



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

TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT

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TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2015

Introduction

1. This is the twentieth 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 2015.

Membership of the Assembly

2. After a period of stability for some years in the membership of the Assembly, the UK general election in May 2015 led to significant changes in the Westminster delegation. A list of Members and Associate Members at the start and close of 2015 is set out at Appendix 1. Changes to other delegations are expected in 2016 as a result of general elections in Ireland in February, in Guernsey in April, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in May and in the Isle of Man in September.

Political developments

General Overview

3. 2015 saw a continuation of the trend of ever-closer and warmer relations between the UK and Ireland, with two significant visits exchanged in the summer months showcasing the close ties between the two nations.
4. The first was a visit by the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall to the West of Ireland in May. Peace and reconciliation were two of the key themes of the visit, which included a visit to Mullaghmore, where the Prince's grand-uncle and godfather, Lord Mountbatten, was assassinated in 1979. The visit built on Queen Elizabeth's state visit to Ireland in 2011 and the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins's state visit to the UK in 2014, and the warm welcome afforded to the Prince and Duchess in Ireland was in keeping with the shared aspirations expressed for ever friendlier ties between the two nations. It also showcased modern education, research, tourism and business links between Ireland and Britain.
5. In July 2015, President Higgins and Mrs. Sabina Higgins visited Warrington and Liverpool in the UK, where there are extensive Irish communities. The programme for the President's visit included the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace in Warrington.
6. A general election was held in the UK on 7 May 2015, with the Conservatives, led by David Cameron, securing an overall majority. The Conservatives won 330 seats,

Labour won 232, the Scottish National Party won 56, the Liberal Democrats and the DUP won 8 each, Sinn Féin won 4, Plaid Cymru and the SDLP each won 3, the UUP won 2, and UKIP and the Green Party won one seat each.

Cabinet appointments, May 2015	Minister
Prime Minister	David Cameron
Chancellor of the Exchequer	George Osborne
Home Secretary	Theresa May
Foreign Secretary	Philip Hammond
Secretary of State for Justice	Michael Gove
Secretary of State for Defence	Michael Fallon
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions	Iain Duncan Smith
Secretary of State for Health	Jeremy Hunt
Leader of the House of Commons	Chris Grayling
Secretary of State for International Development	Justine Greening
Secretary of State for Education	Nicky Morgan
Leader of the House of Lords	Baroness Stowell of Beeston
Secretary of State for Transport	Patrick McLoughlin
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills	Sajid Javid
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Theresa Villiers
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Elizabeth Truss
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government	Greg Clark
Secretary of State for Wales	Stephen Crabb
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Oliver Letwin
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport	John Whittingdale
Secretary of State for Scotland	David Mundell
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change	Amber Rudd
Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	Baroness Anelay of St John's
Minister without Portfolio	Robert Halfon
Cabinet Office Minister	Matthew Hancock
Chief Secretary to the Treasury	Greg Hands
Chief Whip in the House of Commons	Mark Harper
Minister of State for Employment	Priti Patel
Minister of State for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise	Anna Soubry
Attorney General	Jeremy Wright

- The British-Irish Council enjoyed another successful year of collaboration. Two summits took place during the year, the first in Dublin in June and the second in

London in November. A review of its work sectors and working methods was launched, with initial changes seen at the June 2016 summit in Glasgow, hosted by Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

8. The fourth annual meeting of Irish Secretaries General and UK Permanent Secretaries took place in Dublin 30 September – 1 October, with a focus on data sharing, borders and visas, and trade. Engagement at this level across all of government both symbolises and facilitates the broader process of collaborative work between the Irish and UK Governments and their administrations.
9. The debate around the UK's EU membership continued throughout 2015, with extensive bilateral contacts between Ireland and the UK at political level (Prime Minister/ Taoiseach, Foreign Secretary/ Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministers for European Affairs etc.) and at official level.
10. Links between Ireland and devolved administrations in the UK also grew, with the Scottish Government announcing a new Innovation and Investment Hub within the British Embassy in Dublin and the Irish Government expanding its Consulate General in Edinburgh. This followed a visit by Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Charles Flanagan to Edinburgh in February 2015.
11. The North-South Interparliamentary Association (NSIPA) held its sixth plenary on 26 June in Belfast. It was co-Chaired by Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly Mitchel McLaughlin MLA and Ceann Comhairle of Dail Eireann Seán Barrett T.D. The Association considered the issue of human trafficking, as well as discussing cross-border cooperation in healthcare.
12. NSIPA's seventh plenary was held in Dublin on 26 November, again co-Chaired by Ceann Comhairle Sean Barrett T.D. and Speaker Mitchel McLaughlin. The Association discussed the issue of supporting women in public life and increasing participation.

Developments in Northern Ireland

13. 2015 began with optimism in Northern Ireland following the agreement on the Stormont House Agreement (SHA) in December 2014 that addressed issues around welfare reform and finance as well as the legacy of the past, which were hampering the operation of the Northern Ireland Executive. However, problems emerged with the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement in the course of 2015, including on welfare reform and as well as trust and confidence issues arising from the legacy of paramilitarism. The Ulster Unionist Party withdrew from the Northern Ireland Executive in September 2015.

14. In response to the difficulties, the Irish and UK Governments convened a further round of all-party talks in September. After ten weeks of intensive talks at Stormont, the Fresh Start Agreement was signed on 17 November 2015. The Agreement provides a roadmap for the implementation of many aspects of the Stormont House Agreement and addresses tackling the continuing impact and legacy of paramilitarism.
15. The Agreement covers the ending of paramilitarism and tackling organised crime, financial reforms, welfare reforms, financial supports from the UK and Irish Governments, and implementation of other aspects of the Stormont House Agreement. The Agreement also sets out the next steps for implementing the SHA, including measures on flags, identity, culture and tradition, parades, institutional reform, and the establishment of a Compact Civic Advisory Panel. It was also agreed to reschedule the North South Ministerial meeting in the North West region, with the exact date to be determined.
16. The Agreement ended 2015 on a positive note with the devolved power-sharing institutions on a more stable and sustainable footing with significant progress on fundamental issues for Northern Ireland.
17. Implementation of the Fresh Start Agreement had begun by the end of the year with the setting up of Joint Agency Task Force to tackle cross border crime, the appointment of a three-person panel to develop a strategy on paramilitarism and the adoption of a number of budgetary reforms and financial assistance packages.
18. The year also saw changes in political leadership in Northern Ireland. Colum Eastwood MLA was elected leader of the SDLP on 14 November. Arlene Foster MLA was confirmed as Peter Robinson's successor as DUP leader on 17 December and as First Minister on 11 January 2016.

Ministerial Assignments: Northern Ireland Executive (as of December 2015):

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

Junior Minister OFMDFM	Jennifer McCann	SF
Junior Minister OFMDFM	Emma Pengelly	DUP

Legacy issues in Northern Ireland

19. One of the issues that was not possible to resolve as part of the Fresh Start Agreement was the establishment of the legacy framework as set out in the Stormont House Agreement, namely the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU), the Independent Commission for Information Retrieval (ICIR), the Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG) and the Oral History Archive (OHA). Although significant progress was made on many of the outstanding issues during the talks, final agreement could not be reached including on finding the balance between the requirements of national security and onward disclosure to families.

20. Under the Fresh Start Agreement the Irish and UK Governments committed to working to resolve the outstanding issues on dealing with the legacy of the past and to finding a process that would be agreeable to all and allow for the SHA institutions to be established. Both Governments are continuing to engage on this with a view to progressing this issue which is so crucial both to individual victims and survivors and broader society.

21. There were also a number of developments on individual legacy cases in Northern Ireland during the year:
 - The case of Pat Finucane was discussed by the Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg on 9 December in its consideration of the McKerr group of cases.
 - An all-Party Motion on Ballymurphy was adopted by Dáil Eireann on 15 July 2015. The motion supported the Ballymurphy families in their call for an independent panel inquiry into the deaths of 11 people in Ballymurphy, West Belfast in 1971.
 - In June, Garda Authorities in Ireland began the process of handing over files to the Belfast Coroner’s Court connected to the 1976 Kingsmill massacre, following the implementation of a commitment by the Taoiseach to introduce the necessary legal mechanisms to provide for such cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the inquest in Belfast.
 - The Irish Government continued to pursue a response to the all-party Dáil Eireann motions of July 2008 and May 2011 urging the British Government to allow access by an independent international judicial figure to all original documents in their possession relating to the Dublin – Monaghan bombings. The issue was raised by Taoiseach Enda Kenny in his meeting with Prime Minister Cameron on 18 June. It was also raised on a number of occasions by Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Charles Flanagan during meetings with the British Government,

and in a bilateral with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers on 21 December.

Commemorations

22. 2015 marked the fourth year of the Decade of Centenaries, marking the key events from 1912-1922, that had a profound influence on Ireland.
23. Irish President Michael D Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins, together with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Charles Flanagan, travelled to Turkey to attend the commemorative events marking the Gallipoli landings in 1915 and associated battles. The events were held in the Canakke province of Turkey on the 24th and 25th of April. Seven commemorative events took place in total, including the Ireland and Commonwealth service on April 24th at Cape Helles.
24. On 29 June, the Ireland 2016 Global and Diaspora Programme was launched by Minister Flanagan, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ms Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for the Diaspora, Mr Jimmy Deenihan TD, and Minister with responsibility for Culture Ireland, Mr Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD. This is an international programme of creative, community and commemorative events to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising with Ireland's diaspora and friends across the world.
25. On 1 July 2015, the 99th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, Minister Flanagan became the first Irish Cabinet Minister to represent the Irish Government at the annual commemoration at Belfast City Hall. Minister Flanagan laid a wreath in remembrance of those who died, which included over 3,500 individuals from the island of Ireland. On the same day, Minister Humphreys represented the Government at commemorative ceremonies in France.
26. On 6 November, the Irish Government launched the 2016 Somme Commemorative programme, which includes commemorative events, exhibitions, cultural projects and a joint production of Frank McGuinness' iconic play, *Observe the Sons of Ulster*, marching towards the Somme, staged by Dublin's Abbey Theatre and Belfast's Lyric Theatre. Events will also take place on an all-island basis, including through a number of projects supported through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund.
27. On 9 November, the Taoiseach Enda Kenny attended the Remembrance Sunday event at Enniskillen. The Tánaiste Joan Burton represented the Irish Government at the ceremony in Dublin. Minister Flanagan represented the Government at the Remembrance Day ceremony in Belfast.

28. Also in November, Minister Flanagan launched the Ireland 2016 Commemorative Programme in Britain, comprising dozens of events to take place across Great Britain throughout 2016.

Work of the Assembly

50th Plenary Conference (Dublin)

29. The 50th Plenary Conference of the Assembly was held in Dublin between Sunday 23 February and Tuesday 25 February 2015. The Steering Committee agreed at its meeting held during the conference that the Annual Report should no longer contain a precis of the speeches made and questions asked on the grounds that the verbatim record is now available on the website (www.britishirish.org). This, the 20th Report, therefore merely reports details of speakers and any specific or unusual arrangements.
30. The Assembly's Committees all met at the conference hotel, the Shelbourne, in the afternoon of Sunday 23 February. The plenary conference sessions took place in the Senate Chamber, Leinster House, except in the afternoon of Monday 24 February when the session was held at Croke Park, the headquarters of the Gaelic Athletic Association.
31. The theme of the conference was sport and how it could help build communities and develop co-operation between those from different traditions. This theme was apparent at the very outset in the speech by the Managing Director of Punchestown Racing Course, Richard O'Sullivan, who spoke after dinner on Sunday 23 February. Another theme underlying the conference was commemoration of the past, drawing particular attention to the twenty-five years since the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly's formation (as the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body).
32. The Assembly was once again privileged to hear an address by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, at the very beginning of the conference. Later, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Paschal Donohoe TD, spoke and answered questions. The Assembly was delighted to add its support to the bid to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup in the island of Ireland.
33. Senator Paul Coghlan introduced the report of Committee A on Cross-Border Police Co-operation. The Report was agreed.
34. The President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Liam O'Neill, addressed the plenary conference at Croke Park and he was followed by a distinguished panel of speakers on sport's contribution to community and cultural development. The panel members were Mr Ryan Feeney, Head of Community and Public Affairs for the Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association (UGAA), Ms Claire Adams, Outreach Project Officer for the Irish Football Association (IFA), Ms Miriam Malone, Business Partnerships Manager for the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), Mr Hugo MacNeill, Chairman of the British Irish Association and a former Rugby International and Mr Trevor Ringland, Chairman of PeacePlayers International Northern Ireland and a former Rugby International.

35. On Tuesday 25 February the Assembly resumed its work in the Senate Chamber, Leinster House, beginning with consideration of reports from Committees B and D. Robert Walter MP, Chair of Committee B introduced the Committee's report on The European Investment Bank. He told the Assembly that this would be the last occasion he would attend since he was standing down as MP at the next election. He was warmly thanked for his contributions over the years. Lord Dubs, Chair, introduced the report by Committee D on Irish Communities in Scotland. Both Reports were agreed.
36. In addition to its normal parliamentary proceedings, the Assembly paid a visit on Monday 24 February to the Garden of Remembrance, created to commemorate all those who had died in the cause of Irish independence. The two Co-Chairs, Frank Feighan TD and Laurence Robertson MP, laid wreaths.
37. A significant step in the constantly improving relationship between Ireland and Britain was the visit to Croke Park, a bastion of Irish sport and an ikon of Irish nationalism. Not only was the panel discussion held there but the Assembly was entertained to lunch and enjoyed a tour of the stadium.

51st Plenary Conference (Cheltenham)

38. The 51st plenary conference was held in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, between Sunday 15 and Tuesday 17 November 2015. Those attending were accommodated in the Cheltenham Park Hotel but sessions were held in the Gold Cup Room at Cheltenham Racecourse. A number of Irish Members took advantage of the location of the plenary to arrive a day early and attend a race meeting.
39. This was the first plenary conference held since the British General Election in May and there were significant changes in the British delegation. Both British Vice-Chairs had left the House of Commons; Dave Anderson MP and Andrew Rosindell MP were appointed in their places. Many other long-serving British Members, including Committee chairs and rapporteurs, were also no longer available for appointment to the Assembly. Andrew Rosindell MP was appointed additionally as Chair of Committee B.
40. One consequence of the British General Election was a delay in appointing the new British delegation; this in turn meant that the Assembly's Committees had been limited in their capacity to do any significant work since the Dublin plenary conference. Reports were made by Senator Coghlan (Chair) on what work Committee A had been doing and Lord Dubs (Chair) on Committee D. However, in respect of Committee C, Arthur Spring TD, deputising for the Chair, Senator Jack Wall, was able to introduce a report on Preventing Youth Unemployment through Education and Training.
41. The session began with an address by David Lidington MP, Minister for Europe. Later in the session, Dominic Hannigan TD, Chair of the Oireachtas Joint European Union Affairs Committee addressed the Assembly on the Committee's Report on "UK/EU Future Relationship Implications for Ireland". The subject of Europe was debated later during the conference on a motion tabled on behalf of the Steering Committee by Andrew Rosindell MP. The motion was in the following terms:-

That this Assembly has considered the matter of future relations between the UK and Ireland following the UK referendum on its membership of the EU.

42. Owing to ongoing talks between the political parties in Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State, Mrs Theresa Villiers MP, could not be present but Ben Wallace MP, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, addressed the Assembly and answered questions. The ongoing talks also meant that the hoped-for presence of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was not possible.
43. In view of the importance of National Hunt racing at Cheltenham and the interest that both the UK and Ireland have in the sport, the Assembly was pleased to listen to addresses by Nick Rust, Chief Executive of the British Horseracing Authority and by Brian Kavanagh, Chief Executive of Horseracing Ireland.
44. George Hamilton QPM, Chief Constable of Northern Ireland, and Noirin O’Sullivan, Commissioner of An Garda Síochána, gave a joint presentation on policing North and South of the Border and then answered questions.
45. The last item of business was a presentation on behalf of the three Crown Dependencies (Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man) explaining their status and relationship with the United Kingdom and their methods of government. Deputy John Le Fondre (Jersey), Deputy Roger Perrot (Guernsey) and Mr Speaker Rodan (Isle of Man) spoke in turn and then answered questions.
46. Members of the Assembly had the opportunity in the interval between the morning and afternoon sessions on Monday 16 November to see something of areas of the racecourse which racegoers would not normally see—the jockeys’ rooms and the weighing room were examples.
47. Finally, it is right to draw attention to two exceptional matters. The first of these was that the Assembly observed a minute’s silence at 11.00 am on Monday 16 November in respect of all those affected by the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November. The two Co-Chairs had put out a press statement in the following terms:

On behalf of the members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, we are united in expressing our deepest sympathies and in condemning the recent attacks in Paris.

Our hearts go out to all those bereaved, their families and friends. These terrible events only serve to unite us with each other and with the people of France at this dark time.

48. The second of these was that the Assembly was honoured that The Princess Royal graciously attended the dinner held in the Panoramic Room of Cheltenham Racecourse on the Monday evening. Her Royal Highness was able to meet many Irish and British Members at the reception which preceded the dinner. The Co-Chairs each expressed the Assembly’s pleasure at Her Royal Highness’ attendance in short speeches before and after dinner.

The Steering Committee

49. The Steering Committee met on the occasion of the two plenary sessions, and on 19 October in London. Amongst matters discussed at these meetings were proposals to develop and enhance BIPA into the future (work on which it was agreed would be carried forward by Committee A), media arrangements, rules governing travel expenditure, and the work of committees.

Committees

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

Staffing of the Assembly

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

Prospects for 2016

52. Debates and presentations at the Irish Plenary taking place from 3 to 5 July in Malahide, near Dublin, will focus on the impact on British-Irish relations of the result of the UK referendum on EU membership, the centenary commemoration of events in 1916, and tourism and interconnectivity opportunities between the two islands. A report on Visa Systems would be presented by Committee B. The 2016 British plenary will be held in Cardiff, at the invitation of the National Assembly for Wales, from 27 to 29 November.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The UK Parliament—January 2015

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP	Sir Tony Baldry
Rt. Hon Paul Murphy MP	Lord Bates
Mr. Robert Walter MP	Mr. Neil Carmichael MP
Mr. Joe Benton MP	Mr. Michael Connarty MP
Lord Bew	Miss Rosie Cooper MP
Baroness Blood MBE	Mr. Ian Davidson MP
Viscount Bridgeman	Baroness Doocey OBE
Mr. Conor Burns MP	Mr. Paul Farrelly MP
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr. Jim Dobbin MP	Mr. Richard Graham MP
Lord Dubs	Mr. Brandon Lewis MP
Lord Empey OBE	Lord Lexden
Mr. Paul Flynn MP	Mr. Jim McGovern MP
Lord German OBE	Baroness O’Loan DBE
Baroness Harris of Richmond OBE	Rt. Hon Lord Shutt of Greetland
Mr. Stephen Lloyd MP	Lord Tugendhat
Mr. Jack Lopresti MP	Mr. Robin Walker 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	

The UK Parliament—December 2015

Mr. Laurence Robertson MP	Ms. Caroline Ansell MP
Mr. Dave Anderson MP	Ms. Victoria Atkins MP
Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP	Mr. Tom Blenkinsop MP
Lord Bew	Viscount Bridgeman
Baroness Blood MBE	Mr. Glyn Davies MP
Mr. Andrew Bridgen MP	Lord Donoughue
Ms. Deidre Brock MP	Lord Empey
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP	Mrs. Margaret Ferrier MP
Miss. Rosie Cooper MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Rt. Hon Baroness Corston	Rt. Hon David Hanson MP
Rt. Hon Jeffrey Donaldson MP	Mr. Stephen Hepburn MP
Lord Dubs	Lord Kilclooney
Mr Mark Durkan MP	Ms Siobhain McDonagh MP
Mr Nigel Evans MP	Sir Alan Meale MP
Mr Paul Farrelly MP	Mr Mark Pritchard MP
Lord Glentoran	Mr Bob Stewart MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond	
Ms Helen Jones MP	
Mr Danny Kinahan MP	
Mr Jack Lopresti MP	

Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr Conor McGinn MP
Mr Nigel Mills MP
Lord Skelmersdale
Mr Robin Walker MP

Ireland—January 2015

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. Martin Heydon TD
Senator Cáit Keane
Mr. John Lyons TD
Mr. Dinny McGinley 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
Vacancy
Vacancy

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
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 2015

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. Martin Heydon TD
Senator Cáit Keane
Mr. John Lyons TD
Mr. Dinny McGinley TD

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
Senator James Heffernan
Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD
Ms. Sandra McLellan TD
Mr. Tony McLoughlin 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
Vacancy
Vacancy

Ms. Maureen O'Sullivan TD
Mr. Brian Stanley TD
Mr. Brendan Smith TD
Ms. Joanna Tuffy TD

The Scottish Parliament – January 2015

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

The Scottish Parliament – December 2015

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 2015

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

National Assembly for Wales – December 2015

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
Mr. Nick Ramsay AM

Northern Ireland Assembly – January 2015

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

Northern Ireland Assembly – December 2015

Mrs. Judith Cochrane MLA
Mrs. Brenda Hale MLA
Mr. Barry McElduff MLA
Mr. Sean Rogers MLA
Mr. Robin Swann MLA

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

States of Jersey – January 2015

Deputy John Le Fondré

Deputy Kevin Lewis

States of Jersey – December 2015

Deputy John Le Fondré

Deputy Kevin Lewis

States of Guernsey – January 2015

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

States of Guernsey – December 2015

Deputy Roger Perrot

Deputy Al Brouard

Tynwald – January 2015

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Alex Downie MLC

Tynwald – December 2015

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

Mr Alex Downie MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Assembly

Fiftieth plenary, Dublin, 22 to 24 February 2015

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

CROSS-BORDER POLICE CO-OPERATION AND ILLICIT TRADE

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee A (Sovereign Matters) on cross-border police co-operation and illicit trade (Document No. 222) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee B (European Affairs) on the European Investment Bank (Document No. 223) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments, the devolved administrations, The European Investment Bank and the European Commission for their observations.

IRISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

That the Report from Committee D (Environmental and Social) on Irish communities in Scotland (Document No. 224) be referred back to Committee D for further consideration.

NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

That the Assembly takes note of the Nineteenth Annual Report (Document No. 227).

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

That the Assembly takes note of the following government responses to reports and resolutions received since the previous plenary session: (1) response from the Government of Ireland's Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and from the Scottish Government to Committee B's report on the impact of the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013 on the free movement of goods on the island of Ireland (Document Nos. 224 and); (2) responses to Committee D's report on Travellers, Gypsies and Roma: access to public services and community relations" from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Justice and Equality.

Fifty-first plenary, Cheltenham, 15 to 17 November 2015

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

CROSS-BORDER POLICE CO-OPERATION AND ILLICIT TRADE (ADDENDUM TO REPORT)

That the Assembly takes note of the Addendum to the Report from Committee A (Sovereign Matters) on cross-border police co-operation and illicit trade (Document No. 255), which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

PREVENTING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee C (Economic) on Preventing Youth Unemployment through Education and Training (Document No. 256), which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

THE IRISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environmental and Social Affairs) on The Irish Communities in Scotland (Document No. 257), 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 responses to reports and resolutions received since the previous plenary session:

- Response from Mr. Robert O'Driscoll, Private Secretary to Mr. Charlie Flanagan, T.D., Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade.'
- Response from Mr. Niall Cody, Chairman, Irish Revenue Commissioners, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade'.
- Response from Mr. Michael Noonan, T.D., Irish Minister for Finance, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade'.
- Response from Mr. Chris Quattrociochi, Private Secretary to Ms. Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Irish Minister for Justice and Equality, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade.'
- E-mail from Ms. Clare O'Reilly, Department of Health, to the Private Secretary to the Minister of Health, indicating the Department has no direct response to make to BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade'.
- Response from Ms. Lin Homer, Chief Executive, HM Revenue and Customs, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade'.
- Response from Mr. David Ford, MLA, Minister for Justice (Northern Ireland Assembly) to report by BIPA Committee A entitled 'Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade'.

- Response from Mr. Damian Hinds, MP, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, HM Treasury, to report by BIPA Committee A entitled ‘Cross Border Police Cooperation and Illicit Trade’.
- Response from Mr. Werner Hoyer, President and Mr. Jonathan Taylor, Vice President, European Investment Bank, to report by BIPA Committee B entitled ‘European Investment Bank’.
- Response from Irish Minister for Finance to report by BIPA Committee B entitled ‘European Investment Bank’.
- Response from Mr. Kay Parplies, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission, to report by BIPA Committee B entitled ‘European Investment Bank’.
- Response from Ms. Eimear Friel, Private Secretary to the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, to report by BIPA Committee B entitled ‘European Investment Bank’.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Annual Report of Committee A (Sovereign Matters)

1. The Committee met formally on four occasions during 2015: in Belfast in January, in London in October, and during the plenary meetings in Dublin and Cheltenham in February and November respectively.
2. The Committee's work in 2015 was largely concerned with its inquiry into Cross-border police cooperation and illicit trade. In January the Committee held its final set of meetings on the inquiry in Belfast with David Ford MLA, then Minister for Justice, and officials from the Department for Justice NI, Chief Constable of the PSNI George Hamilton, Assistant Chief Constable Will Kerr, and representatives from HMRC.
3. The Committee's report on Cross-border police co-operation and illicit trade 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 welcomed the excellent cross-border cooperation between justice and law enforcement officials and agencies, and called on the Cross-Border Enforcement Groups to establish a permanent, full-time task force dedicated to eliminate the activities of organised crime gangs involved with cross-border illicit trade. The report also expressed alarm regarding evidence of the widespread presence of fuel laundering plants and filling stations selling illicit fuel, and more serious penalties, including more lengthy custodial sentences for illicit trade activities.
4. In October the Committee met in London to follow up on some of the findings of its report on Cross-border police cooperation and illicit trade, meeting with Ben Wallace MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and representatives from HMRC and the National Crime Agency.
5. Based on its October meetings the Committee produced an addendum to its report on Cross-border police cooperation and illicit trade, which was presented and adopted at the Cheltenham plenary in November. This called for greater determination in tackling the ongoing criminality, particularly in the border area.
6. Finally, the Committee saw several changes to its membership following the UK's general election. Senator Paul Coghlan praised the hard work of those members who were no longer on the Committee, and welcomed new members.

Attendance at meetings of Committee A in 2015:

Belfast 12 January 2015: Senator Paul Coghlan (Chair), Lord Bew, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Jim Walsh

Dublin 22 February 2015: Senator Paul Coghlan (Chair), Lord Bew, Senator Jim Walsh, Chris Ruane MP [Associate]

London 20 October 2015: Senator Paul Coghlan TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Baroness Blood, Viscount Bridgeman, Senator Jim Walsh

Cheltenham 15 November 2015: Senator Paul Coghlan, Lord Bew, Baroness Blood, Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney, John-Paul Phelan TD, Senator Jim Walsh

Annual Report of Committee B (European Affairs)

1. During 2015, Committee B met formally at the plenary meetings in Dublin and Cheltenham.
2. At the Dublin plenary in February 2015, the Committee agreed its Report on *The European Investment Bank*. The Report was presented to the plenary for adoption following a debate on the Report that engaged a wide range of members. The Committee discussed progress on its recently launched inquiry on visa systems. Lord German reported on a preliminary meeting that had been held with the European Commission in Dublin in November 2014. It was noted that further work on the inquiry was unlikely until the new British delegation to the Assembly had been appointed after the May 2015 UK general election. The Committee also bid farewell to its Chairman, Mr Robert Walter MP, who was standing down from the House of Commons at the time of the election.
3. At the Cheltenham plenary in November 2015 a number of new members were welcomed to the Committee following the appointment in October of a new British delegation to the Assembly after the general election. This included a new Chairman of the Committee, Andrew Rosindell MP. The Committee agreed to appoint Baroness Harris as co-rapporteur to the visas systems inquiry, replacing Lord German who was no longer a member of the Assembly. It was agreed that Baroness Harris and the Irish co-rapporteur, Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD, should proceed with holding update meetings with the British and Irish governments respectively in order to complete work on the inquiry for a report to be agreed at the Dublin 2016 plenary. It was agreed that this may include a visit to a British and Irish sea port if deemed necessary following these discussions.

Attendance at meetings of Committee B in 2015

Dublin, 22 February 2015: Mr. Robert Walter MP, (Chairman), Seán Conlan TD, Noel Coonan TD, Lord German, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Senator Imelda Henry, Joe O'Reilly TD, Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD, William Powell AM, Lord Shutt of Greetland

Cheltenham, 15 November 2015: Andrew Rosindell MP, (Chairman), Noel Coonan TD, Paul Farrelly MP, Senator Imelda Henry, Joe O'Reilly TD, William Powell AM, Robin Swann MLA

Annual Report of Committee C (Economic Affairs)

1. Committee C agreed continued to gather evidence for its report on the issue of youth unemployment and specifically '*Preventing Youth Unemployment through Education and Training*'. The Committee focused on education and training as key strategic measures to allow young people reach their full potential and thus prevent them falling into the trap of unemployment. The Committee held a number of meetings to build on the knowledge gained through the meetings on the issue in 2014 and the early part of 2015.¹
2. The Committee heard the European perspective on youth unemployment in July 2015 when a delegation travelled in a representative capacity to Brussels on a fact finding mission. They met a number of MEPs; the Irish Deputy Permanent Representative; Ms. Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Skills; the EU Commission Director in charge of Europe 2020 and the Secretary General and staff of the European Youth Federation.
3. The Committee held a final meeting on 2 November 2015 regarding the issue. It heard from Senior Officials in the Irish Departments of Education and Skills; Jobs, Enterprise and Employment and Social Protection and the State Training Agency, SOLAS. In addition, senior Officials from a range of employer representative organisations, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the National Council of Ireland (NYCI) engaged in a roundtable discussion where a lively and productive discussion ensued.
4. The Report was adopted at a meeting held on 15 November 2015 and adopted by the Assembly on 17 November 2015 at the UK Plenary in Cheltenham. The report recommendations were received very positively, particularly as it is an issue of increasing significance in all the member nations.
5. The Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement discussed its findings with a group of senior civil servants from Northern Ireland and the Republic at a meeting in December dealing with cross border cooperation in education and training to prevent youth unemployment and promote job creation.
6. The Committee met again in London on 18 February 2016 to hear a topical address from Mr. John McGrane, Director General and Mr. Iwer Boecker, Country Division Head for Ireland on Ireland-UK Economic Relations. It also agreed to conduct a new Inquiry into '*The implications of the projected growth of online sales for the key sectors of the economies in the BIPA Member Countries*'. A Work Schedule is being drawn up and work will commence on the Inquiry shortly.

¹ Details of the Committee meetings held in 2014 are given in the BIPA Annual Report for 2014.

Attendance at meetings/Fact Finding Mission of Committee C in 2015

Belfast, 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.

Brussels, 14 July 2015: Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Lord Empey OBE and Senator Paschal Mooney.

Dublin, 2 November 2015: Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Lord Empey OBE, Arthur Spring TD and Senator Paschal Mooney.

Cheltenham, 15 November 2015: Jack Wall TD (Chairman), Senator John Crown, Helen Jones MP, Lord Glentoran, Lord Empey OBE, Deputy John Le Fondré, Senator Paschal Mooney, Sean Rogers MLA, Mary Scanlon MSP, Arthur Spring TD, Robin Walker MP and Lindsay Whittle AM.

Annual Report of Committee D (Environmental and Social Issues)

1. In light of the pause in its work arising from the 2015 UK General Election, Committee D met three times during 2015: two meetings during plenary sessions; and a further meeting taking evidence. There was a large turnover of membership of the Committee following the UK General Election, and the Chairman would like to thank all the members of Committee D for their work during the year.
2. The Committee's principal piece of work during the year was its continuing inquiry into *The Irish Communities in Scotland*. The Committee reported back to the February 2015 Dublin plenary meeting on the findings of its November 2014 visit to Glasgow. The plenary meeting invited the Committee to explore these important issues in further detail. Consequently, the Committee made a further visit to Glasgow in October 2015. The Committee met interlocutors from its previous visit, including the Irish Consul General and the Irish Heritage Foundation. In addition, the Committee heard evidence from new witnesses including: Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Scottish Government; Police Scotland; Glasgow City Council; the 1916 Rising Centenary Committee (Scotland); the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland and the Irish Business Community in Scotland.
3. The Committee's final report was agreed and published at the Cheltenham plenary meeting in November 2015. The report concluded that Irish communities have made a significant contribution to Scottish society for many decades and more. Historically these communities have faced issues of discrimination and disadvantage, although the Committee noted that such concerns are diminishing as time goes by. The report found that Irish culture – whether in music, language, dance, literature or sport – is thriving, and Irish communities are held up as a shining example of successful integration. This is underpinned by increasingly close political and economic ties between Scotland and Ireland. The Committee acknowledged that challenges remain, in particular ensuring that the activities of community groups are adequately

resourced. Nevertheless, the Committee expressed confidence that the Irish communities in Scotland will make an increasingly forceful and positive contribution to Scottish society in the years to come. The report gained media coverage, for instance in the *Irish Post* and BBC Scotland, and was positively received by the Irish Consul-General in Scotland.

4. At the Cheltenham plenary meeting, the Committee also announced its intention to follow up its October 2014 report on Travellers, Gypsies and Roma: access to public services and community relations. Given the cross-jurisdictional nature of the subject area, responses have been received from a myriad of British and Irish Government departments. The Committee has subsequently written letters in response to the various departments seeking further information and clarification of some of the issues raised in the Government responses. Further responses have since been received from various British Government departments, and are expected from Irish Government departments now the Government formation process is complete.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2015

Dublin, 22 February 2015

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Seán Crowe TD, Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Senator Cáit Keane, Barry McElduff MLA, Michael McMahon MSP, Senator Mary Moran, Mark Pritchard MP, Chris Ruane MP, Joyce Watson AM

Glasgow, 11-12 October 2015

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Senator Cáit Keane, John Lyons TD, Michael McMahon MSP, Senator Mary Moran, Lord Shutt of Greetland, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM

Cheltenham, 15 November 2015

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Maurice Cummins (Vice-Chairman), Dave Anderson MP, Deirdre Brock MP, Senator Cáit Keane, John Lyons TD, Barry McElduff MLA, Michael McMahon MSP, Nigel Mills MP, Senator Mary Moran, Lord Skelmersdale, Joyce Watson AM

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2015

Ireland:

Clerk: Ms. Tara Kelly

Policy Adviser:

Ms Laoise Moore-Durajczyk

Clerk, Committee A:

Mr. Ian Devine

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Mr. Ian Devine

Clerk, Committee C:

Ms. Betty Kehoe/Mr. Luke Brennan

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Ms. Betty Kehoe/Mr. Luke Brennan

Irish Secretariat:

Ms. Betty Kehoe/Mr. Luke Brennan

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Dr. Robin James

British Consultant:

Sir Michael Davies KCB

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr. Edward Faulkner

Clerk, Committee B:

Mr. Ed Beale

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Dr. Anna Dickson

Clerk, Committee D:

Mr. Stuart Stoner

UK Secretariat:

Mrs. Amanda Healy

Media Consultant:

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