



BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TIONÓL PARLAIMINTEACH NA BREATAINE AGUS NA HÉIREANN

NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

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NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2014

Introduction

1. This is the nineteenth annual report of the Assembly 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 Assembly during 2014.

Membership of the Assembly

2. Following the significant turnover in membership in the 2010 and 2011, arising from general elections to the two sovereign parliaments and to the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014, like the two preceding years, was a period of stability in membership, with only minor changes. A list of Members and Associate Members is set out at Appendix 1.

Political developments

General Overview

3. The relationship between Ireland and Britain continued to deepen in 2014, the major highlight being the State Visit by President Michael D. Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins to the UK in April.
4. This first State Visit by the President of Ireland took place from 8 – 11 April 2014. The visit was marked by warmth and enthusiasm from both the British hosts and the general public, including Irish people living in Britain. The extensive programme of events spanned across an impressive range of political, economic, cultural and social aspects of the Irish-British relationship including a very special Ceiliúradh evening in the Royal Albert Hall. Ireland and Britain's trading relationship, amounting to €1 billion per week, was showcased and further trading links were promoted. Political links were further cemented through the participation in the State Visit of the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and several Irish ministers.
5. 2014 also saw a visit by President Higgins to Wales in October for an official programme where he took part in events to commemorate the life of Dylan Thomas.
6. The close engagement between the UK and Ireland is anchored at the political level by the annual summit meeting between the Taoiseach and the PM. This practice began after the May 2011 visit to Ireland of HM Queen Elizabeth and the third such summit took place in London on 11 March 2014 where there was strong agreement on the continued importance of working together.
7. Deeper economic co-operation and collaboration on a range of areas recommended by the 2013 British-Irish Joint Economic Study Report continued in 2014 while formal

structured engagement at the Secretary General/Permanent Secretary level across the civil service also continued with the most recent meeting in this format taking place in London in September. Such engagement is a sign of the broader process of collaborative work between the two Governments and their administrations and provides an input into supporting policy development in both jurisdictions.

8. The British-Irish Council held two summit meetings in 2014: in Guernsey in June and on the Isle of Man in November.
9. 2014 also saw extensive public debate ahead of the referendum on Scottish independence on 18 September, when the Scottish electorate voted to remain in the United Kingdom. The referendum generated considerable interest in Ireland and elsewhere. The Irish government and most other foreign governments remained neutral. Discussions are now continuing on proposed changes to devolution arrangements within the UK.

Commemorations

10. 2014 marked the centenary of the start of the First World War. Events commemorating this important anniversary provided an opportunity to remember together all those men and women who lost their lives, as well as to explore the totality of the history of these islands and reaffirm the legitimacy of all traditions.
11. Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly marked the centenary by visiting Flanders in October 2014. Our programme included ceremonies at the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messines, and concluded with participation in the daily 'last post' ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres.
12. President Higgins' State Visit to the United Kingdom in April also underlined the importance of the current decade of centenaries to both countries. This was reflected through individual events, demonstrating a commitment by both countries to inclusive commemorations. Later in the year on 4 August, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge hosted a First World War commemorative service at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's military cemetery at St. Symphorien in Belgium, which President Higgins attended.
13. The Remembrance Sunday commemoration at the London Cenotaph included Irish participation for the first time since 1946, with Ireland's Ambassador to Britain, Dan Mulhall, laying a laurel wreath during the ceremony.
14. During an official visit to Ireland, on 16 December, British Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP attended a lecture by the former President of Ireland, Professor Mary McAleese, marking the centenary of the Christmas Truce of 1914. This took place at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin. Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan T.D., and Foreign Secretary Hammond both addressed the audience during the evening.
15. In November 2014, the Irish Government launched outline plans for the "Ireland 2016" commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising, which will be a centerpiece of Ireland's decade of centenaries.

North South Co-operation

16. There was a full round of 24 North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meetings during 2014 covering all sectors and including two Plenary meetings and one Institutional meeting. At these meetings Ministers discussed the challenges facing both jurisdictions and opportunities for co-operation. Ministers, North and South, worked to develop priorities for North/South co-operation in their respective sectoral areas especially where it could lead to economic recovery, job creation, the best use of public funds and the most effective delivery of services.
17. Examples of such co-operation which were taken forward in 2014 include Ministers, North and South, working together on Joint Trade Missions and the joint support for the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) bid to bring the 2023 Rugby World Cup to the island of Ireland.
18. Engagement between the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive on EU issues continued in 2014 with the draft of the new PEACE and INTERREG Programmes being submitted to the European Commission in September. It is hoped that the new programmes will be launched in Spring 2015 and provide funding of more than €0.5 billion to Northern Ireland and the Southern border counties up to 2020. Ministers also engaged actively on the potential for collaboration to draw down EU funds to the island of Ireland from other available European programmes.

Political and Security Developments in Northern Ireland

19. 2014 was an extremely busy year regarding political developments in Northern Ireland. In May, local elections took place, in tandem with the European elections across UK and Ireland. NI Party Leaders' talks on flags, parades and dealing with the past, intended to take forward discussions on issues considered during the 2013 Haass talks, were suspended for the duration of the elections. After the elections there was some renewed momentum but on 3 July Unionist parties ended their participation in Party Leaders' Talks following a Parades Commission decision regarding a section of a parading route in North Belfast. Following the collapse of the Party Leaders' talks, it became apparent that on a number of legacy issues, as well as broader financial and welfare issues, the talks had become deadlocked.
20. By September 2014, it was the joint assessment of the UK and Irish governments that the political impasse in Northern Ireland was such that the immediate involvement of the Governments was required to break the political logjam. On 28 September, the Governments announced that political talks, involving the NI Executive Parties and the Governments, would be convened to seek to resolve these issues and provide for economic renewal and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The talks opened on 16 October and, following eleven weeks of intensive negotiations, they concluded successfully on 23 December with the Stormont House Agreement.
21. The Stormont House Agreement addresses a number of important issues. In particular, it provides new tools to address the complex legacy of the past. The Agreement also sets out a plan for financial and budgetary reform in Northern Ireland. It proposes a way forward on flags, identity, culture and tradition through the establishment of a commission. It envisages the devolution of responsibility for

parades to the Northern Ireland Assembly. It establishes a programme of institutional reform at Stormont and progresses a number of outstanding aspects from the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements, including the establishment of an independent civic advisory panel to advise the Northern Ireland Executive. It also provides for further measures to enhance North/South cooperation on the island of Ireland. The Agreement contains specific provisions on review and monitoring of implementation, with quarterly review meetings and six-monthly progress reports. The Stormont House Agreement provides a good basis on which to advance a number of issues identified in BIPA's Committee A Report of 31 March 2014 'The Implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast and St. Andrews Agreements', in particular dealing with the past, implementation of the Agreements, and other legacy issues.

Ministerial Assignments: Northern Ireland Executive (as of December 2014):

Department	Minister	Party
OFMDFM-First Minister	Peter Robinson	DUP
OFMDFM-Deputy First Minister	Martin McGuinness	SF
Finance and Personnel	Simon Hamilton	DUP
Education	John O'Dowd	SF
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Arlene Foster	DUP
Regional Development	Danny Kennedy	UUP
Agriculture and Rural Development	Michelle O'Neill	SF
Environment	Mark H. Durkan	SDLP
Social Development	Mervyn Storey	DUP
Culture, Arts and Leisure	Carál Ni Chuilín	SF
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Jim Wells	DUP
Employment and Learning	Stephen Farry	Alliance
Justice	David Ford	Alliance
Junior Minister OFMDFM	Jennifer McCann	SF
Junior Minister OFMDFM	Jonathan Bell	DUP

Legacy Issues

22. The first half of the year saw challenging developments on a number of legacy issues. The High Court in London in February 2014 ruled that the trial of John Downey on charges relating to the Hyde Park bombing should not proceed in the light of a letter he had received in 2007 from the Northern Ireland Office indicating that there were no outstanding warrants for his arrest. An independent inquiry, chaired by Justice Heather Hallett, into the operation of the 'On the Runs' administrative scheme was subsequently established which reported on 17 July 2014. In addition, in March 2014, the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) launched an inquiry into the OTR scheme. NIAC met with a range of individuals in the course of its consideration of these matters and is due to report in February 2015. Throughout the year, there was a significant level of media attention around the Boston College oral archive tapes relating to legacy cases, which is the subject of ongoing judicial proceedings. On 2 December 2014, the Irish Government announced its decision to

request the European Court of Human Rights to revise its 1978 judgment in the so-called 'Hooded Men' case taken by Ireland against the UK.

23. Dealing with the past was a major focus of the Stormont House talks, with an overwhelming consensus amongst all parties to the talks on the need to place victims and survivors at the heart of efforts to deal with the legacy of the past. The Agreement reached on 23 December provides for a range of mechanisms designed to better address these needs of victims, survivors and their families. This comprehensive framework includes an independent Historical Investigations Unit which will have full policing powers to take forward investigations into Troubles-related deaths; an Independent Commission on Information Retrieval to enable victims and survivors, to seek and receive information about the death of their loved ones; as well as an oral history archive which will provide a central place for people from throughout the UK and Ireland to share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles.

Security Situation

24. The overall security situation in 2014 remained of concern. In a statement at Westminster in October, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Theresa Villiers MP, said that the threat level remained severe. There were a number of high-profile attacks on the PSNI in Belfast, Derry and Strabane, as well as a firebombing of a hotel in Derry. A series of parcel bombs were sent to Army recruitment offices in Britain in February and to prison officers in Maghaberry in March. There were 28 paramilitary-style shootings carried out in Derry in 2014. Importantly, however, the number of violent deaths in Northern Ireland in 2014 was at the lowest level since 1969 and, despite several attempts, no security officials were killed.
25. A number of arrests were made by the PSNI and the Garda Síochána in relation to dissident activity. Both the PSNI and the Garda Síochána continue to cooperate very closely to combat dissident activity on both sides of the border.
26. While there were no major incidents involving loyalist paramilitaries in 2014, tensions within the ranks of the UDA remain following a deterioration in relationships during the dispute over the flying of the Union flag at City Hall.
27. Tensions simmered throughout the year over how issues related to a specific parading route in north Belfast would be resolved. A loyalist camp set up at Twaddell Avenue to protest the Commission's decision marked 500 days of protest on 23 November 2014. In October, Secretary of State Villiers published terms of reference for a Panel of experts to examine the parades dispute in north Belfast. On 23 December, owing to insufficient cross-community support, the Secretary of State decided not to go ahead with setting up the panel.
28. More generally, 2014 saw the most peaceful parading season in recent years. This can be attributed to some extent to the significant amount of cross-community work being carried out at interface areas and the very successful PSNI management of parades and related protests.

Work of the Assembly

48th Plenary Conference (Dublin)

29. The 48th Plenary Conference was held at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin between 30th March and 1st April 2014. Its overall theme was reform of the public services and control of public expenditure. Members were welcomed to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham by Michael Wardick, the Senior Heritage Guide, who gave a short account of the building's history.
30. The session began with an address by Brian Hayes TD, Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works, and a former Member of the Assembly. Mr Hayes spoke of the problems of unemployment across Europe since the economic crash of 2008. The Irish economy was closely linked with that of the United Kingdom and growth in the UK was essential to the economy of Ireland. When the crash occurred 60% of those who lost their jobs were in the construction sector which had been contributing 20% of Ireland's GDP. Now it was only 5% and it was hoped to increase this to 10%. But the companies which were now doing best were small ones employing fewer than ten people. Many companies now in business had not been established before the crash of 2008.
31. He spoke of the importance of the investments made by the leading ten internationalised companies in the Irish economy. The English language, a competitive tax regime, membership of the eurozone and a well-educated workforce were reasons why large companies invested in Ireland.
32. Education and training were key factors in getting people back to work and the Irish government very much welcomed the youth guarantee which guarantees a young person retraining or a job placement within four months of becoming unemployed rather than twelve months as previously. There was much to learn from a country like Germany where youth unemployment was 8% compared to Ireland where it was 25%. There was a lot to do to get people back to work but full employment had happened in the past and there was no reason why it shouldn't happen again.
33. At the end of his address, Mr Hayes answered questions from Jim Walsh TD, Lord German, Jim Sheridan MP, Seamus Kirk TD, Joyce Watson AM, Senator Paschal Mooney, John Scott MSP, Sean Rogers MLA, Baroness Blood, Senator Paul Coghlan and Danny Kinahan MLA.
34. Frank Feighan TD presented the report of Committee A on The Implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast and St Andrews Agreements. Mr Feighan gave an outline of the people and organisations the Committee had talked to. The Committee believed that the two agreements had had a significant and transformative effect on security, politics and economic and social opportunity on Ireland. But the report found that the full potential of the Agreements has yet to be reached.

35. Paul Murphy MP made three points. The first was on the need for, and the desirability of, regular reports on the implementation of the Agreements. It was now sixteen years since the Good Friday Agreement and it might require some changing as provided for in the Agreement. His second point was to congratulate the Committee on the way in which they had phrased the recommendation on a Bill of Rights; thirdly, he hoped that Governments would take some notice of the recommendation about relations between the Assembly and the British-Irish Council. Baroness Blood spoke of the need for tackling issues which are of importance to the community; she was supported by Senator Paschal Mooney who spoke of the horrors of the peace walls. Patrick O'Donovan TD spoke of matters which were "unfinished business" such as the Bill of Rights and the Civic Forum and he asked which government was responsible for driving these things through, Stormont, Dublin or London. Senator Paul Coghlan and Senator John Crown also spoke. Frank Feighan TD replied to the short debate.
36. The Assembly took note of the Report which was then sent to the British and Irish Governments.
37. Jack Wall TD reported on the way in which Committee C was planning to investigate Youth Unemployment. A number of members welcomed the programme of visits planned for the enquiry.
38. After a short break, the Assembly participated in a panel discussion on The Future of Work. The panellists were Mr Gerry Kindlon, President of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, Ms Ann Riordan, Chair of Science Foundation of Ireland and Mr Frank Ryan, Chair of the Industrial Development Authority Ireland. The first panellist to speak was Gerry Kindlon. He talked about the importance of the digital economy and the Internet which was driving change at an astonishing pace. He said that the Internet was vital to eliminate peripherality. Investment in the infrastructure must continue and the necessary skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) must be developed quickly. He added that no-one should expect a job for life these days; people would have multiple careers and would need retraining at different periods of their lives.
39. He was followed by Ann Riordan who spoke about the work done by Science Foundation Ireland in preparing young people for the jobs of the 21st century. She also spoke about the speed of change, mentioning that what students learned at the beginning of their courses could be out of date by the time they graduate. The value of what they learn would be how they use information to deliver solutions. The number of Digital jobs in the European Union was growing by 100,000 annually but the number of IT graduates and skilled IT workers was not keeping pace. Much more needed to be done to create the workforce of tomorrow. The final panellist was Frank Ryan who spoke about the history of work in Ireland. Industries, such as textiles, which had employed thousands of workers, did not still exist, while a company like Google was employing equivalent numbers of people in a different part of Ireland. Even digital companies hadn't survived; for instance only one of the eight largest computer companies trading in the 1980s was still in business. He stressed the importance of looking constantly to the future and evaluating the industries of the future which would replace those now trading. Ireland had to continue to attract foreign direct investment.

40. The following members then contributed to the panel discussion; David Melding AM, Arthur Spring TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Patrick O'Donovan TD, Aengus O' Snodaigh TD, Willie Coffey MSP, Lord German, Senator Jim Walsh, Sean Rogers MLA, Senator Paschal Mooney, William Powell AM, Seamus Kirk TD, Senator Cait Keane, Martin Heydon TD, Joyce Watson AM, Alison McInnes MSP, Joe O'Reilly TD, Robert Walter MP, John Scott MSP, John Paul Phelan TD and Frank Feighan TD.
41. In a break between sessions, all Members of the Assembly visited the Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge where the two Co-Chairs, Joe McHugh TD and Laurence Robertson MP laid wreaths.
42. When the session resumed, the Assembly was interested to listen to an address by Michael O'Leary, Chief Executive of Ryanair. Mr O'Leary began by informing the Assembly that Ryanair was now the largest airline not only in Ireland but also in the UK. He spoke of the importance of tourism to the economy during a recession and roundly attacked air passenger duty. Air passenger duty (APD) had resulted in Ireland's three largest airports losing nearly a third of their travellers. APD had had a similar impact in the UK but the economy there was larger and there were alternative ways to travel than by air.
43. He strongly welcomed the work done by the present Irish government in reducing APD from 10 euros to 3 euros and he was even more delighted to know that APD was to be abolished at midnight. He looked forward to an increase in visitors from European countries who, instead of visiting the UK, would come to Ireland where they could enjoy the same weather, better beer and no passenger tax. As a consequence, Ryanair had announced the creation of more than twenty-five new routes. He pointed out that VAT receipts from the increased passenger numbers would be higher than what the travel tax had contributed to the Irish exchequer. He called on Westminster MPs to take back to the UK government the argument that APD was a deeply regressive tax.
44. He didn't wish to get into the case for or against Scottish independence but he would support an independent Scotland if the decision was taken to abolish APD. Most airlines had said that such a move would be a dramatically stimulative economic measure for Scotland. He hoped that the UK government would see the impact which the abolition of APD was having in Ireland and abolish it too.
45. Ryanair had ordered 175 new aircraft and he expected the company to grow from carrying 80 million passengers annually to about 110/115 million passengers. In this way Ryanair would be directly responsible for creating 30,000 new jobs, mainly for young people, and he hoped that many of these jobs would be in Ireland or the UK. Tourism was an industry which was going to create lots of entry-level jobs and bring employment to the youth of Europe.
46. Mr O'Leary then answered questions from Lord Dubs, Oliver Colville MP, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Paschal Mooney, Arthur Spring TD, Steve Rodan SHK, Deputy Roger Perrot, Andrew Rosindell MP, Darren Millar AM, Mark Pritchard MP, Robert Walter MP, John Scott MSP, Martin Heydon TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Willie Coffey MSP, Danny Kinahan MLA and Frank Feighan TD.

47. The Assembly was then privileged to hear an address by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD. Mr Kenny began by mentioning his previous membership of the Assembly which had given him an early understanding of British politics. The Assembly had made a huge contribution to creating a better understanding between parliamentarians on both sides of the Irish Sea. Twenty years ago only imagination would have led people to believe that Queen Elizabeth would come to Ireland on a Royal Visit or that President Michael D Higgins would make a formal state visit to the UK. The Queen's visit had been an enormous success; she had contributed to the homely nature of it, epitomised by an exchange between the Queen and an Irish fishmonger on a mother in law fish!
48. The Taoiseach then turned to the subject of jobs and employment. He reported that the two countries had reached an agreement on British-Irish relations for the next decade. A trade mission comprising Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland itself had made a joint visit to Singapore. And the two governments were working on the introduction of a common travel visa. From the point of tourism and hospitality, there would be great advantages in marketing the UK and Ireland together.
49. Mr Kenny then referred to the visit he and the UK Prime Minister had made to Flanders to mark the sacrifices men from all parts of the British Isles had made during the Great War. The Peace Park was a commemoration of the common sacrifice and other peace parks were springing up throughout Ireland.
50. He understood that the Assembly had been assessing the progress made since the Good Friday and St Andrew's Agreements. The Good Friday Agreement had opened up not just economic opportunities but had created a great sense of the future where all communities can live together in peace and mutual respect. He acknowledged that the political situation in Northern Ireland remained fragile and he welcomed the recommencement of party leader talks with Dr Haass. As Taoiseach, he had met groups from both sides of the community who still had raw emotions inside them. He had spent three hours with the relatives of the disappeared and with the people of Ballymurphy. It was important that people should be able to speak about their hurt. The process towards peace had begun twenty years before and progress had been made but the issues which remained had to be dealt with in the North. Mr Kenny went on to say that he didn't want the political process blocked by clinging to the past when young people wanted to open up the future. The confidence levels of Northern Ireland had to be developed and money had been made available to support the peace dividend. The United States and the European Union were supportive. He wanted to pay tribute to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister for the ways in which they were building a more united and reconciled Northern Ireland. When they travelled to China the Irish Ambassador, a fluent Chinese speaker, had been made able to help them. Both the British and Irish governments were making every effort to speed recovery of the economy throughout the island.
51. The Taoiseach then spoke of the shared experiences of the trenches in World War I. He gave the example of Major Willie Redmond MP, a Catholic, who when badly wounded was carried half a mile by a Protestant to the convent where he died. Protestants and Catholics had fought side by side against a common enemy. A decade of commemorations was beginning, encompassing the Ulster Covenant, the Great War, the Easter Rising and through to Independence and partition. He acknowledged the work which the Assembly had been doing in this area and reported that the Irish

Government was supporting a number of commemorative events through the Reconciliation Funds and he had been in Enniskillen on Armistice Day which he found it poignant to see a laurel wreath among the poppies, a sign of the singularity of peoples of both communities. Commemorations of the Easter Rising and the First World War would provide several opportunities for developing better understanding between different traditions and communities. He praised the work that the Assembly had been doing over many years to create better understanding.

52. At the conclusion of his speech, the Taoiseach answered questions from Joe O'Reilly TD, Paul Flynn MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Sean Rogers MLA, Mark Pritchard MP, Robert Walter MP, Sean Conlon TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Senator Paschal Mooney, Senator John Crown, Lindsay Whittle AM, Danny Kinahan MLA, Frank Feighan TD and Sean Crowe TD.
53. The business on Tuesday began with an address by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Mr Howlin acknowledged that public service reform was a challenge all politicians faced. Three years ago when the present government was formed they embarked on the most ambitious reform programme in the history of the state because they realised an efficient and effective public service was key to economic recovery. They had made significant progress even during a time of increased demands on public services, particularly in welfare, health and education. The number of public servants had been reduced by 30,000 a reduction of 10%.
54. The changes had been achieved in an environment of industrial peace and stability. He mentioned the Croke Park agreement (which had achieved a 1.8 billion euro saving in pay and pensions) and the Haddington Road agreement which would deliver a further 1 billion euro saving up to 2016. A new Office of Government Procurement had been established in his department which was targeting a half a billion euro savings. A Human Resources and Pensions Shared Service Centre had been operational since March 2013 and when fully operational would achieve 12.5 million euro savings annually. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer had also been established within his department to build on the potential benefits of digitalisation and as a result the government portal now had links to more than 400 information and transactional services. A series of public expenditure reforms had been implemented to bring greater structure, scrutiny and openness to the budgetary process.
55. In January 2014 he had published a second Public Service Reform Plan; the first had been published in 2011 shortly after the government took office. The fiscal situation in 2011 meant that the first stage of reform had to focus on reducing costs by reducing waste and duplication. The next phase would continue to drive down costs but would also focus on citizen engagement and improved outcomes for the economy and service users. The government was committed to greater use of alternative service delivery models. He said that there was a need to change radically the way government engaged with citizens and business.
56. The government was progressing its legislative programme to improve public governance and rebuild trust in administrative and political oversight. For instance, lobbying would be regulated so that people knew who was lobbying and that it was

transparent. A reformed Freedom of Information Act would be enacted and whistleblowers would be protected. Statute law reform would be pursued.

57. The Civil Service was to be subject to a renewal programme to identify a clear vision for the future. This was important in view of the role it had at the centre of the public service. It needed the tools and skills to deal with changing environments. Every civil servant would be encouraged to have his or her say what the civil service did well and where it could be improved. In engaging with a broad range of stake-holders, he was confident that the Civil Service could have a vision where everybody could have pride in the public administration. In January 2014, he had published a consultation paper of strengthening the accountability of the Civil Service. This took some time in negotiating with senior members of the public service. The object of the exercise is to assess with greater clarity and certainty who is accountable and for what. Mr Howlin ended by saying that challenges remained but the objective was convince the public that public services were worth the investment and were up to the mark.
58. Mr Howlin then answered questions from John Scott MSP, David Melding AM, Lord Shutt of Greetland, Jim Dobbin MP, Deputy John le Fondre, William Powell AM, Joyce Watson AM, Senator Paul Coghlan, Lord Dubs, John Robertson MP, Steve Rodan SHK, Paul Murphy MP, Frank Feighan TD and Senator Jim Walsh.
59. Robert Walter MP then reported on the work of Committee B (European Affairs) Mr Walter brought the Assembly up-to-date on the Committee's report on the Irish Presidency. The responsible Irish Minister had responded to the report at the previous plenary in London and now the responsible British Minister had sent in a written response, which was available to Members.
60. Mr Walter then reported on a visit the Committee had made to the headquarters of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg as part of its current enquiry. They had had a very informative visit and at the most recent meeting of the Committee they had decided to visit Bilbao where the Bank had helped a number of initiatives to establish. He hoped that this report would be presented to the Assembly at its October meeting. Future work would be a follow-up enquiry to their 2010 report on the European Union concept of a British and Irish economic space, particularly in connection with the impact of the UK's HGV road user levy within the jurisdictions represented in the Assembly. The committee's next major enquiry would be into the two visa systems within the European Union.
61. Lord German added that the staff of the European Investment Bank had been excellent in the way they had responded to the Committee's visit. He hoped that all jurisdictions represented in the Assembly would find the report useful in making use of the enormous funds available. Senator Paschal Mooney welcomed the committee's decision to look into the HGV levy. The British Government's legislation on this matter would have an impact on the Irish Republic. It would be most welcome if some mechanism could be established whereby pending legislation in one jurisdiction could be notified to another where there might be some unfortunate impact. Sean Conlan TD remarked that there was no simple solution to this problem. The issue of cabotage was a significant one because it was requiring more trucks on the road. He had proposed a motion that all of the jurisdictions and the islands of Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man should be treated as one functional area so that cabotage rules would

not apply in the functional area. He hoped that the motion might be proposed at the next plenary.. The points made by Senator Mooney had been raised by the Taoiseach with the Prime Minister and by the Irish Minister of Transport with his opposite number; the solution probably required an amendment of the legislation.

62. In reply Robert Walter said that the proposal for some kind of early warning system of legislation being proposed in one jurisdiction being drawn to the attention of other jurisdictions was one for future consideration, possibly by Committee A.
63. Lord Dubs reported on the work of Committee D. He said that the Committee was currently looking at the problems faced by Irish Travellers and Roma. They had decided to visit a travellers' site each time they took evidence and had so far visited sites in Dublin and Belfast; but the Committee was only halfway through the enquiry. They would be visiting London and seeing the notorious Dale Farm site, as well as making a visit to Edinburgh. Travellers and Roma were subject to discrimination and often kept out of supermarkets and other retail shops. In the case of the Roma, there was the additional problem of language. The issue of kinship was another difficulty because the Committee had heard evidence in Belfast that the leader of one kinship group would not allow another group to use vacant space on a site. Whether the Committee would find solutions to these problems, he could not say at this stage.
64. Having devoted a lot of attention to social issues recently, the Committee had decided that their next enquiry would be into the environmental aspects of fracking.
65. Jim Wells MLA admitted that he had a different view on travellers to the majority of the Committee. He would be asking travellers how they would allay the concerns of the settled community. Senator Cait Keane expressed the hope that the Committee would come to a consensus.
66. The Annual Report for 2013 was agreed to.
67. Mattie McGrath TD moved the following motion:-

That the Assembly examines the relationships in relation to the orderly wind-up of Bank of Scotland Ireland.
68. Mattie McGrath explained the purpose of the motion. He had presented a report in 2013 which he claimed laid bare the losses suffered by the taxpayer and citizens in all jurisdiction represented in the Assembly. Certus, the company appointed to wind up the business left behind by the departure of Bank of Scotland (Ireland) was creating widespread misery in Ireland by its actions. He hoped that presenting his report would result in the uncovering of the dubious practices which had occurred. The Lloyds Banking Group was based in the UK and he asked that Westminster parliamentary committees should investigate the legality of what the Group was doing and present a report to Parliament. Jim Wells MLA added his support to the case made by Mattie McGrath and spoke of the actions of Ulster Bank which was selling off its loan book for a fraction of the debts. Many of these loans had been to small companies which were slowly emerging from the recession but which were now being mercilessly pursued by companies which owned the loan books but have no stake in Ireland, north or south of the border, The problem in Northern Ireland was that the Executive had no

direct control over the situation which was one for the UK as a whole. Senator Jim Walsh supported Jim Wells' point about the selling off of loan books. He thought it totally unacceptable for banks to sell off their loan books at a discount without giving their customers the opportunity to buy their loans at a similar discount. The Minister for Finance had argued that it was administratively easier to sell the loans in chunks rather than individually. He hoped that Committee C would examine the problems in the banking system. Senator Paschal Mooney and John Scott MSP supported the motion and John Scott welcomed the intention of the Northern Ireland Select Committee at Westminster to report soon on the structure of banking.

69. Senator Cait Keane criticised the failures which led to the financial crisis and which the current Government was tackling. She had listened to what Minister Howlin had said earlier in the day about accountability and she hoped it wouldn't be too long before the reforms he had spoken of were in place and the system of regulation worked properly. Then people would know who was responsible when things went wrong. Patrick O'Donovan TD spoke of the way in which banks were divesting themselves of staff and withdrawing from their communities. Since the banks had been bailed out by the public, they should display civic responsibility.

70. The motion was agreed to and was sent to the British and Irish Governments.

71. Lord Dubs moved the following motion:-

The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly believes Dementia is a challenge throughout our respective jurisdictions in Britain and Ireland;

72. Members welcome the progress of Irish in Britain in developing the "Cuimhne" whole-community memory loss strategy to improve the lives of older Irish people and their families affected by dementia; and notes work being done on the ground – engaging families, support services and welfare providers, older people's forums and pensioner groups, enabling them to improve services and keep those with memory loss included.

73. The Assembly further notes that Irish in Britain staff have established links with a well-known hotel group and a number of companies recognising the business case for expanding their market by becoming more dementia-friendly; and welcomes the partnerships that have been built with The Alzheimer's Society (UK), the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia and the Prime Minister's Dementia Task Groups, tackling the cultural factors that prevent older Irish people from accessing mainstream support.

74. Members of the Assembly understand the difficulties that arise in keeping those with early stage dementia engaged in normal and active family life. We note that for those living overseas, visits back to Ireland provide a vital link with families; for carers and those affected by dementia, travel can be an uncertain experience and may very quickly become impossible.

75. The Assembly urges travel and transport companies to pay special attention to those experiencing memory loss and to assist families and carers maintain their connection with home. Members believe there is a compelling business case for companies to

take appropriate steps to become dementia-friendly and enable families to remain part of the travel market.

76. Lord Dubs expanded on the terms of the motion saying that travel between the UK and Ireland for older Irish people who wished to visit their families back home could be a challenging experience. He urged travel companies to do more and to provide staff with appropriate training to deal with those who suffer memory loss. He had not been impressed by Michael O’Leary’s response that it might cost his airline more to provide these additional services.
77. Viscount Bridgeman, Sean Crowe TD, Joyce Watson AM, Mattie McGrath TD, Oliver Colville MP, John Robertson MP, Senator Paschal Mooney all supported the motion which was then agreed to.
78. The Assembly then listened to another panel discussion, this time on Reform of the Public Sector. The panellists were Dr Eoin O’Malley of the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University and Dr Richard Boyle, Head of Research, Publishing and Corporate Relations of The Institute of Public Administration. Dr O’Malley said that when thinking about the future of work in the public sector, it was right to consider whether people had ownership of the goals which they were expected to achieve. Professionals like doctors and nurses tended to have ownership of clinical outcomes. But the imposition of controls could easily have perverse results; for instance, the Blair governments in the UK introduced waiting-time targets which resulted in a nurse standing at the door of the casualty unit and saying “hello” and then sending people to a seat where they would wait. Academics were almost completely free of controls but there was a strong horizontal accountability of the work academics did. Introducing controls in the public sector was an attempt to achieve accountability but it was a very expensive way of achieving this. Introducing controls to get 10% of the workforce to be more productive results in the loss of productivity among the other 90%. Academia had little in the way of hierarchy whereas in the civil service hierarchical conduits tended to block information getting through to ministers. Another advantage that academia enjoyed was its flexibility and people moved easily from one job to another. This suggested that if the public sector moved towards a position-based system where people moved in and out of working in a particular sector, this would increase self-motivation. Such a move would have implications for policy makers but he believed that moving in that direction was the right thing to do.
79. Dr Richard Boyle said that the Institute of Public Administration had identified five challenges from its work on international trends towards public sector reform. The first was designing a productive public service; this required action on a number of fronts including more joined-up government and better scrutiny of public expenditure. The second challenge was renewing public sector capacity in a time of reduced budgets and the loss of experienced staff as cuts were implemented. The fiscal crisis had highlighted the need to urgently build greater capacity at European and international levels to promote national and mutual interests. The third challenge identified by the Institute was implementation. There was a widespread perception of “not much happening”; changing structures was not enough although it was the easy thing to do and more visible to the outsider.

80. The fourth challenge was to engage the citizen. Previous reforms have been aimed at better customer service and greater consultation but only in respect of the citizen being the passive recipient of the service. Citizens should be given a more active voice in the design, delivery and monitoring of services, so increasing their participation in the processes. His fifth and final challenge was to secure effective political accountability. Senior public servants should expect to give evidence to parliamentary committees on their performances in managing expenditure and the delivery of major projects. While public servants were already subject to accountability demands, too often there were gaps in the overall picture which could lead to perceptions of incompetence. Strong political coordination was required.
81. Members of the Assembly including Jim Wells MLA, Joe O'Reilly TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Patrick O'Donovan TD, Darren Millar AM, David Melding AM and Martin Heydon TD joined in the panel discussion.

49th Plenary Conference (Ashford, Kent, and Flanders)

82. The 49th Plenary Conference was held at the International Hotel, Ashford, Kent, between 19 and 21 October 2014. At the Steering Committee meeting on Sunday 19 October, it was confirmed that Frank Feighan TD had succeeded Joe McHugh TD (who had become a minister in the Irish Government) as Co-Chair of the Assembly.
83. The arrangements for the conference were very different to the normal pattern. On Monday 20 October, all those attending the conference made a day visit to the Ypres Salient to pay their respects to the men and women from all parts of these islands who had been killed in that sector during the First World War. In order to accommodate this visit within the work of the Assembly, all Committees met in the afternoon of Sunday 19 October and the business on Tuesday 21 October was extended to 4.00 pm rather than finishing at 12.30 pm.
84. For the Flanders visit, Members and staff travelled in two coaches, leaving Ashford in the early morning and returning very late the same day. Each coach was fortunate to have on board a historian from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who was able to speak about the topography of the Ypres Salient and the part played in the battles by soldiers and regiments from all parts of the British Isles. The day was an intensive one, but the weather was fine and warm which enabled all the planned sites to be visited in the time available.
85. The first stop was at the grave of Major Willie Redmond MP, an Irish nationalist, who died on 7 June 1917. His grave stands outside the walls of a Commonwealth cemetery at Loker. Its position was not for any political reason but because his family had asked that his grave should remain where it was, within the walls of a convent, a convent which has since moved.
86. The coaches then stopped at the Island of Ireland Peace Park, near Messines. The park was the idea of a Catholic nationalist, Paddy Harte TD, and a Protestant unionist politician, Glen Barr; it was conceived as "A Journey of Reconciliation" between Irish Unionists and Nationalists and had been opened in 1998 by President Mary McAleese and HM Queen Elizabeth II in the presence of the King and Queen of the

Belgians. The Co-Chairs laid wreaths in the stone tower which dominates the park while the Hon Steve Rodan SHK played a lament on his pipes. Wreaths were also laid on behalf of both communities in Northern Ireland and Chris Ruane MP laid a wreath on behalf of the Irish in Britain Association.

87. All those travelling in the coaches had the privilege of having lunch in the Messines Peace Village, an international and rural hostel usually only available to youth and school groups. It had been constructed after the completion of the Peace Park. From there, it was a short walk to visit the Messines Ridge British Cemetery which contains 986 British graves, 504 Commonwealth graves and 954 unknown graves. The names of the unknown soldiers are recorded at the entrance.
88. The next cemetery visited was the Wytschaete Military Cemetery. The small village was known to British troops as “Whitesheet”. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens; 1,002 servicemen are either buried or commemorated, 673 bodies being unidentified. Outside the walls of the cemetery is a memorial to the 16th (Irish) Division which, together with the 36th (Ulster) Division, was responsible for the victory at Wytschaete in June 1917.
89. The coaches then drove to the Scottish memorial at Frezenberg Ridge, which commemorates all Scots who fought in the Ypres Salient, and in particular the Scottish 9th and 15th Divisions and the 51st Highland Division which all fought in the Battle of Passchendaele. John Scott MSP laid a wreath at the foot of the memorial while Hon Steve Rodan SHK again played the pipes. The Assembly next visited Artillery Wood Cemetery, near Boezinge, where the Irish poet, Francis Ledwidge, and the Welsh poet, Ellis Humphrey Evans (Hedd Wyn), are buried. They were both killed on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele in July 1917. Irish and Welsh members of the Assembly paid their respects at the two graves.
90. From there the Assembly members went on to visit the recently unveiled Welsh Memorial at Langemark, where a wreath was laid by David Melding AM. Members of the National Assembly for Wales together with Welsh MPs and peers joined together in paying their respects at the memorial. Finally, the Assembly paid an all-too-brief visit to Tyne Cot, the largest Commonwealth War cemetery anywhere in the world. Time did not allow for any commemorations, but Members were able better to grasp the full extent of the slaughter in the Ypres Salient. Tyne Cot’s walls record the names of 35,000 of the 90,000 unidentified soldiers who fell in the Ypres Salient; the other 55,000 are recorded on the Menin Gate in Ypres.
91. An early dinner was hosted by the British and Irish Ambassadors to Belgium in a restaurant within a short walk of the Menin Gate where the last engagement of the long day was held. Members were delighted that several Mayors and other local dignitaries were able to join them at the dinner.
92. Members of the Assembly were reserved space within the Menin Gate for the daily ceremony. Laurence Robertson MP, Co-Chair, and Frank Feighan TD, Co-Chair, read the Exhortation, after which they, together with John Scott MSP, David Melding AM, Jim Wells MLA, Sean Rogers MLA, Hon Steve Rodan SHK, Deputy John Le Fondre and David Marquand (an official) laid wreaths on behalf of their respective parliaments and assemblies. They were followed by the British and Irish Ambassadors

and many young people laying wreaths. The Last Post was then sounded by buglers. At the conclusion of the ceremony, British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly members and staff rejoined the coaches and made the journey back to Ashford.

93. The visit had been made possible with the very great assistance of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, particularly their local staff, and also by the British and Irish embassies in Brussels. Members were extremely appreciative of the presence of both Ambassadors throughout the day and the Assembly wishes to record its gratitude both to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and to the two embassies.
94. The normal work of the Assembly resumed on Tuesday 21 October. The first item on the agenda was the presentation of the report of Committee A by Senator Paul Coghlan who had succeeded Frank Feighan TD as Chair. Senator Coghlan reported that the Committee had begun a new enquiry into smuggling and cross-border police activity. They had held meetings in Belfast and Dublin and would hold further meetings, including one in London.
95. The next item on the agenda was the work of Committee B. Lord German, as rapporteur, spoke on the Committee's enquiry into the European Investment Bank. He drew attention to the wide divergences in the sums lent by the bank to Spain (10.66 billion euros), the UK (3.7 billion euros) and Ireland (0.5 billion euros). There were a number of lessons which the Committee had learned from a visit made to Bilbao in June and he would incorporate these into the Committee's report on the bank.
96. Robert Walter MP, Chair, reported that the Committee's next enquiry would be into the two different visa systems of the Schengen area and the common travel area between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and how these impacted on tourism, business, labour and the education sector. The Committee's most recent report entitled "The Impact of the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013 on the Free Movement of Goods on the Island of Ireland" recommended that the UK Secretary of State for Transport should reconsider the decision not to provide exemptions for Northern Ireland roads; the present rules had a detrimental effect on hauliers who work across the border. The report also asked the UK Government how the levy complied with European Union cabotage rules.
97. Joe O'Reilly TD, Senator Jim Walsh, Senator Paschal Mooney and Noel Coonan TD all added their concerns about the impact of the levy on Irish hauliers, particularly those using the A5.
98. The Assembly then had the pleasure of listening to an extremely interesting address by Professor Keith Jeffery of Queen's University, Belfast on Ireland and the Great War. Professor Jeffery illustrated his talk with photos relevant to the points he was making. He said that the picture of Ireland's participation in World War One was not as traditionally painted. Lord Kitchener's call for volunteers was met with enormous enthusiasm in Ireland, as it was in other parts of Great Britain. The number of Irish who served in the British army was not entirely clear but it was nearer to 210,000 than to the 500,000 named on the Irish National War Memorial at Kilmainham. The perception that those who volunteered for service in the war were mostly protestant loyalists was not correct. In many parts of Ireland, catholic nationalists volunteered in huge numbers and figures supplied by John Redmond (up to the date of his death in

February 1918) showed that more catholic nationalists joined up than protestant unionists. He gave examples of recruitment in Munster and Leinster.

99. In answering the question of why so many Irish joined up at the outset of war, Professor Jeffery drew attention to the plight of defenceless Catholic Belgium which had been attacked by Germany and there was concern that Catholic Ireland might be next. A war memorial in Cork was dedicated to those who “fell fighting for the freedom of small nations”. Other volunteers joined up because they wanted a job or because their friends had done so; some saw the war as a great sporting occasion. The Unionists joined up for King and Country. War provided business opportunities. Farmers grew wealthy supplying the army.
100. In addition to Flanders and the Somme, the 10th (Irish) Division went to Gallipoli and Suvla Bay. These events ended in defeat which to the nationalists became an indicator of the futility of war and of wasted lives. “We’ve sent our bravest and best out there and it’s ended in defeat” was also encapsulated in the song *The Foggy Dew* written about the Dublin rebels and containing the line “Twas better to die ’neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud-el-Bar”. Irish graves can also be found in Jerusalem, Macedonia and Italy.
101. Professor Jeffery drew attention to the resilience of the British army throughout the war; there was a commitment to a cause, to comrades and to the whole endeavour. Irish recruitment went up in 1918 (10,500 men joined the army in the last four and a half months of the war), but the reasons for this were complex. The initial enthusiasm of 1914 had and yet men joined up in great numbers. The 36th (Ulster) Division went over the top on 1st July. Could this have been because it was the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne? The reasons may never be fully understood.
102. Hostilities were not confined to France and Belgium. The *Lusitania* was sunk just off the Head of Kinsale, resulting in many Americans being killed, one factor which brought America into the war. Other ships were torpedoed in the seas around Ireland, including the *Leinster*, the *Holyhead* mail boat. Professor Jeffery referred to the “men of Newry” who had gone down with these boats but were not included in the lists of Commonwealth dead because they were merchant seamen. One of the slides he showed was of the “women of Armagh”; for the first time, women had their own money through receiving separation allowances. And women were getting economic opportunities they had never had before, working in factories, including munitions factories.
103. Professor Jeffery ended his talk with the subject of “commemorations” and memorials. The Armistice was commemorated in Ireland with dances and cheering into the 1930s; commemorations had now become more reflective and sombre. He illustrated the points he made with photos of memorials, including that at Enniskillen where there was the Remembrance Day bombing in 1987. Despite all the differences across communities the terrible events of the Great War created a sense of shared humanity and experiences.
104. Senator Paschal Mooney, Frank Feighan TD, Lord Rogan, Viscount Bridgeman, Joe O’Reilly TD and Paul Murphy MP all asked questions and contributed to a short discussion on the subject.

105. The Assembly next held a debate on the current state of the British and Irish economies. Jack Wall TD introduced the debate. He spoke of the recovering economies on both sides of the Irish Sea. The Irish growth rate was estimated to be 4.6% in 2014 and most of this was export driven. Export levels were now higher than they had been before the crisis. Unemployment had fallen from 15.1% in 2012 to 11.1% in September 2014. The United Kingdom and Ireland enjoyed a 1 billion euro worth of trade very single week much of it within the food and drink sectors. Tourism was another growth area, with visitor numbers from the UK to Ireland being 9% higher in 2014. The UK economy was also estimated to grow 3% in 2014. All these facts represented a very positive story for the two countries.
106. Joyce Watson AM was disappointed that the subject of the debate had not been known in advance because she had been unable to prepare for it. She expressed the view that many people didn't feel they were benefitting from the improved economies, especially those at the bottom of pay levels, those with part-time work and in zero hour contracts. There was also gender disparity in employment opportunities; for instance in the construction industry females made up only 1% of the workforce.
107. David Melding AM spoke of the critical shortage of housing for young people. It was important to encourage innovation in the housing sector to create vitality. Education and training were also important in job creation. Young people must be equipped with the skills to establish new businesses. Senator Paschal Mooney shared Joyce Watson's concern that the improving economies hadn't benefitted people, especially the poorest. He attributed Ireland's economic improvement to an attractive exchange rate with her principal trading partners, the UK and the USA. He expressed concern at the indication of stagnation in the Eurozone, particularly in Germany. He pointed to the food and drink sectors contribution to Irish exports but said that cattle prices were depressed and that farmers were struggling. The respective Ministers in the North and the South had agreed to the labelling of beef as "Irish" without distinction of its origin. Most supermarket chains had embraced this concept but Tesco had refused to accept it. He wondered whether the Assembly could do anything to change this.
108. Deputy John Le Fondre spoke of the contribution the Crown Dependencies had made. Financial services were Jersey's principal industry and it provided a significant help to the UK economy. The Jersey government ensured tight regulation of the financial sector. He would like to see more attention being given to the level of compliance and transparency in other jurisdictions, for instance Delaware in the USA. Like Ireland, tourism was another important industry in Jersey. Senator Cait Keane suggested that the Bitcoin needed some attention. Its use had grown by 3000% around the world but neither Ireland nor the United Kingdom had introduced regulation of it. She asked how its use might affect the economies of both countries; it would be unforgivable if this online virtual currency destabilised the economies of both countries.
109. John Scott MSP was also concerned about the slow-down of the European economies but he didn't share Joyce Watson's gloomy perspective about the situation in the UK. He wondered about the impact of the abolition of Air Passenger Duty and whether, as Michael O'Leary had predicted, the replacement income had materialised.

He welcomed the Irish Government's decision to close the double Irish loophole in respect of corporation tax. Willie Coffey MSP said that child poverty was increasing in the UK, particularly in Scotland, as a result of the British Government's policies. Michael McMahon MSP shared Willie Coffey's views on poverty. He had seen evidence of the increase in the use of food banks. It was important that when employers took on new employees they paid them a living wage so that they could feed their families.

110. Jim Wells MLA, who had recently been appointed a Minister in the Northern Ireland Administration, said in a valedictory speech how much he had enjoyed his membership of the Assembly. He had been the first Unionist ever to attend the Assembly and had been apprehensive as to how he would be received. However, he had found the Assembly to be a constructive body and he had made many new friends among parliamentarians from all parts of the British Isles. He hoped to return to the Assembly when no longer a Minister. Several Members paid tribute to Mr Wells's contribution to the work of the Assembly.

111. The Assembly then heard an address by Dr Andrew Murrison MP, Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Dr Murrison began by offering the apologies of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for her absence owing to important meetings in Northern Ireland. He added that it had been a pleasure for him to attend this particular plenary because he was the Prime Minister's special representative for commemorations of the Great War. He was extremely sorry that he hadn't been present in Flanders on the previous day.

112. Dr Murrison praised the work of the Assembly over the past twenty years in improving Anglo-Irish relations. Progress in Northern Ireland was impressive and few would have imagined only a few years ago that events such as the G8 summit and the UK City of Culture being in Northern Ireland. The Executive had a number of achievements to its credit and Belfast was now the second-most popular city in the UK for inward investment. Although Northern Ireland had a political settlement which was far from perfect, it had allowed it to prosper in ways undreamed of at one stage. But many challenges remained.

113. He was aware that some had accused the British Government of taking its eye off the ball recently and not doing enough to prevent the present impasse. But he assured the Assembly that the Government was very closely engaged and committed on Northern Ireland issues. But it must be remembered that there was now a devolved system of government in which the majority of decisions were taken by the Executive. The Government was determined to bring prosperity to Northern Ireland and the staging of the G8 summit at Lough Erne was testimony to this. However, it was clear that the institutions were not working satisfactorily.

114. There were two issues which were contributing to near deadlock at Stormont and both needed to be resolved urgently. The first of these was welfare reform; a modern economy required a welfare system which rewarded work and lifted people out of poverty and dependency. The Government had agreed flexibility in the way in which the reforms were introduced to reflect Northern Ireland's special circumstances. But the Government couldn't go further. He urged nationalist

politicians to allow the reforms to go ahead or else welfare would erode the Executive's ability to spend money on hospitals, schools, policing and transport.

115. Dr Murrison went on to say that welfare reform was not the only issue holding things back; Unionists had to urgently tackle legacy issues that so embitter community relations. Disputes over flags, parades and the past were consuming increasing amounts of time and resources. These two issues were at the centre of the current talks taking place in Belfast. Politicians in Northern Ireland would betray the future and fail to honour the past if no progress were made in the talks. The people of Northern Ireland expected the devolved administration to deliver on everyday matters like schools, health and jobs. Deadlock on welfare reform and issues like flags and parades was holding back constructive progress.
116. Dr Murrison ended his address by speaking of the current state of British-Irish relations, The visit to the United Kingdom by President Higgins in April had been an outstanding success. The way in which British/Irish relationships had improved so strikingly over recent years was illustrated by the initiatives to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. The Assembly had been instrumental in helping to bring about the present state of reconciliation and warmth between the two nations.
117. Viscount Bridgeman, Joe O'Reilly TD, Senator Paul Bradford, Senator Paschal Mooney, Senator Cait Keane, Senator Jim Walsh, Sean Crowe TD and Patrick O'Donovan TD all asked the Minister questions to which Andrew Murrison responded.
118. Lord Dubs, Chairman, then presented the report of Committee D on Travellers and Roma. He said it had been a complicated enquiry because, although there were differences between the two groups, both were often deeply unpopular among some people. He gave a number of examples of discrimination and drew attention to the evidence of poor health care for Travellers; the life expectancy for a male Traveller was fifteen years shorter than that of other males. Statistics were hard to obtain but there was evidence from Travellers themselves that GPs wouldn't visit their sites. There were problems related to housing. There was a need for more sites and pitches, particularly in England but the problem was often exacerbated by the children of Travellers not wishing to leave the family site and consequently the sites become over-crowded. Education was another problem area because of the movement of people. The Committee felt it was important that educational records should be transferred easily while in the case of the Roma there was a lack of language support for children who do not speak English.
119. Overall, there was a problem of discrimination towards Travellers, some of which they brought on themselves. He added that Travellers often dealt in scrap metal but in London to do this legally they had to obtain a licence from each of the thirty-two London boroughs, something which would be both costly and very time-consuming. Why could not a single licence be available for London?
120. In conclusion, he said that the Committee recommended a conference of all the jurisdictions represented in the Assembly together with representatives of the

Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities to explore the issues raised in the report and agree a best way forward.

121. Joyce Watson AM, Sean Crowe TD, Jack Wall TD and Senator Maurice Cummins spoke in a short debate on the report. The Report was then agreed to and sent to the British and Irish Governments.

122. Jack Wall TD, Chairman of Committee C, gave a brief report on the Committee's enquiry into Youth Unemployment. The Committee had held meetings with officials from the Department for Work and Pensions and with representatives of the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion and the Institute for Public Policy Research. They had also visited Cardiff and the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone. They planned to visit Plymouth to see the City Deal which gives the city control of decisions to help businesses grow, focussing particularly on youth employment.

The Steering Committee

123. The Steering Committee met on the occasion of the two plenary sessions. Amongst matters discussed were plans to remember Irish and British involvement in the First World War (this included consideration of a paper from the Scottish Parliament on reconciliation and commemoration), the work of committees, the rules governing travel by committees, and future media arrangements.

Committees

124. The work of the Committees during the year is set out in Appendix 3.

Staffing of the Assembly

125. Details of the staffing of the Assembly can be found at Appendix 4.

Prospects for 2015

126. Debates and presentations at Irish Plenary taking place from 22 to 24 February in Dublin will focus on the 25th anniversary of the setting up of the Assembly, and on the role of sport in economic development and political reconciliation. Committee reports will be presented on cross-border police co-operation, the European Investment Bank, and Irish communities in Scotland. Following the UK general election in May 2015, there is likely to be a hiatus of some months until the Westminster delegation to the Assembly is re-appointed. The 2015 British plenary will be held in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, from 15 to 17 November.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

Members of the Assembly

The UK Parliament—January 2014

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP
Rt. Hon Paul Murphy MP
Mr. Robert Walter MP
Mr. Joe Benton MP
Lord Bew
Baroness Blood MBE
Viscount Bridgeman
Mr. Conor Burns MP
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP
Mr. Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Dubs
Lord Empey OBE
Mr. Paul Flynn MP
Lord German OBE
Baroness Harris of Richmond
OBE
Mr. Stephen Lloyd MP
Mr. Jack Lopresti MP
Rt. Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Mr. John Robertson MP
Lord Rogan
Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP
Mr. Chris Ruane MP
Mr. Jim Sheridan MP
Lord Skelmersdale

Sir Tony Baldry
Lord Bates
Mr. Neil Carmichael MP
Mr. Michael Connarty MP
Miss Rosie Cooper MP
Mr. Ian Davidson MP
Baroness Doocey OBE
Mr. Paul Farrelly MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr. Richard Graham MP
Mr. Brandon Lewis MP
Lord Lexden
Mr. Jim McGovern MP
Baroness O’Loan DBE
Rt. Hon Lord Shutt of Greetland

Lord Tugendhat
Mr. Robin Walker MP

The UK Parliament—December 2014

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP
Rt. Hon Paul Murphy MP
Mr. Robert Walter MP
Mr. Joe Benton MP
Lord Bew
Baroness Blood MBE
Viscount Bridgeman
Mr. Conor Burns MP
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP
Lord Dubs
Baroness Doocey OBE
Lord Empey OBE
Mr. Paul Flynn MP
Lord German OBE
Baroness Harris of Richmond
OBE

Sir Tony Baldry
Lord Bates
Mr. Neil Carmichael MP
Mr. Michael Connarty MP
Miss Rosie Cooper MP
Mr. Ian Davidson MP
Baroness Doocey OBE
Mr. Paul Farrelly MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr. Richard Graham MP
Mr. Brandon Lewis MP
Lord Lexden
Mr. Jim McGovern MP
Baroness O’Loan DBE
Rt. Hon Lord Shutt of Greetland

Mr. Jack Lopresti MP
Rt. Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Mr. John Robertson MP
Lord Rogan
Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP
Mr. Chris Ruane MP
Mr. Jim Sheridan MP
Lord Skelmersdale
(Labour vacancy following death of Jim Dobbin MP)

Lord Tugendhat
Mr. Robin Walker MP

Ireland—January 2014

Mr. Joe McHugh TD
Mr. Seamus Kirk TD
Mr. Aengus Ó Snodaigh
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr. Seán Conlan TD
Mr. Noel Coonan TD
Mr. Seán Crowe TD
Senator John Crown
Senator Maurice Cummins
Mr. Frank Feighan TD
Mr. Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan TD
Senator Jimmy Harte
Senator Imelda Henry
Mr. Martin Heydon TD
Senator Cáit Keane
Mr. John Lyons TD
Mr. Mattie McGrath TD
Senator Paschal Mooney
Mr. Patrick O’Donovan TD
Mr. Joe O’Reilly TD
Ms. Ann Phelan TD
Mr. John Paul Phelan TD
Mr. Arthur Spring TD
Mr. Jack Wall TD
Senator Jim Walsh

Mr. James Bannon TD
Mr. Jerry Buttimer TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Senator Terry Brennan
Mr. Joe Carey TD
Senator Michael Comiskey
Ms. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD
Mr. Pat Deering TD
Ms. Anne Ferris TD
Mr. Dominic Hannigan TD
Senator James Heffernan
Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD
Ms. Sandra McLellan TD
Mr. Tony McLoughlin TD
Ms. Maureen O’Sullivan TD
Mr. Brian Stanley TD
Mr. Brendan Smith TD
Ms. Joanna Tuffy TD

Ireland—December 2014

Mr. Frank Feighan TD
Mr. Seamus Kirk TD
Mr. Aengus Ó Snodaigh
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr. Seán Conlan TD
Mr. Noel Coonan TD
Mr. Seán Crowe TD
TD
Senator John Crown
Senator Maurice Cummins
Senator Imelda Henry

Mr. James Bannon TD
Mr. Jerry Buttimer TD
Senator Paul Bradford
Senator Terry Brennan
Mr. Joe Carey TD
Senator Michael Comiskey
Ms. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy

Mr. Pat Deering TD
Ms. Anne Ferris TD
Mr. Dominic Hannigan TD

Mr. Martin Heydon TD
Senator Cáit Keane
Mr. John Lyons TD
Mr. Dinny McGinley TD
Mr. Mattie McGrath TD
Senator Paschal Mooney
Senator Mary Moran
Mr. Patrick O'Donovan TD
Mr. Joe O'Reilly TD
Mr. John Paul Phelan TD
Mr. Arthur Spring TD
Mr. Jack Wall TD
Senator Jim Walsh

Senator James Heffernan
Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD
Ms. Sandra McLellan TD
Mr. Tony McLoughlin TD
Ms. Maureen O'Sullivan TD
Mr. Brian Stanley TD
Mr. Brendan Smith TD
Ms. Joanna Tuffy TD

The Scottish Parliament – January 2014

Mr. John Scott MSP
Mr. Willie Coffey MSP
Ms. Alison McInnes MSP
Mr. Michael McMahon MSP
Ms. Mary Scanlon MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Ms. Siobhan McMahon MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2014

Mr. John Scott MSP
Mr. Willie Coffey MSP
Ms. Alison McInnes MSP
Mr. Michael McMahon MSP
Ms. Mary Scanlon MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP
Mr. John Lamont MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Ms. Siobhan McMahon MSP

National Assembly for Wales – January 2014

Mr. David Melding AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Mr. William Powell AM
Mrs. Joyce Watson AM
Mr. Lindsay Whittle AM

Ms. Elin Jones AM
Ms. Rebecca Evans AM
Ms. Antoinette Sandbach AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2014

Mr. David Melding AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Mr. William Powell AM
Mrs. Joyce Watson AM
Mr. Lindsay Whittle AM

Mr. John Griffiths AM
Ms. Elin Jones AM
Ms. Antoinette Sandbach AM

Northern Ireland Assembly – January 2014

Mrs. Judith Cochrane MLA

Mrs. Jo-Anne Dobson MLA

Mr. Danny Kinahan MLA
Mr. Barry McElduff MLA
Mr. Sean Rogers MLA
Mr. Jim Wells MLA

Mrs. Brenda Hale MLA
Mrs. Dolores Kelly MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly – December 2014

Mrs. Judith Cochrane MLA
Mrs. Brenda Hale MLA
Mr. Danny Kinahan MLA
Mr. Barry McElduff MLA
Mr. Sean Rogers MLA

Mrs. Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MBE MLA
Mrs. Dolores Kelly MLA

States of Jersey – January 2014

Deputy John Le Fondré

Deputy Alan Breckon

States of Jersey – December 2014

Deputy John Le Fondré

vacancy

States of Guernsey – January 2013/4

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

States of Guernsey – December 2014

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

Tynwald – January 2014

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Alex Downie MLC

Tynwald – December 2014

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Ales Downie MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Assembly

Forty-eighth plenary, Kilmainham, Dublin, 31 March and 1 April 2014

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOOD FRIDAY/BELFAST AND ST ANDREWS AGREEMENTS

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee A (Sovereign Matters) on the implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast and St Andrews Agreements (Document No. 215) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

That the Assembly takes note of the Eighteenth Annual Report (Document No 216).

BANK OF SCOTLAND/IRELAND

That the Assembly examines relationships in relation to the orderly wind up of Bank of Scotland Ireland

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY TRAVEL

That the Assembly believes Dementia is a challenge throughout our respective jurisdictions in Britain and Ireland;

Members welcome the progress of Irish in Britain in developing the “Cuimhne” whole-community memory loss strategy to improve the lives of older Irish people and their families affected by dementia; and notes work being done on the ground—engaging families, support services and welfare providers, older people’s forums and pensioners’ groups, enabling them to improve services and keep those with memory loss included.

The Assembly further notes that Irish in Britain staff have established links with a well-known hotel group and a number of companies recognising the business case for expanding their market by becoming more dementia friendly; and welcomes the partnerships that have been built with The Alzheimer’s Society (UK), the All Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia and the Prime Minister’s Dementia Task Groups, tackling the cultural factors that prevent older Irish people from accessing mainstream support.

Members of the Assembly understand the difficulties that arise in keeping those with early stage dementia engaged in normal and active family life. We note that for those living overseas, visits back to Ireland provide a vital link with families. For carers and those affected by dementia, travel can be an uncertain experience and may very quickly become impossible.

The Assembly urges travel and transport companies to pay special attention to the needs of those experiencing memory loss and to assist families and carers maintaining their connection with home. Members believe there is a compelling business case for companies to take appropriate steps to become dementia friendly and enable families to remain part of the travel market..

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

That the Assembly take note of the following government responses to reports and resolutions received since the previous plenary session: (1) Response from UK Department of Health to the Assembly's resolution about medical research (Doc. 217); and (2) Response from the UK Minister for Europe to Committee B's report on Ireland's Presidency of the European Union (Doc. 218).

Forty-seventh plenary, Flanders and Ashford, Kent, 20 and 21 October 2014

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

THE IMPACT OF THE HGV ROAD USER LEVY ACT 2013 ON THE FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee B (European Affairs) on The Impact of the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013 on the Free Movement of Goods on the Island of Ireland (Document No. 219) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

THE BRITISH AND IRISH ECONOMIES

That the Assembly has considered the matter of the British and Irish Economies

TRAVELLERS, GYPSIES AND ROMA: ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environmental and Social Affairs) on Travellers, Gypsies and Roma: access to public services and community relations (Document No. 220) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

That the Assembly take note of the following government response to a report received since the previous plenary session: Response from the Minister for Justice and Equality to Committee D's report on Human Trafficking.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Annual Report of Committee A (Sovereign Matters)

1. The Committee met formally on four occasions during 2014, in Belfast in June and during the plenary meetings in Dublin and Ashford in March and October respectively. The Committee also met informally in Dublin in January.
2. The Committee's work in the first half of 2014 was concerned with the conclusion of the inquiry into the Implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and St Andrews Agreement. In January the Committee held its final set of meetings on the inquiry in Dublin with Eamon Gilmore TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, and members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.
3. The report was presented and adopted at the Dublin plenary in March. It was well-received by fellow BIPA Members and it also received positive media coverage in both Britain and Ireland. The report stated that the two Agreements had had a significant and transformative effect on security, politics, economic and social opportunity on the island of Ireland and in Northern Ireland most particularly. However, the report found that the full potential of the Good Friday/Belfast and St Andrews Agreements had yet to be reached. The Committee called on all parties to the Agreements to maintain momentum to ensure that all outstanding provisions are implemented in their totality.
4. In the second half of the year the Committee began its new inquiry into Cross-border police cooperation and illicit trade. This is a follow up to the Committee's 2009 report in the same area. The Committee held its first meeting in Belfast in June, with David Ford MLA, Minister of Justice in the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Petrol Retailers Association. The second meeting was held in Dublin with a range of witnesses, including: Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Justice and Equality; Nóirín O'Sullivan, the Garda Commissioner; the CEOs of Monaghan, Donegal and Louth County Councils; Grant Thornton; and Retailers Against Smuggling. The Committee will report at the Spring 2015 plenary.
5. The visit by BIPA to Flanders as part of the Ashford plenary in October was particularly symbolic for Committee A, as this had initially been a recommendation in the Committee's 2012 report on the Decade of Commemorations.
6. Finally, the Committee saw a change in its Chairman as Frank Feighan TD became co-Chair of BIPA. Senator Paul Coghlan was appointed Committee A Chair and praised the hard work of his predecessor at the October plenary.

Attendance at meetings of Committee A in 2014:

Dublin 30 March 2014: Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Baroness Blood MBE, Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, John-Paul Phelan TD, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

Belfast 16 June 2014: Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Baroness Blood MBE, Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, John-Paul Phelan TD, Jim Sheridan MP, Senator Jim Walsh

Dublin 22 September 2014: Frank Feighan TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, John-Paul Phelan TD, Senator Jim Walsh

Ashford 19 October 2014: Senator Paul Coghlan (Temporary Chair), Viscount Bridgeman, Rosie Cooper MP (Associate), Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, John-Paul Phelan TD, Patrick O'Donovan TD, Senator Jim Walsh

Annual Report of Committee B (European Affairs)

1. During 2014, Committee B met formally at the plenary meetings in Dublin and Ashford as well as holding a meeting in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, during a visit in relation to its inquiry into *The European Investment Bank*. In addition, in relation to this inquiry, the Committee visited Bilbao, Spain, and the co-rapporteurs visited Brussels, Belgium.
2. In January 2014, the Committee travelled to the headquarters of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg as part of its inquiry on *The European Investment Bank*. The Committee took evidence from Jonathan Taylor, Vice President, Simon Barnes, Director, and Sean Fitzpatrick, Policy and Strategy Division, Economics Department, European Investment Bank.
3. At the Dublin plenary in March 2014, the Committee agreed that, following the visit to Luxembourg, it should visit Bilbao, Spain, which had been highlighted as an area that had particularly benefited from investment from the European Investment Bank. The Committee also agreed that the co-rapporteurs visit Brussels in relation to this inquiry. The Committee considered its future programme, and agreed the next inquiry should be into *Visa systems*. Lord German and Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD were appointed co-rapporteurs. The Committee also agreed to produce a follow-up to its November 2010 report, *British and Irish Regional Economic Space*. This report would feature the HGV Levy and cabotage as a case study. Sean Conlan TD and Danny Kinahan MLA were appointed co-rapporteurs.
4. In June 2014, the Committee visited Bilbao, Spain, to take evidence for its *European Investment Bank* inquiry. The Committee took evidence from Mr Asier Abaunza Robles, Councillor for Mobility and Transport. Bilbao City Council, Mr Inaki Uriarte Pascual, Operations and External Actions, Basque Railway Network and Mr Ignacio Martin-Muñoz Sainz, Head of Treasury and Capital Markets, Kutxabank. The Members who took part in that visit were Sean Conlan TD Lord German, Senator Imelda Henry and Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD.

5. At the Ashford plenary in October 2014, the Committee considered and agreed the Terms of Reference for its next inquiry into Visa systems. The Committee also agreed its Report *The Impact of the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013 on the Free Movement of Goods on the Island of Ireland*. This was presented to the Plenary, and the debate engaged a large number of members.
6. In November 2014, the co-rapporteurs for the *European Investment Bank* inquiry visited Brussels, Belgium. Meetings were held with Paulus Geraedts, Maria Dimitriadou, Kay Parplies and Andon Kalibatsev, Coordination with the EIB Group, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN), European Commission, the Economics, Finance and Taxation Section of the UK Permanent Representation to the EU, Declan Kelleher, Ambassador of Ireland to the EU and Ernest Urtasun MEP (Greens/European Free Alliance, Spain), Member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and rapporteur on a report on the European Investment Bank. In addition, in relation to the inquiry into *Visa Systems* a meeting was held with Anne-Marie Soerensen and Monika Mosshammer, Visa Policy, Directorate-General for Home Affairs (DG HOME), European Commission:

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2014

European Investment Bank, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, 13 January 2014: Mr. Robert Walter MP, (Chairman), Sean Conlan TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Lord German, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Joe O'Reilly TD, William Powell AM.

Dublin, 31 March 2014: Mr Robert Walter MP (Chairman), Willie Coffey MSP, Sean Conlan TD, Noel Coonan TD, Jim Dobbin MP, Lord German, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Danny Kinahan MLA, Seamus Kirk TD, Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD, William Powell AM.

Ashford, Kent, 19 October 2014: Mr Robert Walter MP (Chairman), Noel Coonan TD, Lord German, Danny Kinahan MLA, Joe O'Reilly TD, William Powell AM, Lord Shutt of Greetland.

Annual Report of Committee C (Economic Affairs)

1. Committee C agreed an ambitious programme for its inquiry into youth unemployment at its meeting during the Assembly's 48th Plenary Session in Dublin. It has continued in the last year to gather evidence for its planned report on the issue. The terms of reference for the inquiry are to examine the causes, scale and effects of youth unemployment and the effectiveness of policies and initiatives put in place by the administrations in each BIPA jurisdiction and by the EU to address the issue.
2. Given the importance of the subject and the scope for different approaches, the Committee agreed to visit each BIPA jurisdiction to build up a full picture of how this issue is being tackled.

3. The initial meeting of the inquiry took place in London on 24 February last. At its meeting in Cardiff on 30 June 2014, the Committee held discussions with Rathbone on their work engaging some of the hardest-to-reach young people in training and job preparation, Commerce Cymru on the industry perspective on creating job opportunities for young people, and Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology on the Welsh Government's initiatives. The Committee visited the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, a new centre for post-16 education in an area of high youth unemployment.
4. At its meeting in Belfast in January 2015, the Committee held discussions with the Prince's Trust, the NEETs Advisory Forum, and officials from the Department for Employment and Learning about the work of the Executive on many fronts to reduce youth unemployment. The Committee also held discussions with the Minister for Employment and Learning, Dr Stephen Farry MLA. The Committee noted the partnership between the College and a local fine dining restaurant in Belfast to offer innovative apprenticeships.
5. The Committee plans to hold further meetings in Ireland, Glasgow and Plymouth, and is keen to hear the European perspective on youth unemployment initiatives before presenting its final report.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2013-14

Cardiff on 30 June 2014:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Judith Cochrane MLA, Oliver Colvile MP, Lord Empey, Deputy John Le Fondré, Mattie McGrath TD, Senator Paschal Mooney, Sean Rogers MLA, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Ashford on 19 October 2014:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Judith Cochrane MLA, Oliver Colvile MP, Deputy John Le Fondré, Senator Paschal Mooney, Sean Rogers MLA, Andrew Rosindell MP, Arthur Spring TD, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Belfast on 19 January 2015:

Jack Wall TD (Chairman), John Robertson MP (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cochrane MLA, Lord Empey, Deputy John Le Fondré, Senator Paschal Mooney, Sean Rogers MLA, Mary Scanlon MSP, Lindsay Whittle AM.

Annual Report of Committee D (Environmental and Social Issues)

1. Committee D met seven times during 2014: two meetings during plenary sessions; and five meetings taking evidence.
2. The Committee spent most the year working on its inquiry into access to public services for, and community relations with, Travellers, Gypsies and Roma. In January, the Committee took evidence in Dublin and met with a range of groups including Government officials, law enforcement agencies, community groups, health workers, education professionals and third sector organisations. In addition, the Committee visited a range of Traveller sites to hear about the experiences of Travellers in North Dublin.
3. In March, the Committee travelled to Stormont to take evidence. It held a series of informative sessions with relevant witnesses and then visited a number of Traveller sites and housing projects in Belfast. During the Dublin Plenary, Members took stock of the inquiry to date and discussed possible future work for the Committee.
4. The Committee held meetings in Dublin in June. After a series of useful discussions at Westminster the Committee travelled out to Tower Hamlets to meet Travellers who had been relocated due to Crossrail works who shared their experience of difficulties engaging with housing, health and education services.
5. In July, the Committee took evidence in Edinburgh. After a morning of illuminating evidence sessions the Committee had a facilitated conversation with a number of Travellers from across Scotland. The Committee also agreed to visit Glasgow to follow-up on its work on the Irish Community in Britain by taking evidence on the Scottish perspective.
6. The Committee's Report was agreed by correspondence and was adopted by the Plenary at the Ashford.
7. In November, the Committee met in Glasgow. The Committee wanted to compare its previous findings on the Irish Community in Britain (2007 and 2010) with the experience of the Irish in Scotland. It met with a range of third sector, cultural and academic witnesses and was greatly assisted in its work by the Irish Consul in Scotland. The Committee's findings will be considered at the February Plenary in Dublin.
8. Jim Wells MLA left the Committee following his appointment as Minister at the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in September 2014. Senator Jimmy Harte also stood down as a Member due to ill health. David Melding was replaced as a full Member of the Committee by Joyce Watson AM and Baroness Doocey joined the Committee as a new member. The chairman would like to thank all the members of committee D for their work during the year.

Attendance at meetings of committee D in 2014

Dublin, 12-13 January 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Seán Crowe TD, John Lyons TD, Michael McMahon MSP, David Melding AM, Chris Ruane MP, Jim Sheridan MP, Lord Skelmersdale and Jim Wells MLA.

Belfast, 2-3 March 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Seán Crowe TD, Michael McMahon MSP, Mark Pritchard MP, Chris Ruane MP and Jim Wells MLA.

Dublin, 31 March 2014 – 1 April 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Seán Crowe TD, Senator Cáit Keane, Mark Pritchard MP, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM and Jim Wells MLA.

London, 15-16 June 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Seán Crowe TD, Senator Cáit Keane, John Lyons TD, Mark Pritchard MP, Chris Ruane MP, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM and Jim Wells MLA.

Edinburgh, 13-14 July 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Joe Benton MP, Seán Crowe TD, John Lyons TD, Michael McMahon MSP, Lord Skelmersdale and Joyce Watson AM.

Ashford, 19-21 October 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Joe Benton MP, Seán Crowe TD, Baroness Doocey, John Lyons TD, Michael McMahon MSP, Senator Mary Moran, Mark Pritchard MP, Chris Ruane MP, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM and Jim Wells MLA.

Glasgow, 23-24 November 2014

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Cáit Keane, Michael McMahon MSP, Senator Mary Moran and Chris Ruane MP.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2014

Ireland:

Clerk: Ms. Sinéad Quinn

Policy Adviser:

Ms. Olive Hempenstall

Clerk, Committee A:

Ms. Kate Tyrrell

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Ms. Kate Tyrrell

Clerk, Committee C:

Ms. Betty Kehoe

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Ms. Betty Kehoe

Irish Secretariat:

Ms. Betty Kehoe

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Dr. Robin James

British Consultant:

Sir Michael Davies KCB

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr. Marek Kubala

Clerk, Committee B:

Mr. John-Paul Flaherty

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Ms. Judith Boyce

Clerk, Committee D:

Mr. Chris Atkinson

UK Secretariat:

Mrs. Amanda Healy

Media Consultants:

Mr. Paul Hand, Press Liaison Officer, Houses of the Oireachtas
Ms. Jessica Bridges Palmer, Committee Press Consultant, House of Commons