

UCC / Alliance Francaise Symposium - 'The 60th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration'

Ireland: Adapting to EEC Membership

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European Integration

In his reply to a National Forum on Europe debate in 2005, Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso made a memorable statement on the importance of remembering the history of European integration, beginning with Europe's emergence from the ruins of World War II.

“...I ask you to make a small historic exercise. How was Europe sixty years ago? How is Europe now? And how will Europe be in the future?”

Sixty years ago, I tell you how was Europe. It was Auschwitz, it was the Holocaust. I was in Auschwitz some time ago to commemorate the liberation of that camp/ The worst pages of the history of mankind were written in Europe during the Second World War. It was sixty years ago. It was not two or three centuries ago. That was Europe sixty years ago.

But how was Europe thirty years ago more or less? I can tell you in my country it was not a democracy. I was 17 or 18 years old. I could not read the books I wanted. I could not participate in debate as I wanted. You would go to prison if you attacked our government. That was Portugal in 1974...before our democratic revolution came. And Spain only became a democracy later. That was Europe thirty years ago.

How was Europe more or less fifteen years ago? Poland, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia and then former Yugoslavia, all those countries were under totalitarian communist regimes. Single party, no freedom, that was Europe... The Baltic countries did not even exist as independent countries, they were occupied by the Soviet Union. That was Europe fifteen years ago.

Ten years ago, how was Europe? Srebrenica. It will be in the month of July we are going to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Srebrenica; mass murders, genocide – in Europe, here, very close. Not so close to Ireland but very close to other Member States of the European Union. That was Europe ten years ago.”

Looking at the European Union today and tomorrow it is relevant to reflect on Barroso's insights. His message is that, while it is important to recognise the historical background of the Union's origins, it is equally valid to reflect on the fact that we live through history. The events described by Barroso have had major influence on the evolution of the European Union and continue to do so – as in the case of the relationship of the countries of the Western Balkans with the Union.

The Schuman Declaration

The Schuman Declaration was born of the circumstances of the time – just five years after the end of World War II. This remarkable, short document not alone provided the basis for an initiative of historic significance but pointed the way forward to the enlarged European Union of the 21st century.

I do not know what I was doing on 9 May 1950 but I do remember being brought by my parents to London at Christmas 1945 – to visit my grandparents for the first time. I can remember the bomb damaged streets of the capital and the evidence of war on all sides. I was reminded dramatically of that childhood experience when, in 1998 as a director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, I travelled by road from Sarajevo to Banja Luka in Bosnia, along roads which went through many burnt-out villages which had been destroyed in the frenzy of ethnic cleansing of the early 1990s. Two scenes from Europe's history in the 20th century.

Schuman pointed the way to peaceful co-existence in Europe, beginning with the relationship between France and Germany.

Schuman argued for the need for unity in Europe as a whole, arguing for a project open to all countries willing to take part.

Schuman paved the way for a Europe of shared sovereignty, a European community based on a formalized set of relationships.

Schuman provided for an institutional arrangement based on the unique concept of the High Authority which would evolve into the European Commission.

Schuman argued that the new, united Europe must recognize the needs of a wider world, highlighting the particular problems of Africa.

Schuman placed a special emphasis on the importance of multilateralism, giving a special priority to the United Nations.

Lemass and European Union

When Ireland first applied for membership of the EEC in 1961, the Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, made a statement to the Council of Ministers in Brussels which demonstrated a clear understanding of the values of Schuman and the founding fathers of the Community and which retains a great resonance nearly fifty years later.

“Ireland belongs to Europe by history, tradition and sentiment, no less than by geography. Our destiny is bound up with that of Europe and our outlook and way of life have for fifteen centuries has been moulded by the Christian ideals and the intellectual and cultural values on which European civilisation rests.

Our people have always tended to look to Europe for inspiration, guidance and encouragement...

I desire to emphasise that the political aims of the Community are aims to which the Irish Government and people are ready to subscribe and in the realisation of which they wish to play an active part. As I have already said, the Irish nation has always had a strong sense of belonging to Europe. We are also conscious of the great advantages which can accrue to all the countries concerned and to world peace from a strong and united Europe.”

Paris Summit 1972

In October 1972, the French President, Georges Pompidou, hosted the Heads of State or of Government of the Nine Member States at a Summit Conference which marked the first enlargement of the Communities. The agenda for the Conference centred on three main themes: Economic and Monetary Union and social progress; institutional consolidation and progress in the political sphere; external relations and the Community’s responsibilities in the world.

The nine national leaders addressed the Conference. The Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, was reported as urging that priority be given to strengthening the fabric of economic and monetary union. Among the strongly expressed views from other leaders the Netherlands stressed the need for early direct elections for the European Parliament and Germany, through Chancellor Willy Brandt, advocated an action plan for social policy. (Maher, 1986)

A extensive Communique was agreed by the Summit. Its Preamble summed up its main themes:

“Now that the tasks of the Community are growing and fresh responsibilities are being laid upon it, the time has come for Europe to recognise clearly the unity of its interests, the extent of its capacities and the magnitude of its duties: Europe must be able to make its voice heard in world affairs, and to make an original contribution commensurate with its human, intellectual and material resources. It must affirm its own views in international relations, as befits its mission to be open to the world and for progress, peace and cooperation.”

The Communique covered a wide range of issues:

- Economic and Monetary Union
- Regional Policy,
- External Relations and Political Co-operation
- Political Co-operation
- The concept of European Union.

Of particular significance was the section on Social Policy:

“The Heads of State or Heads of Government emphasised that they attached as much importance to vigorous action in the social field as to the achievement of

the economic and monetary union. They thought it essential to ensure the increasing involvement of labour and management in the economic and social decisions of the Community.....

(the) programme should aim, in particular, at carrying out a co-ordinated policy for employment and vocational training, at improving working conditions and conditions of life, at closely involving workers in the progress of firms, at facilitating on the basis of the situation in the different countries the conclusion of collective agreements at European level in appropriate fields and at strengthening and co-ordinating measures of consumer protection.”

This important move towards a coherent Social Policy was largely inspired by the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt. His memoirs quote his remarks at the plenary session of the Paris Conference: “Social justice must not remain an abstract concept, nor must social progress be misconstrued as a mere appendage of economic growth. If we develop a European view of social policy, many of our countries’ citizens will more readily identify themselves with the community.”

Speaking in Dail Eireann after the Paris Summit, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Hillery, who had been nominated as Ireland’s first Commissioner, commented that:

“The Summit shifted from the economic bureaucratic idea to a Europe of people, a Europe built for the benefit of its citizens. Entering into Europe we should be thinking in a more positive way of how we can so structure it as to preserve to the fullest extent liberties and individual rights while improving the standard of living. Again, all these are aims set out in the Treaty of Rome. We can have a very special role to play in making sure that Europe, as it develops, will be something new in the world and something worth working for....it is for us to find for our people, and for other people, reasons why individual people should feel a loyalty to Europe as a concept”.

Writing in the Institute of European Affairs study of the first 25 years of membership - ‘Europe: The Irish Experience’ - Rory O’Donnell argued that:

“In some respects, Ireland’s motivation in seeking EC membership is relatively obvious. Membership offered the prospect of access to a large, high-priced, heavily subsidised market for the country’s food surplus. In addition, as FitzGerald points out, the fact that Britain was the slowest-growing industrial market in Europe, was undoubtedly a factor in the decision to seek access to the more dynamic markets of the continent. Yet an account which is confined to these material motives is unsatisfactory. The papers in this volume bring out two other factors: Ireland’s desire to find a more satisfactory set of external relationships and the drive to overcome the limits of closure and isolation. The point is not to counter-pose these to the material concerns, but to see how the material and other motivations were interwoven.

In seeking an accurate view of how these were combined, it is important to recognise that the motivation for EU membership differs in each member state. In Chapter 4 Garvin,

identifies the diverse security, cultural and political reasons which motivated France, Germany, the Benelux countries, Spain, Portugal and Greece to participate in integration. It follows that the effects of membership, and ultimately the meaning of membership, varies from country to country and, indeed, within countries. This point is frequently missed by the critics of European integration, who correctly see the difference between countries, but see 'Europe' as an entity (or putative super-power), rather than Europe as a set of relationships.

The difference between countries is real. But it cannot be assumed that nationality is a primordial reality which sets limits to European integration. It might as easily result in diverse motives for integration, and diverse experiences of integration. Indeed, part of the genius of the project has been its ability to place European integration within the vocation of each member state, even within each modern European nationalism. As Garvin emphasises, the diverse motivations for participation are not purely economic. Yet integration can only meet countries' diverse cultural and political needs, if it meets the members' shared need for economic prosperity and security."

Since the original Lemass statement, successive Irish governments have committed this country to the political ideals and aims which inspired the founding fathers of the Community. That basic commitment has been endorsed by the electorate in five referenda since 1972. The outcome of the first vote on the Lisbon Treaty called into question that longstanding policy orientation and it will be interesting to see if the 'yes' last October really indicated a renewal of the positive attitudes of earlier years.

Being at the heart of the unique European project – which for the first time in history has created a true community of sovereign nations founded, not on conquest or force of arms, but on voluntary adherence to common values and shared goals - has enhanced Ireland's international identity, enabling a small peripheral island state to play a positive role in Europe's progress and in its role of promoting peace, prosperity and social progress.

The harsh realities of the early 21st century – in terms of challenges such as the threat to the Euro, the jobs crisis, demographic trends including migration, climate change, energy security and world peace and development – bring attention back to the realities which shaped the thinking of Schuman, Adenauer and de Gasperi and their interlocutors almost sixty years ago. They showed faith in themselves and their fellow Europeans and they held out to them a prospect of progress, peace and prosperity based on a set of common goals and a commitment to common effort. That prospect has been realised over the years in a European Union that, in John Hume's words, "stands as the most vibrant testimony to the ideal that we are all better working with each other and for each other."

Adapting to the EEC: Background

Ireland's application was made in the context of the applications of three other countries – the UK, Denmark and Norway. In early discussions, politicians and commentators in the six founding Member States expressed doubts about Ireland's economic capacity and its proclaimed neutrality. French politicians had equally serious concerns about the British application, in both political and economic terms.

The applicant countries continued to press for EEC membership but their hopes were dashed in 1963 when the French President, Charles de Gaulle made it clear that France would not accept Britain as a member of the Community. His effective veto led to an abrupt end to discussions with all four applicant countries.

In 1967 the membership applications were re-activated and the Government published a new White Paper – 'European Communities' – detailing the issues arising in respect of the three European Communities (European Economic Community; European Atomic Energy Community; European Coal and Steel Community). The White Paper indicated that "the objective of membership for Ireland of the EEC has continued to be emphasised by the Government in the close contacts that have been maintained, in the period since the suspension of negotiations, with the Governments of Member States of the EEC, and with the EEC Commission. These contacts have also presented the opportunity of keeping in close touch with Community policies and developments and of making known, as regards these policies and developments, Ireland's interests, attitudes and circumstances."

This second application was blocked again by President de Gaulle because of his attitude to British membership and to enlargement in general. In 1969 de Gaulle's presidency came to an abrupt end with the defeat, in a referendum, of proposals for electoral reform. He was succeeded by a former Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou who indicated at once that he would not stand in the way of British and Irish membership.

Negotiations started in June 1970 and were completed in January 1972. The Accession Treaty was signed on 22 January 1972. The referendum took place on 10 May 1972 and the result was clearcut. With a turnout of 71%, the 'yes' vote was 83.1% with 16.9% voting 'no'.

Following the successful outcome of the referendum detailed preparations for entry to the Communities were undertaken by Government and civil service. The most significant step was the nomination of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Hillery, as the Irish member of the Commission with the status of Vice-President. The Chief Justice, Judge Cearbhaill O Dalaigh was nominated as the Irish member of the Court of Justice. Ten members of the Oireachtas – including the leading figure in the Labour Party 'no' campaign, Justin Keating - were appointed to the European Parliament and nine members of the Economic and Social Committee were named from business, trade union, agricultural and community organisations.

On 1 January 1973, a new Commission took office with an Irishman, Dr Patrick Hillery, as Vice President with responsibility for Social Affairs and, therefore, for drafting a Social Action Programme, under the terms of the Paris Summit Communiqué.

A General Election in early 1973 saw a change of Government with a Fine Gael-Labour Coalition taking over from Fianna Fail. Garret FitzGerald became Minister for Foreign Minister and presided over the first Irish Presidency of the Council in 1975.

The Coalition had fought the election on the basis of a Fourteen Point Statement of Intent – which contained specific commitments on social reform with emphasis on the elimination of poverty and the ending of social injustice. Brendan Corish became Tanaiste and Minister for Health and for Social Welfare with Frank Cluskey as his Junior Minister, responsible for Social Welfare and EEC Social Policy. I became Special Advisor to both Corish and Cluskey and began work immediately on the Social Action Programme file. Meetings were held with experts in key policy areas and initiatives on poverty were highlighted in a number of contacts.

Commission Vice President Hillery produced a substantial draft of the Social Action Programme in late June 1973 and undertook a series of consultative meetings in the EEC capitals. On 3 September he visited Dublin and held meetings with ministers, including Frank Cluskey who introduced the idea of including a specific action on poverty. Dr Hillery reacted positively and requested a written proposal which was drafted by a small group of civil servants and advisors, approved by Frank Cluskey and delivered by me to the Hillery Cabinet in Brussels on 11 September. The draft Social Action Programme, published in early November, contained a chapter on a ‘Community Programme Against Poverty’ which reflected the Irish text.

The Irish proposal was designed to put the issue of poverty on the EEC agenda and to obtain the involvement of the Community institutions, national governments and wider, civil society. It was felt that focused, practical steps were needed, rather than more generalised approaches to an issue about which there was deep academic and political argument. It was proposed that the Community should “initiate a series of pilot schemes of social action in selected, representative communities in order to provide a basis for the evolution and implementation of policies for the alleviation and elimination of poverty.” The Commission text proposed the implementation, with the Member States, of specific measures to combat poverty by drawing up pilot schemes and studies which would test new, inclusive, methods of helping those beset or threatened with poverty and improve understanding of the nature, causes, scope and mechanics of poverty in the Community.

The Social Action Programme was discussed, refined and formally tabled for decision by a Social Affairs Council in December 1973. It contained more than twenty proposals including major initiatives on equality between men and women in the workplace (notably equal pay for equal work), health and safety at work, social integration for handicapped persons and migrant workers, employment policy and a better focused role for the European Social Fund. The Programme proposed the establishment of important bodies which remain active today, including the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions, situated in Loughlinstown.

The Social Action Programme was adopted, in principle, by the Council in a meeting which was overshadowed by the political fallout from the October War in the Middle East which had

resulted in massive increases in oil prices and subsequent recession. The Danish Presidency at the Council meeting was informed, during the lunch break, that their Government had just lost a no-confidence vote in parliament. Dr Hillery showed great leadership in persuading the Council to adopt the full Social Action Programme as an expression of the political will of the Member States but subject to detailed legislation within an agreed timetable. The proposed action on poverty was given priority status.

In April 1975, the Commission presented a formal proposal for a Council Decision on the Programme of Pilot Schemes and Studies. This was based on Article 235 of the Treaty –giving the Council to act in an area not specifically provided for in the Treaty - and required unanimity in the Council. The European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee were consulted before the Decision was tabled at the Social Affairs Council in June 1975, under the first Irish Council Presidency. The Council met on 17 June 1975 with the Minister for Labour, Michael O’Leary, in the chair and Frank Cluskey leading the Irish delegation. Germany initially opposed the Commission draft, arguing that poverty should be dealt with at national level and should not be a charge on the EEC budget but withdrew its opposition after limitations on expenditure were agreed. The availability of a national veto in this element of EEC Social Policy foreshadowed debates on the scope and scale of European, as contrasted with national, action in the social field which continue to the present day.

The decision to proceed with the programme saw the beginning of a process which extended through a number of Community Programmes until it was ended by German and UK objections to the method of funding, upheld by the European Court of Justice. The process then evolved into a system of national anti-poverty programmes to which Ireland has contributed significantly and which has successfully utilised the Open Method of Co-ordination with its benchmarks, guidelines and exchanges of best practice.

Looking at the Schuman Declaration in Action

The Peace component of the Schuman Declaration has become its most important legacy to Europe. From reconciliation between France and Germany, through the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ending of Communism, to the Eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004 and the Thessaloniki commitment to the countries of the Western Balkans – the history speaks for itself.

The opening of membership to Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 1980s brought to an end an era of authoritarian rule while the 2004 and 2007 enlargements saw ten former communist states joining the free association of democratic nations which is the European Union. International security and promotion of human rights have become major issues for the EU.

The European Charter of Fundamental Rights brings together all the separate documents about the rights of European citizens as well as the judgements made by the official European courts. The Charter also sets down certain fundamental economic and social rights. The Charter does not expand the powers of the EU or give European citizens any new rights. It makes rights

more visible and means that Europeans will be better placed than they have ever been to get the most out of the EU.

The Unity of Europe has been achieved to a considerable degree. The history of the European Treaties must be seen in the context of EU Enlargement which has been a constant feature of the evolution of the integration project. Ireland, the UK, Denmark and Norway applied for membership of the then EEC in 1961, only three years after the entry into effect of the Treaty of Rome.

- 1950 Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands (6)
- 1961 Initial accession applications blocked in 1962 by Charles de Gaulle
- 1973 Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom (9)
- 1981 Greece (10)
- 1986 Spain, Portugal (12)
- 1990 German Reunification; de facto enlargement of EU.
- 1995 Austria, Finland, Sweden (15)
- 2004 Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (25)
- 2007 Bulgaria, Romania. (27)

The European Council has opened accession talks with Croatia and Turkey and has given candidate status to Macedonia. Membership applications have been received from Iceland, Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are Balkans states which have EU aspirations and which have received assurances that, subject to certain conditions – in respect of issues such as effective democratic government, the rule of law and respect for minority rights – they will be considered for EU membership in due course. The conditions attaching to EU membership are set out in the Treaties and the decision to admit a new Member State is made by the European Council, acting by unanimity.

The Shared Sovereignty concept has been advanced as the integration project has been based on a series of treaties between the participating states. The EU Treaties are freely negotiated agreements between sovereign states and ratified in accordance with the respective national constitutional provisions and must be seen in the overall historical context – the true nature of the Union as a successful ‘peace and prosperity’ project. The treaties remain the key political texts – and this explains their often scale, reflecting compromises and consensus. They are situated in the evolving nature of the Union – with its changing borders, its increased diversity, its new challenges. They are designed to provide a clear framework for the joint action of as many as thirty different European democracies sharing elements of sovereignty.

- 1950: Treaty of Paris; European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)
- 1957: Treaty of Rome; European Economic Community (EEC)
- 1957: Euratom Treaty; European Atomic Energy Community
- 1986: Single European Act: Internal Market
- 1992: Treaty on European Union (Maastricht): Single Currency; Common Foreign and Security Policy
- 1997: Amsterdam Treaty: Justice and Home Affairs

- 2002: Treaty of Nice; Enlargement
- 2009: Treaty of Lisbon; Institutional Changes.

The Institutional Structures of the European Union have developed to the present post-Lisbon arrangements. Ireland has participated strongly at all levels:

Irish Council Presidencies (Six to Date)

- 1975 (FG/LAB; Cosgrave/FitzGerald)
- 1979 (FF; Lynch/OKennedy)
- 1984 (FG/LAB; FitzGerald;Barry)
- 1990 (FF; Haughey/Collins)
- 1996 (FG/LAB; Bruton/Spring)
- 2004 (FF; Ahern/Cowen)
- 2013 The next Irish Presidency.

Irish Commission Members

- 1973 Patrick Hillery, Vice President, Social Affairs
- 1977 Richard Burke, Taxation, Transport, Relations with Parliament
- 1981 Michael O’Kennedy; Richard Burke, Personnel and Administration
- 1985 Peter Sutherland, Competition Policy
- 1989 Ray Mac Sharry, Agriculture and Rural Development
- 1993 Pdraig Flynn, Social Affairs and Employment
- 1995 Pdraig Flynn, Social Affairs and Employment
- 1999 David Byrne, Health and Consumer Affairs
- 2004 Charlie McCreevy, Internal Market.
- 2010 Maire Geoghegan Quinn, Research, Innovation and Science

From the beginning, Ireland sent highly qualified individuals to serve in the European Commission. At present the most senior position in the Commission – that of Secretary General - is held by an Irish woman, Catherine Day, who is in her second term in this high office under the Presidency of Jose Manuel Barroso. She succeeded another Irish official, David O’Sullivan, who occupied the post in the period 2000-2005, during the Prodi Commission. David O’Sullivan is now Director General for Trade.

European Parliament

Irish MEPs have played important roles in the European Parliament as its importance within the Union’s decision-making system has increased, notably with the extension of Co-Decision with the Council under the terms of the Lisbon Treaty.

Ireland’s twelve MEPs sit in four of the Parliament’s political groups:

- European Peoples’ Party (4): Fine Gael (4)

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (4): Fianna Fail(3); Marian Harkin

Socialists and Democrats (3): Labour Party (3)

European United Left (1): Socialist Party (1)

The highlight of Irish membership of the European Parliament was in 2002 when Pat Cox was elected to the office of President of the Parliament, a position he held until 2004.

The EU is the world's biggest donor of development and humanitarian aid. In 2007 the EU and its Member States committed Euro 48 billion – equivalent to 50% of global development assistance. Working with international organisations and NGOs the EU is not alone providing aid but seeking to promote economic, rural, administrative and social development. The EU supports the UN Millennium Development Goals with the overarching aim of eradicating poverty in Africa and the rest of the developing worlds.

The Union's European Security and Defence Policy ESDP includes a growing capacity for a range of missions from humanitarian and rescue operations to peacekeeping duties, crisis management and peacemaking under the terms of the UN Charter. Significant missions have been undertaken in Bosnia, Macedonia and Chad. Particular attention is given to civilian projects in areas such as judicial reform, creation of modern police forces and actions to combat corruption

Ireland: A Referendum Country

Following the Judgement of the Supreme Court in respect of the Single European Act in 1987 Ireland has ratified successive EU treaties by way of referendum. Most EU Member States ratify such treaties by parliamentary assent. In the case of the Lisbon Treaty Ireland was the only Member State to hold a referendum.

Results of Irish Referenda on the European Union

		Turnout %	Yes %	No %
1972	Accession	71	83	17
1987	Single Act	44	70	30
1992	Maastricht	57	69	31
1998	Amsterdam	56	62	38
2001	Nice	35	46	54
2002	Nice	45	63	37
2008	Lisbon	53	47	53
2009	Lisbon	59	67	33

The European Convention

It was decided to establish a European Convention under the chairmanship of former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The Convention was set a number of questions under the headings of: the democratic challenge facing Europe; Europe's new role in a globalised world; the expectations of Europe's citizens; a better division and definition of competence in the EU; simplification of the Union's instruments; more democracy, transparency and efficiency in the EU; and, a possible EU constitution.

The Convention was designed to be widely representative of the Governments and Parliaments of 28 countries -including the twelve candidate countries and Turkey – and with both government and opposition MPs, representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission and observers from Civil Society, including the European Ombudsman and the Social Partners. The Irish Delegation included Europe Minister Dick Roche TD (Fianna Fail), former Taoiseach John Bruton TD (Fine Gael), Proinsias de Rossa MEP (Labour), Pat Carey TD (Fianna Fail) and John Gormly TD (Green Party). John Bruton was elected by national parliamentarians to the Praesidium which managed the work of the Convention.

Between February 2002 and June 2003 the Convention held more than 50 public plenary sessions. It established eleven Working Groups on issues from simplification of EU instruments and procedures to the future of Social Europe. It concluded its work on the basis of consensus with only a handful of dissenting voices and presented the text of a draft Constitutional Treaty to the European Council at Thessaloniki on 19th June 2003

That fundamental value system is fully reflected in the successive EU treaties and, in particular, in the Lisbon Treaty. The Preamble to the Treaty refers to the Union "Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law."

The Lisbon Treaty clearly sets out the Values and Objectives of the European Union:

"The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a Society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."

2010 Europe's Challenging Agenda

Future of the Euro
 Financial Supervision and Regulation
 Global Realities; emergence of the BRICS
 Global Governance; UN; G-20
 Post Lisbon Institutional Change

EU 2020 Economy Technology and Society
 Climate Change
 Energy Security
 Internal Market
 Neighbourhood and Enlargement
 Foreign Policy; EEAS project
 Security and Defence
 Justice and Home Affairs; Schengen

Ireland's Perspectives

The European Integration Project, viewed from Ireland has five key aspects:

The **Nature of the Union** - uniting a continent by consent; shared values, equality of membership, continuing enlargement. But, with new questions about the pace and impact of enlargement, perceived job displacement etc.

The **Political Project** – conferred competences, democracy, unique institutional framework, security and stability. Concerns about transparency and scrutiny, especially in respect of implementation (Nitrates Directive etc.)

Economic Perspectives – banking and the financial sector, the ‘euro, trade and investment, a knowledge-based economy – Lisbon Agenda, growth and employment. A history of €60 billion in European Funding – CAP, Regional, Cohesion, R&D.

Society and Values – people, cultures, diversity and identity, fundamental rights, solidarity and social inclusion. Charter of Fundamental Rights. Balancing the economic and social elements of overall EU project.

Europe and the World – foreign and security policy, ‘the Petersberg tasks’, environment, sustainable development. Security in the Balkans and EU neighbourhood; Africa’s development crisis; WTO etc.

In the years immediately ahead priority must be given to giving a central place to EU matters in Irish government and administration. EU policy must be seen as a matter for Government, Oireachtas, political parties, public administration, and wider civil society. The tendency in the Celtic Tiger era was to adopt a “we can stand alone” attitude to the EU. The economic and financial crisis of the past year have demonstrated that such hubris was seriously misguided.

President McAleese at IIEA:

“.....Ireland had and still has a panel of strengths sufficient to reposition us as a smart, innovative, ethically sustainable and competitive economy. Not least of those strengths is our capacity for solidarity, for pulling together across the diverse constituencies of interest, when to do so is the most effective way of protecting our collective national interest. We are right in the middle of just such a time and so far external expert commentators seem impressed at the realism and

sacrifice being brought to bear on our parlous economic situation. The repositioning of Ireland if it is to be successful will be largely down to our own efforts and our relationship with the EU and its individual Member States is absolutely critical to that repositioning.....the post-Lisbon era has to be characterised by the focussing of energies on ensuring that the new EU institutional architecture makes a manifest and positive impact on the lives of Europe's citizens.....Ireland has to keep doing what it has always done very well and that is to maintain a high level of engagement with our European partners, not just in Brussels but also bilaterally with our European colleagues and those who aspire to membership so that we are not known simply through the voices of external spectators and pundits but known for who we truly are.”

Ireland Transformed

Ireland has experienced a profound transformation in political, economic and social terms over the past forty years. The decision of the Lemass government in the 1960s to pursue full membership of the then EEC was a seminal moment in Irish history. Entry to the EEC offered the prospect of economic development in an open market, and financial support for development of human and physical infrastructure, and an opportunity to break the historic ties with Britain and emerge as a mature, liberal, European democracy.

An IEA study of Ireland’s first twenty -five years of EU membership concluded that “Europe is not so much the cause of these transformations as their context. For they were only possible with the creation of an international regime which is voluntary, law-based and pluralist, which constrains the naked use of state power, protects small states in international negotiation and supports both individual and cultural freedom.”

Euro 60 Billion in EU Funding Since 1973

Ireland has benefited from transfers from the European Regional, Social and Cohesion Funds. Apart from the substantial financial benefits to the agricultural sector there has been significant investment in up to 150 major infrastructure projects together with important levels of funding for vocational training and research.

EU funding has gone into almost every aspect of Irish life: improving transport and communication networks; increasing trade; creating employment; promoting cultural diversity, peace and understanding; cleaning up the environment; restoring tourism amenities; sustaining country life and protecting human rights.

Ireland’s economic success in the past twenty years means that the country no longer qualifies for the same volume of EU Structural funding as in the past. In the budget period 2007-2013 Ireland will receive Euro 750 million, half from the Regional Development Fund and half from the European Social Fund.

Each year funding of up to Euro 2 Billion goes to farming families and to support the development of rural Ireland. Beyond support for more efficient food production the EU funds

ensure action on environmental protection. These resources have reached every parish and townland in Ireland.

European Investment Bank: Finance for Key Projects

Since 1973, the European Investment Bank has made loans totalling Euro 10 billion to support investment projects. The Euro 450 million lent in 2008 was directed to key projects in the transport, energy and Research&Development sectors.

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