



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

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

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

No. 104 — March 2005

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY

Introduction

1. This is the ninth 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 2004.

Membership of the Body

2. A reshuffle in the Irish Government in October, which included the appointment of Mr Brendan Smith, TD, formerly Co-Chair, Mr Conor Lenihan, TD, and Mr Tony Killeen, TD, as Ministers resulted in a number of changes in the Irish delegation. Mr Pat Carey, TD, replaced Mr Brendan Smith, TD, as Co-Chair and Mr Seymour Crawford replaced Mr Jim O'Keeffe, TD, on the Steering Committee. Senator Diarmuid Wilson became a full member and Mr John Carty, TD, Mr Trevor Sargent, TD, and Senator Michael Kitt were new appointments. In the delegation from Jersey, Deputy Maurice Dubras replaced Senator Walker as the full member of the Body.

Political Developments

3. The Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly remained suspended throughout 2004. From the beginning of the year, the British and Irish Governments engaged in intensive efforts to move the process forward and restore the power sharing institutions.

4. The review of the operation of the Good Friday Agreement, was formally launched on 3 February and regular meetings were held between February and September. The review was provided for within the terms of the Agreement itself and both Governments stressed that while the operation of the Agreement would be reviewed, its fundamentals would not be renegotiated.

5. In line with the commitment made in the Joint Declaration published by the British and Irish Governments in May 2003, an Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) was established in November of that year. The role of the IMC is to oversee the fulfilment of commitments in regard to ending paramilitary activity, security normalisation and full participation in the political institutions of the Agreement. The Commission's first report was published on 20 April. It outlined the levels of paramilitary and criminal activity that exist in Northern Ireland and described links between political parties and paramilitary organisations. A further two reports were published in July and November. The former dealt with security normalisation in Northern Ireland, the latter with paramilitary activity.

6. As a result of the efforts of those working on the ground to maintain a peaceful environment, the number of contentious parades which resulted in violence during the 2004 marchin season in Northern Ireland was very small. There were, however, a few instances of violence, most notably in Ardoyne, North Belfast on 12 July and to a lesser extent in Lurgan on 13 July.

7. The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair met with the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in Hillsborough Castle in March, in Lancaster House in June and then again in Leeds Castle, Kent from 16-18 September. Very considerable progress was made at the Leeds Castle talks in relation to decommissioning and the ending of paramilitary activity, as was made clear by both Governments, who stated that "*what is on offer now is reasonable in its substance and historic in its meaning*". In spite of intensive efforts, however, it did not prove possible to achieve consensus on possible changes to the operation of the institutions in Strands One, Two and Three of the Good Friday Agreement.

8. In the weeks which followed, the British and Irish Governments continued to hold extensive consultations with the parties in an effort to build on the momentum and achieve a consensus which would allow for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The general sense of optimism that a comprehensive agreement could be reached was also evident at the Body's 29th plenary session in Chepstow, Wales.

9. On 14 November, following discussions between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Paul Murphy MP and the Ulster Political Research Group, the UDA announced its intention to end all violent activity and engage with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD). The Secretary of State said subsequently in the House of Commons that this ceasefire was "*holding*" and "*genuine*" but that the UDA would be judged not by their words "*but by their deeds.*"

10. On 8 December the two Governments published a set of proposals, which they believed could form the basis for securing a comprehensive agreement. These proposals addressed the key issues to be resolved in order to secure peace and political stability in Northern Ireland, including: the ending of paramilitary and criminal activity; complete arms decommissioning; the stability of the political institutions; improvements to accountability and the effectiveness of the institutions and policing, including the devolution of policing and justice. While it was not possible to reach a definitive agreement on that occasion, both Governments pledged to continue to work towards achieving final closure.

11. The Northern Bank robbery in late December proved a severe setback to the process and has made it difficult to forecast with any certainty when it will prove possible to re- establish an inclusive, power-sharing, Executive.

12. The work of the Body in the course of the year, was also affected by the involvement of some members in the European elections in June.

The work of the Body

13. In accordance with the Rules of the Body, two Plenary Sessions were held in 2004: from 18 to 20 April in Clonakilty, County Cork, and from 17 to 19 October in Chepstow.

Twenty-eighth Plenary

14. The Twenty-Eighth plenary session was held at the Inchydoney Lodge and Spa, County Cork.

15. The Body noted with sadness the death of Lord Walker, a former Member.

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, the workings of which are now being reviewed; welcomes the continued commitment of both Governments, and the considerable progress made to date in its implementation; notes that elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly were held in November 2003; regrets that the devolved institutions have been suspended since October 2002 and urges all parties to work together to secure their early restoration; and looks forward to a sustained period of political stability in which the devolved institutions can operate effectively for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland and of these islands.

17. The debate was the first opportunity for the Body to reflect on the results of the postponed elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly which resulted in the emergence of the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein as the largest parties representing the unionist and nationalist communities in the suspended Assembly. A variety of views was expressed, and the motion was agreed.

18. On the Monday afternoon, the Body held a debate on the subject of the enlargement of the European Union. It also heard a statement from the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mr Joe Walsh, TD, who represents the constituency of South-West Cork. The Minister answered questions on a variety of subjects, including the topical one of the implications of the recently-introduced ban on smoking in the workplace in Ireland.

19. Tuesday morning was mainly devoted to Committee business.

20. After the reports from Chairs on the work of their committees, the Body debated a report from Committee B on relations with the Nordic Council. The Committee made wide-ranging recommendations about the procedures of the Body, following lessons learned from the Council, and recommended that the Council and the Baltic Council be given observer status with consideration being given to the same being awarded to the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Committee at a later stage. The President of the Nordic Council, Mr Gabriel Romanus, addressed the Body at the start of the debate. The Steering Committee agreed to consider the report and bring a reply to the next plenary.

21. There was also a lively debate on the report from Committee C on the Delivery of the Health Service to Rural Populations, which saw, among other contributions, a very interesting contribution from Dr Jerry Cowley, TD, based on his experience as a rural General Practitioner.

22. On a more domestic plane, the Body also debated its eighth Annual Report and agreed a change to the rules to allow full Members of the Body to become Associate members of Committees, thus increasing the flexibility of the committee structure.

Twenty-Ninth Plenary

23. The Twenty-Ninth Plenary took place in the St. Pierre Hotel and Country Club, Chepstow, from 17 to 19 October. It was the first plenary session to be held in Wales since devolution, and the Body was glad to welcome a Minister from Wales to one of its debates and the First Minister to its dinner on Monday night. The Body, and particularly our staff, are very grateful to the National Assembly for Wales for all the help its Members and staff gave in the organisation of our programme.

24. The Body welcomed the new Irish delegation and noted with satisfaction that several Members of the previous delegation had been made Ministers. Letters of congratulation were accordingly sent to Mr Brendan Smith, TD, Mr Conor Lenihan, TD, and Mr Tony Killeen, TD, as well as to Mr Alex Salmond, MSP, who had once again become leader of the Scottish Nationalist Party. The Body also noted with pleasure the appointment of Mr Dermot Ahern, TD, a former member of the Body, as Irish Foreign Minister. As no Irish Co-Chair had yet been appointed to succeed Mr Smith, Mr Séamus Kirk, TD, Vice-Chair, stepped into the breach.

25. The political debate at Chepstow took place following the talks at Leeds Castle in September between the two governments and the parties elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly. There was disappointment that these talks had not resulted in a hoped-for breakthrough which could have led to a restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland. Delegates were, nonetheless, hopeful that a comprehensive agreement could be reached. They noted positive developments, including the first formal visit of the DUP leadership to Dublin. Concern about a possible loss of momentum was expressed, and a recurrent theme of the debate was 'Groundhog Day'.

26. The Body resolved 'That the Body takes note of the recent talks held at Leeds Castle between Prime Minister Tony Blair, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and the parties; looks forward to the further discussions planned proving fruitful and to the restoration of the powers devolved under the Good Friday Agreement; notes the intensification of contacts by both governments with all parties, including the recent meeting between the Democratic Unionist Party leadership and the Irish government in Dublin; believes that it is in the interests of all parties in Northern Ireland that the devolved institutions are revived as soon as possible; and urges all involved to work towards the furtherance of the peace process and the full implementation of the Agreement'.

27. The first item of business on Tuesday afternoon was a debate on the Steering Committee's reply to the Report of Committee B on relations with the Nordic Council.

28. The Steering Committee agreed in principle with most of the Committee's recommendations but noted that several of them were not within its power to implement.

29. Committee B had recommended that the Taoiseach should always attend plenaries held in Ireland and the Prime Minister those held in the UK. While the Steering Committee accepted the desirability of such an arrangement, it pointed out that such invitations were routinely issued but that it was not always possible for them to be accepted. The Steering Committee also accepted the recommendation for better and closer co-operation between the Body and the British-Irish Council, while pointing out that it was not for the Committee alone to deliver it. The Committee had been carrying on correspondence with the relevant Ministers; the latest reply from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, dated 10th July 2004, to the Body's request for observer status had concluded 'as you know the BIC decision process operates on a consensual basis and I understand that all BIC administrations would have to be consulted. This process has been set in motion and I hope that both organisations can come to a mutually satisfactory arrangement'.

32. The Steering Committee was happy to look further at Committee B's recommendation that the current pattern of two full plenaries a year, one in each sovereign, should be replaced by a pattern of one full plenary and one themed conference each year, both to be held one year in Ireland and the next in the UK, though it noted that in the absence of an agreement by senior minister to attend such an arrangement might risk losing the Body's momentum.

33. The Steering Committee was happy to accept the recommendation that the Nordic Council be awarded observer status forthwith. It suggested, however, that the position of the Baltic Council, as well as that of the Benelux Parliamentary Consultative Council should be kept under review.

34. The plenary took note of the Steering Committee's reply. A number of members were disappointed that the Steering Committee did not feel that the Baltic Council should immediately be made an observer. The Steering Committee agreed to look further at the question. The motion awarding the Nordic Council observer status was agreed, and Mr Gabriel Romanus, President of the Council, addressed the Body. He subsequently took part in debate in the plenary.

35. The Body approved a change to the rules to disaggregate the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly in respect of the order of questions for oral answer, the Crown dependencies to continue to be treated as a unit. This should ensure a more equal distribution among the member organizations of the Body of questions answered orally.

36. The Body heard an address from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Paul Murphy, MP, who also answered delegates' questions. In the course of these exchanges the Body returned to the subject of relations with the British-Irish Council. Dr Marek AM asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

if he would give the Council positive encouragement to strengthen its links with the Body. The answer was 'Yes, is the answer to that. Essentially the British- Irish Council is a body that is made up of Governments and Administrations, not Parliaments. The importance of the Body, as part of the Good Friday Agreement, cannot be overestimated...Strand Three of the Agreement... was very important for all issues that are covered, one of which was the importance of having parliamentary links for these islands. This is the only body that covers those parliamentary links. The talks at Stormont some weeks ago dealt with the strengthening of the North/South parliamentary body and east-west links, including a desire on the part of all the parties that the secretariat of the British-Irish Council be strengthened. The relationship between a parliamentary body and a government body must be considered in the context of the restoration of the institutions. The BIIPB is important. Members of the Body play an important part, but they also need to complement the work of the governments. We will need to deal seriously with interrelationships over the next number of weeks'.

37. The Tuesday morning began with the topical subject, selected by the Welsh delegation, of the introduction in Ireland and Norway of a ban on smoking in the workplace (a ban whose practical operation delegates had seen in operation at the spring plenary). As an innovation in the Body's practice, the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Health and Social Services, Ms Jane Hutt, made a keynote speech. The Body resolved 'that the Body notes the introduction in Ireland and Norway of legislation to prohibit smoking in the workplace as examples for consideration by government'. The Body will at each future plenary hold one debate on a topic selected by a devolved assembly or Crown Dependency.

38. Following business reports on behalf of the Committees, the Body debated and adopted a report from Committee D on waste management.

Steering Committee

39. At the beginning of the year, the Members of the Steering Committee were Mr Brendan Smith 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 and subsequently Mr Murray Tosh, 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 Maurice Dubras of Jersey. In December, Mr Smith having left the delegation, Mr Pat Carey was appointed Irish Co-Chair and Mr Seamus Crawford, TD, replaced Mr O'Keeffe. The Committee met on four occasions.

40. According to the wish of the Body, the Steering Committee and the Co-Chairs continued to press for a representative of the Democratic Unionist Party to present to the Body the party's view. Despite representations that such a presentation would not imply membership of the Body, there has so far been no success.

Committees

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

Staffing

42. There were a number of staff changes in the year as long-standing supporters of the Body moved on. Brigadier John Osborne, the British Consultant retired and was replaced by Sir Michael Davies, formerly Clerk of the Parliaments. On the Irish side, Mr Colm McGrady became Irish Consul-General to Wales and was succeeded as policy adviser to the Irish side by Ms Maeve Clery. The Body wished all these old friends well in their new lives and looks forward to working with their successors.

Prospects for 2005

43. If there is a UK general election in 2005 the activities of the Body are likely to be restricted. It may be, however, that following this election developments will take place in respect of the restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland. The Body remains eager to welcome once again representatives from the Northern Ireland Assembly, whose attendance could be expected to revitalize its debates.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Members of the Body

Ireland - January 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Brendan Smith TD (*Co-Chairman*)
Mr Seamus 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
Mr Damien English TD
Mr Jim Glennon TD
Senator Brian Hayes
Ms Cecilia Keaveney TD
Mr Tony Killeen TD
Mr Conor Lenihan 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
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Michael McCarthy
Mr Paddy McHugh TD
Mr Michael Mulcahy TD
Mr Seán O Feargháil 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

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

Ireland -December 2004

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
Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Mr Jim O'Keefe TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Ms Liz O'Donnell TD
Mr Jim O'Keefe TD

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

Senator Mary O'Rourke

Senator Mary White

Mr Seamus Pattison TD (*Leas-Cheann Comhairle*)
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan
Mr Joe Sherlock
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Members of the Body

United Kingdom - January 2004

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

United Kingdom - December 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David Winnick MP (*Co-Chairman*)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr John Battle MP

Rt Hon Michael Mates <i>MP (Co-Chairman)</i>	Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Kevin McNamara <i>MP (Co-Chairman)</i>	Mr Kevin Brennan MP
Mr Harry Barnes MP	Mr Tony Colman MP
Mr Joe Benton MP	Mr Tony Cunningham MP
Rt Hon the Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville CH	Mr Paul Flynn MP
Mr Alistair Carmichael MP	Mr Dominic Grieve MP
The Lord Dubs	Mr John Grogan MP
Mr Jeff Ennis MP	The Baroness Harris of Richmond
The Lord Glentoran CBE DL	Mr Andy King MP
Mr John Hume MP MLA	Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Ms Helen Jackson MP	Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP	Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP	Mr John McWilliam MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP	Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Rt Hon Sir Brian Mawhinney PC MP	Mr John Robertson MP
Mr John McFall MP	Mr David Ruffley MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP	Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr William O'Brian MP	Mr Hugo Swire MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP	Mr Gareth Thomas MP
The Lord Smith of Clifton	
The Lord Temple-Morris	
Mr Robert Walter MP	

Members of the Body

The Scottish Parliament - January 2004

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

The Scottish Parliament - December 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Murray Tosh MSP
 Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
 Ms Helen Eadie MSP

Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

Mr Robin Harper MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP

Members of the Body
National Assembly for Wales - January 2004

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

National Assembly for Wales - December 2004

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

Members of the Body
States of Jersey - January 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Terence Le Sueuer

States of Jersey - December 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Maurice Dubras

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Senator Frank Walker

Members of the Body
States of Guernsey - January 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Roger Berry OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W. Torode

States of Guernsey - December 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Michael W Torode

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

Members of the Body
Tynwald - January 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Donald J. Gelling MLC

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Edgar Quine MHK

Tynwald - December 2004

FULL MEMBERS

Donald J. Gelling MLC

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Edgar Quine MHK

APPENDIX 2

Twenty-eighth Plenary, Clonakilty, 19 and 20 April 2004
Reports and other documents approved by the Body

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions :

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

That the Body reaffirms its support for the Good Friday Agreement, the workings of which are now being reviewed; welcomes the continued commitment of both Governments, and the considerable progress made to date in its implementation; notes that elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly were held in November 2003; regrets that the devolved institutions have been suspended since October 2002 and urges all parties to work together to secure their early restoration; and looks forward to a sustained period of political stability in which the devolved institutions can

operate effectively for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland and of these islands.

EU ENLARGEMENT

That the Body takes note of the enlargement of the European Union on 1st May 2004.

LINKS BETWEEN THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY AND THE NORDIC COUNCIL

That the Body takes note of the report of Committee B on Links between the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body and the Nordic Council [Doc No 95].

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BODY

That the Body takes note of the Eighth Annual Report of the Body

[Doc No 98].

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RULES (NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES)

That Rule 31 be repealed and proposed new Rule 31 [Doc No 96] be adopted with immediate effect.

DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES TO RURAL AREAS

That the Body takes note of the Report of Committee C on Delivery of Health Services to Rural Areas [Doc No 97] and the conclusions and recommendations of the report, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved institutions for their comments.

Twenty-seventh Plenary, Chepstow 18 and 19 October 2004

The Body agreed to the following Resolutions:

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Resolved, That the Body notes the recent talks held at Leeds Castle between Prime Minister Tony Blair, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and the parties; looks forward to the further discussions planned proving fruitful and to the restoration of the powers devolved under the Good Friday Agreement; notes the intensification of contacts by both governments with all parties, including the recent meeting between the Democratic Unionist Party leadership and the Irish Government in Dublin; believes that it is in the interests of all parties in Northern Ireland that the devolved

institutions are revived as soon as possible; and urges all involved to work towards the furtherance of the peace process and the full implementation of the Agreement.

RELATIONS WITH THE NORDIC COUNCIL

That the Body Takes note of the response of the Steering Committee to the Report from Committee B (European Committee) on Relations with the Nordic Council [Doc No 101].

That the Body invites the Nordic Council formally to assume observer status at its deliberations.

AMENDMENT TO THE RULES

That the Amendment to the Rules (Questions Allocation) [Doc No 100] , be made with immediate effect.

SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

That the Body notes the introduction in Ireland and Norway of legislation to prohibit smoking in the workplace as examples for consideration by governments.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

That the Body takes note of the Report from Committee D - Culture, Education and Environment- on Waste Management [Doc 99].

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.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees
Committee A : Committee on Sovereign Matters

1. Committee A met formally on five occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions and three times on working visits.
2. In April, the Committee followed up its earlier visit of February 2003 by undertaking a further visit to Belfast to discuss progress on negotiations on the restoration of the Assembly and the Executive. The Committee met representatives of a number of the political parties involved in the negotiations. It also discussed the situation with the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP.
3. Following its meeting at the Inchydoney plenary in April, the Committee decided to undertake visits to Belfast and to Dublin to discuss the work of the Human Rights Commissions, North and South. The visit to Belfast took place in October. The Committee met former and existing members of the Commission, and discussed the Commission's work with the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Rt Hon John Spellar MP. Following its meeting at the Chepstow plenary, the Committee visited Dublin in December for a meeting with members of the Irish Human Rights Commission.
4. The Committee also kept under review progress on matters connected with its report on the mutual recognition of penalty points.
5. Further meetings are expected to take place in the New Year.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2004

Monday 5th April 2004, Belfast: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Helen Jackson MP, Tony Killeen TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Tuesday 20th April 2004, Inchydoney: Mr Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O'Donnell TD, Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 11th October 2004, Belfast: Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Mr Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Dubs, Lord Smith of Clifton, Senator Martin Mansergh.

Tuesday 19th October 2004, Chepstow: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Mr Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Senator Brendan Ryan.

Monday 13th December 2004, Dublin: Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Senator Martin Mansergh, Liz O'Donnell TD.

Committee B : European Affairs

The Committee held three formal meetings in 2004, twice during the Body's Plenaries, and once at the House of Commons to agree our Report into *Links Between the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body and the Nordic Council*. The Committee's Report was debated during the Clonakilty Plenary with the, favourable, response from the Steering Committee being debated during the Chepstow Plenary.

At our meeting at the House of Commons, the Committee also took its first set of evidence on our new inquiry into *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy*. Due to circumstances, the Committee was not able to press as far ahead with this inquiry as it would have otherwise wished, and planned visits to Warsaw and to Dublin had to be postponed. The Committee was, however, able to hold discussions in Stockholm with Swedish Parliamentarians and officials in October. We intend to continue with this inquiry in 2005 by rearranging the cancelled visits and also visiting NATO, SHAPE and the European Commission.

At the Chepstow Plenary the Committee agreed to undertake another inquiry, (to be held in parallel to *A Common European Defence and Foreign Policy*), on *The use of cross-border European funding*. The Committee agreed that this latter inquiry should, subject to the approval of the Steering Committee, be undertaken by a sub-committee. Following such approval, the sub-committee held its first meeting - which was somewhat novel - in December. Most of the sub-committee met at the Scottish Parliament, whereas the UK Parliament's Member participated in the meeting through a video link-up with the House of Commons.

The sub-committee's inquiry was due to be completed in time for a Report from the full Committee to be presented at the Bundoran Plenary in March 2005.

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2004

Monday 24 February, House of Commons: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mr Damien English TD; Baroness Harris of Richmond; Mr Conor Lenihan TD; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien.

Tuesday 20 April, Inchydoney: 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; Mr Conor Lenihan TD; Mr Steve McCabe MP; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien; Mr Murray Tosh MSP.

Monday 18 October, Chepstow: Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (in the Chair); Mr Séamus Pattison TD (Vice-Chairman); Mrs Helen Eadie MSP; Mr Mike German AM; Mr John Griffiths AM; Baroness Harris of Richmond; Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP; Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP; Senator Paschal Mooney; Senator Francie O'Brien; Mr Murray Tosh MSP.

Attendance at the meeting of the sub-committee in 2004

Thursday 16 December: (at the Scottish Parliament) Mr Mike German AM (in the Chair); Mrs Helen Eadie MSP; Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP; Senator Paschal Mooney; (at the House of Commons) Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP.

Committee C : Economic Affairs

1. Committee C met formally on four occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions and twice on working visits. The Committee completed and reported on its inquiry into rural health services and commenced a new agricultural inquiry.
2. At a Committee meeting in Ware in October 2003, the Committee decided to complete its inquiry into the delivery of health services to rural populations by undertaking working visits to rural areas in Wales and Scotland.
3. The Committee's visit to Wales, which took place on 25-26 January 2004, focussed on a self-standing, mid-wife led maternity unit in the Rudry Valley in South Wales. This was followed by a visit to Northern Scotland in March. The Committee visited the Caithness General Hospital at Wick as well as local group GP practice in the area. The Committee's report on its inquiry was debated and formally adopted at the 28th plenary session in Inchydney in April.
4. Following discussions at a Committee meeting during the Chepstow plenary, it was agreed to commence a new inquiry into issues affecting the small farm sector in Ireland and Britain. The inquiry will build on the Committee's previous work in this area while focusing on key recent developments including the Enlargement of the European Union and EU CAP reform. A series of meetings and working visits are planned for 2005.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee C in 2004

Sunday - Monday, 25-26 January 2004, Caerphilly, Wales: William O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Joe Benton MP, Jerry Cowley TD, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, John Marek AM, David Melding AM

Sunday - Monday, 14-16 March 2004, Wick, Scotland: William O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Joe Benton MP, Seymour Crawford TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD

Tuesday 20 April 2004, Inchydoney: Bill O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Seymour Crawford TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, David Melding AM

Tuesday 19 October 2004, Chepstow: Seamus Kirk TD (Chairman), William O'Brien MP (Shadow Chairman), Harry Barnes MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Jimmy Devins TD, John Ellis TD, Cecilia Keaveney TD, David Melding AM

Committee D : Environmental and Social Issues

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

In March the Committee met in Brussels to hear representations from the European Commission, Irish Presidency team and to meet representatives from the waste management industry. In June the Committee met in Dublin to finalise the report on Waste Management. The report was debated and formally adopted at the Chepstow plenary in October.

In April at the plenary meeting in Clonakilty the Committee decided to conduct a new inquiry into special educational needs provision across the islands and to consider the issue of truth and reconciliation.

During the autumn the Committee made working visits to Belfast, Dublin and Edinburgh as part of their inquiry into special educational needs provision. The Committee visited schools with provision for children with significant to moderate special needs in Belfast and Edinburgh. Meetings were also held with officials from education departments, teachers and local education authorities.

The Committee decided to limit the remit of their inquiry into special educational needs provision across the island to provision for children with special needs which are on the autistic spectrum. The Committee decided to visit a school for autistic children in Barnsley in early 2005.

At the Chepstow plenary the Committee considered a paper on truth and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. This paper was adopted and was tabled for the next plenary meeting.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2004

29 March 2004: Brussels Kevin McNamara MP (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), John Curran TD and Jeff Ennis MP.

20th April 2004: Clonakilty Kevin McNamara MP (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), Johnny Brady TD, Senator Paul Coughlan (Substitute), Jeff Ennis MP, Donald Gelling MLC, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Arthur Morgan TD, Chris Ruane MP and

Lord Temple-Morris.

15 June 2004: Dublin Kevin McNamara MP (Chair), Senator Mary O'Rourke (Co-Chair), Jeff Ennis MP, Jim Glennon TD and Chris Ruane MP.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Body in 2004

Irish Clerk: Mr John Hamilton

British Clerk: Ms Alda Barry

Counsellors/Advisers:

Mr Colm McGrady & Ms Maeve Clery

British Consultant:

Brigadier John Osborne OBE &
Sir Michael Davies

Clerks , Committee A:

Mr Colm McGrady & Ms Maeve Clery

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 & Ms Maeve Clery

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Mr Mike Hennessy

Shadow Clerks, Committee D:

Ms Marianne Bolger

Clerk, Committee D:

Ms Audrey Nelson

Irish Administrator: Mrs Veronica Carr,

British Administrator: Miss
Amanda Hay

Irish Assistants:

Ms Jennifer Dorgan, Mr Rory Desch & Ms Brigid
Byrne

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns