

Report on
Developments
in the
European
Union
in 2004



EU Member States

■ EU Member States

Ireland
UK
France
Germany
Austria
Belgium
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Spain
Portugal
Italy
Slovenia

Poland
Slovakia
Czech Republic
Sweden
Denmark
Finland
Estonia
Latvia
Lithuania
Hungary
Cyprus
Malta
Greece

■ Countries due to join the EU on 1 January 2007

Romania
Bulgaria

■ Candidate Countries

Croatia
Turkey

■ Non-EU Members



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Introduction

This is the second Annual report on Developments in the European Union to be submitted to the Oireachtas under the terms of the EU (Scrutiny) Act 2002. The report is divided into five sections; the first four parts of the report summarise the key developments in the EU during 2004. Part 5 of the report provides an overview of Oireachtas scrutiny of proposed EU legislation during the year.

2004 proved to be a year of momentous historical and institutional development for the European Union with the accession of ten new Member States and the agreement on the European Constitution. Ireland held the EU Presidency during the first six months of 2004 followed by the Netherlands during the second half of the year.

The accession of the ten new Member States to the European Union on 1 May was the one of highlights of Ireland's Presidency. Leaders from all EU Member States and the Presidents of the European Parliament and the European Commission attended a "Day of Welcomes" in Dublin to celebrate this historic occasion. Ten towns and cities across Ireland also 'adopted' a new Member State to commemorate the Union's enlargement which was celebrated across the EU. At the June European Council, the Presidency succeeded in securing agreement on a Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe which provides the Union's citizens with a single, consolidated European Constitution which, if adopted by all Member States, will serve as the Union's basic law for many years to come.

During 2004 enlargement negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania were concluded, while Croatia was accepted as a candidate country. At the December European Council agreement was reached on opening accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005, provided certain conditions are fulfilled. Following the enlargement of the Union, relations with the Union's new neighbours are being taken forward through the European Neighbourhood Policy.

During the six months of the Irish Presidency some 80 legislative proposals were concluded with the European Parliament representing 20% of all legislation adopted during the Parliament's five year term. Significant legislative progress was made in the economic, social and environmental policy areas as well as in the Lisbon Strategy which aims to make the EU the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy. During the Irish Presidency agreement was secured on the

parameters for the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy to take place in 2005.

The terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March led to adoption of the Declaration on Combating Terrorism at the March European Council. In June, the European Council noted the significant progress made in implementing the measures set out in the Declaration and the work of the European Counter Terrorism Coordinator. The multi-annual Hague Programme, which was adopted in November, sets out a range of policies related to the area of freedom, security and justice in the Union including cross-border issues such as the fight against terrorism and organised crime, enhanced justice and police cooperation, border management and asylum and migration policy.

In the external relations area both Irish and Dutch Presidencies sought to emphasise the importance of effective multilateralism, conflict prevention and the development of the European Security and Defence Policy. Ireland and the Netherlands also worked closely with partners to strengthen and develop key partnerships, including the Transatlantic relationship and EU-Africa cooperation. In the development area the EU focussed on the Millennium Development Goals with their emphasis on poverty eradication and sustainable development and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Irish Presidency also sought to promote wider public engagement in the EU through the provision of information about the EU and its impact on the lives of all Europeans. It convened the first Ministerial Conference on Communicating Europe in April 2004; this was followed up by a meeting in October organised by the Dutch Presidency.

At a specially convened meeting of the European Council on 29 June, Heads of State and Government nominated José Manuel Durao Barroso as the new President of the Commission.

EU citizens elected a new European Parliament in June which included, for the first time, MEPs from the ten new Member States. Following a hearings process with prospective Commissioners, and the subsequent withdrawal of two nominee Commissioners, the European Parliament endorsed the new College of Commissioners in November.

I. Institutional Developments

European Constitution

The Irish Presidency successfully concluded the Intergovernmental Conference with an agreement on the European Constitution at the June European Council in Brussels.

In January, such an outcome seemed unlikely following the failure of the December 2003 European Council to reach agreement. However, after a sustained period of bilateral contact at political and official level, the Taoiseach reported to the European Council in March that in his view agreement was possible. He invited partners to confirm that the necessary political will existed to complete the negotiations. In response, the Heads of State or Government decided to reach agreement by the June European Council.

Three Ministerial-level meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, resolved

many of the outstanding issues prior to the final negotiations in June. Bilateral discussions also continued, including during the Taoiseach's pre-European Council tour of capitals.

At the European Council in June, two days of intensive negotiations, both in plenary format and in a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings with partners, resulted in consensus on the outstanding questions, including the future size and composition of the Commission, the voting system in the Council, and the scope of qualified majority voting.

Over the summer, final technical legal work was undertaken on the text of the European Constitution and it was translated into each of the Union's Treaty languages, including Irish.

The European Constitution was signed by the Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs and their colleagues from each of the Member States in Rome on 29 October. To coincide with

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this, the Department of Foreign Affairs published an introductory explanatory guide and leaflet.

The European Constitution is intended to enter into effect on 1 November 2006, following ratification by all Member States. By end-2004 Lithuania and Hungary had completed their national ratification processes.

Further information on the European Constitution is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs website at:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie/eu/futureofeurope.asp>

Further information on the European Constitution can be found on the Union's inter-institutional portal at:

<http://europa.eu.int/constitution/>

Financial Perspectives

The Irish Presidency initiated discussions at official level on the policy orientations of the future Financial Perspectives as outlined in the Commission's Communication of 10 February 2004. It prepared an analytical report for the June European Council clarifying issues and positions and offering feedback to the Commission on its Communication. As such, the report fulfilled the Presidency objective of establishing an effective foundation for subsequent negotiations on this dossier, including with regard to remaining within the timeframe envisaged in the Multiannual Strategic Programme of achieving political agreement by June 2005.

The Netherlands Presidency undertook a programme of work on the future financial framework with the aim of achieving agreement at the December 2003 European Council on principles and guidelines. A progress report was prepared by the Presidency for the December European Council reflecting Member States' positions on the Commission's proposals and progress in discussions at Ministerial and official level.

The December European Council invited the Luxembourg Presidency, in cooperation with the Commission, to press ahead with further work on this dossier, taking full account of the progress report and the range of Member State positions on the Commission's proposals. The European Council reiterated the deadline for political agreement on the dossier.

Own Resources System

The EU's Own Resources System provides the revenue to finance EU expenditure. In July the Commission produced a Report on financing the European Union, setting out its analysis of the EU's Own Resources System and how it might be changed. The principal recommendations set out in the Report are for the abolition of the UK Rebate, the introduction of a Generalised Correction Mechanism to correct excessive net contributions to the EU Budget, and for consideration to be given to introducing tax-like own resources to finance the EU after 2013. There was discussion of these issues during the Netherlands Presidency and the issues will be further discussed under the Luxembourg Presidency as it strives to achieve agreement on the Financial Perspectives in June 2005

Cohesion Policy (Structural and Cohesion Funds) 2007-13

The Commission published its Third Cohesion Report in February 2004 containing its policy, management and implementation proposals for Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2007-13. The Commission has proposed a budget of some €336 billion for Cohesion policy for the period 2007-13. The Commission's proposals envisage a Cohesion policy with stronger links to the Lisbon and Gothenburg processes through increased emphasis on competitiveness, employment, social cohesion and sustainable development. Significant changes are proposed in the method of planning, implementation and management for the Structural and Cohesion funds. An enhanced role for the Council is at the core of the proposals. Draft regulations for the governance of Structural and Cohesion Funds were published in July and set out the suggested framework and criteria for the operation of the Structural and Cohesion Funds after 2006. The regulations are currently being discussed in the Council Working Group on Structural Actions.

PEACE II Extension

On 18 May last the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair wrote a joint letter to Commission President Prodi requesting that the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) -which assists projects aimed at consolidating peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and border areas- should be extended to the end of 2006. The extension of the programme was adopted in January 2005.

Enlargement of the European Union

Accession of ten new Member States

The accession of the ten new Member States – the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – to the European Union on 1 May 2004 was one of the defining moments of the Irish Presidency. The celebrations, including the Day of Welcomes in Dublin on 1 May, appropriately marked the historic and inclusive nature of the occasion.

Making a success of enlargement was a key priority for the Irish Presidency. The Presidency worked intensively with the Commission and all Member States to ensure the integration of the new members and a smooth transition from a Union of fifteen to twenty-five.

Cyprus

During the Presidency, Ireland worked closely with the Commission and Member States and in consultation with the Secretary General of the United Nations to ensure that the influence of the EU was brought to bear in favour of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, on the basis of the Secretary General's proposals. The focus was on the achievement of an agreement which would enable the accession of a united Cyprus to the European Union. Secretary General Annan, in reporting to the UN Security Council in May, expressed appreciation for the support that the EU had extended to his efforts. In the absence of a settlement following the referendum on 24 April, the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted Conclusions on the need to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community, which recommended the use for this purpose of the funds earmarked for northern Cyprus in the event of a settlement and requested the Commission to prepare comprehensive proposals. The Presidency also ensured the adoption of the necessary Regulation on the dividing line in Cyprus, which enabled the 1 May enlargement to proceed without the complication of unfinished business on the movement of persons and goods across the dividing line in Cyprus.

Further enlargement

The European Commission published its Regular Reports on Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and also published Strategy Papers on Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, a Recommendation on Turkey and a document entitled "Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective" in October 2004.

Negotiations continued with Romania and Bulgaria throughout 2004 and were formally concluded at the European Council in December. The Irish Presidency informally concluded negotiations with Bulgaria in June while Romania concluded its negotiations under the Dutch Presidency in December. Drafting of the Accession Treaty began in July 2004 and finished in January 2005. The December European Council decided that the Accession Treaty for both Bulgaria and Romania should be signed on 25 April 2005, with a view to their accession in January 2007, if they are both ready.

Croatia

At the June European Council the EU decided to grant candidate status to Croatia. Following on from this, the Commission outlined a framework for the accession negotiations with Croatia in its enlargement strategy paper, published in October 2004. The December European Council invited the Commission to submit a proposed negotiating framework to be agreed by the Council with a view to opening negotiations on 17 March 2005, provided that there was full cooperation with International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Turkey

The Commission's Report and Recommendation on Turkey's progress toward accession, published in October 2004, concluded that Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria and recommended the opening of accession negotiations. The December European Council decided, in the light of the Commission's report and recommendation, that Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria, provided that it brings into force six specific pieces of legislation identified by the Commission. It set out significant further detail in relation to the accession negotiations.

European Parliament elections

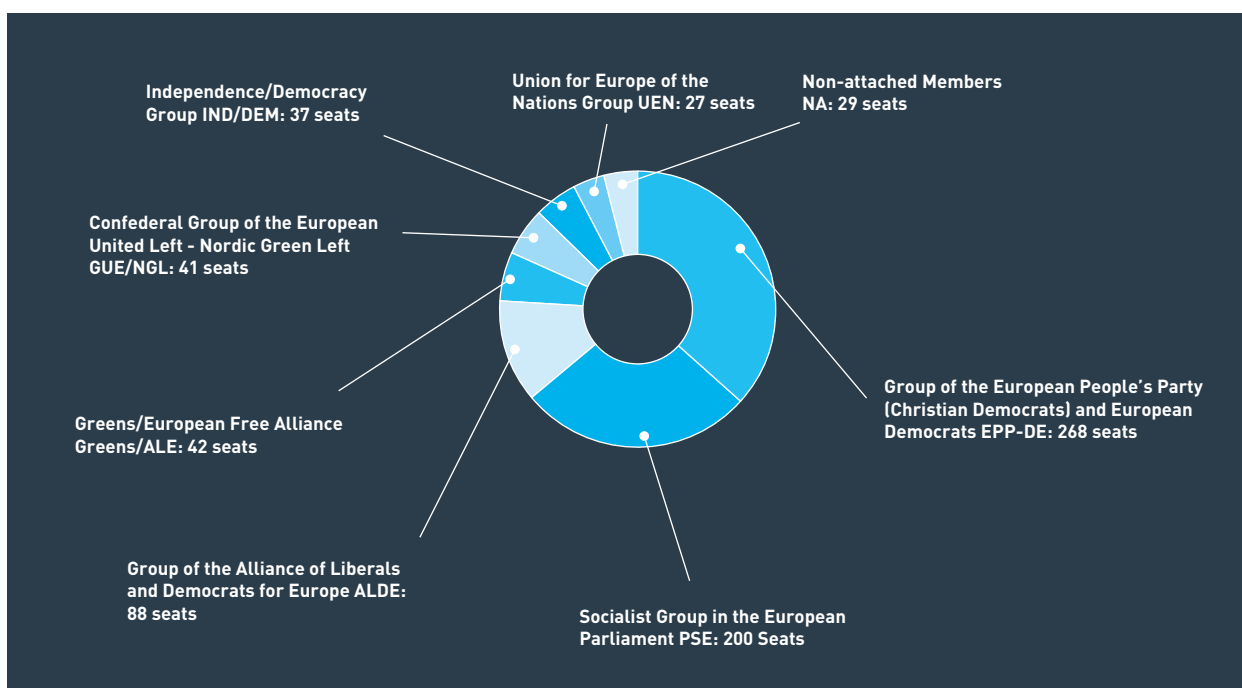
From 10-13 June 155 million voters in 25 Member States participated in the first post-enlargement elections to the European Parliament electing 732 MEPs.

The relative strengths of the main Political groups in the European Parliament remained unchanged after the elections. The Christian Democrats (268 members) remain the largest group in the European Parliament followed by the Socialists (202 members) and the Liberal Group (88 members).

Irish MEPs

Constituency	MEPs	Political Group in the European Parliament
Dublin	Proinsias de Rossa (Lab) Mary Lou McDonald (SF) Gay Mitchell (FG) Eoin Ryan (FF)	Socialist Group Confederal Group of the European United Left Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) Union for Europe of the Nations Group
East	Liam Aylward (FF) Avril Doyle (FG) Mairead McGuinness (FG)	Union for Europe of the Nations Group Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
North West	Marian Harkin (Ind) Jim Higgins (FG) Séan Ó Neachtain (FF)	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) Union for Europe of the Nations Group
South	Simon Coveney (FG) Brian Crowley (FF) Kathy Sinnott (Ind)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) Union for Europe of the Nations Group Independence/Democracy Group

European Parliament election results 2004



Appointment of the European Commission 2004-2009

At the European Council on 29 June Heads of State and Government nominated Mr José Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission to replace Mr Romano Prodi whose mandate was set to end in late 2004. Mr Barroso's nomination was subsequently approved by the newly elected European Parliament. In August President Barroso allocated portfolios to nominees for the College of Commissioners which included for the first time Commissioners from the ten new Member States. The Irish nominee, Mr Charlie McCreevy, was allocated the internal market and services portfolio.

During September and October Commissioners-designate appeared in public hearings before Committees of the European Parliament. On 11 October the Civil Liberties Committee voted against approving the nomination of Mr Rocco Buttiglione (Italy) to the Justice, Freedom and Security portfolio.

A vote by the European Parliament on the new College of Commissioners that had been due to take place on 27 October was deferred when it became clear that MEPs would oppose the appointment of the new Commission following concerns expressed by MEPs about Mr Buttiglione and a number of Commissioners-designate.

Following the deferral of the European Parliament vote, the nominations of the Mr Rocco Buttiglione and Ms Ingrida Udre (Latvia) were withdrawn and these were replaced by Mr Franco Frattini (Justice, Freedom and Security) and Mr Andris Piebalgs (Energy). President Barroso also decided to appoint Mr Lazlo Kovacs (Hungary) to the Taxation and Customs Union portfolio (Mr Kovacs had earlier been nominated as Commissioner-designate for Energy).

On 18 November, the European Parliament approved the appointment of the new Commission and on the following day the Council adopted a Decision formally appointing the Commission. The new College of Commissioners (listed in the table) formally took office on Monday, 22 November.

The Barroso Commission 2004-2009

Commissioner (Member State)	Portfolio
Mr José Manuel Barroso (Portugal)	Commission President
Mr Joaquin Almunia Amann (Spain)	Economic And Monetary Affairs
Mr Jacques Barrot (France)	Commission Vice President with responsibility for Transport
Mr Joe Borg (Malta)	Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
Mr Stavros Dimas (Greece)	Environment
Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner (Austria)	External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy
Mr Ján Figel (Slovakia)	Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism
Ms Mariann Fischer Boel (Denmark)	Agriculture and Rural Development
Mr Franco Frattini (Italy)	Commission Vice President with responsibility for Justice, Freedom and Security
Ms Dalia Grybauskaitė (Lithuania)	Financial Programming and Budget
Ms Danuta Hübner (Poland)	Regional Policy
Mr Siim Kallas (Estonia)	Commission Vice President with responsibility for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud
Mr László Kovács (Hungary)	Taxation and Customs Union
Ms Neelie Kroes (Netherlands)	Competition
Mr Markus Kyprianou (Cyprus)	Health and Consumer Protection
Mr Peter Mandelson (Great Britain)	Trade
Mr Charlie McCreevy (Ireland)	Internal Market and Services
Mr Louis Michel (Belgium)	Development and Humanitarian Aid
Mr Andris Piebalgs (Latvia)	Energy
Mr Janez Potočnik (Slovenia)	Science and Research
Ms Viviane Reding (Luxembourg)	Information Society and Media
Mr Olli Rehn (Finland)	Enlargement
Mr Vladimír Špidla (Czech Republic)	Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Mr Günter Verheugen (Germany)	Commission Vice President with responsibility for Enterprise and Industry
Ms Margot Wallström (Sweden)	Commission Vice President with responsibility for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy

At the December General Affairs and External Relations Council Ireland presented a proposal which seeks to have official and working language status in the EU accorded to the Irish language

Communicating Europe

A key objective of Ireland's EU Presidency was to communicate the EU more effectively to citizens. The Irish Presidency website which received over 47 million hits in six months was the principal communications tool in this regard. The Government also published reports and information material on the Presidency programme as well as a brochure on the Lisbon Strategy entitled "What Europe is doing for you".

During its Presidency Ireland also inaugurated the Communicating Europe Ministerial process which has been continued by subsequent Presidencies.

On April 7/8 Ministers or State Secretaries for European Affairs from all 25 Member States and senior representatives of the EU institutions attended the inaugural Communicating Europe Ministerial Conference in Wicklow.

During the Conference delegates assessed and contrasted the public impact of existing EU information and communications strategies and highlighted best practice. Delegates also discussed a broad range of related issues including participation in EU referenda and elections to the European Parliament, the role of the European Parliament and national Parliaments in the dissemination of information about the EU, promoting greater openness and transparency in the EU, and the role of the media in communicating Europe.

These meetings provided Ministers for European Affairs with an opportunity to exchange views on how to communicate the EU more effectively to citizens with a view to promoting wider public engagement in EU affairs.

In August Ms Margot Wallström was appointed as the first Commission Vice-President with responsibility for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy. Vice-President Wallström has expressed her intention to promote wider dialogue and debate with the citizens about the future of Europe and its institutions.

The Netherlands carried forward the Communicating Europe initiative and convened a series of meetings of Ministers for European Affairs throughout the Presidency and a Ministerial Conference on Communicating Europe was convened in Amsterdam in October.

The Dutch Government also organised a series of conferences and public debates in The Hague, Rotterdam, Warsaw, Berlin and Washington DC which explored the political relevance of the EU and the common values shared by all Europeans.

Official and Working Languages of the European Union

At the December General Affairs and External Relations Council Ireland presented a proposal which seeks to have official and working language status in the EU accorded to the Irish language. Ireland's proposal provides for a transitional arrangement under which certain key EU legislation (that adopted jointly by the Council and the European Parliament) would be translated into Irish. Under the proposal, the possibility of extending the range of documents to be translated into Irish would be the subject of a review to take place not later than four years after adoption of the current proposal. The proposal takes the form of a proposed amendment to Regulation 1 of 1958 which governs the official and working language régime of the EU. It requires the unanimous agreement of Member States.

II. Promoting an area of Growth and Prosperity

The Lisbon Strategy

The main objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, adopted by the European Council in 2000, are to develop a stronger, more competitive and more innovative economy in Europe, to create more and better jobs, to work towards strengthening social cohesion, and to protect and sustain our shared environment. The scope of the strategy extends to a range of policy areas and has the potential to impact positively on the lives of all EU citizens.

Spring European Council, 25/26 March 2004

One of the key objectives of Ireland's EU Presidency was to achieve progress in implementing the Lisbon Strategy. The Irish Presidency used the Spring European Council, at which progress on advancing the Lisbon Strategy is reviewed annually, to focus attention on sustainable growth and employment. This approach encompassed action in support of maintaining sound macro-economic policies, promoting greater competitiveness and ensuring a strong focus on social cohesion while ensuring that growth was environmentally sustainable.

The European Council concluded that the creation of more and better jobs was the one of the most pressing issues to be addressed at the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy at the 2005 Spring European Council. The European Council therefore urged Member States to develop and implement policies aimed at promoting worker adaptability, attracting more people into Europe's labour markets, enhancing the quality of employment and investing in human capital. It also agreed that increased priority should be given by Member States to elements of the Lisbon Strategy which reduce social exclusion and poverty in Europe. Building on Ireland's positive experience of social partnership, the Irish Presidency secured the agreement of the European Council to the establishment by Member States of Reform Partnerships involving social partners, civil society and public authorities, to promote complementary strategies for change. Ireland also achieved agreement, as Presidency, on a range of legislative dossiers aimed at advancing the Lisbon Strategy.

Mid-term review of Lisbon Strategy

In November 2004 a high-level group chaired by former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, published an independent assessment of the Lisbon Strategy in preparation for the mid-term review of the Strategy taking place at the Spring

European Council in March 2005. The report highlighted the urgency of improving the performance of the EU economy and called for action in a number of key policy areas. In particular, it recommended a greater focus on growth and jobs and, in this regard, proposed that Member States should ensure greater engagement of national parliaments and relevant stakeholders in accelerating the implementation of Lisbon reforms.

November European Council

The November European Council highlighted the progress made by the EU institutions in developing a common methodology for assessing the impact of new legislation, including on competitiveness, and for simplifying existing European legislation and noted the critical role played by the European Parliament in this area. It also noted the progress made on devising a methodology to assess the administrative burden of regulation on business.

Growth and Employment

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

A Directive consolidating enforcement of intellectual property rights and increasing enforcement against piracy and counterfeiting was adopted. Council Agreement was secured on a Directive clarifying the rules on the patentability of computer implemented inventions.

Draft Chemicals Regulation (REACH)

During 2004 Ministers gave political direction at both the Environment and Competitiveness Councils on some key issues that emerged during negotiations at Working Group level on the proposed new Chemicals legislation. The legislation will have significant implications for industry in the EU and as the discussions developed there was detailed consideration of the need to strike the correct balance between environmental health and competitiveness considerations.

Research and Development

The Competitiveness Council agreed a top-up of €2 billion for the 6th Framework Programme to reflect the enlargement of the EU.

Space Policy

The first Joint EU/European Space Agency Council was convened in Brussels on 25 November 2004 to discuss major policy issues concerning the definition of a European Space

Programme (ESP), due to be launched in 2007. A second Joint Space Council will be held in Spring 2005.

Financial Services

The Financial Services Action Plan was effectively completed during the Irish Presidency, agreement being reached on key dossiers including the Financial Markets Instruments Directive (to facilitate trading by financial services companies throughout the EU), the Transparency Directive (to provide investors with regular information) and the Takeover Bids Directive.

Competition and Consumer Protection

Agreement was secured on a number of measures in 2004 to ease the administrative burden on business in the EU while protecting the consumer. These include the Directive on takeover bids which aims to establish minimum guidelines for the conduct of takeover bids so as to protect competition.

Agreement was also reached on a Directive enhancing consumer protection legislation against unfair business-to-consumer practices in the internal market. A regulation improving the efficiency of the trademark system through the Community Trademark Regulation was also adopted.

Agreement was secured at Council and in the European Parliament on a Regulation providing for close cooperation between authorities in Member States to better enforce consumer protection laws.

Support for Workers and Worker Mobility

During the Irish Presidency agreement was reached on the Reform and Simplification of Regulation 1408/71 which protects the social security rights of migrant workers and their

family members moving within the EU. A Directive protecting workers against the risks associated with optical radiation including the harmful effects of solar, infrared and laser radiation was also adopted. Political Agreement was also secured on Europass (see page 15) and the Directive on the Mutual recognition of Professional Qualifications. These measures will enable more workers to have their professional qualifications recognised in other EU Member States.

Equality Issues

Agreement was reached during the Dutch EU Presidency on a draft Directive on equal treatment of men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services particularly with regard to insurance charges and premiums. Earlier in 2004 the Daphne II Programme, which supports actions to combat violence against children, young people and women, was agreed for 2004-08. A Decision establishing a Community Action Programme to promote organisations active at European level in the field of equality between men and women was adopted in April.

As Presidency, Ireland also coordinated and presented the common EU position on the draft UN Convention to promote and protect the dignity and rights of people with disabilities which was the subject of the UN Ad Hoc Committee meeting from 29 May to 9 June.

Customs

In May, agreement was reached on a Regulation which will introduce electronic information exchange between Customs administrations and e-declarations to improve the security and safety of goods crossing Community borders and facilitate

The Lisbon Strategy aims to develop a stronger, more competitive and more innovative economy in Europe, to create more and better jobs and to strengthen social cohesion and protect and sustain our shared environment

trade. Council also adopted a decision in April on the conclusion of an EU/US Agreement broadening the existing Agreement on customs co-operation and mutual assistance in customs matters to include co-operation on Container Security and related matters. The European Commission, together with ten Member States of the Union and Philip Morris International reached an agreement to combat the problem of cigarette smuggling. Ireland, along with the 15 who had not signed the original agreement, has been invited to sign.

Taxation

Direct Taxation

In the area of the taxation of savings, the EU signed agreements with Switzerland, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino to apply equivalent measures to those in the EU Taxation of Savings Directive. The EU Savings Directive, following a decision by Council, is now to apply from 1 July 2005.

Company Taxation

Following discussion at the Informal meeting of Economic and Finance Ministers in September, a Commission Technical Working Group was established to examine the technical issues surrounding the introduction of a common consolidated corporate tax base throughout the EU. Ireland does not see a need to proceed to a common base and is of the view that the focus should be on tackling specific issues identified as barriers to trade within the Internal Market. Ireland participates in the Commission Working Group without prejudice to its national position.

Significant progress was made on a number of other direct tax dossiers such as agreement on changes to the 1990 Mergers Directive.

Indirect Taxation

In the indirect taxation area, progress was made on a number of dossiers including the complex proposal to change the place of supply rules for services for VAT purposes in relation to business to business transactions. In addition, the Commission issues some new legislative proposals in the area of VAT. In the area of excise duties, a proposal to amend the Energy Tax Directive for the new Member States was adopted by Council in April. The Council also adopted a proposal in April for a Directive amending the mutual assistance directive by the competent authorities of Member States in the field of direct

and indirect taxation which broadens the scope of exchange and disclosure of information and places new obligations in relation to notifications of taxpayers.

VAT on Postal Services

In response to an Opinion of the European Parliament of March 2004, the Commission revised its proposal of May 2003 on VAT on postal services. This would amend the Sixth VAT Directive with a view to making all services provided by the postal sector subject to VAT. Ireland remains opposed to the proposal in its present form.

Environment and Sustainable Development

Work continued on promoting the Union's progressive approach to environmental protection and sustainable development throughout 2004 and new legislation was adopted to promote better air quality, cleaner water and reduced sulphur content in marine fuels. Agreement was secured on a Directive that will ensure a cost-effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the transfer of clean technologies to developing countries and countries in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Bathing Water

Political agreement was reached in the Council on a proposal for an updated Directive on bathing water. The Directive will lay down provisions for the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality, as well as comprehensive management measures and the provision of information to the public.

Waste Management

Environment Ministers unanimously adopted conclusions on waste prevention and recycling. To combine both economic growth and sustainable development, the EU is committed to ensuring that the impacts which economic activities and the use of natural resources exert on the environment are reduced, through material substitution, re-use and repair, recycling, energy recovery and eco-efficiency.

Accidents and Natural Disasters

In response to recent accidents and natural disasters Environment Ministers discussed a common response to marine pollution and flooding.

Political agreement on a common position on a draft directive on ship-source pollution and on the introduction of sanctions

for infringements was reached at Council in June 2004. The Proposal is one of a number of initiatives undertaken following the enormous environmental damage caused following the sinking of the Prestige oil tanker off the coast of northern Spain in November 2002.

The EU acknowledged that Europe suffered a large number of floods over the last years, which caused loss of life, injuries and damage to property and infrastructure. The Commission has been invited to submit an appropriate proposal for a European Action Programme on flood risk management, taking into account the conclusions and the work of the Informal meeting of the EU Water Directors.

Extension of LIFE Programme

The EU LIFE Environment Programme is a financial instrument which contributes to the development and implementation of community environment policy and legislation, through the support of innovative and demonstration-type environmental projects. In 2004 political agreement was reached on a proposed regulation extending the life of the existing regulation to the end of 2006. Under the agreement reached, the LIFE Programme will have a budget of €317.2m for 2005/2006.

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted by the Russian Federation in November which paved the way for its entry into force in February 2005. The Environment Council brought forward two sets of conclusions on climate change under the Dutch Presidency in preparation for international negotiations for further emissions reductions after 2012, and consideration of such reductions by the Spring European Council in 2005.

Aarhus Convention

Political Agreement was reached on a draft Regulation on the application of the Provisions of the Aarhus Convention to EU Institutions and bodies. Political Agreement was also reached on a draft Decision on the Conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Aarhus Convention. Work is continuing on Ireland's ratification of this Convention which deals with public access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

Eco-efficiency

Environmental concerns related to batteries and accumulators are mainly due to the materials they contain. In 2004 the Council

reached political agreement on a draft Directive on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators. The Draft Directive will now go for second reading.

Energy

Political agreement was reached at Council on the Directive on the Eco-Design requirements for energy using-products.

Political agreement was reached on Trans-European Networks at the June Council as well as the Regulation on conditions for access to the gas transmission networks.

Transport

Aviation Sector

In 2004 a Regulation was adopted establishing common rules on the compensation and assistance provided to air passengers by airlines in the event of denied boarding, cancellation or long delay of flights. This Regulation entered into force in February 2005.

Aviation safety has also been enhanced across the EU following the adoption of measures regulating the minimum levels of insurance for European aircraft operators and operators of foreign aircraft flying into European airports or through European airspace, and ensuring that non-EU aircraft comply with the internationally agreed safety standards laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The EU is continuing to work to complete the regulatory framework for the establishment of a Single European Sky, which is intended to bring about major structural improvements to European air traffic management systems. The EU will also seek to develop strategic capability in satellite navigation through the Galileo project.

Railways

Agreement was reached on the Second Railway Package which will lead to increased safety, interoperability, rail freight liberalisation, the establishment of a new European Railway Agency and Community accession to COTIF (Convention concerning International carriage by Rail).

Road Transport

A Directive on the interoperability of electronic road toll systems was adopted in 2004 and came into force;

harmonised toll collection technology will facilitate free movement across borders across the EU. A Directive on safety in road tunnels was also adopted. Discussions continued on the draft directive for charging heavy goods vehicles for the use of specified road infrastructure.

Trans European Transport Networks

The Trans European Networks (TENs) were instituted by the EU during the 1990s to improve physical infrastructure and services across borders. Examples of TENs are energy networks and transport networks and connections between Member States.

The TEN Networks (TEN-T) programme is aimed at transforming the collection of national transport networks into a transport network that will serve the needs of the entire Union. To advance the TEN-T process, the European Council adopted a set of Guidelines in 1996 which provide the legal and administrative rules regarding the TEN-T. With delays in project completion and increasing congestion, there was an urgent need to adopt new Guidelines which would concentrate resources on priority infrastructure projects and extend the TEN-T Network across the enlarged Union. The Irish

Presidency worked very closely with the European Parliament and with the European Commission to have the revised TEN-T Guidelines adopted by 1 May 2004.

The Revised TEN-T Guidelines include a number of new features including;

- ▶ A list of 30 priority projects, costing about €225 Billion, spread right across the enlarged EU, and declared to be of European interest was agreed. These projects are primarily road, rail and commercial inland waterway projects.
- ▶ These priority projects include - the Cork-Dublin-Belfast Rail corridor, and - the Cork-Dublin-Belfast Road corridor.
- ▶ Closer co-operation between cross-border authorities including in Ireland for the two main Road/Rail Irish Priority Projects under TEN-T; the Cork/Dublin/Belfast Rail Priority Project and the Cork/Dublin/Belfast Road Priority Project.

The TEN-T projects will enable Ireland to be sufficiently well linked with the emerging trans-European transport network. Ireland welcomes the inclusion of a new category of Motorways

Agreement was reached on establishing Common Rules on the compensation and assistance provided to air passengers by airlines in the event of denied boarding, cancellation or long delay of flights

of the Sea in the projects selected for trans-European transport networks. Under the Motorways of the Sea category it is possible that an Irish port (or cluster of Irish ports) could benefit from EU funding. However it is likely that only selected feasibility studies will qualify for EU funding from this initiative up to and including 2006.

Telecommunications and Information Society

During 2004 the EU sought to promote greater and safer use of all communications media. In December, Communications Ministers unanimously reached political agreement on the first reading of a proposal for a Community programme promoting safer use of the internet and new online technologies. The Council recognised that cross border cooperation would be an integral part of this proposal to fight illegal content, tackle unwanted or harmful content and promote a safer online environment. Council Conclusions were also adopted in December calling on all players to cooperate strongly against the increasing problem of e-mail "spam". The Council also invited the European Commission to assess whether funds from forthcoming Community Programmes could be applied to developing solutions to counter the diffusion of e-mail "spam".

During the year the Council also adopted a Decision on the Interoperable Delivery of pan-European Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (IDABC) which aims to provide both business and citizens with easier access to online public services across the EU. Agreement was also reached on the 'eContent plus' proposal which seeks to promote investment and innovation in the emerging digital content industry in Europe and contribute to the Lisbon Strategy by strengthening European competitiveness in the knowledge economy. Council Conclusions were agreed on the eEurope-Next Steps/National Broadband Strategies which aim to prioritise the introduction and use of broadband networks throughout the Union by 2005 to provide citizens across the EU with fast and easy access to the Internet.

Education

During the Irish Presidency agreement was reached on an Interim Report setting out the objectives for the education and training aspects of the Lisbon Agenda which include promotion of lifelong learning, education and training throughout the EU to enable the realisation of a "knowledge society". The Education Council also adopted a resolution on strengthening policies, systems and practices for lifelong guidance in Europe.

Europass

Political agreement was secured on "Europass", a single framework of documents for the transparency of qualifications and competences of citizens in Europe. The main concept is to link separate documents aimed at the transparency of qualifications and competences into a single framework, in the form of a structured portfolio of documents, known as Europass. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has been designated as the National Europass Centre. Political agreement was also secured by the Irish Presidency on a consolidated EU directive on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Progress was also made during the Irish and Dutch Presidencies on the development of a European Qualifications Framework.

Integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning

The current EU education and training programmes will come to an end in 2006. The EU Commission has proposed a new integrated programme for mobility and cooperation in lifelong learning which will cover both education and training. The new programme will succeed the existing Socrates and Leonardo programmes.

Agriculture and Food

In 2004 the Irish and Dutch Presidencies achieved their objectives of facilitating the integration of the ten new Member States into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), of continuing the process of simplification of the CAP which was initiated in the Mid-term Review, and of enhancing food safety standards. Legislation adopted included the following:

- ▶ Regulation on the welfare of animals in transport
- ▶ The Regulation on the reform of the support regimes for cotton, tobacco, olive oil and hops (the 'Mediterranean

Package') which was agreed in April represented a further major step in enhancing the market orientation and the future sustainability of the CAP

Substantial progress was achieved also in advancing the EU's legislative programme on food safety and the measures adopted included:

- ▶ Regulation on official feed and food controls which streamlines and reinforces the efficiency of control services
- ▶ The 'Hygiene Package', which comprises of four Council Regulations and a Council Directive which update, reform and consolidate EU legislation on the hygiene of foodstuffs
- ▶ Proposal laying down requirements for the production, transport, storage and handling of animal feed which completes the "farm to fork" food approach to food safety.

There was detailed examination and discussion, but no decisions, on the Commission's proposals relating to rural development policy and the financing the CAP (both of which were presented as part of the package of proposals relating to the Financial Perspective 2007-2013) and on the outline proposals for the reform of the EU sugar regime. There was broad support in the Council for the Netherlands Presidency's initiative to encourage greater co-operation and co-ordination between Member States in research activity which is aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of research in areas such as food safety and quality, competitiveness, sustainability and environmental protection.

Fisheries

Progress was made on a number of issues in the fisheries area in 2004 particularly with a view to involving stakeholders in decisions and in promoting maritime environmental sustainability. Following a Ministerial Conference in Dundalk in March with stakeholders, an agreement on a work programme to accelerate environmentally friendly fishing practices was concluded by the Irish Presidency. Measures adopted in 2004 included a Council Regulation eliminating as far as possible mortality of dolphin species in Community waters. A Council Decision was also adopted to establish Regional Advisory Councils with Community funding which will involve local fishing communities and draw on local and regional expertise in the management of fisheries and a Regulation aimed at targeting fisheries structural funds more effectively. Agreement was also secured on a Framework Regulation establishing limits for Community fishing fleets in Western Waters (waters from the North of Scotland to the South of the Iberian Peninsula). In late 2004 a proposal on a new European Fisheries Fund was published and new Total Allowable Catch and Quotas for 2005 and 2006 were negotiated and agreed.

Maritime Security

A comprehensive package of maritime security measures was implemented during 2004 under Regulation EC/725/2004 on enhancing ship and port facility security. Agreement was reached at Council on a further Directive aimed at enhancing port security in the face of threats of intentional unlawful acts.

Regional Advisory Councils with EU funding will involve local fishing communities in the management of fisheries

Maritime Safety

Political agreement on a Common Position was reached at the Council of Ministers meeting in December on a proposed Regulation on the implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code within the Community which aims to enhance the safe management, safe operation and pollution prevention of ships flying the flag of a Member State and of all ro-ro passenger ferries operating on a regular services to or from ports of the Member States of the European Union.

Health

In June the European Health Insurance Card was introduced facilitating access to emergency treatment for EU citizens staying temporarily in another Member State; the card replaces the E111 form. On 2 June Ministers had an extensive discussion on EU patient mobility and related health care issues and Council Conclusions were adopted on Patient Mobility, Promoting Heart Health, E-Health, Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Planning, Alcohol and Young People and Childhood Asthma.

Agreement was also reached on a Decision on the adaptation of the negotiating mandate of the European Commission in relation to the revision of the International Health Regulations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and on a Council Decision to allow the Community and its Member States to ratify the World Health Organisation (WHO) Convention on Tobacco Control.

In addition a Tobacco Control Conference was arranged to review tobacco control policies in the European Union.

The Irish Presidency also secured agreement on the establishment of a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in Stockholm to combat the risk of epidemics and increase the surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the EU.

In December Ministers discussed a coordinated approach by the Community to the HIV/AIDS problem in the EU and its neighbourhood and adopted Council Conclusions on Emerging Zoonotic Diseases such as Avian Flu and SARS.

Youth Affairs, Arts, Culture and Sport

Youth

In May Ministers for Youth adopted a Resolution on Social Integration with regard to Young People promoting the development of strategies to ensure that meaningful social inclusion measures are developed in the context of policies related to youth. Ministers also adopted a Declaration on Racism and Intolerance in relation to Young People to promote measures to provide young people with appropriate opportunities to play an effective role in combating racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism as well as related intolerance and all forms of discrimination.

Arts and Culture

Agreement was secured on the "European Capital of Culture" event for the years 2005 to 2019 which provides for the nomination of two capitals of Culture from 2009 onwards, in order to allow the new Member States to participate in this action. The Irish Presidency also organised a number of key events to advance the cultural cooperation agenda including Seminars on the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity through Literature (Killarney), Creative Financing and Music (Dublin) and Networking for the Arts in Europe (Cork).

Sports

In January the Irish Presidency hosted the highly successful pan-European launch of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 in Croke Park. Reference has also been made to sport as part of a wider EU competence in relation to Education and Culture in the new European Constitution. This new provision on sport enables the EU to contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of its special nature, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.

Broadcasting

Priority was given to progressing the debate on the regulation of satellite television broadcasters as well as advancing the overall review of the Television Without Frontiers Directive.

III. Creating an Area of Freedom, Justice and Security

Hague Programme

In June the European Council mandated the preparation of a new multi-annual programme in the Justice and Home Affairs area, fulfilling a commitment contained in the Irish Presidency programme. The Hague Programme which was adopted in November 2004 is a five year programme and includes approximately 90 envisaged measures and actions dealing with all aspects of policies relating to strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice. Strengthening freedom is concerned with policies in relation to citizenship of the Union as well as asylum and migration policy. Strengthening security is concerned with measures directed to police cooperation and the fight against crime, including combating terrorism and drugs. Strengthening justice is concerned with judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters. The European Strategy on Drugs 2005-12, which is intended as a further integral part of the Hague Programme was adopted in December.

Fight against Terrorism

An extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council was convened by the Irish Presidency on 19 March in response to the Madrid bombings of 11 March. A Declaration on combating terrorism was adopted at the European Council on 25 March. The Declaration focussed on both legislative and non-legislative measures to combat terrorism. Mr Gijs de Vries was appointed as the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

An EU Action Plan to combat terrorism was developed and adopted at the June European Council. At the JHA Council in October the European Commission presented four Communications concerning the prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks, the fight against terrorist financing, preparedness and consequence management in the fight against terrorism and the protection of critical infrastructure. An updated Action Plan on combating terrorism was agreed by JHA Council in December. Agreement was also reached on a strategy on the fight against terrorist financing, a report on intelligence capacity in relation to the fight against terrorism and an EU Solidarity Programme on the consequences of terrorist threat and attacks. The Council also adopted conclusions on prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks.

Asylum

The Asylum Qualifications Directive was adopted at the April Council. Agreement was reached on the Asylum Procedures Directive, which sets out minimum standards for the granting and withdrawal of refugee status in the EU. The Hague Programme provides for the further development of a Common Asylum System by 2010.

Agreement was also reached on a Decision to establish the European Refugee Fund 2005-2010 at the JHA Council meeting in June. This fund aims to support and encourage efforts made by Member States in receiving refugees and in dealing with the integration and voluntary return of refugees.

Immigration

During the Irish Presidency agreement was secured on a number of measures in the Immigration area. These included Regulations creating an Immigration Liaison Officers' network and establishing a programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum. Agreement was also reached on a Directive on the entry and residence of third country nationals for the purposes of studies or vocational training. A Council Decision on the organisation of joint flights for removal from the territory of two or more Member States of third country nationals who are the subject of individual removal orders was agreed. Council also approved a Directive on the obligation of carriers to communicate passenger data; the purpose of this initiative is to improve border controls and combat illegal immigration by requiring carriers to transmit passenger data in advance to the competent national authorities. In November agreement was reached on Council Conclusions on the establishment of Common Principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU.

In October the JHA Council agreed a Regulation establishing the European Agency for the management of operational co-operation at the external borders. The objective of the creation of the Agency is to improve coordination of operational cooperation between Member States and to facilitate the application of existing and future Community measures relating to the management of external borders. The control and surveillance of external borders remains the responsibility of Member States.

In December 2004 Council Conclusions were adopted on measures to combat illegal immigration across the maritime borders of the Member States of the European Union and in relation to third country nationals illegally staying in the territory of Member States.

Visas

In February the JHA Council approved Conclusions on the development of the Visa Information System (VIS) and a Council Decision establishing the VIS was agreed at in June. This decision enables the European Commission to prepare the technical development of the VIS.

Fight against crime

The issue of organised crime was discussed at the informal meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers in January. This discussion followed from the Conference on Organised Crime held in Dublin in November 2003 and led to the adoption of a Council Resolution on a model protocol for the establishment in Member States of partnerships between the public and private sectors to reduce harm from organised crime.

Significant progress was made during the Irish Presidency on a Framework Decision on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to confiscation orders with a general approach being agreed at the JHA Council in June. The Framework Decision is designed to facilitate cooperation between Member States with regard to the recognition and execution of orders to confiscate the proceeds of crime.

In November Council agreed Conclusions on the fight against organised crime in the Western Balkans and also reached a Common position on the revision of the Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime. In December the Council also adopted conclusions in relation to the European Crime Prevention Network, tackling cross-border organised crime at EU level, an administrative approach to combating organised crime and improved use of Eurojust in the fight against serious crime.

Drugs Policy

The Dublin Conference on the EU Drugs Strategy/The Way Forward was held in May in order to facilitate the adoption of the new Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 by the European Council in December. The strategy will be a key instrument to effectively confront drugs use and trafficking in drugs. In October the JHA Council agreed a Framework Decision laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of drug trafficking. The proposal targets illicit drug trafficking by providing a common EU definition of drug trafficking to be punishable in all Member States, minimum rules in relation to punishment levels as well as liability of legal persons, and jurisdiction and prosecution.

Police Cooperation

On 19 February 2004 the JHA Council agreed Conclusions on the three year CEPOL (European Police College) report. An Irish Presidency proposal to give CEPOL legal personality was adopted in July 2004. A recommendation concerning a handbook for cooperation between Member States to avoid terrorist acts at the Olympic Games and other comparable sporting events was agreed at Council in February. In April the JHA Council agreed Council Conclusions on police co-operation to combat football related violence.

Council Conclusions on the role and positioning of the Police Chiefs Task Force with a view to strengthening of EU operational cooperation were agreed in November and in December Council Conclusions were adopted on Police professional standards concerning International Police Cooperation.

Customs

In March Council adopted a Resolution on a Strategy for Customs Cooperation and a related Work Plan (2004 - 2006) which will provide a framework for the development of customs cooperation in matters relating to the creation of an area of freedom, justice and security.

IV. The European Union and the Wider World

United Nations

The Irish Presidency worked to use the growing political weight of the EU in support of an effective multilateral system, with the UN at its heart, and strengthen the Union's relationship with the UN. Ireland put the theme 'effective multilateralism with the UN at its core' to the forefront of Union's political dialogue with all external and regional partners.

EU Member States continued to participate actively at the UN and the Irish and Dutch Presidencies coordinated EU positions on a wide range of issues, including HIV/AIDS, development, human rights, peacekeeping and current issues of international peace and security. As Presidency, Ireland, and subsequently the Netherlands, made frequent statements to both the General Assembly and the Security Council on behalf of the EU.

The European Union maintained its active support for the International Criminal Court (ICC), encouraging the widest possible signature and ratification of the Rome Statute.

Human Rights

The EU participated actively in the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in March-April 2004. A major success was having the EU resolution on the death penalty adopted with a record number of member states of the Commission voting for, and co-sponsoring, the resolution.

The EU also took an active part in human rights debates at the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September-December 2004 resulting in the adoption of EU resolutions on religious intolerance and on the human rights situations in Burma/Myanmar, Turkmenistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Irish Presidency developed EU Guidelines in support of Human Rights Defenders which were endorsed by the European Council in June. Work on implementing these guidelines was carried forward at a forum for NGOs, diplomats and parliamentarians organised by the Dutch Presidency in The Hague in December.

Measures to implement the EU Guidelines on Children Affected by Armed Conflict were adopted by the GAERC in May 2004. Work on making these guidelines operational, and those on torture, was carried out during the Dutch Presidency in the second half of the year.

The EU participated actively in meetings in January and August of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Disabilities, which is working on the text of an international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Documents on the Ad Hoc Committee can be accessed on the UN website www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/adhocdocs.htm

ESDP and Conflict Prevention

2004 saw the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) becoming increasingly operational.

- ▶ The EU launched Operation Althea on 2 December 2004, a military crisis management mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Seven thousand personnel from thirty three countries are participating in the mission which aims to consolidate and support peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and follows on from the previous NATO-led SFOR mission. Over fifty members of the Irish Defence Forces are deployed in the EU mission, the bulk of whom are serving as part of the Finnish-led Multinational Task Force North, based in Tuzla. The mission is authorised by a Chapter VII UN mandate.
- ▶ EU Police missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Operation Proxima) continued throughout 2004, with Assistant Commissioner Kevin Carty of the Garda Síochána being appointed Head of EUPM in February 2004.
- ▶ Financial support for the establishment and training of an Integrated Police Unit (IPU) in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo was provided by the European Commission during 2004 and preparations for an ESDP monitoring and mentoring mission for the IPU were finalised (the mission is expected to deploy early in 2005).

- ▶ The first ESDP Rule of Law mission was established in Georgia in July 2004.

In terms of capabilities development, the main focus on the military side was the development of the Battlegroups/Rapid Response Elements concept which was finalised during the Irish Presidency. Work continued in the second half of the year, with the Dutch Presidency convening a Military Capabilities Commitment Conference at which Member States committed up to thirteen Battlegroup formations. These formations will be available to deploy to crisis situations within a fifteen day period from 2005 onwards. Ireland has expressed its intention to consult with partners with a view to possible participation in the Battlegroups/Rapid Response Elements initiative.

Progress in the area of civilian capabilities was reflected by the June European Council's endorsement of an Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of ESDP, which raises the level of EU ambition in the field of Civilian Crisis Management and defines measures to be carried out over the coming years. This was followed by a Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference in November, at which Member States declared almost 12,000 civilian personnel (including police, rule of law experts and civil protection personnel) available for deployment to EU civilian crisis management missions on a case-by-case basis. Ireland committed up to ninety five personnel.

Cooperation between the EU and other international actors, particularly the UN, in the area of crisis management was an important priority in 2004. Agreements between the two organisations were finalised regarding how the EU can best contribute to and assist the UN's efforts in military and civilian peacekeeping operations. In particular, Kofi Annan commended the measurable progress made during the Irish Presidency in EU-UN cooperation in this area.

European Security Strategy

The purpose of the European Security Strategy, adopted at the December 2003 European Council, is to enable the EU to bring a holistic approach to security issues, and to provide a coherent framework for the EU's engagement with the wider world.

The Irish Presidency delivered on each of the four mandates given by the December 2003 European Council when it adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS):

- ▶ On Effective Multilateralism, the Union made an agreed contribution to the work of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.
- ▶ On Combating Terrorism, the Union's Action Plan was comprehensively updated and approved by the June European Council.
- ▶ The June European Council also approved the Union's Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East prepared on the basis of widespread consultation with the region.
- ▶ The June European Council adopted a Policy Paper on a comprehensive EU approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Significant progress was achieved in 2004 on the implementation of the December 2003 EU Strategy on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Specific Declarations on Non-Proliferation were issued at the EU-Japan Summit and the EU-US Summit, both of which took place in June. At the EU-India Summit in November it was agreed to establish a dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation, while a Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Arms Control was issued at the EU-China Summit in December.

Control of Arms Exports

A review of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, which was initiated during Ireland's Presidency of the EU, and which is currently ongoing, is examining ways in which the Code of

Conduct can be improved.

Anti-Personnel Landmines

At the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Landmines the Netherlands Presidency delivered a statement which highlighted the activities of the European Community in providing assistance to countries affected by landmines.

Combating Terrorism

During the first half of the year, the Irish Presidency drafted and secured agreement on the EU's strategy on combating terrorism – the 25 March European Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism. The final text of the Declaration was the result of substantial inter-Departmental collaboration and greatly accelerated international coordination in the two weeks following the devastating terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March. Amongst other measures, it established the post of EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator, to which Mr. Gijs de Vries of the Netherlands was appointed. Common Foreign and Security Policy measures contained in the Declaration include enhancing cross-pillar coordination; protection of EU citizens; political dialogue; technical assistance; cooperation with international organisations and ratification of the 12 international conventions relating to terrorism.

Efforts under the Dutch Presidency, during the second half of the year, concentrated on the implementation of the approximately one hundred and seventy actions contained in the Plan of Action. A report prepared by Secretary-General/ High Representative Solana and presented to the December European Council noted, in relation to CFSP matters, that good progress had been achieved on cooperation between the EU and the United Nations and the EU and the United States. The report also took note of the stepping-up of counter-terrorist cooperation with select priority countries with particular regard to political dialogue, information exchange and technical assistance.

The European Council also called for the implementation of the terrorism-related aspects of the **Hague Programme for an**

Area of Freedom, Justice and Security, in particular those aspects of the Programme which deal with the exchange of information subject to agreed safeguards.

Political agreement was secured in 2004 on a Directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering, including terrorist financing. The proposal is awaiting consideration by the European Parliament. Ireland has continued to ensure that up-to-date Statutory Instruments are in place to allow for enforcement of penalties under EU Regulations on the combating of terrorism

EU – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The EU participated actively in OSCE activities in the areas of anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination. The OSCE held three major conferences on these issues in 2004. Irish Ministers attended two of these events representing the EU.

EU – Council of Europe

The strengthening relationship between the EU and the Council of Europe was given most dramatic effect by the accession of 10 members of the Council of Europe to the EU on 1 May 2004. This now means that the EU accounts for 25 of the 46 Council of Europe member states.

The increased importance of the work of the Council of Europe for the EU was most notably seen in the European Constitution, agreed under the Irish Presidency in the first half of the year, which states that the Union shall accede to the 'European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' and the European Court for Human Rights.

Transatlantic Relations

EU – US Relations

One of the central priorities of the Irish Presidency was to seek to improve the substance of the strategically important EU-US relationship. Rather than focus on past differences the Presidency concentrated on already existing cooperation and on reaching agreement where we share common concerns. This priority was fully shared by the Netherlands Presidency in the second half of 2004.

The successful outcome of both the EU-US Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington in March and the EU-US Summit in Dromoland Castle in June marked important progress in EU-US relations. Furthermore, the Summit demonstrated a growing consensus within the transatlantic community on the numerous challenges facing our common interests. The Summit witnessed the adoption of seven Joint Declarations on combating terrorism, non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass destruction, Iraq, Sudan, HIV/AIDS and Malaria, the broader Middle East and economic partnership. These all added significantly to the development of closer more productive ties. EU-US relations continued to improve during the second half of the year. The appointment of former Taoiseach John Bruton as Head of the Commission Delegation in Washington (he presented credentials to President Bush on 9 December) is an important step in developing more effective EU public diplomacy in the US.

EU – Russia Relations

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement is the cornerstone of EU-Russia relations and the decision taken on 27 April to extend the Agreement to the new EU Member States was a significant achievement for the Irish Presidency. This difficult issue had dominated the EU-Russia agenda for some time.

A very successful EU-Russia Summit followed in Moscow on 21 May. Negotiations between the EU and Russia on Russian accession to the WTO were concluded at the Summit. President Putin also committed Russia to early ratification of border treaties with Estonia and Latvia. The ratification by Russia of the Kyoto Protocol in October was considered a very welcome development.

Progress was also made on negotiations on a substantial EU draft Action Plan on developing Four Common Spaces with Russia (an economic space, a space of freedom, security and justice, an external security space and a research and education space), although final agreement on the package was not reached.

The political crisis in Ukraine in November/December had a bearing on EU-Russia relations, including at the EU-Russia summit in November. Both sides agreed on the need for a peaceful resolution to the crisis and on the need to respect the Constitution of Ukraine.

Belarus

As Presidency, Ireland pushed for greater support for human rights groups and political parties in Belarus, resulting in a decision by the General Affairs and External Relations Council to further strengthen support for civil society there. The decision was taken against a background of significant deterioration in the human rights situation in Belarus, increased repression of the opposition, and an intensification of the political crisis in that country. Minister of State Kitt, together with HR/SG Solana and European Commissioner Verheugen, hosted high-level meetings with leaders of the Belarus opposition in Brussels in May. Ireland co-funded these meetings with the Swedish government.

Relations between the European Union and Belarus were negatively impacted by the conduct of the parliamentary elections held on 17 October. The elections were not considered by the OSCE monitoring mission to be free or fair and, as a result, there was little confidence that the result reflected the will of the people of Belarus. Following the elections, the EU decided at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 22/23 November to introduce a visa ban against officials directly responsible for the fraudulent elections, and against those responsible for severe human rights violations in repressing peaceful demonstrators. It was also decided to continue the EU policy of limiting bilateral Ministerial contacts with Belarus. The EU reiterated that there is a willingness to deepen the relationship with Belarus once the Belarussian authorities clearly demonstrate their intention to respect democratic values and the rule of law.

Ukraine

EU-Ukraine relations were steered through a difficult pre-Presidential election period in the first half of the year when President Kuchma sought to reinforce his grip on power and restrict media reporting freedoms ahead of first round elections held on 31 October.

The political impasse in Ukraine following the second round of Presidential elections on 21 November resulted in an intense focus by the EU on the country. HR/SG Solana, Ambassador Biegan as Special Representative of the Presidency, and the Presidents of Poland and Lithuania, played important roles in brokering a peaceful outcome to the crisis. The European Council on 16/17 December adopted a declaration on Ukraine which commended the Ukrainian people and leaders for having found a peaceful solution to the situation and stressed the strategic importance of Ukraine as a key neighbour and partner of the European Union. The conclusions also spoke of the "distinctive" relationship with Ukraine and looked forward to proposals for ways to strengthen cooperation, making full use of the Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy. The Action Plan was adopted by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 13/14 December. The Dutch Prime Minister, as Presidency, welcomed the outcome of the re-run of the second round of elections on 26 December and recalled the OSCE assessment that the re-run had brought Ukraine substantially closer to meeting international standards.

Georgia

The Irish Presidency marshalled a swift and supportive response to help ensure the smooth transition of power to President Saakashvili following the "Rose Revolution" in early January. Minister Cowen represented the European Union at the inauguration of President Saakashvili on 25 January, and the EU plans to launch a Rule of Law Mission to Georgia in February 2005.

Sustained efforts were made, particularly by EU Special Representative Talvitie, to facilitate contacts between Russia and Georgia on the situation in the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Tensions had risen in the early autumn between Moscow and Tbilisi following clashes between South Ossetian separatists and Georgian military forces. However, there were signs by December that prospects for a negotiated outcome to the conflict, which might include European Union assistance and international mediation, were improving.

European Neighbourhood Policy

Intensive work was undertaken with the Commission and the Member States on the implementation phase of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The guiding principles were agreed at the June General Affairs and External Relations Council and consultations on Action Plans began with several countries. The inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the ENP, decided at the June European Council, was a key achievement of the Irish Presidency.

Seven ENP Action Plans, including those for Ukraine and Moldova, were adopted at the December General Affairs and External Relations Council. Adoption of the plans will allow the European Union to begin to work towards closer economic integration and political cooperation with these countries.

Western Balkans

During the first six months of the year, the Irish Presidency maintained the priority attached to EU-Western Balkans relations and the momentum in bringing the region closer to the EU.

The decision by the June European Council to grant candidate status to Croatia, acceptance of the membership application from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the Council decision to request the Commission Opinion, provided public confirmation of the seriousness of the EU's commitment that the Stabilisation and Association Process framework leads to eventual accession.

The EU continued to provide full support for the UN Mission in Kosovo and welcomed the peaceful and orderly manner in which the Kosovo elections were held in October 2004. The EU urged the new Government to focus on the implementation of standards in the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities, ahead of a comprehensive review of standard implementation which will be carried out in mid-2005. If the outcome of that review is positive, it will be followed by a process of negotiations to resolve the final status of Kosovo.

The EU continued to give support to the effective implementation of the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. ICTY's chief prosecutor, Ms Carla del Ponte, made a presentation to the October GAERC on the work of the Tribunal. The Council agreed to freeze the assets of a number of high level indictees still at large.

The Council agreed to extend the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission in the Western Balkans to the end of 2005.

Africa

Conflict prevention was a major overarching theme of the Irish Presidency, since there can be no sustainable development without peace. Particular attention has been paid to working with Africa in order to strengthen its own capacity to deal with and prevent conflict. The establishment of the African Peace

Facility in May 2004 represents a major contribution in this regard, since it makes up to €250 million available in European Development Fund (EDF) funding for non-military assistance to African peace support operations as well as to improve the institutional capacities of the African Union and relevant sub-regional organisations in the areas of peace-keeping and conflict resolution. In January 2004, the Council adopted a revised Common Position on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa. The adoption of this Common Position underlines the importance which the European Union attaches to its relationship with Africa. The EU also remained actively involved in the peace talks on Somalia and Ethiopia and Eritrea.

During the second half of 2004 the EU provided considerable planning and financial support to the African Union to assist with deployment and expansion of its monitoring mission (AMIS) in Darfur, Sudan. A total of €80 million was made available to AMIS through the African Peace Facility established under the Irish Presidency while Ireland made a bilateral contribution of €500,000 to the African Union in November in support of the expanded AMIS mission.

The situation in Darfur has been a constant theme of the EU's engagement with the Government of Sudan since the emergence of rebel groups there in March of 2003. The External Relations Council issued several condemnations of the humanitarian and human rights violations in Darfur and repeatedly called on the Government of Sudan to provide unhindered and safe humanitarian access to the region, to disarm the Janjaweed militia and bring to justice those responsible for serious violations of human rights. The European Union has also been closely involved in the peace talks which led to the signing on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. The European Commission also responded to the major humanitarian emergency in Darfur by providing approximately €215 million in assistance during 2004 while Ireland contributed approximately €6 million in humanitarian assistance.

Development Cooperation

The main priority areas in the development cooperation field in 2004 were the eradication of poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, enhanced cooperation between the EU and Africa, the achievement of greater effectiveness and transparency in European development cooperation, and the strengthening of the multilateral system.

Eradication of Poverty

In January the Presidency secured Council Conclusions emphasising the need for greater overall coherence in EU external policy and affirming that meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals with their strong emphasis on poverty eradication and sustainable development should be reflected across all EU policies and financing decisions. In April, the Council agreed on the importance of increasing aid volumes and harmonising donor approaches in line with EU commitments.

HIV/AIDS

The Presidency held a Ministerial Conference on HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia, in Dublin in February. This inaugural pan-European meeting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic adopted a Declaration which includes for the first time, targets and time-tables to address the fight against HIV/AIDS in the European and Central Asian region.

EU-Africa cooperation

In addition to the African Peace Facility mentioned above, the EU also established a financing instrument for access to water services, committing €500 million to the Water for Life initiative. The Council also endorsed the objectives of an ambitious EU Action Plan to support commodity dependent countries. The Union reached agreement on an EU-African partnership to support cotton producing countries in Africa, including specific trade and development assistance measures.

Middle East Peace Process

EU efforts to promote implementation of the Road Map and the role of the Quartet were actively pursued during the period under

review, in the face of a very difficult situation on the ground.

The Irish Presidency maintained dialogue with all regional partners and Minister Cowen's first Presidency visit overseas was to Israel and Egypt. Following the cancellation of the Arab League Summit in late March 2004, the Minister travelled to Egypt and met President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Maher, as well as Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa. He encouraged Arab leaders to renew the Beirut initiative and this was subsequently done at the rescheduled Summit held on 22-23 May in Tunis.

The European Council of 16-17 December, in its declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, welcomed efforts by the Palestinian leadership to ensure a democratic transition in the occupied Palestinian territory following the death of Yasser Arafat. Israelis and Palestinians were encouraged to continue to cooperate closely in the run-up to the Palestinian Presidential elections in January 2005. The European Council reiterated its commitment to the achievement of a negotiated two-State solution through the Roadmap, and expressed its willingness to support an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank as a first step in the overall process in accordance with the conditions laid out by the March 2004 European Council.

The EU's election observation mission to Palestine was deployed in December 2004. The EU also provided financial, technical and political support for the electoral process.

Iraq

The Irish Presidency issued statements of EU policy in relation to key political events in Iraq, including the adoption of the interim constitution, prisoner abuse issues, the formation of the interim Iraqi Government and the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1546.

The November European Council met with Interim Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq to discuss the situation in that country, and reiterated its strong support for the political process and the Interim Iraqi Government. The Council adopted a Declaration on Iraq which expressed the EU's full support for the political transition leading to a constitutionally elected Iraqi government, and set out a comprehensive package of EU

assistance to Iraq, which included funding for support to the electoral process and assistance in financing UN arrangements for the safety and security of personnel (Ireland also made a national contribution of €500,000 for this purpose). The Declaration also called for planning of a possible integrated police, rule of law and civilian administration mission in Iraq.

Iran

Relations with Iran were taken up on several occasions during the year. Policy issues included proliferation concerns, human rights elements, the shape of the Union's overall Comprehensive Dialogue with Iran, and negotiations on the Trade and Cooperation agreement (suspended since 2003).

Concerns that Iran might be seeking to develop its nuclear power programme in such a way as also to obtain a nuclear weapons capacity were a major issue for the EU during the year. EU cohesion and a common EU approach were maintained throughout the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors' meetings. EU statements on Iran were agreed and delivered by the Irish and Netherlands Presidencies at four meetings of the Board of Governors in 2004.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and Middle East

In June 2004, the European Council adopted the EU Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and Middle East. It sets out principles for the EU's relations with the countries concerned and a concrete policy agenda for the future. The Partnership was drawn up following intensive consultations with partners in the region.

A further Euro-Mediterranean Mid-term Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers took place in The Hague on 29-30 November. Agreement was reached on the Work Plan for the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures. Ministers also decided that 2005 will be "the Year of the Mediterranean". The European Council of 16-17 December welcomed that decision,

and noted that the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration would serve to strengthen and relaunch the Euromed process. It also welcomed the start of the implementation of the EU Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and Middle East. The meeting was particularly notable for a more positive atmosphere in relation to the Middle East Peace Process.

Asia

There were two significant events in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) calendar in the period under review. The Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Kildare, in April 2004. This meeting demonstrated how ASEM proceedings could be revitalised and the focused agenda secured the highest attendance by EU Foreign Ministers in many years. A substantive Chairman's Statement and ASEM Declaration on Multilateralism were agreed. The EU also considered the inclusion of Burma in the enlargement of ASEM.

This was followed by the ASEM Summit, in Hanoi, from 7-9 October. While EU Member States continued to have concerns about the lack of political progress in Burma, it was decided at the Summit that ASEM would be enlarged to include the ten new Member States of the European Union, as well as Burma, Cambodia and Laos on the Asian side. A comprehensive Chairman's Statement and a Declaration on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilisations were agreed at the Summit.

There was increased engagement with China throughout the year, including through the first EU-China Seminar in February, a first seminar on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in June, and two successful sessions of the Human Rights dialogue. The China arms embargo remained high on the EU-China agenda throughout the year and the European Council in December reaffirmed the political will to continue to work towards lifting the arms embargo.

In light of the lack of political progress in Burma, the EU amended its Common Position on Burma in October, to extend the visa ban list to those above the rank of Brigadier-General and to prohibit the granting of financial loans to any Burmese state-owned enterprises.

There was a successful EU Troika mission to Afghanistan in February, which conveyed the EU's commitment to that country. As Presidency, Ireland played a key role in preparations for the International Conference on Afghanistan in Berlin, at which the EU pledged €700 million for 2004. Following the successful presidential elections, held in October 2004, the EU will continue to support the ongoing democratisation process, including the parliamentary and local elections (scheduled for April/May 2005), the counter-narcotics efforts, the judicial and security-sector reform and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

The agreement of the modalities for the composite bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, including on the issue of Kashmir, coincided with the EU Troika mission to India on 16 February and Pakistan on 18 February. The Troika drove home key messages in support of the rapprochement between India and Pakistan.

The Presidency successfully promoted ratification of the Union's Third Generation Cooperation Agreement with Pakistan, while having express regard to residual human rights concerns with that country. The agreement provides a framework for commercial, economic and development cooperation and also opens up possibilities for dialogue and cooperation in other important areas, including the environment, regional cooperation, science and technology, drugs and money laundering.

At the end of the period under review, focus on Asia shifted to the areas affected by the devastating Tsunami which struck parts of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, the Maldives, Burma, and Malaysia on 26 December. It can be expected that humanitarian aid and efforts to assist in reconstruction in the region will further dominate the first six months of 2005.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The third Summit between the EU and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) took place in Guadalajara, Mexico on 28 May.

At the EU-LAC Summit, both sides agreed to prioritise social cohesion as one of the main elements of the bi-regional strategic partnership and to cooperate to eradicate poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

Colombia was a key focus of the EU in 2004. On 26 January, the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted comprehensive conclusions which reiterated EU support for the Colombian President in his efforts to reform the country's institutions and to develop a fully functioning democratic state throughout the territory of Colombia. At the same time, the Council stressed the need for a comprehensive peace strategy and the need also to rectify the still grave human rights and international humanitarian law situation.

Haiti

In response to the sudden deterioration of the situation in Haiti in February 2004, the EU was actively involved with other international partners including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in ultimately failed negotiations to seek a compromise between President Aristide and the Haitian opposition. Since the departure from office of President Aristide on 29 February, the country has seen a gradual return to peace and stability, although some unrest remains outside the capital in areas where government institutions are largely absent. At the Haiti donors' conference in Washington on 19/20 July the EU donated \$325 million out of a \$1.08 billion total. Preliminary consideration was also given to possible EU involvement in observing Presidential, parliamentary and local elections which are due to take place in Haiti in 2005. The EU also indicated its willingness to provide financial and technical assistance to ensure that the elections run smoothly.

Multilateral Trade

Doha Development Agenda

Following very intensive discussions at the WTO General Council, WTO Members adopted a framework agreement on 31 July, which sets the parameters for the next stages of negotiation of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).

The text of the framework sets clear and precise parameters on each of the key issues in the DDA negotiations and will help towards the successful conclusion of the negotiations aimed at delivery in the core areas of agricultural goods, industrial goods, trade in services, development issues and trade facilitation. The agreement removed the blockage towards further trade liberalisation in the Agriculture sector, still the main issue in the negotiations for the majority of WTO participants.

v. Overview of Oireachtas Scrutiny process in 2004

In 2004 the Oireachtas sub-committee on European Scrutiny met on 17 occasions to review draft proposals/measures and accompanying explanatory Information Notes compiled by Departments. During the course of the year, the sub-committee reviewed 567 proposals/measures. These included 262 proposed Directives and Regulations, 231 Council Decisions, 8 Commission Green and White Papers, 33 Common Foreign and Security Policy measures and 14 other documents (Commission reports etc.).

The sub-committee referred 85 proposals to sectoral Committees for more detailed scrutiny. A report by the Joint Committee on European Affairs on the operation of the EU scrutiny process in 2002/3 was adopted in October.

Council briefings by Ministers

During 2004 the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or Ministers of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs) briefed the European Affairs Committee on 11 occasions in advance of General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meetings. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform also briefed members of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights in May 2004 on Justice and Home Affairs Councils that took place during the Irish EU Presidency. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government briefed the Environment Committee prior to the Environment Council in December.

Six monthly reports on Developments in the EU

Ministers also submitted six-monthly reports to the Oireachtas outlining key developments at EU level in their policy areas; thirty such reports have been forwarded to the Oireachtas covering the Irish and Dutch Presidencies in 2004

A. Proposals reviewed by the Oireachtas sub-committee on European Scrutiny during 2004

Figure 1: Summary of decisions taken by the sub-committee on proposals submitted by Ministers for review in 2004

Referred for Scrutiny	85
No further scrutiny/Adopted Measures	424
Referred for Information	16
CFSP measures	42
TOTAL	567

Figure 2: Summary of proposals referred to sectoral Committees for further scrutiny

Regulations	36
Directives	26
Decisions	20
Green Paper	3
CFSP Measures	0
White Paper	0
Total	85

Figure 3: Proposals referred for further scrutiny (by Department)

Department	Number of Proposals
Enterprise, Trade and Employment	16
Finance	13
Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	11
Transport	10
Environment, Heritage and Local Government	7
Health & Children	7
Justice, Equality and Law Reform	6
Agriculture and Food	5
Education and Science	4
Taoiseach	3
Arts, Sport and Tourism	2
Social and Family Affairs	1
Community, Rural, Gaeltacht Affairs	0
Defence	0
Foreign Affairs	0
TOTAL	85

B. Proposals circulated in 2004 (by Department)

Figure 4: Number of proposals circulated in 2004
(by Department)

Department	Number of Proposals	Department	Number of Proposals
Foreign Affairs	152	Transport	25
Enterprise, Trade and Employment	114	Health and Children	9
Finance	72	Arts, Sport and Tourism	8
Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	54	Taoiseach	6
Agriculture and Food	44	Education and Science	5
Justice, Equality and Law Reform	30	Social and Family Affairs	3
Environment, Heritage and Local Government	26	Defence	1
		Community, Rural, Gaeltacht Affairs	0
		TOTAL	549

Figure 5: Breakdown of proposals circulated in 2004

Department	Regulations	Directives	Decisions	Green Papers	White Papers	CFSP Measures	Other Total	Total
Agriculture and Food	18	4	21	0	0	0	1	44
Arts, Sport and Tourism	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	34	7	12	0	1	0	0	54
Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defence	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Education and Science	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	5
Enterprise, Trade and Employment	72	13	28	0	1	0	0	114
Environment, Heritage and Local Government	5	8	13	0	0	0	0	26
Finance	19	14	24	1	0	0	14	72
Foreign Affairs	25	1	93	0	0	33	0	152
Health and Children	2	5	2	0	0	0	0	9
Justice, Equality and Law Reform	5	2	19	4	0	0	0	30
Social and Family Affairs	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Taoiseach	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
Transport	10	8	7	0	0	0	0	25
Total	199	63	231	6	1	34	15	549

Notes

