could in no way speak for the Ulster Unionists the Steering Committee felt that with his wide experience and knowledge of Northern Ireland politics he could make a useful contribution to the Body's deliberations. His topic was 'Northern Ireland : Recent Developments', and he drew a rather depressing but nonetheless prophetic picture of the mood of many unionists and the possible outcome of the elections.

29. The plenary also debated the proposed future constitution of Europe, the substantive report from Committee A on Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points and a report from Committee D on Sellafield: Recent Developments (this was sent not only to the governments and devolved assemblies for comments but also to the secretariat of the British-Irish Council for onward transmission to their environmental sectoral group).

Steering Committee

30. The Members of the Steering Committee during the year were Mr Brendan Smith TD and Mr David Winnick MP, Co-Chairmen, and Mr Seamus Kirk TD, Mr Michael Mates MP, Mr Kevin McNamara MP and Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD, Vice-Chairmen. Dr Dai Lloyd AM represented the devolved institutions, a vacancy being held for a representative of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Crown Dependencies were represented variously by Mr Donald Gelling MHK of the Isle of Man and Senator Roger Berry of Guernsey. The Committee met on four occasions.

Committees

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

32. The incorporation of the devolved parliamentary assemblies and the Crown dependencies continues as satisfactorily as may be in the absence of any representation from the Northern Ireland Assembly.

33. Relations with the Nordic Council are becoming stronger. Primary responsibility has been delegated to Committee B, whose activities in this field are detailed in Appendix 3.

34. The Body has long held that it has a right to be regarded as the parliamentary arm of the British-Irish Council. Attempts in the year to establish closer relations between Body and Council, however, met with limited success. Although certain papers are exchanged between the secretariats this is a somewhat one-sided

process and the Council rejected a request from Committee A to send an observer to its meeting. The Steering Committee is actively pursuing the matter.

35. The British-Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association continued to provide a verbatim report of the plenary meetings free of charge other than in the provision of accommodation and meals. At its meeting in Ware, the Steering Committee invited the Association to continue this arrangement, and they have accepted.

36. There were a number of staff changes in the year. Mr Jim Mulkerrins, the Irish Joint Clerk, was succeeded by Mr John Hamilton. Among the Committee Clerks on the English side, Mr John Whatley was succeeded as Shadow Clerk of Committee C by Mr Michael Hennessey (both of the House of Commons) and Dr Christopher Johnson was succeeded as Clerk of Committee D by Ms Audrey Nelson (both of the House of Lords). On the Irish side, Mr David Keating replaced Ms Mariannne Bolger as Shadow Clerk of Committees B and D, and Mr Rory Desch replaced Miss Jennifer Durgan in the Irish secretariat.

Prospects for 2004

37. For the first time in several years no general election is expected in any member organisation, so there should be less disruption of the pattern of the Body's work. The facility to establish sub-committees and appoint rapporteurs may lead to an increase in the activities of committees. The work of the Body can be enhanced with the re-establishment of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland and the participation of all the political parties entitled to nominate representatives

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Ireland

Members of the Body - January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Brendan Smith TD (*Co-Chairman*)

Mr Seámus Kirk TD (*Vice-Chairman*)

Mr Jim O'Keefe TD (*Vice-Chairman*)

Mr Johnny Brady TD

Dr Jerry Cowley TD

Mr Seymour Crawford TD

Dr Jimmy Devins TD

Mr John Ellis TD

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Barry Andrews TD

Mr Niall Blaney TD

Senator Paul Bradford

Ms Joan Burton TD

Senator Paul Coghlan

Mr Paudge Connolly TD

Mr John Curran TD

Senator John Dardis

Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Mr Tony Killeen TD
Mr Conor Lenihan TD
Senator Joe McHugh
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 TD (*Leas-Cheann Comhairle*)
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock TD

Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Paddy McHugh TD
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Seán O Fearghaíl TD
Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde
Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Diarmuid Wilson
Senator Mary White

Members of the Body - December 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Brendan Smith TD (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Seamus Kirk TD (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Dr Jerry Cowley TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Dr Jimmy Devins TD
Mr John Ellis TD
Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Mr Tony Killeen TD
Mr Conor Lenihan 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 Coghlan
Mr Paudge Connolly TD
Mr John Curran TD
Senator John Dardis
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Paddy McHugh TD
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Seán O Fearghaíl TD
Mr Ned O'Keeffe TD
Senator Ann Ormonde

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

Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Sheila Terry
Senator Diarmuid Wilson
Senator Mary White

United Kingdom

Members of the Body - January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David Winnick MP (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Michael Mates MP (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Kevin McNamara MP (*Vice-Chairman*)
Mr Harry Barnes MP
Mr John Battle MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Rt Hon the Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH
Vacancy {Mrs Jean Corston MP}
The Lord Dubs
The Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Mr John Hume MP MLA
Ms Helen Jackson MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr John McFall MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Rt Hon Sir Brian Mawhinney PC MP
Mr William O'Brien MP
Mr Lembit Öpik MP
The Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Peter Temple-Morris MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

The Lord Alderdice
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Kevin Brennan MP
Mr Tony Colman MP
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Mr John Grogan MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mr John McWilliam MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Gareth Thomas MP

Mr Robert Walter MP

United Kingdom

Members of the Body - December 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David Winnick MP (Co-Chairman)
Mr Michael Mates MP (Co-Chairman)
Mr Kevin McNamara MP (Co-Chairman)
Mr Harry Barnes MP
Mr John Battle 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
The Lord Smith of Clifton
The Lord Temple-Morris
Mr Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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 Chris Ruane MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Hugo Swire MP
Mr Gareth Thomas MP

The Scottish Parliament

Members of the Body - January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP
Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP
Ms Cathie Craigie MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ms Annabel Goldie MSP
Mr Jamie Stone MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Ms Shona Robison MSP

The Scottish Parliament***Members of the Body - January 2003*****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***Members of the Body - December 2003*****FULL MEMBERS**

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Mrs Eleanor Burnham AM
Mr John Griffiths AM
Dr John Marek AM
Mr David Melding AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Dr Brian Gibbons FRCGP AM
Mr Glyn Davis AM

Members of the Body- December 2003**FULL MEMBERS**

Dr Dai Lloyd AM

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Dr Brian Gibbons FRCGP AM

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

Mr Glyn Davis AM

Northern Ireland Assembly - membership suspended October 2002

States of Jersey

Members of the Body- January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Senator Pierre Francois Horsfall OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Terence le Sueur

Members of the Body - December 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Senator Terence le Sueur

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

States of Guernsey

Members of the Body - January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Roger Berry OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W. Torode

Members of the Body - December 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Roger Berry OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W. Torode

Tynwald

Members of the Body - January 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Donald J. Gelling MLC

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Edgar Quine MHK

Members of the Body - December 2003

FULL MEMBERS

Donald J. Gelling MLC

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Edgar Quine MHK

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other documents approved by the Body The Body agreed to the following Resolutions Twenty-Sixth Plenary, Kilkenny, 23rd and 24th March 2003

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

That the Body reaffirms its support for the Good Friday Agreement, which was democratically endorsed by the people of Ireland, both North and South; believes that the full implementation of the Agreement is necessary to ensure peace, stability and sustainable political institutions in Northern Ireland; welcomes the intensive efforts of the two Governments, in consultation with political parties in Northern Ireland, to secure rapid and full implementation of the Agreement, including the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve a successful outcome to this process; and looks forward to the prospect of the Agreement being fully operational and in place before the Assembly elections on 29 May.

RULES OF THE BODY

That the Amendment to Rules (Questions deadlines [Doc No 91]) be made with immediate effect.

That the Amendment to Rules (New Rule: Powers to appoint sub-committees and rapporteurs [Doc No 92]) be made with immediate effect.

That the Amendment to Rules (Shadow Chairmen [Doc No 93]) be made with immediate effect.

TOURISM

That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee C on Tourism [Doc No 87] and the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both governments and devolved administrations for their observations.

PENALTY POINTS

That the Body takes note of the Interim report of Committee A on Penalty Points [Doc No 90].

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BODY

That the Body takes note of the Seventh Annual Report of the Body [Doc No 89].

Twenty-Seventh Plenary, Ware, 20th and 21st October 2003

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions:

RECENT ILL-HEALTH OF THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

That the Body is very sorry to hear of Tony Blair's ill-health; recognizes the immense contribution which the Prime Minister of the UK has made to try to bring about a lasting peaceful solution in Northern Ireland as well as establishing a close working relationship between our two countries; and wishes him a full recovery.

THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

That the Body remains fully supportive of the Good Friday Agreement as the only way forward for the people of Northern Ireland; recognizes the political progress brought about by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, benefiting all the people of these islands; acknowledges the collective responsibility of all concerned, including the two governments and the pro-Agreement parties, to make the Agreement work; calls upon all parties involved to redouble their efforts to achieve the restoration of the devolved institutions; trust that the elections to the Assembly, postponed from May 2003, will be held before the end of the year; and looks forward to welcoming a full delegation of Assembly Members to its spring plenary in 2004.

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR EUROPE

That the Body takes note of the proposed constitution for Europe.

SELLAFIELD: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

That the Body takes note of the report Committee D on Sellafield: Recent Developments and the conclusions and recommendations of the report, which should be forwarded to both governments and the other administrations represented on the Body for their observations and to the British-Irish Council Secretariat for transmission to members of the environmental sectoral group.

PENALTY POINTS

That the Body takes note of the report of the Committee on Sovereign Matters on mutual recognition of penalty points and agrees that the report should be forwarded to the British and Irish governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

Work of Committees ***Committee A*** ***Committee on Sovereign Matters***

1. Committee A met formally as a full Committee on five occasions during the year, three times during plenary sessions and twice on working visits.
2. In February, the Committee undertook a visit to Belfast to discuss progress on negotiations on the re-establishment of the political institutions. The Committee met representatives of a number of the political parties involved in the negotiations, and others including the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Jane Kennedy MP. The Committee also took the opportunity to meet the recently-appointed Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Hugh Orde.
3. Following its meeting at the Kilkenny plenary in March, the Committee decided to repeat its visit of the previous year examining progress in the establishment of a new police service for Northern Ireland. In the course of this visit, which took place in June, the Committee met the Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, and Prof. Desmond Rea (Chairman) and Mr. Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman) of the Policing Board. It also visited the Police Training College.
4. At the Kilkenny plenary the Committee was also able to table submit a report on the mutual recognition (between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) of penalty points for driving offences. This report was based on the work of the Committee's rapporteurs, Lord Dubs and Senator Brian Hayes, who had held a number of meetings on the subject. These meetings continued following the Kilkenny plenary session and culminated in the tabling submission of a final report, which was adopted at the Ware plenary session in October. The report's main recommendation was that efforts should be made by the relevant authorities in each jurisdiction to ensure that penalty points could be imposed on drivers committing offences other than in their "home" jurisdiction (i.e. drivers from the Republic speeding in Northern Ireland, and vice versa). A full response is awaited.

5. At its meeting at the Ware plenary, the Committee decided to visit Belfast in the New Year for further meetings with representatives of the political parties.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2003

Sunday 2nd and Monday 3rd February 2003, Belfast: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Tony Killeen TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O'Donnell TD, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Tuesday 25th March 2003, Kilkenny: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Senator Brian Hayes, Tony Killeen TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Sunday 15th and Monday 16th June 2003, Belfast: Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Mr Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH, Lord Dubs, Ms Helen Jackson MP, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 20th October 2003, Ware: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Ms Helen Jackson MP, Tony Killeen TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Ned O'Keeffe TD, Baroness Harris of Richmond.

Tuesday 21st October 2003, Ware: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Tony Killeen TD, Liz O'Donnell TD, Ned O'Keeffe TD, Baroness Harris of Richmond.

Committee B Committee on European Affairs

The Committee met four times in 2003, twice during the Body's Plenaries, and twice whilst on visits in connection with our inquiry into Links Between the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body and the Nordic Council. The inquiry dominated the Committee's work during the year; we approved a timetable for it in March, and undertook a series of visits: to the Headquarters of the Nordic Council and to the Danish Parliament in June, to the Finnish Parliament and the Headquarters of the Nordic Investment Bank in September, and to the Norwegian Parliament in December.

As 2003 closed, there was still one more visit to be undertaken, to the Headquarters of the Baltic Assembly, which would take place in January 2004, and we had agreed to meet in London in February in order to agree our report, with the aim of it being debated during the Clonakilty Plenary.

The Committee also agreed on the subject, and timetable, for its next inquiry, A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy. The inquiry would start immediately after the Nordic Council inquiry was concluded (indeed, we agreed that the first

evidence session should take place at the same meeting at which we met to agree the Nordic Council report). Evidence sessions, and visits in connection with the inquiry, are to be concluded by autumn 2004, with the report being agreed shortly thereafter.

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2003

Monday 24 March, Kilkenny: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Damien English TD; Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP; Mr John Griffiths AM; Mr Conor Lenihan TD; Mr Steve McCabe MP; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien.

Monday 16 June, Copenhagen: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Tony Colman MP (for Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP); Mr Damien English TD; Mr Conor Lenihan TD; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien.

Tuesday 21 October, Ware: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP; Mr Mike German AM; Mr John Griffiths AM; Baroness Harris of Richmond (for Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP); Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien; Senator Ann Ormonde (for Mr Conor Lenihan TD).

Monday 8 December, Oslo: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Tony Colman MP (for Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP); Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP; Mr Mike German AM; Baroness Harris of Richmond (for Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP); Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien.

Committee C ***Committee on Economic Affairs*** ***Committee C*** ***Committee on Economic Affairs***

1. Committee C met formally as a full Committee on five occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions, twice in Committee working on report, and once on working visits.
2. In January, the Committee met in Dublin to hear presentations from tourism promotion agencies in respect of its ongoing inquiry into tourism. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Ciarán Tuite of Bord Fáilte and Mr. Paul O'Toole, Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland Ltd. In February Committee C met again in Dublin to finalise and formally adopt its report on tourism.
3. Following the tabling of its report on tourism at the Kilkenny plenary in March, which debated and formally adopted the report, the Committee at its meeting in Kilkenny decided to conduct a new inquiry into health service delivery with particular emphasis on delivery of services to populations in regional or peripheral areas.

4. In May, the Committee made a working visit to the Isle of Man, arranged with the assistance of Mr. Donald Gelling CBE MLC. The Committee met with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Clare Christian, the speaker of the House of Keys the Hon. Tony Brown SHK as well as health service staff and senior executives of the health service. The Committee visited the new acute hospital in Douglas and the Southlands Health Complex in the south of the island.

5. At its meeting at the Ware plenary, the Committee decided to continue its inquiry into delivery of health services with visits to Wales and Scotland.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee C in 2003

20 January 2003: Dublin Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, Andrew McKay MP, Robert Walter MP

February 2003: Dublin Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, Andrew McKay MP, Robert Walter MP

25 March 2003: Kilkenny Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, Dr. Brian Gibbons AM, Joe Benton MP, Robert Walter MP

11-12 May 2003: Isle of Man Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD.

21 October 2003: Ware Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, Joe Benton MP, Robert Walter MP.

Committee D: Environmental and Social Committee

Over the past year Committee D have had two main streams of work: Waste management and Sellafield.

Waste management

The Committee visited Guernsey and the Isle of Man to look at how they were dealing with the problem of limited landfill resources. The Committee learned that both islands were turning to Energy from Waste plants as an alternative to landfilling waste. The next steps planned for this enquiry are a visit to the European Commission in Brussels in order to clarify the ways in which different Member States

are going about meeting the EU landfill targets. The Committee also plan to write to the Sovereign Governments and devolved administrations in order to find out more about their waste management strategies.

Sellafield

In March 2003, during the Plenary Session of the Body in Kilkenny, and following a short debate on the Committee's report Sellafield: an Update, the Committee appointed Senator Mary O'Rourke and Mr Jeff Ennis as rapporteurs to keep a watching brief on Sellafield. The Committee visited Sellafield shortly thereafter, and also held discussions in Guernsey, France and the Isle of Man on nuclear reprocessing and the handling of discharges and waste. Conclusions were summarised in a short follow-up report, Sellafield: Recent Developments, which was debated at the Plenary Session in Ware in October 2003. The report focused on reprocessing at Sellafield, and the ways in which waste was dealt with either by vitrification or return to its owners. The report also addressed information exchange between officials on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2003

Sellafield, 10 March 2003: Jim Glennon TD; Kevin McNamara MP(Chair); and Senator Mary O'Rourke(Co-Chair).

Kilkenny, 24th March 2003: Kevin McNamara MP(Chair); Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair); Mr Johnny Brady TD; Mr Alistair Carmichael MP; Mr Jeff Ennis MP; Mr Donald J Gelling CBE MLC; The Lord Glentoran; Mr Arthur Morgan TD; Mr Joe Sherlock TD; and Lord Temple-Morris.

Guernsey and Cogema la Hague, 7-8 July 2003: Kevin McNamara MP(Chair); Senator Mary O'Rourke(Co-Chair).Deputy Roger Berry; Jeff Ennis MP; Deputy John Langlois; and Arthur Morgan TD, Mr Conor Lenihan, Ms Marian McGennis TD (Co-Chair), Mr Kevin McNamara MP (Chairman), Mr Iain Smith MSP

Dublin, 10 April 2002 : Ms Eleanor Burnham AM, Mr Jeff Ennis MP, Mr Brian Hayes TD,

Mr Brendan McGahon TD, Ms Marian McGennis TD (Co-Chair), Mr Kevin McNamara MP (Chairman), Mr Iain Smith

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Body in 2003

Ireland:

Clerks: Mr Jim Mulkerrins/Mr John Hamilton

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Ms Alda Barry

Counsellors/Advisers: Mr Colm McGrady

British Consultant: Brigadier John
Oborne

Clerks, Committee A: Mr Colm McGrady

Shadow Clerk, Committee A: Mr Huw
Yardley

Shadow Clerks, Committee B: Ms Marianne
Bolger & Mr David Keating

Clerk, Committee B: Mr Mike Clark

Clerks, Committee C: Mr Colm McGrady

Shadow Clerks, Committee C: Mr John
Whatley & Mr Mike Hennessy

Shadow Clerks, Committee D: Ms Marianne
Bolger & Mr David Keating

Clerk, Committee D: Dr Christopher
Johnson & Ms Audrey Nelson

Administrators: Mrs Veronica Carr, Ms
Jennifer Dorgan & Mr Rory Desch

Administrator: Miss Amanda Hay

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns