



**AN BILLE COSANTA (LEASÚ) 2005
DEFENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2005**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Introduction

The European Union has recently committed to the establishment of a number of military units, referred to as battle groups. It is envisaged that these units will draw their membership from all EU Member State Defence Forces, and will be dependent upon a high level of cooperation between EU Member States to function properly.

The decision to establish battle groups is strongly supported by the United Nations. EU battle groups will be capable of being deployed to global trouble spots with far greater speed than is possible at present, and will therefore be able to respond quickly to preserve life and prevent acts of genocide and other war crimes.

In order to assure the full participation of Ireland in an EU battle group, the Irish Defence Force must be enabled to engage in joint training missions with other EU Member State Defence Forces. The purpose of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2005 is to amend the Defence (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1960 to ensure that contingents of the Permanent Defence Force can participate in training outside the State.

Ireland has a long and proud tradition in peacekeeping missions, and the development of EU battle groups offer us the chance to continue in this important work on a global basis. Our international responsibilities mean that we must play our part in the formation and preparation of EU battle groups.

*An Teachta Liam Ó Toimín,
Aibreán, 2005.*