



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

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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Introduction

1. This is the thirteenth annual report of the Body since it was decided at the Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Body during 2008.

Membership of the Body

2. There were a number of significant changes in membership during the year. In the early spring, the British Co-Chair, the Rt Hon Paul Murphy, returned to the Cabinet and was replaced by the Rt Hon Peter Hain. Sean O'Fearghail was replaced as an Irish Vice-Chair and Chair of Committee C by Ms Margaret Conlon. Most importantly for the future of the Body, the October session was attended for the first time by delegates from the Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Party.

Political Developments

General Overview

3. 2008 was a year of consolidation for the peace process in Northern Ireland following the restoration of devolved government in May 2007. A Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, along with the Budget, were passed by the Assembly on 28 and 29 January 2008.

4. In the lead up to the summer recess, divisions arose between the DUP and Sinn Féin on key issues such as the devolution of policing and justice, reform of the academic selection process and the Irish Language Act. As a result the Executive failed to meet until November, disrupting the work of government and the other institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, including the North South Ministerial Council (see below). Following an announcement by the First and deputy First Ministers of an agreed way forward towards devolution of policing and justice powers, meetings of the Executive resumed on 20 November, with North South Ministerial Council meetings resuming shortly thereafter. The third NSMC Plenary meeting following restoration was held in Derry on January 23rd, 2009.

Retirement of Dr. Ian Paisley MLA

5. On 4 March 2008, Dr. Ian Paisley MLA announced that he would step down as First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive in May and that he would also retire from his role as DUP party leader. Speaking after the announcement, the Taoiseach described his decision as 'a watershed in the history of Ireland', and

praised Dr. Paisley, saying ‘the leadership he has shown in recent years means that future generations of Irish people, North and South, will live in a peace and prosperity that previous generations could only dream of’. Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that ‘progress on bringing a lasting peace to Northern Ireland would not have been possible without his immense courage and leadership’. Peter Robinson MLA was nominated by his party to succeed Dr. Paisley. The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern T.D., and Dr. Paisley, attended the official opening ceremony of the *Battle of the Boyne Heritage Centre* on the 6 May 2008. Speaking at the event, Dr. Paisley stated that there could be no turning back to the violence of the past, and said that ‘together we can share this island home’. The Taoiseach welcomed the Unionist community, including members of the Loyal Orders, to the event.

Northern Ireland Assembly & Executive

6. The Assembly election was held in March 2007. 36 seats were won by the DUP, 28 by Sinn Féin (including one who now sits as an independent MLA), 18 by the UUP, 16 by the SDLP, 7 by the Alliance Party, one seat each for the Green party and the PUP, and one seat was won by an independent candidate¹. These results yielded 4 Ministerial posts in the Executive for the DUP, 3 for Sinn Féin, 2 for the UUP, and one for the SDLP. Current Ministerial assignments are outlined below.

7. Following the appointment of Peter Robinson as First Minister on 05 June 2008, there was a reshuffle of DUP members of the Executive (in February, Jeffrey Donaldson was appointed a Junior Minister in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, replacing Ian Paisley Jnr).

8. At the end of the year, ministerial positions were filled as follows:

Department	Minister
Finance and Personnel	Nigel Dodds, DUP (<i>replaced Peter Robinson</i>)
Education	Caitriona Ruane, SF
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Arlene Foster, DUP (<i>replaced Nigel Dodds</i>)
Health, Social Services & Public Safety	Michael McGimpsey, UUP
Social Development	Margaret Ritchie, SDLP
Regional Development	Conor Murphy, SF
Environment	Sammy Wilson, DUP (<i>replaced Arlene Foster</i>)
Agriculture and Rural Development	Michelle Gildernew, SF

¹ Current Northern Ireland representation at Westminster is as follows: DUP (9), SDLP (3), Sinn Féin (5), UUP (1).

Culture, Arts and Leisure	Gregory Campbell, DUP (<i>replaced Edwin Poots</i>)
Employment and Learning	Reg Empey, UUP

Devolution of Policing and Justice

9. On 18 November 2008, First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness announced that they had reached agreement on a process leading to the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Executive. This agreement sets out a series of steps to be taken by the Assembly and Westminster leading up to the transfer of policing and justice powers. It also includes a methodology for the election of a Justice Minister, by a cross-community vote in the Assembly. The DUP and SF have already indicated that they will not seek to nominate one of their party for this post initially. These temporary arrangements will last until May 2012. A Judicial Appointments Committee will appoint judicial officer holders and John Larkin QC has been named as the prospective Attorney General.

10. Both Governments welcomed the move. The Taoiseach noted the importance of devolving policing and justice powers, adding that its achievement would be “*the final piece of the jigsaw of the peace process*”. Work on progressing the devolution of policing and justice continues in Stormont and at Westminster. The Assembly Executive and Review Committee is currently working on its second report on aspects of devolution. An earlier report, on the modalities of devolution, was approved by the Assembly on 20 January. The Northern Ireland Act 2009, which gave effect to those parts of the Agreement which required primary legislation received Royal Assent at Westminster on 12 March .

Parades and the Strategic Review of Parading

11. For the most part, the 2008 marching season passed off very peacefully. The 12th July parades remained relatively trouble-free, although there were some minor incidents at individual marches. Policing at the parades and community stewarding on both sides was effective. On 18 April 2007, former Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, was announced as the Chair of the Strategic Review of Parading in Northern Ireland. An interim consultation report was published on 29 April 2008, and publication of the full report is expected take place later this year.

Consultative Group on the Past

12. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland established the Consultative Group on the Past, to consult widely and make recommendations which would help deal with the legacy of the past. The group published their final report on 28 January 2009. Amongst other things, the Group recommended that a £12,000

‘recognition payment’ be given to the families of all those killed as a result of the Troubles. Political and public reaction to this was so strong that Secretary of State Woodward, on 25 February, promised that the recommendation would not be acted upon. It remains to be seen whether other elements of the report, such as the establishment of a 5 year Legacy Commission, will be taken up.

IMC Reports

13. The 19th Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission was published on 3 September 2008. The Report was sought by the Irish and British Governments in order to receive from the IMC a fuller assessment of the completion of the transformation of the IRA. The Report states that the IRA Army Council ‘is no longer operational or functional’; that it has ‘completely relinquished the leadership and other structures appropriate to a time of armed conflict’; and that the method used to bring this about has been ‘the standing down of the structures which engaged in the armed campaign.’ The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D. welcomed the Report on behalf of the Government describing its conclusions as “very positive”. The 20th report, issued in November 2008, expressed concern at the growing level of activity of Dissident Republican groupings.

North / South Co-operation and the North South Ministerial Council

14. The Government continues to give strong priority to North/South Co-operation, with key objectives including joint initiatives to strengthen the all-island economy, a shared approach to infrastructure and spatial planning, including for the North-West, and improved co-operation on cross-border public services such as health and education. The seventh plenary meeting of the NSMC took place in Derry on 23 January this year. Ministers, led by the Taoiseach, the First Minister and deputy First Minister, discussed the international economic crisis, the recent pork recall in Ireland and common challenges in areas like climate change and energy security.

15. There have now been three NSMC Plenary meetings, two NSMC Institutional Format meetings and some twenty-four NSMC Ministerial meetings since the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly in May 2007. Each of these Ministerial meetings deals with North/South cooperation in sectoral areas like transport, education and environment, while Ministers also oversee the work of North/South Bodies like Tourism Ireland and Waterways Ireland.

16. Progress has also been made towards the establishment of the *North South Parliamentary Forum*, which is mandated under the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements. Two working groups have been formed to develop proposals for such a body, one in the Assembly to be chaired by the Speaker, and one in the Oireachtas to be chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. The Oireachtas Commission visited the Assembly in October to progress the issue.

Irish Government Investment in Northern Ireland

17. As part of the National Development Plan, launched on 23 January 2007, the Irish Government announced plans for significant investment for the first time in strategic North/South projects. Thereafter, agreement was reached at the NSMC plenary in July 2007 on a major roads investment programme to provide dual carriageway standard on routes within Northern Ireland serving the North West Gateway and on the eastern seaboard corridor from Belfast to Larne including a contribution of £400m/€580m from the Irish Government. The NSMC has also agreed to proceed with the restoration of the Ulster Canal from Clones to Lough Erne. The Government is, in addition, contributing significant funding to cross-border research and innovation.

US Investment Conference May 2008

18. The Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the US Investment Conference on 8 May 2008 in support of the Northern Ireland Executive's attempts to attract foreign direct investment from the United States to the North. The Conference saw new investment deals announced by Bombardier, Bloomberg, Cybersource and Independent News and Media, among others, and has, in the view of Invest Northern Ireland, laid the groundwork for additional investment deals over the coming months and years.

Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

19. The most recent meeting of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, which involved a presentation from Cooperation Ireland, took place in Leinster House on 30 October 2008. The Committee is tasked with examining issues arising from Ireland's role as a signatory to the Good Friday Agreement, ongoing developments in its implementation, any proposals relating to its implementation and related matters referred to it by Dáil Éireann. MPs from Northern Ireland are invited to attend meetings of the Committee. Michelle Gildernew (Minister for Agriculture, Sinn Féin), Eddie McGrady (SDLP), Alasdair McDonnell (SDLP), Conor Murphy (Minister for Regional Development) and Pat Doherty (Sinn Féin) have participated in the meetings to date.

High Level Visits to Northern Ireland in 2008

20. President George Bush visited Northern Ireland on 16 June 2008, where he described the peace process in Northern Ireland as a 'success story'. President Bush had meetings in Stormont with First Minister Peter Robinson and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, and with the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Brown. Following these meetings he visited an integrated school in Belfast. Prime Minister Gordon Brown addressed the Northern Ireland Assembly in

Stormont on 16 September 2008, where he praised the work of Assembly members today and encouraged them to set a date for the devolution of policing and justice powers.

British-Irish Council

21. The 12th Summit of the British-Irish Council was hosted by Mr. Rhodri Morgan AM, First Minister for Wales, in Cardiff on 20 February 2009. The main topics for discussion included the global economic crisis, social inclusion and an update on the Strategic Review.

22. The 11th meeting at Summit level of the British-Irish Council (BIC), which was hosted by the First Minister of Scotland, Mr. Alex Salmond MP, took place in Edinburgh on 26 September 2008. The main topics for discussion included demography, energy issues and an update on the Strategic Review of the Council. The 10th meeting at Summit level of the Council was hosted by the Taoiseach in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on 14 February 2008. The main topics for discussion included the Council's future effectiveness, and cooperation on the fight against drugs.

The work of the Body

Thirty-Sixth Plenary

23. The Thirty- Sixth plenary session was held at White's Hotel, Wexford on 28th and 29th April 2008.

24. The Monday session began with the main political debate on the following motion:

“That the Body, in this tenth anniversary year of the Good Friday Agreement, welcomes the immense and historic political progress made on these islands in the past decade; welcomes the continued successes of the power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland, which is taking forward its work programme in an inclusive way for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland; calls on all parties to work together to implement the outstanding elements of both the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements; looks forward to the political parties moving to complete the process of devolution through the devolution of policing and justice powers, as agreed at St Andrews; welcomes the continuing engagement of the international community in the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, in particular the European Commission Task Force on Northern Ireland and the engagement of the US administration in the forthcoming US Investment Conference, which takes place in Belfast from 7th to 9th May; welcomes and supports the ongoing programmes and initiatives of North-South and East-West co-operation on these islands; recognises the potential of the British-Irish Council for strengthening further relations between its members, welcomes the strategic review of the BIC and looks forward to active engagement with the Council; and looks forward to continuing its

consultations with the Northern Ireland Assembly, the governments and other elected institutions with a view to early establishment under the name of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly, as the East-West parliamentary forum, embracing the totality of relationships on these islands as envisaged in the St Andrews Agreement.”

25. . The motion was moved by Seymour Crawford TD who spoke of the positive developments in Northern Ireland politics. He referred to a recent meeting between senior members of the Body and the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties at which hope had been expressed that a change of name for the Body and changes in the rules might facilitate the participation of the Unionists in the Body. The resignation as First Minister of Dr Paisley had held matters back for a time. He spoke of the need for investment both in Northern Ireland and in the border areas in the republic which had suffered a great deal during the troubles. Robert Walter MP and Alasdair Morgan MSP spoke of the role the Body could and should play in scrutinising the British-Irish Council. Mr Morgan added that the Body should provide a forum where Members from the different administrations in the islands could discuss matters of common interest.

26. Senator Cecilia Keaveney reminded the Body that the tenth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement had passed but that a lot still needed to be done. It was important that the young people who had not been affected by the years of violence should be educated on who the other side of the sectarian divide were. Robert Walter MP, like Alasdair Morgan, wanted the Body to take on the role of scrutinising the British-Irish Council. Peter Hain MP, Co-Chair, thanked members of the Body for the welcome and courtesy they had extended to him on his recent appointment as Co-Chair and then spoke of the achievements of the Body in bringing people together. But he supported the terms of the motion calling for changes in the Body. There was support for a change in the name of the Body from Alasdair McDonnell MLA. Baroness O’Cathain drew attention to the plight of the rural community, a subject which she felt should be of concern the Body. She received support from Johnny Brady TD.

27. Brian Hayes TD paid tribute to the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in changing the mindset of Unionists towards the South. Rory O’Hanlon TD supported north-south co-operation in policing and, particularly, in health. Eddie McGrady MP described the Good Friday Agreement as “evolutionary”. He was disappointed that, when the St Andrew’s Agreement had been reached, the two Governments had allowed parties to veto the commitment to transfer policing. He was also concerned that the victims of the violence seemed to have been forgotten or ineffectively dealt with. He supported the idea of the Body becoming concerned with all the various problems that concern all the islands represented in its membership. Dinny McGinley TD spoke warmly of the progress made since the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974, but said that policing was still an issue and that he wanted to see more co-operation between the police forces north and south of the border because of killings such as that of Paul Quinn. Chris Ruane MP paid tribute to those who had brought the peace process so far but stated that problems still exist, policing being one. He supported the idea of extending the remit of the Body and ensuring that action is taken on recommendations made by Committees. Martin Mansergh TD spoke of the beneficial changes that were already taking place in Ireland

and mentioned how the then two Finance Ministers had established a good working relationship and would shortly become the leaders of the two parts of Ireland

28. Michael Mates MP winding up the debate reported on a meeting a small group of members had had with Sir Reg Empey and Peter Robinson urging them to appoint Unionists to the Body so that their views could be heard directly rather than by proxy. The proposed change in name from Body to Assembly was welcomed by the two Unionist leaders. He also referred to the continuing theme of the debate, that the Body should exercise parliamentary scrutiny over the British-Irish Council. The fact that Paul Murphy, who had so recently been Co Chair, was the UK Minister responsible for the Council would make this easier to achieve.

29. The Body then turned its attention to the opportunities that tourism offers as a driver for economic development. Mr Hugh Friel, Chairman, and Mr Paul O'Toole, Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland, an organisation which was set up under the auspices of the Good Friday Agreement, were the principal speakers. Mr Friel described in his address the aims and achievements of the organisation. He told the Body that visitor numbers to the island of Ireland had increased by 31% since 2002, well outstripping the European growth of 19%. Belfast City Airport now had twenty international flights a day, whereas four years ago there was only one. Feedback from visitors to Ireland was that they had had a wonderful visit and that Ireland had exceeded expectations. However there were many challenges and new investment was needed in infra-structure and marketing. The requirement for separate visas south and north of the border was a problem. Tourism was a competitive industry and Ireland had to compete to maintain its position.

30. Seventeen members of the Body then spoke and asked questions on matters as different as the adequacy of hotel rooms throughout Ireland but particularly in Belfast, the rate of VAT on hotel accommodation, the scope for political tourism, family-history tourism and the impact of a weak dollar.

31. Later in the morning the Body considered the problem of drugs, first hearing from the former Irish Co-Chair, Pat Carey TD, who, as Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, had responsibility for drug policy. He spoke of Ireland's lead role in the British-Irish Council's sectoral group on the misuse of drugs. The group meets about four times a year and during 2007 Scotland led the discussion at one meeting on homelessness, England led on drug strategy development, the Isle of Man led on enhanced information systems around drugs and alcohol and Wales led on substance misuse. There was close co-operation between all Administrations on enforcement. He described actions which were being taken by the Irish Government in developing a new national drugs strategy for the period 2009-2016 and he spoke of the way in which the British-Irish Council provides a venue for exchanges of views on drug strategy. He was followed by Detective Superintendent Barry O'Brien of the National Drugs Unit in Dublin who gave a Power-Point presentation and spoke of the changes in the range of drugs available to users, drugs trafficking, the recently acquired ability to deal in drugs on credit and the phenomenal growth in the number of offences in the last twenty years. He assured the Body that his unit worked closely with the PSNI and had

almost daily contact with them. Again many members of the Body spoke of the failure of all governments to find an answer to the drugs problem and asked questions which were answered by Mr Carey and Superintendent O'Brien.

Address by Mr Martin Cullen TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs

32. During the afternoon session the plenary heard a ministerial address by Mr Martin Cullen TD, the Minister for Social and Family Affairs. Mr Cullen spoke of the close links between the islands of the British Isles. 800,000 Irish born people live in Britain and an estimated 5.5 million are second and third generation Irish. This inevitably was a powerful bond between Britain and Ireland. Recently the relationship between the Unionist community and the South had grown much closer. He cited joint commemorations for the 90th anniversaries of the Easter uprising and the Battle of the Somme and the forthcoming opening by the Taoiseach and First Minister Paisley of a visitor centre at the site of the Battle of the Boyne. The Irish Government was strongly in favour of a North-South parliamentary forum. Mr Cullen recorded the support of the United States in bringing peace to Ireland as well as the generous support of the European Union

33. The Tuesday session was devoted mainly to committee business. In business reports from committees, Michael Mates MP reported that Committee A (Sovereign Matters) had at last had a response from the UK Government on ID cards and the common travel area. The Government had promised to give proper consideration to the impact of the common travel area on e-borders. Lord Dubs added that the Committee had found the unsatisfactory situation that a driver disqualified in Great Britain could drive in Northern Ireland. The Committee were promised that this would be sorted out by the autumn. The Body took note of the reports from Committee A on ID cards and the Common Travel Area and on Penalty Points and the report from Committee D on the Irish Community in Britain. The Twelfth Annual Report of the Body was also noted.

Thirty-Seventh Plenary

34. The Thirty-Seventh plenary session was held at the Marriott Gosforth Park Hotel in Newcastle upon Tyne on 20th and 21st October 2008. As indicated above, for the first time, representatives of all the political parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly were present, a situation which gave the greatest pleasure to all members. The presence of the two Unionist parties after so long a period was a goal which the Steering Committee in particular had worked very hard to achieve.

35. The Monday session began with a debate about Rule changes and a change in the name of the Body. Alastair Morgan MSP moved "*That the Body shall henceforth be entitled the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly and be governed by the rules contained in Document 136*". The change in title had been suggested a year earlier in the hope that dropping the old title would help to alleviate the fears of the Unionist parties about participating. Mr Morgan drew attention to the St Andrews Agreement which referred to

need to establish an East-West parliamentary forum and the thought that the Assembly was well-fitted to take on this role. He also argued that the Assembly should establish close formal links with the British-Irish Council, so providing parliamentary scrutiny of the Council's work. He drew attention to rule changes which reflected the change of membership which had occurred in 2001 when representatives of the devolved institutions became members of the then Body.

36. In the debate which followed, Lord Glentoran reminded the Assembly that problems continued to exist between the north and south of Ireland, particularly organised crime. But he also drew attention to matters such as tourism and agriculture which concern our islands as a whole. Jim O'Keeffe TD Supported the suggestion that a more formal relationship should be developed with the British-Irish Council. Robert Walter MP suggested that the Council should make a half-yearly report to the Assembly so that the Council was subject to parliamentary scrutiny. He felt that the Council and the Assembly might meet in the same city at the same time so that Ministers could drop in and out as at the Nordic Council. Seymour Crawford TD believed it would be a retrograde step for the Assembly to meet in capital cities and in parliamentary premises as suggested by Mr Walter; he thought that the advantages of meeting away from a parliamentary environment were significant in breaking down barriers and enabling members to get to know each other. Steve Rodan SHK supported the idea of a formal relationship with the Council and regretted the fact that Paul Murphy MP, the UK Minister on the British-Irish Council had been prevented at the last minute from attending and speaking to the Assembly. Michael Mates MP recommended that the report of the debate should be sent to Paul Murphy and to officials. This suggestion was agreed to by the Assembly.

37. Jim Wells MLA spoke as the first Democratic Ulster Party member to speak in the Assembly and welcomed the rule changes and the change in the name of the Body. He said that he and his colleagues intended to play a full part in the Assembly. Barry McElduff MLA welcomed the participation of the Unionists and spoke of the need for the Assembly to look at the east-west as well as the north-south dimension. Many other members welcomed the Unionist presence at the Assembly and Lord Maginnis explained why it had taken so long for them to join but expressed a view shared with Baroness O'Cathain that the Assembly should not attempt to become an interlocutor between the British-Irish Council and the parent Parliaments.

38. At the conclusion of the debate the motion was agreed and the change of name from British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly was adopted.

Intelligence relating to the Omagh bomb

39. The Assembly then turned its attention to discussing an emergency motion submitted by Andrew Mackinlay MP on the Intelligence Relating to the Omagh Bomb, for which he had received the requisite fifteen signatures of support, from three participating institutions, under Rule 15(b). Mr Mackinlay moved---

“That the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly calls on the United Kingdom Government to disclose immediately to the legal counsel of the families of the victims of the Omagh bombing, details of, and all information relating to and arising from, the request made by the RUC to GCHQ, for surveillance of those subsequently suspected of preparing and carrying out the atrocity in Omagh a decade ago; including transcripts and timelines.”

40. He referred to a recent BBC Panorama programme in which it was stated that the RUC had asked the intelligence agencies in the UK to undertake surveillance of certain individuals. He was critical of the UK government’s use of “national security” as a reason for not providing the evidence held by the security agencies. He also dismissed the excuse used by the government that wire-tapping is inadmissible evidence under UK law. He argued that if the evidence had been made available it could have brought about a successful prosecution and believed it could assist the civil action being brought by the families if made available now. He said it was not unreasonable for the Assembly to add its weight to the families’ request.

41. Brian Hayes TD, who supported the motion, said that the bereaved families have been treated badly and he was critical of the Irish Government for not being more forthcoming and making stronger appeals for information which would assist the civil action. Lord Maginnis was anxious that present-day security should not be undermined by criticism of the intelligence agencies. Dave Anderson MP felt that the excuse of national security was too often used to prevent transparency; the important thing was the anguish of the families. Other speakers such as Alistair Carmichael MP, Chris Ruane MP, Lord Smith of Clifton and Lord Glentoran also disagreed with Lord Maginnis in the particular circumstances of Omagh. Most members of the Assembly supported the motion and congratulated Andrew Mackinlay on tabling it. Charlie O’Connor TD said he would continue to voice his concern in the Dail while Dinny McGinley TD mentioned the number of victims buried in Donegal in the Republic. However, Michael Mates MP took issue with the proposal that the information held by the intelligence agencies should be released directly to the families’ lawyers. He argued that such matters were for the judiciary to decide. He warned against the politicising of the judiciary.

42. Seymour Crawford TD, winding up the debate, described the raw emotions of the Omagh families and referred to all the speeches. He hoped that, despite Michael Mates’ criticism of the wording of the motion all members would support it.

43. The Assembly accepted the terms of the motion and Peter Hain MP, Co-Chair, immediately said that he would write to the British Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and that Niall Blaney TD, his fellow Co-Chair, would write to the Taoiseach and to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and for Justice conveying the views of the Assembly.

Energy Policy

44. In the afternoon session, the Assembly heard an address by the Irish Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Eamon Ryan TD, who spoke about energy policy and then answered questions. He was able to report on the work of the European Council on climate change and explain the renewable energy package as well as the lowering of emissions targets. Mr Ryan then spoke about the way that Ireland is developing policy to meet the targets and north-south co-operation in an all-Ireland grid study. This would allow the island of Ireland to increase its power needs from renewables to 40% by 2020. He spoke also of the development of an east-west electricity grid which would help the UK meet its emissions target because of the wind power available from Ireland. He was followed by Peter Hain MP who, in the absence of a British energy minister, offered his own perspective as a former Secretary of State. The small size of both islands in comparison to other countries of the world required co-operation between Ireland and Britain to ensure energy security. Both islands had common interests and concerns and both had huge amounts of wind. There was much which the Assembly, in conjunction with the British-Irish Council could do to drive a common energy policy forward.

45. Sixteen members then asked questions of the Minister on subjects such as bio-diesel from cooking oil, the unsightly impact of onshore wind turbines, the pros and cons of nuclear power and the need for large public investment to support innovation in generation.

Business Reports by Committee Chairs, and Reports from Committees

46. Jim O’Keeffe TD drew the Assembly’s attention to two reports from Committee A (Political and Sovereign Affairs). He asked the Assembly to take note of the UK Government’s response to the report on ID cards and the Common Travel Area. The response from the Home Office had been to suggest that he should meet the Irish Government and that Michael Mates MP his shadow chair should speak to the UK Government. They would make a full report to the plenary in Donegal .The second Report to which Mr O’Keeffe referred was that on Cross-Border Co-operation between the Police Forces of Northern Ireland and the Republic. The Committee had met separately with the Garda Commissioner and the PSNI Chief Constable to discuss co-operation and would be meeting the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Irish officials in Dublin and their equivalents in the UK. A full report would be made at the plenary in Donegal. In the context of cross-border co-operation, Lord Dubs spoke of the need for the mutual recognition of driving penalty points and the need for disqualifications to apply in both Ireland and Great Britain. Alasdair Morgan MSP asked that the Committee should extend its work to examine the licensing of goods vehicles operators. During a brief debate several members supported what Lord Dubs had said about driving offences, while Lord Maginnis was critical about the report’s suggestion of secondments to increase the number of Catholics in the PSNI. He said that this was unhelpful.

47. Margaret Conlon TD asked the Assembly to take note of the Report from Committee C (Economic) on Renewable Energy except Nuclear and asked that it should be

forwarded to both Governments and to the devolved administrations. She described the work of the Committee and linked it to the address which the plenary had heard earlier from the Irish Minister, Eamon Ryan TD. Other speakers in the short debate included Michael German AM who spoke about the Severn barrage options and interconnectors, Lord Gordon of Strathblane who spoke of the limitations of UK national grid which was designed as a distributor and not as one which could accept contributions and Deputy Graham Guille who described what Guernsey is doing about renewables.

48. Lord Dubs then drew attention to the report from Committee D (Environment and Social) on the Integration of Newly-Arrived Migrants. The Committee's inquiries were confined to Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales so they had visited Dublin, Belfast and Cardiff during the inquiry. In all three jurisdictions, migrants were faced with language difficulties and there was a lack of reliable statistics on the number of new arrivals. The Committee had been concerned about the exploitation of migrants by some employers. Chris Ruane MP pointed out that many young migrants who had been attracted to the UK because they were able to remit money back to their home countries now found that the depreciating pound had eroded that attraction. Dr Dai Lloyd AM supported the conclusions of the report and particularly the recommendations about language teaching. Senator John Ellis commended the Welsh system of providing packs to immigrants explaining their rights in their own language. He went on to draw attention to the number of migrant workers, particularly in Ireland, who were now unemployed, which in itself was a serious burden to integration. Willie Clarke MLA mentioned that the downturn in the economy could result in racist attacks against immigrants.

49. On Tuesday morning the Assembly heard an address by the Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office, Paul Goggins MP on the security situation in Northern Ireland. At the dinner, the previous night at Alnwick Castle, the Assembly had already heard the personal and frank assessment of the Secretary of State, Shaun Woodward MP on the Northern Ireland political situation. Mr Goggins believed that there were still three main threats to the people of Northern Ireland. The first was the threat posed by dissident Republicans. He said that this threat should be met by ensuring that the dissidents did not get armaments and that young people should be diverted away from the hands of dissidents. The second threat was from Loyalist paramilitaries and the third was from those involved in organised crime. On the last point he said that organised crime in Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly international. He referred to cannabis factories being run by Chinese underworld gangs and the co-operation with Dutch police which led to the smashing of a gang which was running arms and drugs. Human trafficking was also taking place and had to be tackled. A new cross-border fuel fraud group had been established. He ended his address by saying that in the next few weeks there would be an opportunity finally to reach an agreement on the completion of devolution with the devolution of policing and justice powers. He believed that this would be the biggest signal yet to dissident Republicans that the political deal is complete and there is no role for them.

50. In answer to a question from Peter Hain MP he reported on the improvement in policing right across South Armagh but he acknowledged that there was still some way to

go. Andrew Mackinlay MP asked why the British Government, unlike the US Administration, had not supported those who had suffered violence to obtain compensation from Libya where there was clear evidence of Libyan involvement. His question was supported by Baroness O’Cathain. Mr Goggins replied that circumstances had changed and that Libya is now a key ally in the fight against international terrorism. Jeff Ennis MP and Chris Ruane MP asked about organised crime and Loyalist paramilitaries and what new approach could be used to tackle the threats. Mr Goggins was confident that devolution of justice and policing would help a great deal. Alastair McDonnell MLA MP was concerned that the policing budget might shrink. Mr Goggins replied that tough decisions might have to be made but as normalisation returned fewer police would be required. Fergus O’Dowd TD and Seymour Crawford TD asked about the murder of Paul Quinn and the involvement of the IRA. Mr Goggins replied that the matter had been most thoroughly investigated and there was no evidence that the murder had been officially sanctioned.

51. Peter Hain MP, Co-Chair, thanked the Minister warmly for his address and the openness of his replies.

52. The Assembly was then privileged to have the opportunity in private to hear the preliminary findings of Lord Eames and Dennis Bradley on the Consultative Group on the Past. Members were able to question both during a lengthy exchange of views

The Steering Committee

53. Unlike 2007, there were very few changes in the membership of the Committee. Peter Hain MP succeeded Paul Murphy MP as British Co-Chair at the beginning of 2008 when Mr Murphy was appointed to the UK Government. Mr Sean O’Fearghail TD, Irish Vice Chair, left the Assembly (and consequently the Steering Committee) before the autumn session in Newcastle and was replaced by Mrs Margaret Conlon TD.

54. The Steering Committee met on the occasion of each of the two plenary sessions and it also met in Douglas in June and in London in December 2008. Much of its work recently has been in considering the future role of the Assembly, a subject which will continue to occupy it, as the Assembly spends less time on Northern Ireland issues and more on matters which concern all the islands. An important matter which the Committee considered at its December meeting was how to replace Mr Mike Burns as Media Adviser to the Assembly when he resigns at the conclusion of the Donegal plenary after eighteen years in post. The Committee agreed that a trawl should be made of the Press Galleries of all the constituent members of the Assembly and of other relevant groups, after which an interview panel comprising the Co-Chairs with a representative of the communications directorate of one of the sovereign parliaments and of the human resources section of the other would decide on an appointment.

Committees

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

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Members of the Body

Ireland January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATES

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

Ireland January-- 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Niall Blaney TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Mrs Margaret Conlon TD
Senator Dan Boyle
Mr Johnny Brady TD

ASSOCIATES

Mr Chris Andrews TD
Ms Aine Brady TD
Senator Martin Brady
Mr Dara Calleary TD
Senator Ivor Callely

Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator John Carty
Senator Donie Cassidy
Senator John Ellis
Mr Pat Gallagher TD
Senator Dominic Hannigan
Senator Eoghan Harris
Mr Brian Hayes TD
Mr Michael D Higgins TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Dinny McGinley TD
Mr Joe McHugh TD
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Mr Charlie O'Connor TD
Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD
Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD
Mr Michael Ring TD
Mr Noel Treacy TD

Mr Joe Carey TD
Mr Sean Connick TD
Mr Michael D'Arcy TD
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Mr Frank Feighan TD
Senator John Hanafin
Senator Cecilia Keaveney
Senator Alan Kelly
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Joe O'Reilly
Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Phil Prendergast
Senator Eugene Regan
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Shane Ross

United Kingdom – January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Baroness Blood MBE
Mr Alastair Carmichael MP
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Baroness Goudie
Mr Dominic Grieve MP
Ms Meg Hillier MP
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Steve McCabe MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Baroness O'Cathain
Mr John Robertson MP

ASSOCIATES

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Mr Quentin Davies MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoughue
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Mr Robert Walter MP

The UK Parliament- December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Peter Hain MP
Lord Dubs
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Baroness Blood
Mr Alastair Carmichael MP
Lord Cope of Berkeley
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Lord Maginnis of Glasdrum
Baroness O’Cathain
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Lord Desai
Mr Jim Devine MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoughue
Baroness Harris of
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr John McFall MP
Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr Stephen O’Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP MSP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

The Scottish Parliament – January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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

The Scottish Parliament – December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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

National Assembly for Wales – January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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

National Assembly for Wales – December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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

Northern Ireland Assembly- January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

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

ASSOCIATES

Mr Alex Atwood MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly- December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David McClarty MLA

ASSOCIATES

Mr Alex Atwood MLA

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

Mr Willie Clarke MLA

States of Jersey- January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATES

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Jersey- December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATES

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Guernsey – January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

ASSOCIATES

Deputy Jack Honeybill

States of Guernsey – December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

ASSOCIATES

Deputy Jack Honeybill

Tynwald – January 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eddie Lowie MLC

Tynwald – December 2008

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eddie Lowie MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Body

Thirty-sixth plenary, Wexford, 28 and 29 April 2008

ID CARDS AND THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA

The Body agreed to the following Resolution:

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the response of the Irish government to the Report of Committee A (Document No 119) entitled “ID Cards and the Common Travel Area” (Document 135).

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PENALTY POINTS

The Body agreed to the following Resolution:

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the response of the Irish Government to the Report of Committee A (Document No 94) entitled “the Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points” (Doc No 133).

THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

The Body agreed to the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Committee takes note of the response of the Irish Government to the Report of Committee A (Document No 131) entitled “The Irish Community in Britain” (Doc No 134).

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BODY

Resolved, That the Body take note of the Twelfth Annual Report of the Body. (Document No 132).

Thirty-Seventh plenary, Newcastle upon Tyne, 20 and 21 October 2008

RULES AND FUTURE OF THE BODY

The Body agreed to the following Resolution

That the Body shall henceforth be entitled the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly and be governed by the rules contained in Document 136.

INTELLIGENCE RELATED TO THE OMAGH BOMB

The Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

That the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly calls on the UK Government to disclose immediately to the legal counsel of the families of the Omagh bombing details of, and all information relating to or arising from, the request made by the RUC to GCHQ, for surveillance of those subsequently suspected of preparing and carrying out the atrocity in Armagh a decade ago; including transcripts and timelines.

ID CARDS AND THE COMMON TRAVEL AREA

The Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

That the Assembly takes note of the response from the UK government to the Report from Committee A (Doc. No 119) entitled ‘ID Cards and the Common Travel area’ (Doc. No 138).

CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN POLICE FORCES

The Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

That the Assembly takes note of the Interim Report of Committee A on Cross-Border Co-operation between Police Forces.

RENEWABLE ENERGY EXCEPT NUCLEAR

The Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

Resolved, That the Body take note of the report of Committee C on Renewable Energy except Nuclear (Doc No. 139), and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments and the devolved administrations for their comments.

THE INTEGRATION OF NEWLY-ARRIVED MIGRANTS

The Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the report of Committee D on ‘‘The Integration of Newly-Arrived Migrants’’ (Doc. No. 141) and of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report, which should be forwarded to both Governments and the devolved administrations for their comments.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Committee A Committee on Sovereign Matters

1. The Committee met formally on six occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions, and four times on working visits.
2. The Committee's primary interest during 2008 was its inquiry into cross-border cooperation between police forces. As part of this inquiry, in July, the Committee met Commissioner Fachtina Murphy of An Garda Síochána and Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde of the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). In December the Committee met officials from the Northern Ireland Office to discuss matters arising from its inquiry. A further visit to Dublin, Carrickmacross and Newry would take place in the New Year with meetings with officials from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform with officers from An Garda Síochána and officers from the Police Service Northern Ireland. The Committee expects to report at the March plenary session which will take place in Donegal.
3. The Committee continued to keep a watching brief on progress on matters connected with its report on the mutual recognition of penalty points. Lord Dubs, a rapporteur on this matter, received an update from an official from the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland, on the mutual recognition of driving disqualifications and penalty points. Lord Dubs updated the Body on behalf of the Committee during its Business Report at the Newcastle plenary session.
4. The Committee also kept under review matters connected with its report on ID Cards. The UK Government sent a further response to the Committee's report, specifically with information on the implications for the Common Travel Area and the e-borders scheme of the introduction of British ID cards. As a result, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman wrote to the relevant Irish and British Government Ministers respectively asking for an update on the introduction of the e-borders scheme. The Home Office Minister responded to the Committee and also wrote to the Chairmen of the Assembly on the matter.

Attendance at Meetings of Committee A in 2008

Wednesday 27 February 2008, House of Commons, London:

Mr Jim O'Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt. Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chairman), Senator John Carty, Lord Dubs, Mr Brian Hayes TD, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Mr Martin Mansergh TD

Mr Dinnie McGinley TD, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon TD and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Monday 28 April 2008, Whites Hotel, Wexford:

Rt. Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chairman), Senator John Carty, Lord Dubs, Mr Dominic Grieve MP, Mr Brian Hayes TD, Dr. Rory O’Hanlon TD and Mr Noel Treacy T.D. (Associate Member).

Wednesday 23 July 2008, Stormont Hotel, Belfast:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Mr John Carty TD, Lord Dubs, Mr Dinnie McGinley TD and Dr Rory O’Hanlon TD.

Monday 20 October March 2008, Marriott Hotel, Newcastle:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Senator John Carty TD, Lord Cope of Berkeley, Lord Dubs, Senator Brian Hayes, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Mr Dinnie McGinley TD, Dr. Rory O’Hanlon TD, and Lord Smith of Clifton.

Sunday 7 December 2008, Crowne Plaza St James Hotel, London:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Senator John Carty, Mr Brian Hayes TD, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Dr. Rory O’Hanlon TD.

Monday 8 December 2008, House of Commons, London:

Mr Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chairman), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Shadow Chairman), Baroness Blood, Lord Cope of Berkeley, Senator John Carty, Lord Dubs, Mr Brian Hayes TD, Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP, Dr. Rory O’Hanlon TD.

***Committee B
European Committee***

During 2008, Committee B continued its inquiry into a Common European Defence and Foreign Policy. Visits to Paris and London are anticipated in the coming months, as the Committee proposes to visit the HQ of Lieutenant General Pat Nash, Operational Commander of EUFOR Chad mission (Paris) and the Department of Defence (London) to progress this inquiry. The Committee also began a new inquiry into Economic Migration.

It met in Dublin in November 2008, as agreed during its discussion at the BIPA Plenary in Newcastle in October. It is hoped that the Committee will meet again in March or April 2009.

Common European Defence and Foreign Policy Inquiry

To date, the Committee has had four meetings in connection with this inquiry, which originally commenced in 2004. It met with the British Conservative Party’s front bench defence spokesman, Keith Simpson MP, and the British Liberal Democrat Party’s front

bench spokesman, Paul Keetch MP, at a meeting in Westminster in February 2004. Its second meeting was in October 2004, with the British Ambassador in Stockholm, along with representatives of the Swedish Foreign and Defence Ministries, the President of the Nordic Council, Gabriel Romanus MP, and the Deputy Director for European Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Sweden, Anna-Karin Holm Ericson. The Committee's third meeting in this regard was with NATO officials at NATO Headquarters in Brussels in February 2007.

Following a suitable interval for the duration of the Irish general elections in May 2007 and then preparations for the referendum of the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008, the Committee met for the fourth time on 6 November 2008, in Dublin. Mr. Dick Roche T.D., Minister for European Affairs met the Committee and spoke of the Irish-EU relationship, the importance of Irish neutrality, the existing European Security and Defence Policy and the potential advantages and disadvantages of a common European defence and foreign policy. The Committee was also briefed on Irish security and defence policies by Mr. Ciaran Murphy, Assistant Secretary General at the Department of Defence.

Economic Migration Inquiry

Mr. Conor Lenihan T.D., Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Integration Policy, spoke to the Committee about economic migration to Ireland and the issues to arise in Ireland from that, such as the need to change school enrolment policies and improve language proficiency.

Attendance at the meeting of Committee B in November 2008:

Mr. Robert Walter MP (Chair)
Mr. Jim Dobbin MP
Mr. Charlie O'Connor T.D.
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Cecilia Keaveney

Deirdre Clarke (Shadow Clerk)
Jillian O'Keefe (Department of Foreign Affairs)
Rhiannon Hollis (Clerk)

Committee C Economic Committee

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

In 2008 the Committee concluded its work on its report entitled “Renewable Energy except Nuclear”. The Committee held a series of meetings in Westminster on 3 July, to conclude its evidence gathering for the report. At its meeting the Committee held discussions both with UK witnesses,² and with two Irish witnesses who travelled to Westminster for the meeting,³ as well as having an informal lunch meeting with members of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. The Committee found that holding such a meeting was an extremely efficient use of members’ time, and is grateful to those witnesses who travelled some distance to attend the meeting.

At the Newcastle plenary the Committee agreed its renewable energy report and decided to commence an inquiry into apprenticeships. The Committee has already held one evidence session in Westminster on 8 December 2008. The Committee went on a tour of the Houses Of Parliament craft workshops and met apprentices and their managers, and discussed both the subject of apprenticeships and the process of pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Apprenticeships Bill with Alison Fuller, Professor of Education and Work, School of Education, University of Southampton and adviser to the House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee and Glenn McKee Second Clerk to the Committee, and Barry Sheerman MP, Chairman, and Kenneth Fox Clerk of the Children, Schools and Families Committee. The Committee plans to continue its inquiry in 2009 with a visit to Dublin and to Scotland.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2008

Members attending the meeting of the Committee at the Wexford plenary on 28 April 2008:

Seán Ó Fearghail TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), John Austin MP, Henry Bellingham MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Arthur Morgan TD, Baroness O’Cathain OBE, Joyce Watson AM.

Members visiting Westminster on 3 July 2008:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Brian Adam MSP, Lord Donoughue, Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Senator Terry Leyden, Baroness O’Cathain.

Members attending the meeting of the Committee at the Newcastle plenary on 20 October 2008 and approving the report:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), John Austin MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Alasdair McDonnell MLA, Baroness O’Cathain OBE, Joyce Watson AM.

² Philip Wolfe, Executive Director of the Renewable Energy Association; Katherine MacNeill, Deputy Director, Renewables Deployment, and Lorraine Hamid, Deputy Director, EU Renewables Targets, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; and Professor David Cope, Director, Dr Michael O’Brien, Adviser (Environment and Energy) and Eleanor O’Rourke, Fellow, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology.

³ Tim Cooper, Founder and Director of Cool Power Ltd and Martin Fincane, Official, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Members visiting Westminster on 8 December 2008:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Brian Adam MSP, John Austin MP, Seymour Crawford TD, Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Senator Dominic Hannigan, Senator Terry Leyden, Baroness O’Cathain OBE.

Committee D
Committee on Environmental and Social Issues

Committee D met formally as a full Committee on five occasions during the year; twice during plenary sessions and three times on two-day working visits.

The Committee’s interest during 2008 was primarily on completing their inquiry into the integration of newly arrived migrants to Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales. The Committee visited Belfast, Dublin and Cardiff in 2008 and took evidence from community groups and other representatives from civil society, local police forces, academics and civil servants. The report on the integration of newly arrived migrants was formally adopted at the Newcastle plenary in November 2008. At that plenary the Committee agreed to begin an inquiry into the renewable element of climate change across the Islands. The Committee plan to take evidence on this inquiry in 2009 with visits to Scotland and London before the summer.

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

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2008

Belfast 2-3 March 2008

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Lord Glentoran, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Eddie McGrady MP, Senator Francis O’Brien, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Wexford Plenary 28 April 2008

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Dave Anderson MP, Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Barry McElduff MLA, Senator Francis O’Brien, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Dublin 15-16 June 2008

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Senator Geraldine Feeney, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Joe McHugh TD, Senator Francis O’Brien, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Wales 6-7 July 2008

Lord Dubs (Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Willie Clarke MLA, Jim Devine MP, Senator Geraldine Feeney, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Jim Sheridan MP and Iain Smith MSP.

Newcastle Plenary 20 October 2008

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle , Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Senator Geraldine Feeney, Lord Glentoran, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, David McClarty MLA, Barry McElduff MLA, Chris Ruane MP and Jim Wells MLA.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2008

Ireland:

Clerk: Mr Eoin Faherty

Counsellors/Advisers: Mr Liam Caniffe

Clerk, Committee A: Ms Sighle Doherty

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Clerk, Committee C: Ms Jillian O'Keefe

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Administrator: Ms Jullee
Clarke

United Kingdom

Clerk: Miss Alda Barry

British Consultant: Sir Michael
Davies

Shadow Clerk, Committee A: Ms
Nerys Welfoot

Clerk, Committee B:
Ms Rhiannon Hollis

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:
Ms Tracey Garratty

Clerk, Committee D; Ms Audrey
Nelson

Administrator: Mrs Amanda
Healy

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns

