



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Mr. P. Hennessy  
Anglo-Irish

In 1975 the European  
Parliament published a study entitled "The  
effects of on Ireland of membership of the  
European Communities." The first chapter was  
devoted to the "Political and Institutional field" and  
included a section on "Relations with Britain  
and Northern Ireland." The majority of which was  
supplied by Anglo-Irish Section. The Parliament  
is now updating this study and has asked  
us to assist in obtaining the necessary  
material. Attached is a photocopy of the  
1975 Chapter in question. Perhaps you  
would be good enough to let us have  
a new text if any is desired as soon  
as possible.

Patrick Collins  
Economic  
22/8/78.

Mr. O. Higgins  
On up-dated draft submitted for your  
consideration please I have also suggested a  
change of title for the introduction;  
the previous one now has been  
7/9

## CHAPTER 1

### POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FIELD

#### POLITICAL EFFECTS

##### Introduction

1.1 Before becoming a member of the European Community, Ireland's principal links with international organisations were those with the United Nations Organisation, with the Organisation for European Cooperation and Development, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and with the Council of Europe. While Ireland had trade relations with the rest of the world the trade pattern reflected a special economic relationship with the United Kingdom; direct commercial relationships were being formed, however, in the 1960s with several West European countries.

Membership of the EEC has far wider implications for Ireland than any previous links with international organisations. The European Community is seeking economic integration. This requires close political cooperation and may, in time, involve some measure of political integration.

##### Sovereignty

1.2 The concept of sovereignty in Ireland does not have the connotations which it was seen to have in Britain during the 1975 referendum campaign. The reason is that Ireland had until accession to the Community relatively little capacity to influence directly events abroad affecting her interests.

1.3 As early as April 1972, however, the then Minister of Finance, Mr Colley, argued in his Financial Statement that membership of the Community would not 'lead to any diminution of our control over our economic destiny. In fact, the coordination of economic policy that is envisaged in the Community will be of great importance to our economic development'. Membership was regarded as a pooling or sharing of sovereignty by the Member States in a Community context rather than as a loss of sovereignty for the individual Member State. It can thus be argued that membership of the EEC has provided Ireland with an accretion of sovereignty insofar as she is less likely to be economically dominated by Britain and her interests are being safeguarded through the EEC, in which she has a voice in decision-making. In this respect the role of the

Commission as the initiator of proposals for consideration by the Council is important insofar as small countries are concerned as it seeks to maintain the balance between the smaller and larger Community countries.

1.4 Two of Ireland's principal objectives in Community policies have been to secure the launching of the Regional Fund and to widen the scope of the Social Fund. By spirited action within the Community institutions, both objectives have been - to a greater or lesser degree - attained. This example illustrates the relevance of the statement made by the Irish Government before accession: "In effect by agreeing to share the exercise of certain powers with the other member countries we will be enhancing those powers rather than diminishing them".<sup>1</sup>

#### Neutrality

1.5 The Treaty does not contain specific provisions relating to defence and the question of a common defence policy does not arise at present. To date, membership has had no effect on Irish neutrality although the Irish Government has stated that it is prepared to play a full part in the future development of Community policy.

#### Relations with Britain and Northern Ireland

1.6 The Irish Government's official statement in advance of the Irish referendum in May 1972 held out the expectation in regard to relations with Northern Ireland that accession would "create conditions in which we can all - North and South - work together for the benefit of the whole country".<sup>1</sup>

1.7 While progress to date in this regard has been slow, it has nevertheless been real. The governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom have recently applied to the Commission for funds to help finance two crossborder studies and there is a real prospect that, in time, economic differences between North and South will continue to diminish and that regional cooperation will grow within the EEC. Moreover, the European Parliament provides a forum where representatives from North and South, who are members of that institution, can work together for the development of a unified Europe. With the arrival of directly-elected members of the Parliament, which is at present envisaged in 1978, both parts of the island will be represented in the European Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> Into Europe, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1972

1.8 Both North and South in Ireland share the burden of difficulties afflicting the Community's deprived regions, and mutual interest dictates a shared solution of this burden. Following the majority vote in Northern Ireland in the British referendum on continued membership, the conditions exist for greater economic cooperation between North and South, particularly in the border areas. The effects of accession have thus been to give Ireland more independence in her relationship with Britain and to create the possibility of greater economic - and possibly also political - cooperation between North and South.

#### Institutional Effects

##### Community Institutions

1.9 After accession, Ireland participated in the operation of the various institutions of the Community. Membership of the Council of the European Communities, the European Parliament, the Commission, the Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Committee and the Board of the European Investment Bank was enlarged to include representation from Ireland.

1.10 The Council ensures coordination of the general economic policies of the Member States and all important decisions covering a wide range of subjects are channelled through it. It consists of representatives of the governments of Member States and its composition may vary according to the subject being considered. The office of President is held by each member of the Council in turn.

1.11 Ireland participates fully in the work of the Council and shares responsibility for its decisions. She has been able to emphasise her separate existence as a nation with special problems and aims and has underlined her desire to play a dynamic part in the development of the Community. Her presidency of the Council during the first half of 1975 was instrumental in giving her considerable publicity. Her views on Community problems were widely reported as were the initiatives taken by her to solve them.

1.12 Special committees assist the Council. The most important of these is a Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Member States, generally known as COREPER. This Committee prepares the Council's work by attempting to arrive at a consensus among the Member States with the assistance of national experts and of the Commission.



1.13 Other Committees assisting the Council include the Special Committee on Agriculture, the Standing Committee on Employment, the Energy Committee and the Education Committee. Moreover some 52 working parties carry out preparatory work under the aegis of the Council.

1.14 The Economic and Social Committee must be consulted by the Council or the Commission where the Treaties so provide. It consists of representatives of producers, farmers, carriers, workers, the professions and business interests.

1.15 Many committees have also been set up under the Treaties or set up by the main institutions to assist in the work of the Community.

1.16 Consequently, persons representing a wide spectrum of interests participate in the working of Community institutions. In this way, decisions contained in Community regulations, decisions or directives have been considered in depth, prior to adoption, by committees comprised of various experts from the Nine member states. These committees ensure that, in attempting to reach a consensus, national interests are safeguarded and through them Member States learn at an early stage whether draft proposals contain undesirable provisions.

1.17 Many proposals come before the European Parliament for an opinion following detailed consideration in one of the fourteen specialist committees of Parliament. In addition, Members of the European Parliament contribute to debates on proposals which reach the floor of the House. They may also raise specific matters by way of oral questions to the Commission or Council or seek to put down an oral question with debate.

1.18 Therefore, Community legislation and directives, for the most part, undergo a long period of gestation which gives each Member State adequate opportunity to put forward its views and to influence the course of the decision. This does not mean that all proposals which are finally agreed receive the unqualified support of all Member States. Many proposals by the Commission or suggestions for legislation by the Parliament, receive considerable publicity in Ireland, particularly if they are controversial or have important implications for the country. Likewise, deliberations of the Council are the subject of wide publicity if the Ministers have difficulty in reaching agreement on a particular proposal.

Relations with Britain and Northern Ireland

The population of Northern Ireland is approximately one and a half million people. Within this population there exist two separate communities whose aspirations are at present incompatible. About one million of them make up a largely Protestant majority who prefer to remain within the United Kingdom and do not wish to be part of an independent Irish Republic.

On the other hand there are close on half a million people who feel themselves at a disadvantage as they form a permanent minority. Mostly Roman Catholics, they have generally shared the traditional nationalist outlook predominant in the rest of the island and have seen little reason to identify with the political institutions established in Northern Ireland.

These divisions have been reflected in economic and social differences which have led to bitterness, violence and bloodshed - unfortunately still with us today. A lasting solution to this problem must await the cooperation of all the people in agreed structures and institutions which will enable them to live together in peace, harmony and justice.

Before Ireland's accession it was hoped that membership of the EEC would enable the whole population of the island, both North and South, to work together for the benefit of the entire country. The Community has provided single market and a common agricultural policy which applies to all nine Member States. Moreover, the nucleus of a common social and regional policy has been established. All these developments have tended to diminish economic differences between the two parts of the island.

Both the British and Irish Governments have taken steps to develop economic cooperation in Northern Ireland within the context

of the European Community. The interests of both parts of the island are close/in relation to EEC policies on agriculture, industry and competition. This is particularly so in relation to regional policy and regional development, for whose purposes the whole island is regarded as an underdeveloped region. B

#### A Framework for North-South Co-operation

In December 1977 a Study on Cross-Border Communication in the Derry-Donegal area was published. This study, which had been commissioned by the Irish and British Governments, was partly financed by the Community. Both Governments are at present considering the recommendations made in this Study with a view to working out coordinated programmes for putting them into operation with EEC aid where appropriate. The Economic and Social Committee which visited the area following the publication of the Study has endorsed its findings and indicated its support for the view that the EEC has a particular rôle to play in promoting the economic development of the area. 2

2. Following a meeting in September 1977 between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister a Steering Group was set up to examine possible economic cooperation, particularly between North and South. This Group recommended a study of the River Erne catchment area with particular reference to the development of tourism and to the improvement of land through arterial drainage. This recommendation has been endorsed by the Irish and British Governments. It is expected that the project will benefit from EEC funds. Another cross-border study, <sup>presently under way</sup> on which work is almost ready to begin, and which is again being partly financed from the Commission budget, is a study of herring stocks in the north-west Irish Sea.

4. The Council of Ministers decided in 1978 to commit 8 m.u.a. for arterial drainage projects in Irish border regions. The details of this scheme are at present being worked out by the Commission in consultation with the two administrations.



5. This form of practical co-operation reflects the fact that both parts of the island share the burden of difficulties afflicting the Community's deprived regions, and mutual interest dictates a shared solution of this burden. The commitment of the Community as a whole to a greater European union will undoubtedly contribute to a breaking down of barriers between people in both parts of Ireland, all of whom are now in a special sense citizens of Europe.

6. With direct elections to the European Parliament in June 1979, democratically elected members from both sides of the border will share the same political forum. It is clear that they will also share a common interest in many aspects of Community activity which have a distinct relevance to the whole island. [It remains to be seen, however, how far this shared interest will lead to political cooperation.]

*The desirability of a co-ordinated approach to the protection of these interests is unlikely to be totally unnoted.*

7. \* [Ireland's membership of the EEC has given a filip to cross-border cooperation in a number of economic matters. It has led to some diminution of economic differences between Northern Ireland and the Republic and it leaves the door open to closer political cooperation in the European Parliament on matters of interest to the whole island.]

#### INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS

##### Community Institutions

Since accession, Ireland has participated in the operation of the various institutions of the Community. Membership of the Council of the European Communities, the European Parliament, the Commission, the Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Committee and the Board of the European Investment Bank was enlarged to include representation from Ireland.