



**Tithe an  
Oireachtais  
Houses of the  
Oireachtas**

**An Comhchoiste um Ghnóthaí an Aontais Eorpaigh**  
Tuarascáil Taistil – Fáiltiú ag Comóradh 50 Bliain ó Aontachas  
na hÉireann leis an AE, Strasbourg

Aibreán 2023

**Joint Committee on European Union Affairs**  
Travel Report – Reception Marking the 50th Anniversary  
of Irish Accession to the EU, Strasbourg

April 2023



## Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



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Sinn Féin



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Green Party



**Seán Haughey T.D.**

Fianna Fáil



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**Marian Harkin T.D.**

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**Robert Troy T.D.**

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Fianna Fáil



**Senator Regina Doherty**

Fine Gael



**Senator Sharon Keogan**

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**Senator Vincent P Martin**

Green Party



**Senator Michael McDowell**

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## Report on attendance marking 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Irish accession to the EU

### Introduction

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs is an important forum for debate on Ireland's EU membership. In this regard, the Committee agreed that throughout 2023 it would examine opportunities to mark and reflect on the fiftieth anniversary of Ireland's accession to the then European Communities in 1973.

The Committee accepted an invitation from the Department of Foreign Affairs to cohost, on the behalf of the Houses of the Oireachtas, a reception to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Irish accession to the EU. The reception took place at the seat of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The Committee was represented at the event by:

- Cathaoirleach, Deputy Joe McHugh
- Leas-Chathaoirleach, Deputy Brendan Howlin
- Deputy Ruairí Ó Murchú.

The delegation was accompanied by Darren Kelly, Policy Advisor to the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, and Paul Conway, National Parliamentary Representative of the Houses of the Oireachtas to the EU Institutions.

The delegation would like to thank Nigel Hutson and Sarah Greene of the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union for their support in arranging this event.

### Bilateral engagements

The reception coincided with a plenary session of the European Parliament, allowing for Committee members to engage bilaterally with Members of the European Parliament prior to the reception.

Members met with Nathalie Loiseau MEP, Chair of the European Parliament delegation to the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly. The members had a

thorough discussion with Ms Loiseau regarding her role in EU-UK relations. Issues discussed included the improved atmosphere in negotiations regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol, the importance of consultation with Northern Irish representatives, the importance of continuing parliamentary relations between the EU, Ireland, and the UK, and general political developments in the EU and the UK.

Members met with David McAllister MEP, Chair of the European Parliament UK Contact Group. The members had a thorough discussion with Mr McAllister regarding his role in EU-UK relations. Issues discussed included the improved atmosphere in EU-UK negotiations, contacts between the European Parliament and Northern Irish representatives, the impacts of Brexit on the island of Ireland, and the role of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee in scrutinising the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

### **Reception to mark 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Irish accession to the EU**

The reception marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Irish accession to the European Union took place. It was co-hosted by the Government, represented by Minister of State for European Affairs Peter Burke, and the Houses of the Oireachtas represented by members of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs.

The reception offered members of the Committee an opportunity for informal discussions with the broad range of attendees who have made contributions to Ireland's EU membership. Attendees included current and former Irish Members of the European Parliament, the Ambassador of Ireland to the European Union H.E. Tom Hanney, Irish staff and office-holders at the European institutions including European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly, and Commissioner Mairead McGuinness.

Nigel Hutson of the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union, introduced the co-hosts and speeches were made by Minister of State for European Affairs Peter Burke representing the Government, Cathaoirleach of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs Joe McHugh representing the Houses of the Oireachtas, Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, and former President of the European Parliament Pat Cox. Representing the Swedish Presidency of the Council

of the European Union, Swedish Minister for European Affairs Jessika Roswall also joined the reception and made brief remarks.

Deputy McHugh's speech outlined the importance of the European Union in removing borders, noting that he and Deputy Ó Murchú had crossed the border to Germany on their morning run prior to the reception. He also outlined the importance of the European Union in fostering a European identity in Ireland, and in promoting human rights including the right to dignity, noting the contributions of the late John Hume to the development of European values. Deputy McHugh thanked Ireland's Members of the European Parliament for their contributions to Ireland's EU membership and to Parliament President Roberta Metsola for her support to the local community affected by tragic events in Creeslough. Deputy McHugh also outlined the importance of European integration for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The reception also marked the launch of an exhibition, "Into Europe", commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and developed by the Royal Irish Academy. The exhibition, consisting of twelve thematic panels examining Ireland's European Union membership, was on display in an area of the Parliament adjacent to the bust of the late John Hume.

Following the reception, attendees attended a formal dinner at the Maison Kammerzell Restaurant in Strasbourg.



## Appendix I: Committee Terms of Reference

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| <p>(1) Go gceapfar Roghchoiste, dá ngairfear an Roghchoiste um Ghnóthaí Eorpacha, ar a mbeidh 9 gcomhalta de Dháil Éireann, chun breithniú a dhéanamh ar cibé nithe a éiríonn—</p> <p>(a) as ballraíocht na hÉireann san Aontas Eorpach, agus</p> <p>(b) as Éirinn do chloí leis an gConradh ar an Aontas Eorpach agus leis an gConradh ar Fheidhmiú an Aontais Eorpaigh,</p> <p>a roghnóidh sé agus nach bhfuil tarchurtha chuig aon Choiste eile.</p> | <p>(1) That a Select Committee, which shall be called the Select Committee on European Union Affairs, consisting of 9 members of Dáil Éireann, be appointed to consider such matters arising from—</p> <p>(a) Ireland’s membership of the European Union, and</p> <p>(b) Ireland’s adherence to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,</p> <p>as it may select and which are not referred to any other Committee.</p> |
| <p>(2) Gan dochar do ghinearáltacht mhír (1), breithneoidh an Roghchoiste—</p> <p>(a) cibé Billí a bpléann an Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus an Roinn Cosanta leis an dlí reachtach ina leith,</p> <p>(b) cibé tograí a bheidh in aon tairiscint, lena n-áirítear aon tairiscint de réir bhrí Bhuan-Ordú 220, agus</p> <p>(c) cibé nithe eile,</p> <p>a tharchuirfidh an Dáil chuige.</p>  | <p>(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee shall consider such—</p> <p>(a) Bills the statute law in respect of which is dealt with by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Defence,</p> <p>(b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 220, and</p> <p>(c) other matters,</p> <p>as shall be referred to it by the Dáil.</p>                          |

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| <p>(3) Beidh an tAire Gnóthaí Eachtracha (nó comhalta den Rialtas nó Aire Stáit a ainmneofar chun gníomhú ina áit nó ina háit chun na críche sin), ina chomhalta nó ina comhalta <i>ex officio</i> den Roghchoiste chun na nithe atá leagtha amach i mír (2)(a) agus (b) a bhreithniú agus beidh sé nó sí i dteideal vótáil in imeachtaí an Roghchoiste.</p> | <p>(3) The Minister for Foreign Affairs (or a member of the Government or Minister of State nominated to act in his or her stead for that purpose) shall be an <i>ex officio</i> member of the Select Committee for the purpose of consideration of the matters outlined at paragraph (2)(a) and (b) and shall be entitled to vote in Select Committee proceedings.</p> |
| <p>(4) Beidh ag an Roghchoiste na cumhachtaí a mhínítear i mBuan-Ordú 96, seachas míreanna (6) go (10).</p>  | <p>(4) The Select Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 96, other than paragraphs (6) to (10).</p>  |
| <p>(5) Déanfar an Roghchoiste a chomhcheangal le Roghchoiste arna cheapadh ag Seanad Éireann chun bheith ina Chomhchoiste um Ghnóthaí Eorpacha, agus, gan dochar do ghinearáltacht mhír (1), déanfaidh an Roghchoiste an méid seo a leanas a bhreithniú—</p>   | <p>(5) The Select Committee shall be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann, to form the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, which, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), shall consider—</p>  |
| <p>(a) doiciméid phleanála straitéiseacha an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh lena n-áirítear Clár Oibre an Choimisiúin,</p>   | <p>(a) the European Commission's strategic planning documents including the Commission Work Programme,</p>  |
| <p>(b) forbairtí beartais tras-earnála ag leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh,</p>  | <p>(b) cross-sectoral policy developments at European Union level,</p>  |
| <p>(c) nithe a liostaítear lena mbreithniú ar an gclár gnó i gcomhair cruinnithe de Chomhairle (Airi) Gnóthaí Ginearálta an Aontais Eorpaigh agus toradh cruinnithe den sórt sin.</p>  | <p>(c) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the General Affairs Council (of Ministers) of the European Union and the outcome of such meetings,</p>  |
| <p>(d) cibé rialacháin faoi Achtanna na gComhphobal Eorpach, 1972 go 2009 agus ionstraimí eile arna ndéanamh faoi reacht agus is gá de dhroim na n-oibleagáidí a ghabhann le ballraíocht san</p>   | <p>(d) such regulations under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009 and other instruments made under statute and necessitated by the obligations of membership of</p>  |

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| Aontas Eorpach a roghnóidh an Coiste,  | the European Union as the Committee may select,  |
| (e) fógraí arna dtarchur ag an Dáil faoi Bhuan-Ordú 134(1)(a),   | (e) notifications referred by the Dáil under Standing Order 134(1)(a),   |
| (f) fógraí i dtaobh tograí chun na Conarthaí a fuarthas ón gComhairle Eorpach de bhun Airteagal 48.2 den Chonradh ar an Aontas Eorpach a leasú,  | (f) notifications of proposals for the amendment of the Treaties received from the European Council pursuant to Article 48.2 of the Treaty on European Union,  |
| (g) fógraí i dtaobh iarratais ar bhallraíocht san Aontas Eorpach a fuarthas ón gComhairle Eorpach de bhun Airteagal 49 den Chonradh ar an Aontas Eorpach, agus   | (g) notifications of applications for membership of the European Union received from the European Council pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, and  |
| (h) cibé nithe eile a tharchuirfidh an Dáil chuige ó am go ham.  | (h) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.   |
| (6) Tabharfaidh an Comhchoiste tuarascáil do dhá Theach an Oireachtais ar oibriú Acht an Aontais Eorpaigh (Grinnscrúdú), 2002.   | (6) The Joint Committee shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.  |
| (7) Beidh ag an gComhchoiste na cumhachtaí a mhínítear i mBuan-Ordú 96, 133 agus 135 agus beidh aige an chumhacht chun moltaí a chur faoi bhráid an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha (nó faoi bhráid Aire Stáit) i dtaobh nithe a bhaineann leis an Aontas Eorpach. | (7) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 96, 133 and 135 and shall have the power to make recommendations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or Minister of State) on European Union matters. |
| (8) Féadfaidh na daoine seo a leanas freastal ar chruinnithe den Chomhchoiste agus páirt a ghlacadh in imeachtaí gan ceart vótála a bheith   | (8) The following may attend meetings of the Joint Committee and take part in proceedings without having a   |

acu ná ceart tairiscintí a dhéanamh ná leasuithe a thairiscint:

right to vote or to move motions and amendments:

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| <p>(a) Comhaltaí de Pharlaimint na hEorpa arna dtoghadh ó thoghcheantair in Éirinn,</p> <p>(b) Comhaltaí de thoscaireacht na hÉireann chuig Tionól Parlaiminteach Chomhairle na hEorpa, agus</p> <p>(c) ar chuireadh a fháil ón gCoiste, Comhaltaí eile de Pharlaimint na hEorpa.</p> | <p>(a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland,</p> <p>(b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and</p> <p>(c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.</p> |
| <p>(9) Déanfaidh an Comhchoiste ionadaíocht do dhá Theach an Oireachtais ag Comhdháil na gCoistí um Ghnóthaí Comhphobail agus Eorpacha de chuid Parlaimintí an Aontais Eorpaigh (COSAC) agus tabharfaidh sé tuarascáil ar an gcéanna do dhá Theach an Oireachtais.</p>                | <p>(9) The Joint Committee shall represent both Houses of the Oireachtas at the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) and shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas thereon.</p>                                   |
| <p>(10) Beidh Cathaoirleach Roghchoiste na Dála ina Chathaoirleach nó ina Cathaoirleach ar an gComhchoiste freisin.</p>   | <p>(10) The Chairman of the Dáil Select Committee shall also be the Chairman of the Joint Committee.</p>  |







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