



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade

## **Divisional Briefing**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**May 2016**

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## Asia Pacific Unit

### Immediate priorities for incoming Minister

- The economic and political importance of the Asia Pacific region is likely to continue to grow in the coming decades. Ensuring a strong continued focus on trade promotion in the region will remain a key priority. This will be progressed through active promotion of political, economic and cultural ties, enhancing our presence in the region, and building partnerships with key interlocutors. The Programme for Government contains a commitment to a Strategy for the Asia Pacific region. The incoming Minister may wish to instruct officials to prepare a paper on how to take this forward.

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- The next EU ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, at which the attendance of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade is recommended, is due to take place in Thailand (Bangkok) in mid-October 2016.

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- Visits to China and to India should be given consideration in 2016/2017. Both will require planning and preparation. This would build on the momentum created by recent high level visits to Ireland.

### Overview

The Asia Pacific region is currently home to over half of the world's population and two of the world's three largest economies. Countries across Asia have developed rapidly to become significant drivers of global growth and increasingly influential global actors. The implications for Ireland of this unprecedented and continuing transformation are immense.

By 2025, Asia is likely to account for almost half the world's output while the continent is set to overtake the combined economic output of Europe and North America before 2020. Economic development in Asia has dramatically increased life expectancy in the region and has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. At a macro-economic level, this development has led to increasing demand for energy, raw materials and food. At the individual level, the rise of a large new middle class has created demand for improved health care, consumer technology, diverse and high-protein food products, luxury goods, and travel. There is nevertheless a degree of economic uncertainty in the region at present. China is experiencing a slowdown in its level of economic growth as the country makes the transition to a more balanced domestic consumption and services based economic model. Rising tensions in the region connected to developments in the South China Sea are also a source of concern, as are ongoing security issues on the Korean peninsula. It is important to recognise the diversity of the Asia Pacific region which encompasses some of the world's richest and poorest nations, which presents both opportunities and challenges. In addition, demographic distributions vary widely, with the countries of North East Asia facing the challenge of ageing societies, while India and the countries of the South East have rapidly growing young populations.

Ireland has a strategic interest in broadening and deepening relationships with countries in the Asia Pacific region, which are playing an increasingly important role in world affairs. In Asia there is a relative lack of awareness of Ireland and an absence of significant historical links which necessitates more concerted awareness-raising and branding of Ireland compared to traditional markets in North America and the EU. In addition, the role that the State plays in the economy and in business in Asia is significant. In some Asian countries, state-owned enterprises play a preponderant role in the economy, increasing the importance of government-level relations. Even where the private sector is in the lead, across the region, considerable importance is placed on government-level contacts as a precursor to economic cooperation.

This cultural and economic context requires a **deep cross-Government response** by Ireland to ensure that opportunities for increased trade and investment are fully grasped. In order to achieve our aims it is vital to ensure that Ireland is actively promoting our political, economic and cultural ties, increasing our presence, and building partnerships with key governments in this dynamic and diverse region. Ireland's relationship with the Asia Pacific region has continued to deepen and strengthen in recent times. This has been facilitated by the expansion of our regional mission network with the opening of new Embassies in Thailand and Indonesia, and a new Consulate General in Hong Kong in 2014, in addition to our existing Embassies in China (including a Consulate General in Shanghai), Australia (including a Consulate General in Sydney), India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam. The Asia Pacific Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for bringing strategic focus to our relations with the region, working closely with our Embassies and Local Market Teams (which include the State Agencies) to promote exports, encourage foreign direct investment, increase business and leisure travel to Ireland, and promote other offerings such as education and cultural links.

Our engagement in Asia is founded on **building relationships at the highest political level**, through high-level visits and meetings, and, where possible, through establishing formal partnerships. In recent years, a programme of high level visits from Ireland to the region has boosted political and economic ties.

A Strategic Partnership for Mutually Beneficial Cooperation, launched in 2012, provides a framework to deepen bilateral engagement with China. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] When trade with Hong Kong is included, China is currently our biggest trading partner in Asia.

A Partnership for Prosperity and Growth with Japan was agreed during the Taoiseach's visit there in December 2013, setting out a path to enhance relations and promote the economic prosperity of both countries. 2017 will see the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Japan; to mark the occasion, Ireland has indicated that we would warmly welcome a visit by a senior member of Japan's Imperial Household.

The visit of Prime Minister Modi to Ireland in September 2015 has created new momentum in the bilateral relationship. PM Modi's visit to Ireland was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister since Prime Minister Nehru almost 60 years previously. Ireland was the second country in the EU to have been visited by Prime Minister Modi. Ireland and India share strong historical links dating from the two countries' struggle for independence. The visit by Prime Minister Modi provides the impetus to further strengthen bilateral links. Consideration should be given to a visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade to India this year. India has become one of the fastest growing major economies in the world with growth rates of over 7% in 2015. India's population comprises more than a sixth of the world's population. More than 50% of the population is under 25. Given such demographics, India will continue to assume growing importance politically and economically in Asia and indeed the world in the coming years.

The Asia Pacific region also includes Australia and New Zealand. Ireland shares strong historical ties with both countries and the recent economic downturn resulted in significant emigration of young Irish people to these countries. Australia and New Zealand are like minded countries at multilateral fora such as the UN and the ILO. Ireland also has much to learn from both countries in dealing with other countries in the Asia Pacific region. New Zealand for example has as an open trade orientated economy much like Ireland and was the first developed country to enter into a Free Trade Agreement with China.

Total **exports** of goods and services from Ireland to the Asia Pacific region exceeded €20 billion in 2014. As exports continue to be a significant driver of our economy, and as Asia is the highest-growing market for imports globally, countries in the region are increasingly important markets for Irish companies. Missions and State Agencies aim to focus on specific sectors, including financial services, information technology, life sciences, food, beverages

and ingredients, education, and certain niche sectors. In the period ahead, our efforts will focus on further strengthening trade, tourism and investment promotion in China, Australia, India, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea, each of which are priority markets established under the Government's Trade Strategy. A review of this strategy in February 2014 added a new category of Exploratory and High Potential Markets, which in Asia includes Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Ireland supports and benefits from the **EU's engagement with Asian** countries and with collective Asian institutions and bodies, which includes annual summits, ongoing dialogues, strategic partnerships and the negotiation of EU Free Trade Agreements with key partners such as South Korea. Ireland plays an active role in EU policy formulation and implementation with respect to Asia. We also work in cooperation with Asian countries within the **UN**, including on issues such as human rights, peacekeeping and disarmament. Engagement with regional bodies also offers opportunities to strengthen our ties with the region. Through the **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** process, which brings together fifty-three Asian and European countries at Head of State and Foreign Minister level, we are able to deepen our dialogue with Asian partners, and to meet bilaterally with countries we might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with regularly. Ireland is also accredited to the ten-member **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** through our new Embassy in Jakarta. The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in late 2015 with the aim of developing greater economic integration in a region with a combined market of US\$2.6 trillion and over 620 million people presents great potential for enhanced trade opportunities for Irish companies over time. The next EU ASEAN Foreign Ministerial, at which the attendance of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade would be expected, is due to take place in Thailand in October 2016.

## **Consular Services**

Along with passports, the provision of consular services and assistance lies at the heart of the Department's **People**-centred role. The Consular Services Division is co-located with the Passport Service in Knockmaun House in Mount St. and the following brief outlines the breadth of the work undertaken in this area. Officials are available to provide additional written or oral briefing at the Minister's convenience.

Consular Division is responsible for three main areas of work:

- 1 Consular Crisis Planning, Preparedness and Response
- 2 Consular Assistance
- 3 Consular Services

### **Immediate /Short-term issues for the Minister**

- **A new Smartphone Travel App will be ready for launch in late May/early June. This will be a new and innovative tool for engagement with citizens in relation to travel information and crisis response.**
- **The Euros2016 takes place in June in France. Up to 100,000 Irish supporters are likely to travel to France for the tournament. Significant resources are being devoted by this department and partners such as the FAI and the Garda Siochana to ensuring the safety of Irish citizens. The Minister will have a role in relation to the communication of key messaging around this major event.**

**The Minister is likely to be engaged on a number of ongoing consular cases.**

## **Crisis Planning, Preparedness and Response**

Consular Division is responsible for the Department's Emergency Response Plan. This plan sets out the strategic and operational priorities for the Department's response in the event of a serious incident abroad involving, or having the potential to involve, Irish citizens. The Department has a fully equipped Crisis Centre ready for activation once a crisis occurs.

The plan was most recently activated and the Crisis Centre operational after the Brussels terrorist attacks on 22 March 2016. Over the past twelve months, the Department has responded to a significant number of consular crises abroad involving Irish citizens, including those in Berkeley, Nepal, Tunisia and Paris. In response to a crisis, Consular Division works closely and effectively with our network of Missions overseas, with a range of other departments and agencies, including the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, Dublin Airport Authority, and representatives of airlines, tour operators and insurance companies.

The multiple crises experienced in 2015 highlighted the importance of contingency planning to a successful crisis response. Consular Division has ensured that Ireland's Embassies and Missions now have crisis contingency plans in place to respond to events such as terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other major incidents which might negatively impact Irish citizens. Crisis simulation exercises are regularly conducted focused on potentially high-risk locations, including with Embassy Paris, in advance of Euros2016.

An online travel registration system for Irish citizens travelling overseas is available on the Department's website and is open to all categories of traveller. The system is used by the Department in crisis situations to contact Irish citizens abroad and the Division routinely places mentions of the system into the Minister's PQ and press query answers to increase public awareness.



### **Consular Assistance**

As the numbers of Irish citizens travelling and living abroad continues to rise, so does the demand for consular assistance and support. The number of assistance cases handled by the department rose by around 20% year on year in both 2014 and 2015, and the rate of increase in the first quarter of 2016 has increased to 37%. Throughout 2015 consular assistance was provided to over 1,500 Irish citizens and, in a significant number of cases, this assistance was provided over an extended period.

Ireland's 80 Missions and 93 Honorary Consuls provide professional and compassionate help and advice to thousands of people each year, many of whom are experiencing deeply traumatic situations.

### **Significant Developments**

- Demands for consular assistance peaks between May and August, with an average of 37% of total cases for the year occurring at this time.
- Demand for consular assistance in traditional locations such as Spain and Portugal continues to grow, with a further sharp rise being observed in 2016 due to a fall in travel to countries such as Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt.
- Public communications will be enhanced with the launch of smartphone Travel App in May 2016. The Division continues to improve its social media outreach.
- The Department provides a 24 hour duty officer service with officers on call outside of working hours.
- The Division is working closely with relevant sporting organisations (such as the FAI and OCI) in preparation for major sporting events in 2016, including the European Championships and Rio Olympics.

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## **Consular Services**

Consular Services is responsible for the following:

- Authentication of Documents.
- Foreign Birth Registration (citizenship for persons born abroad to an Irish citizen not born in Ireland).
- Issuing Certificate de Coutume (letters of freedom for Irish people planning to marry or enter into a civil partnership).
- Administration of appointments, renewals and terminations of Honorary Consuls.
- Liaison with the Department of Justice on visa matters.
- Certain historical aspects of cases of Irish Children sent abroad for adoption from 1940s to 1970s.

In all of the above services, this Division strives to provide a high quality service to the public and we continuously seek ways to improve the customer experience and to reduce waiting times. We also provide ongoing support and guidance to Missions also providing these services.

Consular Division is also responsible for coordination of the network of 95 Honorary Consuls, including the appointments process. Honorary Consuls provide a large range of services on behalf of the Government, including consular assistance, services and trade promotion. The cost of operating the network represents excellent value, at an estimated cost of approximately €0.5m per annum.

Consular Division also acts as the conduit for the Department of Justice and Equality on visa policies and procedures that are regularly sent to our Missions abroad. Over 100,000 visas were processed in 2015, primarily at Missions abroad.

The Department is currently responsible for over 2,000 files relating to Irish children sent abroad for adoption from the 1940s to 1970s (primarily to the US from mother and baby homes) which are held at the National Archives. Once passed, the Adoption (Tracing and Information) Bill will provide for the files and related records to be transferred to the Adoption Authority.

## **Corporate Services Division**

Corporate Services Division supports the Secretary General in the day to day management of the Department. It is headed-up by Director General Fergal Mythen. The Division discharges a range of functions including:

- Human Resources and training;
- Information and communications technology – which includes supporting the automated passport system;
- Accommodation services;
- Security – which includes enhanced security profiles and preparedness of missions; liaising with An Garda Síochána to advise on immediate and urgent security threats in Ireland and missions; servicing the EU Council Security Committee (CSC), the National Security Authority (NSA) and the Office of Emergency Planning (OEP)/ Emergency Task Force and;
- Departmental archives and registry.

The Division also provides the general coordination function for the Department and is responsible for cross-cutting issues, including compliance and accountability issues, such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection. In 2015, the Department received 122 Freedom of Information requests of which 66% came from the media. A significant majority of these requests are for access to financial and/or administrative information. Requests for personal information are predominantly linked to passport or consular cases.

### **Structure of Department**

The Department consists of 18 Divisions and Units at home, as well as the British Irish Inter-Governmental Secretariat in Belfast and the North-South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat in Armagh. Departmental locations in Ireland include headquarters in Dublin (at Iveagh House and six other locations in Dublin), Cork (Passport Office) and Limerick (Development Cooperation Division), plus a total of 80 diplomatic and consular offices abroad, called ‘missions’.

Many Heads of Mission are also accredited to additional countries on a concurrent basis which enhances the cost-effectiveness of external representation. In addition, Ireland has a network of 95 Honorary Consuls/Honorary Consuls General (69 Honorary Consuls and 26 Honorary Consuls General) in 59 countries.

### **Accommodation**

The Department currently manages a total of 139 properties abroad on behalf of the State - 34 owned and 105 rented. These are used primarily as Embassy offices (Chanceries) and official residences of Heads of Mission, which are used for promotional and outreach activities.

There are currently 18 locations abroad where our Embassies are co-located with State Agencies in **Ireland House** arrangements. New York, Tokyo and Madrid are among the larger Ireland House arrangements with a number of State agencies operating under one roof.

### **Staffing**

There is currently 1425 'core' staff employed in the Department, 808 of whom are based at HQ (including about 280 in the Passport Offices). The remaining 617 are made up of HQ staff serving abroad (305) and locally-recruited employees in missions. This core number excludes temporary specialist and administrative staff employed on contract by Irish Aid at our development missions. It also excludes approximately 227 Temporary Clerical Officers (TCOs) employed annually to assist the Passport Offices in Mount Street, Balbriggan and Cork in coping with the heavy seasonal increase in demand for passports.

### **Key Current Divisional Issues**

#### Staff Numbers

Following the moratorium on recruitment and staffing restrictions, delegated sanction was restored to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in February 2015. Delegated sanction permits the Department to fill vacancies through recruitment and/or promotion in specified grades (up to Principal Officer Standard or equivalent) subject to the overall pay-bill ceiling. The pay bill ceiling for 2016 and 2017 is €77,818k for Vote 28 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and €14,913k for Vote 27 International Cooperation.

Consequently, the Department has run or partaken in a number of competitions to fill vacancies throughout the Department including recruitment at the diplomatic entry level of

Third Secretary. While vacancies still present a challenge, recruitment of new resources in the coming months should begin to ease the burden of under-resourcing. However, payroll will remain a continuing constraint on recruitment and workforce planning.

National Archives move to a 20 year release rule.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht brought a Memo to Government in late 2015 providing for an amendment to the National Archives Act (1986) to allow for the release of public records after a period of 20 years, rather than 30 years, at present. This follows the move by the British authorities, with effect from end-2013, to release public records after 20 years. It is intended that, with regard to the Northern Ireland conflict and the Peace Process in particular, the role and contribution of successive Irish Governments to a resolution of the conflict is supported by the availability of the necessary records for the benefit of the media, the academic world and the public at large, both domestically and internationally. It is anticipated that Departments most closely involved in Anglo Irish matters, to include this Department, will be the first to have the change implemented.

There will likely be significant implications for this Department. DFAT makes the largest single annual deposit of all Government agencies to the National Archives, accounting for roughly half of the records lodged each year, and these attract considerable public interest. Extra resources are required in the Department's Archives Unit to implement the proposal, given the increased volume of work arising.

## **Development Cooperation Division**

The Development Cooperation Division manages the Irish Aid programme and is responsible for all aspects of Ireland's relations with Africa. The Department's 2011 Africa Strategy, promotes an integrated approach to Africa, across development, political and economic and trade relations. Ireland's aid programme concentrates on the fight against poverty and hunger in some of the poorest countries in the world, with a geographic focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Overall Budget Allocations**

For 2016, the Government has provided €641 million for Official Development Assistance (ODA). €486 million is managed under Vote 27 of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, an increase of €10 million on 2015. The remaining €155 million is accounted for by the international development work of other Government Departments and Ireland's share of the EU Development Cooperation Budget.

Overall, Ireland's ODA will increase by €40 million, or 7%, in 2016, the first substantive increase in seven years. ODA reached a high of €920 million in 2008. There were significant budget reductions in 2009 and 2010, and the budgets were broadly stabilised in succeeding years. However, with strong GNP growth in Ireland in recent years, progress towards the UN target of providing 0.7% of GNP in ODA has continued to slip. Ireland's percentage fell to 0.38% in 2014, and 0.36% in 2015. This placed us 12<sup>th</sup> in international rankings, and 10<sup>th</sup> in the EU.

The broad outline of allocation of the Irish Aid budget for 2016 is:

- €140 million for long term development programmes in eight Key Partner Countries (Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Vietnam).
- €16 million for smaller long term development programmes in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Liberia, and Palestine.
- c. €100 million in response to humanitarian emergencies, an increase on last year in view of the extent of the humanitarian crises in Africa and especially the protracted crises in the Middle East, notably Syria
- €40 million for priority policy areas including resilience, hunger and nutrition; essential services, including health, HIV/AIDS, education; inclusive economic growth; and governance, gender equality and human rights.
- €66 million for the long term development work of NGOs; €15.5 million for development work by missionary organisations; €3.4 million for development education projects.
- €77 million for multilateral organisations, including €35 million for the European Development Fund and €36 million in voluntary core contributions to UN Agencies, notably €7.75 million to the UN Development Fund; €7.2 million to UNICEF; €7 million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, an increase of €1.2 million on 2015 in view of the global refugee crisis.



## **Ireland's international role**

In recent years, Ireland has established a leading international role in the fight to end global hunger and undernutrition, with partners including the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and the United States (particularly during Hilary Clinton's term as Secretary of State). At the UN, Ireland has been given a series of important co-facilitation roles on the future of international development, notably in co-chairing with Kenya the final negotiations leading up to the adoption in September 2015 of the new framework for international development to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The sixteen new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replace the MDGs, and run until 2030 continue the work to end extreme poverty but broaden the agenda so that they are universally applicable, with obligations on all states, developed and developing, bringing together traditional development and environmental, climate change and social commitments. The Department is in discussions with the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the most appropriate institutional framework for national implementation and reporting at UN level.

Building on the success of the negotiations on the SDGs in 2015, the UN Secretary General has called the first ever **World Humanitarian Summit** in Istanbul on 23-24 May, focusing on the need to improve the international response to the unprecedented level of humanitarian crisis globally, which has resulted in the displacement of over 60 million people from their homes and appeals for humanitarian assistance standing at over \$20 billion. Apart from the challenge of organising a Summit in Istanbul in the context of the Syrian civil war and refugee crisis, one of the chief aims will be to ensure greater coherence between short term emergency responses and long term development work. The Taoiseach has been formally invited to attend the Summit, and a reply will issue shortly. President Higgins has received an oral invitation, and arrangements are now being made for his participation. In addition to participation in the formal sessions, Ireland's role at the Summit will include the co-hosting with the World Food Programme of a meeting on gender, food security and nutrition in protracted crises, co-hosting with Austria a meeting on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and participation in a major meeting on the Call to Action for the Protection of Girls and Women from Violence in Emergencies.

The UN Secretary General has also called a one-day **Summit on Migration and Refugee issues** at the UN in New York on 19 September, to follow on from the World Humanitarian Summit. The Irish Permanent Representative to the UN has been asked to co-facilitate the arrangements for this Summit, along with his Jordanian counterpart.

## **Ireland's humanitarian response**

Ireland will provide over €100 million this year in response to humanitarian emergencies. Increasingly, funding is focused on protracted crises in Africa and in the Middle East. In 2015, Ireland responded to crises in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia and South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Lake Chad basin, Yemen, Iraq and Nepal, and Syria, which is now the largest single recipient of Irish humanitarian aid. By the end of 2016, in the five years since the start of the Syrian conflict, Ireland will have provided at least €62 million in assistance to Syrians affected by the war. We are working on a strategy for assistance to neighbouring countries hosting large numbers of refugees, notably Jordan and Lebanon. We will also need to provide additional funding for Syrian refugees in

Turkey under the Turkey Refugee Facility agreed by the European Council (for which Ireland's contribution over the four years 2016-2019 has been set at €22 million).

In addition to funding, Ireland's Rapid Response Initiative deploys experts to work on humanitarian emergencies from the Rapid Response Corps of 120 people (32 of whom were deployed in 2015). Ireland also maintains humanitarian stockpiles in five depots internationally so that essential supplies can be provided for emergencies (over 300 tonnes in 2015).

### **The challenge of working in a changing Africa**

Under the Africa Strategy, we have been developing a series of multi-annual whole-of-Embassy strategies for our Key Partner Countries in Africa. They still have development at their core, but integrate the building of stronger political relations and the pursuit and development of economic and trading opportunities. Africa in recent years has become a dynamic, changing continent, with high economic growth rates in many countries, the development of a new middle class, the involvement of China and other "non-traditional" donors, and the emergence of new, domestic sources of development finance in addition to ODA. However, extreme poverty and inequalities persist in many countries, and the impact of population growth, climate change and conflict create new threats, which undermine development gains and can be expected to contribute to migration pressures over coming years.

A new five-year strategy for Uganda is now ready for submission to Ministers; a two-year transitional strategy for Sierra Leone and Liberia will be submitted in May, building on the very prominent work Ireland led during the Ebola crisis; the Ethiopia strategy is at its mid-point, and funding has been increased for this year to tackle the drought which has emerged as a result of the El Nino phenomenon which is affecting the whole continent; a new five-year strategy is being developed for Tanzania, which will need to address the difficult phenomenon of high economic growth rates and persistent poverty; a new five-year strategy for Malawi is being developed, which will continue to focus on food security and nutrition, in the face of a major humanitarian crisis; a new strategy for Zambia will be prepared next year; work is also beginning on a new five-year strategy for Mozambique, which has benefitted from the commodities boom but is still one of the poorest countries in the world, and which is now Ireland's largest single aid programme; and a new Southern Africa regional programme is being developed, to be managed from Pretoria and to cover South Africa, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. (Ireland's only non-African Key Partner Country, Vietnam, is moving towards middle income status, and the Irish programme is increasingly focusing on economic development and the sharing of experience, involving institutional cooperation with the Central Bank and the ESRI. As African economies continue to develop, the objective is to draw lessons for our programmes from the Vietnamese experience).

The budget for the Fellowship Training Programme has also been increased, to €1.6 million, to provide for post-graduate studies in Ireland for applicants from Irish Aid Key Partner Countries, expanded to cover Palestine, Burundi, Myanmar, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Liberia. The aim is to support the professional development of key personnel, with the secondary effect of developing future key networks linked to Ireland. Business Study scholarships are also provided under the Irish Development Experience Sharing Programme (IDEAS) in Vietnam and the Kadar Asmal Fellowship Programme in South Africa.

## **Economic and trade promotion**

The potential of African countries as future markets for Ireland is recognised in the Africa Strategy. The major markets now are clearly South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya.

The Department is organising the fourth **Africa-Ireland Economic Forum** to promote business opportunities in Africa. It will be held in the Convention Centre in Dublin on 17 June, with a keynote address by the Minister, and a focus this year on agri-business, aviation and energy. The Department is also working with other Departments, including Agriculture, the State Agencies and business representatives in Ireland to promote trade opportunities in Africa. It is also working with IBEC, EI and Consulting Ireland to support Irish businesses in winning contracts from International Financial Institutions. We are cooperating closely with the Department of Finance on a possible decision to join the **Africa Development Bank**, which would potentially open up new business opportunities for Irish companies.

## **Europe Division**

### **Key Priorities**

**Deepen our presence within the European Union.** In addition to active participation in the Foreign Affairs Council a number of bilateral engagements with key partners in Europe is strongly recommended.

The migration crisis has brought the need for Europe to engage more deeply with its neighbourhood into focus. Enhanced engagement with the **key accession states (Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey) and with Ukraine and Georgia** are strongly recommended. If Russia reengages with the European Union and meets its commitments in Ukraine, a visit to Russia is also strongly recommended.

**Migration** itself will continue to be a major challenge for the European Union. A strong support for a comprehensive approach to the issue at EU and national level is strongly recommended.

### **Europe Division**

The Division has responsibility for maintaining - and growing - Ireland's bilateral relations with 53 European and Central Asian States. These include a number of global players including France, Germany and Russia. It also leads on EU Enlargement, the Eastern Partnership and, within the Department, on Migration.

The Division works closely with EU Division in the Department of the Taoiseach which has primary responsibility for Ireland's relations with the European institutions and for internal EU policies. Europe Division also works closely with our 32 resident missions in Europe, gathering information on political and economic developments.

### **Core Issues of Importance**

#### **Migration**

Migration is currently the most pressing item on the EU agenda and Europe Division takes the lead in the Department on the issue, liaising with the Departments of the Taoiseach, Justice and Equality, and Defence. The Division represents the Department on the Irish Refugee Protection Programme Taskforce chaired by the Minister for Justice.

Migration has dominated recent European and Justice and Home Affairs Councils. Over recent months, the EU and Turkey have reached a series of agreements under which Turkey will be assisted in providing for its refugees and illegal migrants entering the EU from Turkey will be returned. The EU will also accelerate the accession process for Turkey, provide visa free access to the Schengen zone and accept under relocation up to 72,000 Syrian refugees from camps in Turkey.

The Migration crisis has exposed deep fault lines in the EU, particularly between countries like Germany which initially adopted liberal policies, and others like Slovakia and Hungary who have strongly resisted common responses to migration.

A number of member states, including Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria have in recent months introduced border controls in an attempt to control migration. This is bringing the Schengen System, of which Ireland is not a member, into question. Politically, too the migration crisis is having a major impact, with extreme right wing parties making strong gains in Austria, Germany, France, Slovakia, Poland and Sweden.

Ireland is geographically removed from the main migration routes and is not a part of the Schengen zone. It also has an opt in arrangement on Justice and Migration issues. Unlike the United Kingdom, Ireland has opted in to the EU decisions last year to relocate 160,000 migrants from Greece and Italy to other member States. Ireland has also agreed to take in 510 refugees who will be resettled from refugee camps and the Government has signalled that Ireland will accept in total up to 4,000 people. The relocation exercise Europe-wide has been extremely slow and only 10 people have arrived to date in this country (one Syrian family). 31 people are expected to be relocated to Ireland in the coming weeks with a further 40 expected shortly afterwards. Ireland has resettled 276 refugees to date and is amongst the leaders in the EU in this regard. A further 11 people are due to be resettled on 17 May, while an additional 138 are expected in June and a further 108 in September. Ireland has also deployed a succession of naval vessels in the Mediterranean, which have rescued over 8,500 people. Following a break for the winter the L.E. Roisin has now been sent to assist in the Mediterranean.

Ireland has also provided over €42 million in response to the Syria crisis since 2011, and has pledged a further €20 million in 2016. Five members of our Rapid Response Corps have been deployed to assist with the response in the Balkans and in Greece. In addition, Ireland has pledged EUR 3 million to the Trust Fund for addressing the root causes of migration in Africa and will contribute 22 million euro to the Turkish Refugee Facility.

## **Ukraine**

As the largest country entirely in Europe, a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Ukraine is of immense importance for European stability and European values. Since 2013, Ukraine has been embroiled in near constant political crisis. The collapse, in the face of public protests, of the Yanukovych Government was used by Russia as the pretext for the illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and its support for separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine. The EU has crafted a unified and coordinated response to these events.

The resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine remains an urgent priority. In February 2015, a Minsk “Package of Measures” (Minsk II) was agreed by the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, with guidance from the Normandy Format (France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine) HOSGs. The Minsk Agreements include 13 points which provide a framework for resolution of the conflict, although just one has been completed: the establishment of working groups to discuss issues related to implementation. Under the Minsk Agreements, local elections should

be held in separatist-controlled areas. If these comply with OSCE standards, then special status laws for the region will come into force and the separatists should return control over the international border with Russia to Ukraine. Agreement has yet to be found on elections and over decentralisation and special status laws. Russia continues to politically and materially support the separatists. The withdrawal of heavy weapons from the frontline is still incomplete and the ceasefire is regularly violated. Over 9,000 people have died to date in the conflict.

While the new Ukrainian government had embarked on an ambitious reform programme, a lack of economic progress and continuing problems with corruption led to the replacement of PM Yatsenyuk with PM Groysman. There is a strong likelihood of parliamentary elections later in the year.

## **Russia**

Twenty five years after the fall of the USSR, relations between Russia and the EU are in a state of reciprocal mistrust and limited cooperation, based increasingly on differences over values and geopolitics, rather than on mutual economic and political interests. In recent years, Russia has pursued an aggressive foreign policy and an increasingly repressive domestic policy. The civil society space has markedly shrunk and human rights are increasingly vulnerable. This is likely to continue, as the country faces into parliamentary elections in September, this year, and presidential elections in 2018.

In addition the sudden and sharp drop in the price of oil has put the Russian economy and finances under heavy pressure. The 2016 Federal Budget included significant cuts in expenditure and its economy remains unreformed, dependent on natural resources and is badly positioned to weather the current drop in hydrocarbon prices.

The situation in Ukraine has directly led to the current stand-off in Russia-EU relations, as Russia's actions have fundamentally undermined international law, the concept of sovereignty and the post-Cold War security and stability architecture in Europe. In response to these actions, the EU has imposed a number of targeted economic sanctions against Russia. As of now we are of the view that insufficient progress has been made on the Minsk Agreements to justify a lifting of sanctions. Ireland also favours a dual track approach towards Russia, whereby restrictive measures on one hand are accompanied by maintaining channels of dialogue, people-to-people contacts and cooperation in fields such as education and culture.

Five guiding principles for EU relations with Russia were agreed on at the March FAC: (i) Support for Ukraine, (ii) Strengthening of EU relations with the EU's Eastern Partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), (iii) Strengthening of EU resilience in security, trade and energy, (iv) Selective engagement with Russia on foreign policy and specific sectoral areas of interest to the EU and (v) Support for civil society and people-to-people contacts.

## **Turkey, Enlargement and the Western Balkans**

Ireland is a supporter of **enlargement**, which is one of the EU's most powerful tools in pursuing our strategic objective of promoting peace, stability, democracy and prosperity throughout Europe.

Ireland is a strong advocate of the on-going EU accession negotiations with Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia, which, along with Albania and Macedonia (where progress is slower) are the current candidate countries. Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina are potential candidate countries, and Ireland is strongly supportive of their European perspective. We recommend an early Ministerial visit to the region, both as a way of demonstrating our commitment to enlargement and in the context of the on-going impact of the migration crisis.

The migration crisis has brought a sharper focus to the EU's relationship with the countries of the **Western Balkans** and Turkey. The need for a coherent and collective response is clear. A re-energising of the accession process with Turkey is as mentioned above now under way and Ireland is supportive, while insisting that all benchmarks and criteria must be met. Our support for Turkey's EU accession process complements our goal of deepening our bilateral relations with Turkey. It is also important that the Western Balkan states themselves are encouraged to continue on the path of reform which is an essential prerequisite for EU membership.

## **Eastern Partnership**

The EU's Eastern Partnership was launched in 2009 to provide a coherent framework for co-operation with the six countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine- which are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. At the most recent Eastern Partnership Summit, in Riga on 21-22 May 2015, the EU re-affirmed its determination to pursue closer relations with these six countries but also recognised the need for greater differentiation in the EU's engagement to take into consideration the particular interests and objectives of each partner country.

Opinions diverge, both among MS and partner countries, on whether the Eastern Partnership should offer an EU membership perspective. The EU has signed Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine which aim to promote political association and economic integration with the EU based on shared values and which are seen by some as a path towards eventual membership. The EU is pursuing a more tailored approach to relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus, largely in response to the wishes of these three countries, which have expressly ruled out EU Membership as a long-term goal.

On 6 April, the **Netherlands** held a **non-binding referendum on the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine** in 2015. Turnout narrowly surpassed the 30% validity threshold; however 61% of those that voted expressed disagreement with the Parliament's approval for the Agreement. The Dutch government hope to find a resolution to the issue before the Summer.

In February 2016 the EU lifted most of the sanctions against **Belarus** in response to the release by the Belarusian authorities of six political prisoners in August 2015 and in the context of improved EU-Belarus relations. The aim is to ensure that Belarus continues on the path of reform.

In **Moldova**, the discovery of a huge banking fraud has led to serious political instability. The appointment of a new Government in January 2016 (the third since the general election of November 2014) was met with protests calling for new elections. FAC Council Conclusions in February 2016 called on the Moldovan Government to undertake extensive reforms aimed at tackling corruption and reiterated the EU's willingness to support the reform process.

There has been recent escalation in the **Nagorno Karabakh** conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia (both countries in the Eastern Partnership). On 2 April, Azerbaijani forces launched a serious offensive along the 'line of contact'; this was followed by three days of intense fighting which constituted the most serious outbreak of violence since the 1994 ceasefire. Ireland's position, like that of the EU as a whole, has been supportive of the OSCE Minsk process as the agreed mechanism tasked with addressing the conflict.

### **Poland and the rule of law**

Since coming to power in October 2015, Poland's Law and Justice (PiS) party has adopted a conservative programme in the country. The laws to alter the composition and functioning of the **Constitutional Tribunal**, have provoked controversy. The Constitutional Tribunal found on 9 March that the government had acted unconstitutionally in appointing new judges and have refused to allocate them cases. The government, however, refused to publish the Tribunal's verdict, referring to it instead as a 'communiqué'. Since then, the Tribunal has effectively been unable to function fully.

On 13 January, the European Commission held an orientation debate and announced its decision to open a 'preliminary assessment' of the situation in Poland under the EU's **Rule of Law Mechanism**.

The Venice Commission issued a very critical opinion on 11 March, with the main finding that *'as long as the situation of constitutional crisis related to the Constitutional Tribunal remains unsettled and as long as the Constitutional Tribunal cannot carry out its work in an efficient manner, not only is the rule of law in danger, but so is democracy and human rights'*. Venice Commission opinions carry political weight, but perhaps the greater significance will be how the Polish Government's response to it influences thinking within the European Commission on the rule of law probe.

As of now, there seems little likelihood of an early reconciliation in Poland or a resolution of the difference of views between the new Polish Government and the Commission.

### **Hungary**

Poland's strongest supporter on this issue is Hungary which has also been the subject of criticism for the manner in which it has changed its constitution and its attitude to media freedom and migration. Hungary has recently announced that it will hold a national referendum aimed at countering European decisions (which are taken by Qualified Majority voting) on the relocation of asylum seekers among Member States.



## **Horizontal Issues**

Europe Division is also responsible for a number of horizontal issues, including the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA), the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF).

- EFTA: This is an intergovernmental organisation set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland). The EEA enables free movement of goods, services, capital, and persons between the EU Member States and 3 of the 4 EFTA Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).
- ENP: The ENP allows the EU to work with its southern and eastern neighbours to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. Partner countries are required to agree an ENP action plan or an Association Agenda with the EU which demonstrates their commitment to democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development. Currently there are 16 partner countries involved in the ENP.
- UfM: This is an intergovernmental organisation bringing together the 28 EU Member States and 15 countries from the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. It provides a forum to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- ALF: The ALF is an inter-governmental institution bringing together civil society and citizens across the Mediterranean. It is funded by the 42 countries of the UfM and by the European Commission.

## Finance Division

### 1.1 Vote 27 International Co-operation

#### 1.1.1 2016 Allocation – Official Development Assistance

For 2016, the Government has provided a gross allocation to Official Development Assistance (ODA) of €641 million split as follows:

- €486 million will be administered by the Development Cooperation Division (DCD) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under Vote 27 – International Co-operation.
- €155 million will be allocated through other Government Departments and Ireland's share allocation of the EU Development Cooperation Budget.

This level of allocation represents a total increase of €40 million in overall ODA, a 7% increase on the 2015 level, – and represents a clear demonstration of Government support and commitment to Ireland's aid programme. The €40 million increase comprises an additional allocation of €10 million to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Irish Aid) under Vote 27, an increase of €10 million to the Department of Agriculture for the World Food Programme and €2 million to the Green Climate fund. The remainder - some €18 million - is made up, for the most part, by a projected increase in the Ireland's share of the EU Development Cooperation budget.

The ODA / GNP % is internationally recognised as a measure of a donor's effort and commitment to development cooperation. Ireland's current broad based economic recovery and the resulting strong growth rates in GNP have reduced the projected ODA/ GNP % for 2016, despite the increase in volumes, the ODA / GNP % outturn is projected to outturn in the region of 0.36%

#### 1.1.2 Vote 27 International Co-operation Allocation 2016

A summary of the total 2016 allocation across the standard subhead classification is follows

**Table 1**

#### **VOTE 27 – INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION** **(Figures in €000's)**

<i>Subhead</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Total Change</i>	<i>% Change on PY</i>
A1 Administration - pay	14,916	15,358	-442	-3%
A2 - Administration Non pay	13,200	12,950	250	2%
A3 - Payment for Bilateral and Other Cooperation - (GIA)	315,34 8	315,96 5	-617	0%
A4 - Emergency Humanitarian Assistance	65,500	58,500	7,000	12%

A5 - Payment to International Organisations for the benefit of Developing Countries	40,857	37,460	3,397	9%
A6 - Voluntary contributions to UN and other Development Agencies	36,610	36,390	220	1%
<b>TOTAL - Vote 27</b>	<b>486,431</b>	<b>476,623</b>	<b>9,808</b>	<b>2%</b>

### 1.1.3 Administration

The Administrative Budget allocation for 2016 is set at €28.3 million and represents a very slight reduction (of 1% approximately) on the 2015 allocation.

**Table 2** provides a breakdown between the various administration subheads for 2016 and comparatives for 2015.

Figures in €000

	<i>2016</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Total Change</i>	<i>% Change on PY</i>
<b>Administration - pay</b>				
Salaries Wages and Allowances	14,916	15,358	-442	-3%
<b>Administration – non pay</b>				
Travel and Subsistence	2,100	2,200	-100	-5%
Incidental Expenses	1,800	1,820	-20	-1%
Postal and Telecommunications Service	1,650	1,860	-210	-11%
Office Equipment Supplies and external IT Services	1,420	1,595	-175	-11%
Office Premises	4,230	3,225	1,005	31%
Consultancy Services	500	750	-250	-33%
Promotional Support and Accommodation	1,500	1,500	0	0%
<b>Total Administration - Non Pay</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>12,950</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>28,116</b>	<b>28,308</b>	<b>-192</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>As a % of total Vote</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>		

Administration subheads cover the costs associated with managing, auditing and evaluating the development programme at headquarters and in our Key Partner Countries. The level is set in the context of the administrative support and management oversight required for the Irish Aid programme. For 2016, the administration subheads will account for just under 6% of the total Vote – in line with previous years and relatively low by international standards.

### 1.1.4 Bilateral Assistance

**Table 3: Breakdown of Bilateral Assistance**

Figures in €000's

<b><i>Breakdown of Bilateral Assistance</i></b>				
	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Total Change</b>	<b>% Change on PY</b>
Bilateral Aid Programme - Grant in Aid	<b>315,348</b>	315,965	-617	0%
Emergency Humanitarian Assistance	<b>65,500</b>	58,500	7,000	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>380,848</b>	<b>374,465</b>	6,383	2%
<b>As a Percentage of Total Vote</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>		

For 2016, Ireland will continue to play a leading role in the comprehensive international response to the unprecedented levels of humanitarian crisis, while ensuring our aid programme remains effective in addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger.

Sub-Saharan Africa will remain the priority region for the aid programme where we will continue to focus on the poorest communities in Africa, particularly in our key partner countries, delivering programmes which address the root causes of poverty and injustice and build resilience within poor and marginalized communities.

Approximately €140 million is allocated to the key partner countries as follows:

- Ethiopia €27m
- Malawi €13.7m
- Mozambique €30.8m
- Sierra Leone €6.7m
- Tanzania €21.7m
- Uganda €16.2m,
- Zambia €12.8m
- Vietnam €11million.

A further approximate €16.6 million is allocated to other bilateral programmes including;

- South Africa €2.8m
- Zimbabwe €2.8m
- Liberia €5.9m
- Palestinian €4.2m.
- Fellowships €1.6m

The Civil Society and Development Education Unit provides direct funding to a range of NGOs for programmes and projects focused on reducing poverty in developing countries and/or promoting the understanding of global poverty in Ireland including:

- €66.4m allocated to predominantly Irish NGOs in support of their long-term development programmes.
- €15.5m will be allocated for the development work of missionary organisations
- €3.4m for Development Education projects.
- €0.95m Volunteer Programmes
- €0.18m Election Observers

In response to the unprecedented demand currently facing the international community, the 2016 allocation under the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance subhead is increased to €65.5 million for 2016 (from €58.5 million in 2015) to fund the current humanitarian crises and ongoing ‘forgotten emergencies’. This funding is for the most part channelled through partnerships with UN Agencies, NGOs and international organisations such as the Red Cross.

An additional, €18.3m is provided under the dedicated budget line for Recovery Assistance – an increase of €5.3 million on the 2015 allocation to this budget line. €4 million is allocated to the Rapid Response Initiative which funds the rapid deployment of experts to support partners’ humanitarian efforts and prepositioning emergency stocks for immediate release when disasters strikes. A further €4.4m is allocated to promote peace and stability through the Stability Fund budget line.

Approximately €40m is allocated across the priority policy areas with €22.8 million allocated to the Essential Services policy area; €7.8 million to Inclusive Economic Growth; €1.6 million allocated to Governance, Gender Equality and Human Rights; €0.6 million to the area of Fragile States and € 7.0 million to Resilience.

Other areas provided for under bilateral assistance include Co-financing with the World Bank (€1m) and implementation of the Research Strategy (€0.85m), support to Policy coherence and aid effectiveness of €0.3 million.

### 1.1.5 Multilateral Assistance

**Table 4: Breakdown of Multilateral Assistance**

Figures in €000's

<i>Breakdown of Multilateral Assistance</i>				
	<i>2016</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Total Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Payment to International Funds	<b>40,857</b>	37,460	3,397	9%
Voluntary Contributions to the UN Agencies	<b>36,610</b>	36,390	220	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,467</b>	<b>73,850</b>	3,617	5%
<b>As a Percentage of Total Vote</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>		

Ireland's membership of the European Union, the United Nations and a range of other multilateral and international organisations allows it to participate in development cooperation programmes at a global level including areas in need outside of our Key Partner Countries. A total of €77,467m is allocated to these areas for 2016.

A large proportion of our multilateral assistance is mandatory such as the assessed contributions to the European Development Fund (EDF). For 2016, our anticipated contribution to the EDF is assessed at approximately €35.07m. €1.6 million is allocated to payments in support of trade related capacity building initiatives within development countries, and €2.0 million to the International Fund for Agriculture Development.

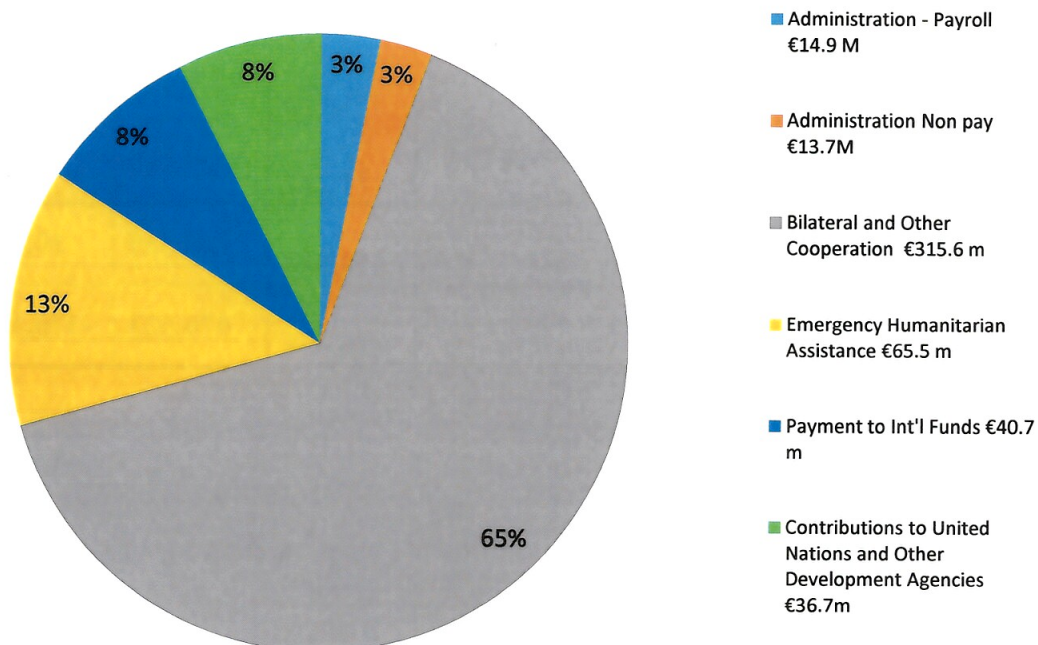
Multilateral assistance also covers voluntary contributions to a range of UN agencies involved in development activities, including democracy-building and electoral reform, education and training, assistance to refugees, protection of human rights, combating HIV/AIDS, developing health systems and environmental protection. For 2016, over €36m will be allocated to Voluntary Contributions to UN Agencies. The largest allocations will go to three UN bodies: the UN Development Programme (UNDP) (€7.75m); the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) (€7.2m) and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (€7m) – an increase of €1.2 million on the 2015 allocation to this UN agency.

## Vote 27 2016 - Allocation by Subhead

### Vote 27 International Co-operation Figures in €000's

Subhead	2016	2015	Change on 2015 allocation	% change on PY
A1 Administration - Payroll	14,916	15,358	-442	-3%
A2 Administration Non pay	13,200	12,950	250	2%
A3 Bilateral and Other Cooperation	315,348	315,965	-617	0%
A4 Emergency Humanitarian Assistance	65,500	58,500	7,000	12%
A5 Payment to Int'l Funds	40,857	37,460	3,397	9%
A6 Contributions to United Nations and Other Development Agencies	36,610	36,390	220	1%
<b>TOTAL VOTE</b>	<b>486,431</b>	<b>476,623</b>	<b>9,808</b>	<b>2%</b>

### Vote 27 - Budget Analysis 2016 by Subhead



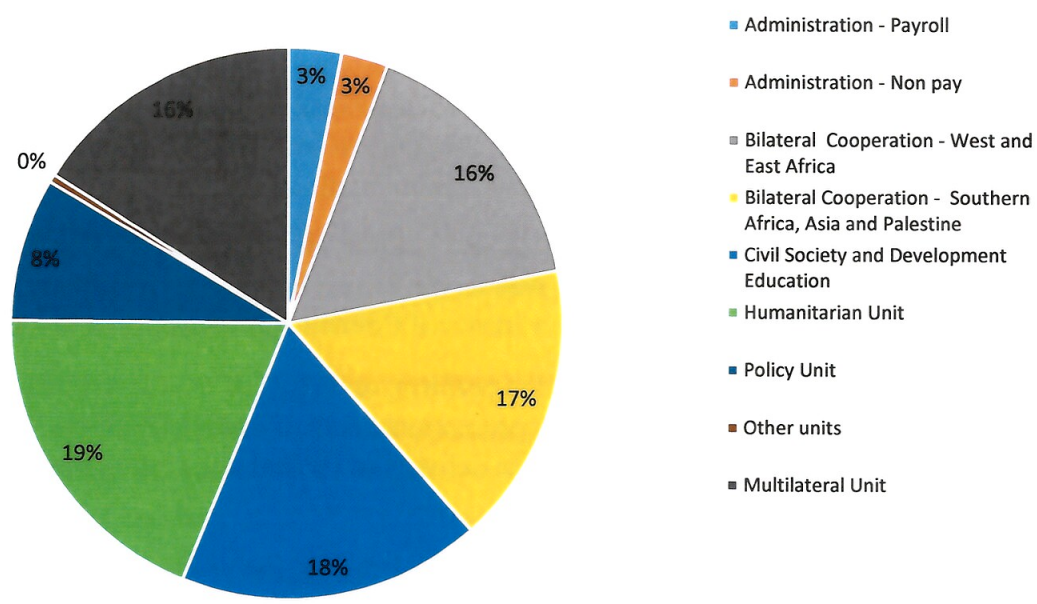
## Vote 27 International Cooperation 2016 – by Unit

### Vote 27 International Cooperation Budget 2016 by Unit Figures in €000's

	2016	2015	Change on 2015	% change on 2015
<b>Administration Payroll</b>	<b>14,916</b>	<b>15,358</b>	<b>- 442</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Administration Non payroll</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>12,950</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>28,116</b>	<b>28,308</b>	<b>- 192</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Programme Business Units</b>				
Bilateral Cooperation - West and East Africa	78,245	81,740	- 3,495	-4%
Bilateral Cooperation - Southern Africa, Asia and Palestine	80,233	84,936	- 4,703	-6%
Civil Society and Development Education Unit	86,470	85,920	550	1%
Humanitarian Unit	92,200	76,500	15,700	21%
Policy Unit ( including Policy Teams)	41,135	42,275	- 1,140	-3%
Performance and Planning and Research	890	1,365	- 475	-35%
Communications and Corporate Services	1,415	1,469	- 54	-4%
Multilateral Unit	77,727	74,110	3,617	5%
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>458,315</b>	<b>448,315</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total Vote</b>	<b>486,431</b>	<b>476,623</b>	<b>-370,428</b>	<b>-80%</b>



Vote 27 Budget Analysis by Unit



## **2.1 Vote 28 – Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade – Budget 2016**

### **2.1.1 General**

Vote 28 funds the operation of the Department and its Mission Network (excluding African missions and Vietnam), Ireland's contributions to International Organisations (such as UN, OECD, and UN Peace-keeping operations) and a number of smaller programmes (such as Emigrant Support Programme, Peace & Reconciliation Fund, etc.).

The Department's structure includes Divisions and Units at Headquarters (HQ) and diplomatic and consular offices abroad, as well as the British Irish Inter-Governmental Secretariat in Belfast and the North-South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat in Armagh.

The network of missions is uniquely placed to perform, on behalf of the Government and citizens, a diverse range of representational, promotional and assistance functions. These offices are an integral and essential tool for the delivery of the Ireland's international priorities.

Budget management in 2016 will be a particularly challenging due to the cost factors set out in Section 3.1.1.

### **2.1.1 General 2016 Allocation**

The Vote 28 Gross Expenditure Budget Allocation for 2016 is €212.011m broken down as follows:

	<b>2016 €'000</b>	<b>2015 €'000</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease) €'000</b>
Pay	78,858	79,603	(745)
Non Pay	65,350	63,350	2,000
Programmes	62,303	62,303	0
Capital	5,500	4,750	750
	212,011	210,006	2,005
Capital Carry forward	475	0	475
	212,486	210,006	2,480

Summary of main 2016 increases/(decreases) over 2015:

1. Pay decreased by €1,745,000 to remove the funding for the extra pay fortnight in 2015 and increased by €1,000,000 for extra staff for the Passport Reform Programme and Consular. The net decrease was €745,000.
2. Non pay increased by €2,000,000 for the Passport Reform Programme.
3. Programmes – no change.
4. Capital increase of €750,000 for the Passport Reform Programme.
5. Capital Carry Forward €475,000 due to unspent capital last year and this will be used for the Passport Reform Programme.

### **2.1.2 Vote28 Programmes**

The Vote 28 Programmes are:

- Contributions to National and International Organisations €43.335m (mainly UN Mandatory contribution, UN Peacekeeping, OECD & Council of Europe)
- Emigrant Support (ESP) €11.595m
- Peace & Reconciliation €2.745m
- International Fund for Ireland €2.65m
- Cultural €0.848m
- Trade Promotion €0.53m
- Information Services €0.5m
- Repatriation €0.1m

### **2.1.3 Passport Reform Programme**

The Department has launched a significant investment in the Passport Service to modernise the issue of passports, improve security and enhance the service provided to citizens. This project is budgeted to cost €18.5M over the period 2016 – 2018. DPER allocated an additional €3.75m in 2016 to this Reform Programme. This is split €1M Pay; €2m Non-Pay and €0.75M capital.

The Passport Service's Reform Programme will balance the introduction of improved citizen services with ensuring the integrity and security of the Irish passport. The Reform Programme will be future proofed by anticipating increased demand, likely developments in technology and changing customer expectations. In addition, it will anticipate and meet the Department's needs over the next ten years while delivering sustained cost savings.

The Reform Programme addresses the elements of organisational structure, business processes, data, technology and skills centred on the three core pillars: Customer First, Protecting Integrity and One Service.

### **3.1 Votes 27 & 28 – 2016 Overview of Budgetary Issues**

#### **3.1.1 Cost Factors**

The following cost factors have been identified across both Votes and will impact during 2016:

1. Foreign exchange rates continue to be a significant risk for the Department. In 2015 the weak Euro cost the Department approximately €10m (in Vote 28 alone the USD cost an additional €8.5m and Sterling cost an additional €1.3m in 2015).
2. Contributions to International Bodies (Vote 28) – these have been held at 2015 original allocation levels. The main areas for concern here are the UN contributions which won't become clearer until the summer. Also the assessed contribution for the OECD is increasing further this year.
3. Significant increases in the operating cost base in the Passport Service are arising in 2016 due to increased passport demand. The current trend is showing a 22% increase over 2015. This will have significant cost implications for the Department. We will engage with DPER as we need to restructure the PPS operating cost base.
4. ESP and Peace and Reconciliation Programmes have been held at 2015 original budget levels. They are providing funding for 1916 commemorations and their grants will continue to be impacted by the adverse Sterling and US Dollar exchange rates.
5. Rental costs of our missions continue to show upward pressures right across the world. These are being driven by the wider global economic recovery and are putting serious pressures on the Department's mission budgets.
6. The inflation in most countries is rising resulting in additional cost increases in missions.
7. The Department is incurring significant increased security related costs across our global mission network due to the increased security situation right across the world.
8. Reorganisation costs – no provision has been made for reorganisation costs due to Departmental changes on the formation of a new Government.
9. No provision has been made for a significant consular crisis.
10. Accommodation (property) related projects are arising in a number locations that will require urgent action. For example Abuja, London, Belfast, etc.

### **3.1.2 Management Accounts – March 2016**

The summary management accounts for March 2016 (most recent) show the financial outturn position as:

Vote 27 Gross Expenditure is ahead of profile by €3.1 million. This arises as follows:

- €27.6 million behind profile on Subhead A3, due to a delay in the Programme grant payments to Mozambique and Civil Society, and
- €30 million ahead of profile on Subhead A6, the UN payments were originally profiled for April and were paid in February.

Vote 28 Gross Expenditure is €12.8 million ahead of profile. This arises as follows:

- Contributions to International Organisations are €9.35 million ahead of profile,
- The balance of the expenditure is on non- pay subheads, in particular the Passport Service due to the increase in the volume of passports being issued.

## **Ireland, United Kingdom and Americas Division**

- **Northern Ireland**
- **North South Ministerial Council and North South Co-operation**
- **British-Irish Relations, including Brexit**
- **US & Canada**
- **Latin America and the Caribbean**
- **Diaspora Engagement**

## Northern Ireland

### Overview

Northern Ireland will go to the polls on 5 May to elect a new Assembly. [REDACTED]

Following the elections there will be an opportunity for the newly formed Executive [REDACTED] to work together to progress a range of issues including those relating to the full implementation of the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements. The reduction in the number of Executive Ministries (from 12 to 9) available and the formal option of being the opposition in the Assembly makes it possible that at least one of the 5 main parties [REDACTED] may choose not to take their seat at the Executive table.

The UK referendum on EU membership, while it has not been a major topic of discussion to date in Northern Ireland, will impact on the political scene between now and June and obviously in the event of a vote to leave there will be very significant consequences for the North [REDACTED]. Commemorations both in relation to the Easter Rising and Somme will also continue to feature in the political dynamic as will the security situation both in respect of dissident republicans, loyalist paramilitaries and contentious parades.

### Short Term Issues

It is expected that the **Assembly elections** in May will not alter the current political landscape in Northern Ireland. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The immediate priority will be an **early visit to Belfast** to meet with the First Minister and deputy First Minister early in their new mandate. [REDACTED]

An **early meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**, Theresa Villiers MP should be the next priority. An early meeting to establish the relationship and underline the expectation and importance of working in partnership to implement the recent Agreements is crucial.

Community engagement in Northern Ireland outside of political negotiations is an important mechanism for the visibility of the Government and a demonstration of a role as a co-guarantor of the peace process and Good Friday Agreement. In mid-May the Minister will receive recommendations for the first of two funding rounds from the **Reconciliation Fund** (£2.7m per year). [REDACTED]

The Department is leading on two of the State Ceremonial events as part of the **2016 centenary programme** which are focussed on reconciliation. On 10 April the Minister hosted a cultural event *Rising to Reconciliation* in the Abbey Theatre focussed on the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. On 26 May a ceremonial event remembering the British soldiers who died during the Rising will be held at Grangegorman Military Ceremony with participation from the Irish and British armies. A number of other commemorations have a reconciliation dimension including the upcoming commemorations for the Somme in July, both in France and in Ireland North and South.

### **Longer Term Issues**

The **Fresh Start Agreement** implements many aspects of the Stormont House Agreement, most notably welfare reform and financial stability, and puts in place a credible plan for ending paramilitarism and tackling associated criminality. Implementation has started well with progress being made on all aspects of the agreement. It was not possible to hold a Review Meeting on implementation before the NI elections so the next one should be scheduled for June.

On **paramilitarism**, discussions are ongoing at official level with the British Government on the international agreement to establish an Independent Reporting Commission which will report on progress to tackle the legacy of paramilitary activity as set out in the Fresh Start Agreement. [REDACTED]

The more challenging aspect of this element of the Fresh Start Agreement is the large scale societal change which will be needed to truly move Northern Ireland towards normalisation. Much of this falls to the Northern Ireland Executive to implement.

The Stormont House Agreement provides for a new institutional framework aimed at fundamentally dealing with the **legacy of the past**. Agreement on the details for implementing this framework has faltered mainly on the issue of national security requirements [REDACTED] and how they should be balanced with the onward disclosure of information to the families of the victims and survivors of the Troubles.

The British and Irish Governments have each been conducting consultations on legacy issues since the failure to reach agreement last November during the Fresh Start negotiations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



While the overall atmosphere around **parades** has improved in recent years, there remain a handful of parades, mostly in Belfast, which continue to be contentious

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **North South Ministerial Council and North South Co-operation**

The main forum for advancing North South cooperation is the **North South Ministerial Council** (NSMC), which was established under Strand Two of the Good Friday Agreement. In the Council, the Government works with the Northern Ireland Executive to advance areas of practical co-operation which are to our mutual benefit.

The NSMC meets in **Plenary**, **Institutional** and **Sectoral** formats. In 2015 and to date in 2016 there have been 19 meetings across the various formats. The **Plenary** (most recent in Armagh on 5 December 2015) normally takes place twice a year and provides the opportunity for the Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to meet together to take an overview of cooperation on the island and of the North South institutions. In the **Institutional** format (a meeting was planned for 23 March but was deferred) the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade meets with the First Minister and deputy First Minister to consider cross-sectoral issues and to resolve disagreements and difficulties. Meetings in **Sectoral** format allow individual Ministers to oversee co-operation in their areas, with the relevant Executive Minister always accompanied by a Minister representing the other community.

### **Short Term Issues**

A tentative date of 10 June has been pencilled in for the next Plenary meeting to be held in Dublin Castle and a further round of Sectoral meetings will be scheduled to take place in the autumn.

The key issue on the North/South agenda both in the short and longer term will be to ensure that momentum on co-operation is maintained both in the NSMC and outside the formal structures, particularly as regards the economy, employment and business development. Maintaining Government visibility on the ground in Northern Ireland together with outreach to business organisations, civil society and political representatives will also continue to be very important [REDACTED]

### **Longer Term Issues**

The November 2015 '*Fresh Start*' Agreement contained a number of Government commitments regarding North-South projects: additional support of £25m in 2019 to complete the first part of the A5 road project, support in principle for development of the Ulster Canal and the Narrow Water Bridge and to undertaking reviews of both projects. In line with the Agreement the Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, has also committed €2.5m of funds to a North West Development Fund to support the North West Gateway Initiative. There is a long-standing proposal for a meeting of Ministers from North and South to take place in the North West to provide a renewed focus on the priorities for that region. The latest proposal was that the meeting be held in Derry on 24 March, but that had to be postponed.

The new PEACE IV and INTERREG V programmes have both been endorsed by the European Commission, with a total EU allocation of €500m. EU funding is now an agenda item at all NSMC meetings, as all departments and North South Bodies aim to maximise drawdown of funds through collaboration, with a particular focus on the €80bn Horizon 2020 programme.

Ministers have been working on identifying and developing priorities for further cooperation which can support economic recovery, job creation, ensuring the best use of public funds and the most effective delivery of services. The further development of joint trade missions and cooperation in major sporting events which have a significant tourism impact for the island have obvious mutual economic benefit. There have been successful joint trade missions to Singapore and Dubai in the last two years and a joint bid for the 2023 Rugby World Cup is being advanced. The Women's Rugby World Cup is being hosted in Dublin and Belfast in 2017.

## **British-Irish Relations**

Ireland enjoys a uniquely close and comprehensive relationship with **Britain**, not just politically but also on the trade, investment, tourism, cultural and Irish community fronts. The State Visits by the Queen to Ireland in 2011 and by President Higgins to Britain in 2014 were regarded as key milestones in the normalisation of our bilateral political relations. There are frequent contacts at both political and official level throughout the year, including at least one meeting at summit level between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister. A regular routine of contact between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the UK Foreign Secretary has also evolved.

Within the context of the increasing devolution of power from Westminster, priority is also being afforded to building trade and political ties with **Scotland and Wales**. There are Scottish and Welsh Government Offices in Dublin (both accommodated in the British Embassy) and bilateral political contacts have intensified in recent months, notably with Scotland, which launched a Trade and Investment Hub in Dublin in early 2016.

Ireland recently assigned an additional diplomat to its Consulate General in Edinburgh and the possibility of re-establishing a Consulate General in Cardiff is reviewed periodically (Ireland opened a Consulate General in Cardiff in 1999, but this was closed in 2009 within the context of the economic downturn).

Elections to the devolved legislatures are taking place on 5 May and both the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly are now in recess. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party enjoys a commanding lead in the polls, while possible gains by UKIP are anticipated in Wales.

### **Bilateral issues to note in the short/medium term:**

- UK referendum on EU membership on 23 June (separate note below).
- In the Minister's diary [REDACTED] is a visit the north of England (Liverpool and Manchester). The visit would include a trade focus as the two cities are key hubs in the UK's "Northern Powerhouse", while his visit would Irish community and media engagements.

[REDACTED]

- The Ireland 2016 Commemorative Programme will continue throughout the year across Britain, with a significant level of participation by the Irish community as well as academic and cultural institutions.

## **UK Referendum on EU Membership**

Following the UK general election of May 2015, PM Cameron delivered on his commitment to negotiate reformed arrangements for continuing British membership of the EU and to hold a referendum on the issue (23 June 2016). The EU Heads of State and Government signed off on a "New Settlement for the UK in the EU" on 18 February 2016, an agreement in which Ireland played a central role in securing.

Ireland has always been clear that we believe the UK's continued membership of the European Union is in our best interests, as well as in the best interests of the EU as a whole.

Three main reasons have been highlighted in this regard:

- **Economy:** Studies show there would be an adverse impact on both the British economy and in turn on the Irish economy if the UK leaves the EU. €1.2 billion in goods and services are traded every week between the UK and Ireland. Anything that might get in the way of seamless flows of goods, services, capital and people between our two countries is not welcome.
- **Northern Ireland:** The EU has been an important factor in sustaining peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. The EU provides a broader context for relations on these islands. Much-needed funding, including through programmes like PEACE and INTERREG, will provide almost €3.0 billion (3 billion euro) in the six years to 2020. North-South cooperation is so much easier when both jurisdictions are members of the same Union.
- **EU:** The UK is an important influential voice at the table in Brussels. We are allies on many of the key issues facing the EU. For example, we want to ensure that the EU is competitive, with a fully functioning digital single market. We want a greater focus on trade agreements with global partners. We want that voice to continue being heard. The withdrawal of the UK would weaken the Union in substance and reputationally at a time of serious challenges.

### **Government Approach to the Referendum Campaign**

While respecting that the question of the UK's membership of the EU is for its electorate to decide, the Government has continued to set out Ireland's perspective to political, business and community contacts both at home and in the UK. The recent statements by the Taoiseach, Minister Flanagan and others to Dáil Eireann on 21 April deal with this aspect in detail.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **US & Canada**

The bilateral relationship with the US and Canada are key partnerships for Ireland. In 2015, the United States was Ireland's largest market for goods exports. The US is by far Ireland's largest source of inward investment, with over 70% of all Irish FDI coming from there, with some estimates putting this currently at over €280 Billion. From a policy perspective, a continuing issue in the US is the plight of many thousands of undocumented Irish.

Bilateral trade with Canada is also significant and is in the region of €2.5 billion per annum. It is expected that implementation of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will increase Irish exports to Canada by the region of €250m. Canadian investment in Ireland is worth \$15Bn while Irish companies have invested over €1bn in Canadian operations and there are over 60 Irish firms with Canadian subsidiaries, employing over 6,000.

Tourism is rapidly growing with both the US and Canada, with over 1.5million visitors coming to Ireland from North America in 2015 and the number of direct flights continuing to rise.

In recognition of this substantial and growing relationship, Ireland has an extensive Embassy and Consulate network in North America. In the US, in addition to our Embassy in Washington DC, there are Consulates General in Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco. There are also 11 honorary Consulates and 13 offices of various Irish economic agencies (IDA, EI, Bord Bia, and Tourism Ireland). Ireland also has an Embassy in Canada and a number of honorary consulates.

### **Short term issues**

The US Supreme Court will hear a challenge to President Obama's executive action on immigration reform in June 2016. This stems from President Obama's decision in November 2014 to grant a reprieve from deportation to undocumented immigrants who have been in the US for more than five years and who have children who are US citizens or legal permanent residents. It was anticipated that the executive action would lift the threat of deportation for up to 5 million undocumented immigrants.

The executive action has been challenged by a coalition of US states led by Texas and been blocked by successive state and federal courts. In the event that the current eight Supreme Court Justices (following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia) do not reach a majority decision in favour of the President's action, the lower Circuit Court of Appeals judgement preventing implementation would stand. Even if the Court rules in favour of the executive action the next President will have the power to rescind the executive action if they so choose.

The Republican and Democratic National Conventions, at which each party will confirm their nominee for President, will take place in July 2016. On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton looks likely to comfortably reach the required threshold of delegates to secure the party's nomination. In the Republican race, Donald Trump seems increasingly likely to be the presumptive nominee.

The text of the EU-Canada CETA was published in February 2016. The implementation of CETA will see 98% of the tariffs between Canada and the EU being removed. The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) is a companion agreement covering more political aspects of cooperation between the two sides.

It now looks likely that CETA and the SPA will be presented to Council in June, with the aim to get the speedy agreement of Member States. Following approval in the European Parliament the hope would be to have the agreement signed in October/November together with the SPA during a special Summit with Canada.

### **Upcoming visits to/from the US and Canada**

- The Taoiseach is expected to visit Washington D.C. for the opening of the Kennedy Center's "Ireland 100: Celebrating a centenary of Irish arts and culture" festival, a three-week event of the US 2016 commemorative programme taking place in May and early June 2016.
- It is expected that US Vice President Biden will visit Ireland during the course of 2016, although the timing of this visit has not yet been confirmed.
- [REDACTED]

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Ireland has embassies in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, our three largest trading partners in the region. There is also a Consulate-General in São Paulo, which was opened in 2015. Enterprise Ireland also retains an office in São Paulo. Our embassies in Mexico and Argentina have a large number of non-resident accreditations, including with partners of growing importance such as Chile, Colombia and Peru. Embassy Ottawa is accredited to Jamaica and the Bahamas. Ireland's global mission network is currently under review and as part of this exercise, the adequacy of our footprint in South America is being considered.

Bilateral trade with Latin America is growing. **In 2015 Ireland's trade in goods with the region was worth almost €3.6 billion, up 11.5% on 2014.** Total Irish exports to the region increased by 14% in 2015, on the heels of a remarkable 41% growth in Irish goods exports to the LAC region in 2014.

### **Short-term issues**

**The signing of a peace deal between the Colombian government and FARC rebels** is expected in the summer after more than 40 years of internal conflict. Ireland is working to step up its engagement in a post-peace accord context, particularly with regard to lesson-sharing of conflict resolution and legacy issues from the NI peace process. Eamon Gilmore was appointed EU Special Envoy to the peace process in October 2015. [REDACTED]



**Argentina,** [REDACTED], looks set to pursue an international trade agenda once again with the election in late 2015 of the pro-free trade Mauricio Macri. The Taoiseach met with President Macri in January 2016 and positive early contact with the new administration continued with the visit to Dublin in March of the Secretary of Productive Transformation, to learn of Ireland's experience of economic development and attracting investment. An invitation has been extended to President Macri to visit Ireland during his mandate.

The resumption of negotiations towards an **EU-Mercosur Association Agreement** is the major issue on the EU-Latin America agenda. [REDACTED]

#### **Other thematic considerations for 2016**

Other issues on the agenda include the continuing economic and political difficulties in **Brazil** (though the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro may provide promotional opportunities in the vast Brazilian market); the spread of the Zika virus throughout the region; and problems of impunity affecting human rights across the region. We will continue to build on our **warm relations with Cuba** and support the normalisation of US-Cuba relations including the ending of the embargo.

## **Diaspora Engagement**

The **Irish Abroad Unit** is responsible for developing Government policy towards Irish communities abroad and the wider Irish Diaspora. This is taken forward through the implementation of the Government's Diaspora Policy 'Global Irish' which was launched in March 2015 and involves management of the Emigrant Support Programme grant scheme, the Global Irish Network and Global Irish Economic Forum, and the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad.

### **Short Term Issues**

The 'Global Irish - **Ireland's Diaspora Policy**', the first clear statement of Government policy on the diaspora, includes a number of new initiatives, including Global Irish Media Fund (pilot scheme grants awarded in February), Global Irish Summer Camp (inaugural camp taking place from 20 July-4 August) and the Alumni Challenge Fund. The Policy also included a commitment to position Ireland as a hub for diaspora engagement.

Since 2004 funding has been provided under the **Emigrant Support Programme (ESP)** to non-profit organisations and projects to support Irish communities overseas and to facilitate the development of more strategic links between Ireland and the global Irish. Since its establishment, over €135 million has been disbursed through the ESP to Irish organisations worldwide. The emphasis of the Emigrant Support Programme is on supporting culturally sensitive, frontline welfare services, targeted at the most vulnerable members of our overseas communities. In addition support is also provided to a number of community and heritage projects, which foster a greater sense of Irish identity, as well as strategic capital projects of these communities. The programme also supports projects that further the outcomes of the Global Irish Economic Forum.

The allocation for the Emigrant Support Programme in 2016 is €11,595,000. The closing date for applications for the 2016 round was 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and applications for 400 projects from over 230 organisations were received. Work is underway to assess these grants with recommendations for funding expected to be submitted in June when political approval will be required.

The **Global Irish Network** is a central element of the Government's engagement with the Diaspora in support of our economic goals. Based in almost 40 countries, the Global Irish Network consists of over 300 of the most influential Irish and Irish-connected individuals abroad and provides Ireland with an invaluable resource of international expertise. The Network serves as an additional resource for the Government and State Agencies in promoting Ireland's economic, cultural and tourism messages in key markets.

The creation of the Network in 2010 followed a recommendation of the first Global Irish Economic Forum in 2009. Since the inaugural meeting there have been three further meetings of the Forum, in 2011, 2013 and the most recent on 19-21 November 2015. At the Forum in November, there was a particular focus on a select number of sectors with high growth and job creation potential including financial services, international education, research and innovation, agri-food and the creative economy to ensure that Ireland can capitalise on the opportunities that exist in these growing spheres.

Since 2012 the President has annually awarded the **Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad**. The Award provides recognition by the Irish State for persons living abroad, primarily Irish citizens, those entitled to Irish citizenship and those of Irish descent, who have given sustained and distinguished service to Ireland and/or Irish communities abroad. The closing date for receipt of nominations by Embassies for the 2016 Awards is 20 April. Nominations received will be accessed by a High Level Panel whose recommendations are then submitted to the Government for approval. It is currently anticipated that the awards ceremony will take place in Áras an Uachtaráin in the autumn.

The High Level panel is composed of a number of Secretaries General as well as four non-Government sector representatives. Two of the non-Government sector representatives were nominated by the President, one by the Taoiseach and one by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. As the terms of office of these non-Government representatives have expired, the Taoiseach and Minister will be required to nominate respective new representatives prior to the sitting of the High-Level Panel.

Kingsley Aikens is the outgoing nominee of the Taoiseach and Fr. Bobby Gilmore was nominated by the former Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade Eamon Gilmore.

### **Long Term Issues**

The issue of voting rights in Irish elections is an issue of great importance to many Irish citizens living abroad. This issue is being looked at in the context of Seanad reform while the members of the Constitutional Convention favoured citizens resident outside the State having the right to vote in Presidential elections. Extending such voting rights faces many legal, policy and practical issues, notably eligibility for an extended franchise given our generous conditions for passing down citizenship through the generations. The Government has asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, in cooperation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Minister of State for Diaspora Affairs to prepare a report for Government on this issue.

## **Legal Division**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is one of the few Government Departments to have its own Legal Division (although most other Departments have secondees from the AG's Office). This reflects the specific purpose of the Division, which is to provide legal advice and assistance in relation to the formulation, development and implementation of foreign policy. Accordingly, the Division is made up of specialists in public international law and related legal areas, together with a small support team.

Legal Division's key functions are to:

- provide legal advice and information on matters of public international law, human rights law and European Union law as they relate to foreign policy and issues of domestic law particular to the Department, such as interpretation of the Passports Act (advice on other issues of domestic law may be obtained from the Offices of the Chief State Solicitor and the Attorney General);
- develop and implement international legal policy in areas such as international humanitarian law, international criminal justice and the law of the sea;
- represent Ireland in international legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and human rights bodies;
- represent Ireland in legal committees in the UN, Council of Europe, EU and other international organisations;
- carry out functions with respect to extradition and mutual legal assistance;
- administer the Department's Treaty Office.

### **Key policy issues for 2016**

In carrying out the above functions, the Division contributes to each of the Department's High Level Goals.

A key ongoing priority for the Division is to provide timely and policy sensitive legal advice to the Minister, the Secretary General and other Business Units as they carry out their tasks and to carry out on an ongoing basis its other functions.

Key issues for 2016 include the following:

### **Legislation**

To bring forward a Bill to amend the Diplomatic Relations and Immunities Acts to streamline and improve our arrangements for giving effect to international obligations with respect to privileges and immunities (a draft General Scheme is being prepared);

To bring forward a Bill to enable Ireland to become party to the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in Time of Armed Conflict (a General Scheme was approved by Government in December 2015);

To make Orders under the Extradition Acts to enable Ireland to meet its obligations under various multilateral treaties dealing with extradition and, thereafter, to discuss with the Department of Justice and Equality and the Office of the Attorney General possible amendments to the Acts to enable these obligations to be met in a more efficient and timely manner;

To work with the Department of Justice and Equality in bringing forward legislation to enable Ireland to become party to an amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the crime of aggression and, in the longer term, bringing forward legislation to enable Ireland to become party to other amendments to the Rome Statute (which may require an amendment of the Constitution);

To make relevant Orders under the Maritime Jurisdiction Act following conclusion of an inter-departmental project led by the Division to review the delineation of the limits of the State's maritime zones;

In conjunction with CSD, to participate in the review to be led by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the operation of the Lobbying Act 2015, insofar as it relates to the lobbying of Departmental officials abroad.

### **International agreements and negotiations**

To represent Ireland in ongoing negotiations at the UN on the development of a new international instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

To negotiate a bilateral status agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross;

To continue discussions with British and Northern Irish authorities to address jurisdictional issues that have created practical difficulties for the operation of North/South Implementation Bodies in Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough;

With IUKAD, to continue negotiations on the establishment of new structures to address the Legacy of the Past (and seeking to ensure in the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers appropriate implementation of European Court of Human Rights judgments against the UK);

Depending on the outcome of the 23 June referendum in the UK, to work on arrangements for a UK withdrawal from the EU;

In conjunction with the Department of Justice and Equality and IUKAD, to bring forward discussions with the UK in relation to any proposals to repeal its Human Rights Act in a manner compliant with the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement;

[REDACTED]

To bring forward negotiations with Canada and Brazil on bilateral extradition agreements and to finalise an amendment of Ireland's existing extradition treaty with Australia and, in the longer term, to discuss the Department of Justice and Equality a strategic approach to the conclusion of agreements in relation to extradition and related matters with other states;

[REDACTED]

To bring forward proposals to ratify Optional Protocols to the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and Consular Relations to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice

## **Legal proceedings**

In conjunction with the Department of the Taoiseach, the Office of the Attorney General and IUKAD, to respond to any request for further submissions from the European Court of Human Rights following on from the Government's December 2014 request to the Court to revise its 1978 judgment in *Ireland v UK*, concerning the alleged torture and inhuman and degrading treatment of the "Hooded Men";

In conjunction with line Departments and the Office of the Attorney General, to represent the State in legal proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights, including in two pending cases: brought by Independent Newspapers, alleging that the award of excessive damages in a defamation case brought by an adviser to former Minister Martin Cullen constituted an interference with freedom of expression; and by a potential deportee claiming that his return to his country of origin would breach his right to freedom from torture or other ill treatment;

To work with line Departments to bring forward implementation of European Court of Human Rights judgments against the State, including in current cases relating to remedies for excessive delays in legal proceedings and relating to the liability of the State for sexual abuse by teachers (arising out of a case brought by Louise O'Keefe);

In conjunction with the Department of Health and the Office of the Attorney General, to respond to any requests for further submissions to the UN Human Rights Committee in relation to two complaints in relation to Irish abortion law brought by women who were pregnant with foetuses diagnosed as having lethal abnormalities.

## **Other matters**

In conjunction with Political Division and other Departments, carry forward work on implementation of UN Security Council and EU sanctions relating to terrorism and related matters, including input into preparations for Ireland's 2016 evaluation by the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force;

In conjunction with the Passport Service and Consular Division, to participate in the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Surrogacy, to review and revise existing guidelines on citizenship, parentage, guardianship and travel document issues in relation to children born as a result of surrogacy arrangements entered into outside the State, pending possible legislation on surrogacy to be brought forward by the Department of Health;

In conjunction with Consular Division, to bring forward proposals on a policy in relation to intervention in foreign court proceedings (primarily in the USA), where Irish citizens face the death penalty and to work on other consular cases with a significant legal element, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

In conjunction with the Department of Justice and Equality, to bring forward proposals to facilitate Irish judges and lawyers taking up positions in international courts and tribunals, drawing on the experience of like-minded European and international partners.

## Passport Service

### Summary

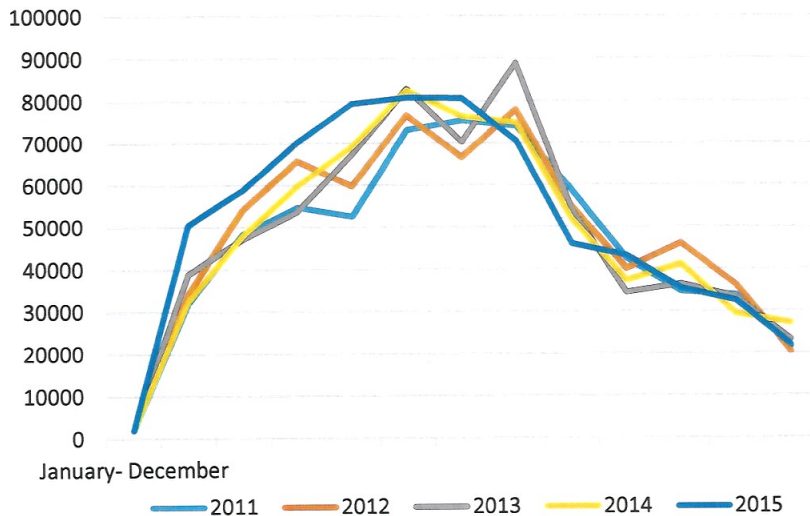
- The peak period for passport applications runs from April to August and the **number of applications** so far this year is up almost 15% compared to last year. The level of increase is exceptional and has put considerable strain on the service and the ability to meet target turnaround times. Additional Temporary Clerical Officers have been recruited (15% increase on last year in weeks sanctioned); staff have been re-deployed within the service and across the Department and overtime used on a targeted basis. An additional thirty Temporary Clerical Officers will be recruited in the coming weeks to service a temporary Call Centre to respond to large volumes of phone and email queries during peak season. Public messaging has also been revised to emphasise the need to apply early and to choose the appropriate application channel depending on travel dates.
- A significant programme of **passport reform** is underway. The programme will result in major changes to technology, business processes and the organisation of the passport service and it is expected to deliver significant efficiencies. The €18.6m programme will also deliver a number of important customer service improvements including an on-line application option for adults renewing passports from the end of the first quarter next year and extension of the option to all applicants by the end of 2018. Customer communication will be significantly enhanced by the end of this year.

Significant savings in staff time from more streamlined processing of renewals will be used in part to focus

The threat of **fraud and identity theft**, is very significant and increasingly sophisticated. In common with many passport services we need to invest to ensure that the latest anti-fraud technology and techniques are deployed to protect the integrity and international standing of the Irish passport.

### Passport Demand

The number of passports issued has risen from 388,000 in 2000 to 670,000 in 2015 and it is projected that in excess of 730,000 passports will be produced this year. **Demand is currently running approximately 15% ahead of the same period last year.** This is the largest increase in ten years with the exception of 2011. It can be attributed in part to the extended school holidays at Easter this year, a significant increase in renewals stemming from a spike in applications in 2006 as well as a marked rise in outbound travel. The impact of the prospect of a British exit from the European Union appears to be relatively mooted to date in terms of first-time applications from the UK but that may change radically depending on the outcome of the referendum. Demand is traditionally **very seasonal**, with over 50% of applications received between April-July each year – see chart below.



Just under 80% of passports issued annually are issued to residents in the State (522,000); another 8% are issued to residents in Northern Ireland (56,500); 6% to citizens resident in Great Britain (45,000); and another 7% are issued by all other overseas diplomatic missions (48,000).

### **Turnaround Times**

Passport Express renewal applications are currently being processed in 11/12 working days, with applications for those who have lost or had their passport stolen or adults who have never held a passport taking 24 days.

Passport Express is a partnership with An Post to facilitate applications from citizens resident in the State. Citizens can avail of this service at over 1,000 post offices. The fee is €80 – plus €9.50 charged by An Post – as opposed to €95 for applications made at Passport Offices in Dublin and Cork.

The Passport Service aims to process renewal applications within ten working days. However, this depends on the level of demand and applicants are strongly advised to apply at least six weeks in advance of travel. Applicants travelling in three weeks or more (15 working days) should use the Passport Express service. Those travelling in less than three weeks need to make an appointment in the Passport Offices in Dublin or Cork. In recent months turnaround timelines had extended on occasion to 14/15 working days for renewals. The delays reflect pressures on the system from the very significant 15% increase in demand as outlined above.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Passport Service was able to put in place measures to address the high demand, including the early recruitment of some of the 197 temporary staff (15% increase from last year) [REDACTED]; the targeted sanctioning of overtime and the temporary reassignment of staff in February/March from other areas of the Department.



## Service Improvements

### **Relocation**

On 8 February the Passport Office in Dublin relocated to Knockmaun House, Lr. Mount Street. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the building has been refurbished to a high standard to meet the requirements of the office and the public area presents a positive professional image of the service.

### **Other Services**

The Passport Offices in Mount Street and Cork operate *online appointment services* which allow customers to book guaranteed time slots before travelling into the office. The public have responded very well to this service - hours previously spent queuing in the offices have been eliminated. Customers are now in and out of the offices in approximately ten minutes. Additionally, the offices have *extended the public opening hours* from 09.00 -17.00. An appointments service will be introduced in the Passport Office in London in June.

A *same day application process* is in place in the Passport Office in Dublin. The new service allows adults and children to renew their passport where immediate travel is required. Up to thirty citizens can avail of the service each day.

A *step by step, user friendly, visual guide* to completing the passport application form was rolled out last year. There has been a marked decrease in the last six months in the most common errors encountered when checking applications.

The *Passport Card* was launched last October and since then over 21,000 cards have been issued. The new card combines pioneering technology and security features with very strong user-friendly and a flexible on-line application process. The card was recently awarded Regional (Europe) ID Document of the Year 2016 by the high security printing industry.

### **Reform Programme**

The Passport Service application system and associated business processes were designed in 2002 and implemented in 2005. They have served us well over the past decade. However the system does not have the flexibility required to respond to the increasing application volumes or to provide services such as online applications. [REDACTED]

To respond the Passport Service has commenced a comprehensive three year reform programme at a cost of €18.6m. The vision is a fully integrated service delivering a more efficient, predictable and citizen-focused service with an increased focus on fraud detection and prevention measures to maintain the integrity of the Irish passport.

The programme will deliver results for the Department and wider Government through:

**(i) Customer First**

*Implement an efficient and easy-to-use application process for citizens that presents them with the service levels they expect, with the right level of supporting information, through the channel of their choice, wherever they are in the world.*

Over 50% of all applications for passports are from adults renewing their existing passport. The introduction of an **online-based renewal process** will greatly reduce the administrative burden for citizens and improve the efficiency of the service. Applicants will no longer be required to have their forms and photos witnessed, saving over 60,000 Garda hours. They will receive their passports more quickly, whether in Ireland or abroad. The service is likely to be available as early as peak season 2017. This year will also see the introduction of enhanced communication with Passport Service customers via webchat, proactive emailing and a more tailored application tracking system.

**(ii) Protecting Integrity**

*Strengthen and modernise the processes, controls and safeguards that verify an applicant's identity and establishes their entitlement to an Irish passport.*

Irish Passports are the **trusted national identity document**. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Inter-departmental, inter-agency and international cooperation continues to be a priority in the detection and prevention of Passport Fraud. Significant progress has been made with the Department of Social Protection (DSP), most notably with the introduction of the Public Services Card as a requirement for first time adult passport applicants as of 29 March. Recent engagement with the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) following [REDACTED]

**(iii) One Service**

*Implement a consistent and standardised approach to Passport services across the Department. Streamline and provide flexibility in operations to enable dynamic assignment of work within and between offices. Up-skill staff and invest in their development across all areas and levels. Develop the capability to quickly identify and act on changes to services and re-allocate resources to better meet our citizens' needs.*

To underpin the reform process, it is necessary to replace the existing **passport technology system**. A new system will deliver a more agile and flexible service delivery model. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Furthermore, a new technology system will provide greater automation to simpler applications such as renewals. Skilled staff can be re-assigned to those areas of passport processing where they can deliver more value (e.g. complex cases, guardianship, first time applicants).

### **Fraud Prevention Initiatives**

Fraud prevention and detection is a top priority for the Passport Service as reflected in the reform programme. A number of initiatives have been taken over the past year to step-up the Passport Service capability in this area and additional resources are being allocated.

[REDACTED]

With effect from 29 March 2016, all first time adult applicants living in the state, and those who have reported a passport issued prior to 2005 as lost or stolen, are required to hold a **Public Services Card**. This will significantly enhance the capacity of the Passport Service to limit the number of Fraudulently Obtained Genuine (FOG) passports. The interview procedures and 'live capture' of the photo by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) provides substantial reassurance as to the true identity of the applicant.

As part of the Passport Reform Programme, **facial recognition technology** is due to be become operational in June. This will allow the comparison of images submitted by applicants to those already held by the Passport Service for all applicants and will facilitate the detection of cases in which multiple passports in assumed names are held by the same person.

[REDACTED]

All data sharing is subject to the provisions data protection legislation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **Political Division**

### **Introduction: The role of the Division**

Political Division is responsible for the overall management of the political aspects of Irish foreign policy. It has primary responsibility for human rights, disarmament and non-proliferation, international security policy, and international terrorism, coordination of Ireland's approach to the United Nations and the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.

The Political Director has a cross-cutting role in ensuring coherence of political foreign policy. The Middle East and North Africa Unit, where political issues predominate, operates under his oversight; and he inputs as appropriate on political aspects of relations with other countries on which the respective geographic units lead.

### **Short Term Priorities**

#### **Foreign Affairs Council**

The regular, formal meetings of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers - the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) - take place on a monthly basis. 'Extraordinary' Council meetings may be convened at any time in response to international events. The next regular meeting will be on 23 May in Brussels. The expectation is that there will be a continued focus on the ongoing instability in the Middle East, on the external aspects of migration and on the proposed EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (see below). The FAC meeting will be preceded by the Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting which takes place one year after the EU reaffirmed its support for the six participating countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) at the May 2015 Riga Summit, and is the first Eastern Partnership meeting at political level since the adoption of the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in December last year.

#### **EU Global Strategy**

The EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy will submit an EU Global Strategy to the June European Council. It is being prepared under her authority, in consultation with the Member States but it will not be a negotiated text. Ireland has availed of all opportunities to input its views in discussions at Ministerial and Senior Official level and has made a national submission on the points we see as being of particular importance for the Strategy. This includes our position that our guarantees in the Lisbon Treaty must be fully reflected in the strategy, that this review should look at all areas of EU external action in a coherent and comprehensive manner, and that the strategy should be truly global in nature in addressing the root causes of the challenges currently facing the European Union, such as migration and extremism. Finally, the strategy should clearly articulate both the interests and the values of the European Union in the pursuit of its external action.

#### **Israel/Palestine (MEPP)**

The French Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process, Pierre Vimont, will visit Dublin on 16 May to discuss the French initiative to try and reinvigorate the process (details below). A meeting with the Minister, as part of the programme, would valuably underscore the high political priority Ireland attaches to the Israel/Palestine issue, our support for the French initiative and the added value we can bring to efforts to progress it."

### **Council of Europe**

The annual meeting of the Committee of Ministers meets at the level of Foreign Ministers will be held in Sofia on 18 May 2016 under the Bulgarian chairmanship. Attendance would provide an opportunity to reaffirm Ireland's strong support for the Council's role monitoring and promoting improvement of the state of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe as well as a useful networking opportunity with non-EU European Foreign Ministers. The CoE now comprises 47 Member States (every country in continental Europe with the exception of Kosovo and Belarus).

### **Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)**

On Monday 9 May 2016, the Minister will be asked to host a Welcome Reception (evening) at Iveagh House for participants (approx. 200) attending a National Data Centres workshop, held for the first time in Ireland from 9-13 May and organised by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies/DIAS. *(The work of these seismologists supports the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation/CTBTO, e.g. in analysing data following missile launches.)*

On Monday 13 June 2016, a Ministerial Meeting will be held in Vienna marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. If desired, a full programme can be organised including: meetings at the International Atomic Energy Agency/IAEA and other UN bodies in Vienna, as well as the Vienna Business Association.

### **Non-Proliferation**

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) are two informal groups of states that seek to limit the proliferation of missile technology and nuclear technology, respectively. Ireland is a member of both groups and is being encouraged to assume Co-Chairing duties of the MTCR with Iceland, from October 2017, subject to a policy decision/Ministerial Approval and advance confirmation of a successor Chair for 2018. Membership criteria, including for countries which are not parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), will be a live issue for both groups in the coming year.

### **Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade**

The Minister usually meets with the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade (JCFAT) every quarter to brief them on the most recent meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and to look forward to the next meeting of the FAC. The last meeting with the JCFAT took place on 25 November 2015, and it is likely that the Committee will invite the Minister to brief them again in the coming months. Topical issues may also arise in the course of the discussion with the JCFAT.

## **Long Term Priorities**

### **UN**

The annual meeting of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) is held in New York every autumn. In 2016, the Ministerial week will take place from 20-27 September, following a summit on Migration and Refugee issues which will be co-facilitated by Ireland, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. The ministerial address at UNGA is an important platform for a statement of policy priorities and concerns on major topical international issues. In addition it provides an invaluable networking opportunity with foreign ministers from non-EU countries, both through bilateral meetings and participation in EU Ministerial meetings with leading international interlocutors, including the US Secretary of State.

Ireland is a long-declared candidate for a UN Security Council seat for the 2021-2022 term, competing with Norway and Canada for the two available seats in the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG). The election will be held in June 2020. It is proposed that a Memorandum to Government would be brought to Cabinet this year, outlining the rationale for Ireland's candidature, resource implications, demands, risks and next steps. The Security Council campaign will be an opportunity to showcase Ireland's foreign policy credentials and strong international standing at the United Nations. The scale, complexity and sophistication of UN Security Council campaigns has grown considerably since Ireland was last elected in 2000 and fully-fledged work on the campaign will have to be stepped up in 2017.

The Minister will in due course be asked to bring to Government a draft of Ireland's first National Plan on Business and Human Rights as part of the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been tasked with leading on the process in consultation with other Government Departments.

### **Middle East and North Africa (MENA) – the EU's Southern Neighbourhood**

The Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) between Israel and Palestine is one of the foreign policy issues of greatest interest to the Irish public; this is reflected in the level of interest in the issue in the Oireachtas. Ireland has developed a distinctive voice of the MEPP at EU level. This level of focus on the Peace Process can be expected to continue. However, there is a wide range of other issues in the region of direct interest to Ireland also, such as the ongoing conflict in Syria and the efforts to resolve it and the conflicts in Libya and in Yemen. Trade, humanitarian and human rights issues all figure largely in Ireland's engagement with this diverse region.

#### **Israel/Palestine (MEPP)**

The MEPP has been largely moribund since the collapse of the talks brokered by US Secretary of State Kerry almost two years ago. The depth of Congressional support for Israel has meant the US Administration has increasing difficulty in putting any real *pressure* on Israel to negotiate seriously. The 'International Quartet' brings together the US, EU, UN and Russia to cooperate on the MEPP, but again the US perspective has dominated there.

An important outside factor is the Arab Peace Initiative, led by Saudi Arabia but with the support of all the more moderate Arab states. The peace plan which they have put on the table offers Israel recognition and security on its 1967 borders, and normalised relations with the Arab world, if Israel will make peace with the Palestinians, and end the occupation of the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 (and the Syrian Golan), and resolve the issue of refugees. The Arab side see this initiative as a major concession and outreach on their part, but Israel has essentially ignored it.

France has announced an initiative to try and reinvigorate the MEPP. What is envisaged is a two-phase international conference, with the aim of leading to, or creating the conditions for, a renewed negotiations process (the first meeting would not include Israeli and Palestinian representatives and the second would).

The initiative faces formidable obstacles. On the Israeli side, while there is generalised public support (in polling) for a negotiated peace, in practice the MEPP is a low priority except when there is a security crisis or alert, in which case security concerns dominate.

The Palestinian leadership is ageing and tired, with no clear successors in view. The picture is complicated by the split between the mainstream *Fatah* party of Presidents Arafat and Abbas, and the more militant Islamist *Hamas* party, now ruling in Gaza but also present in the Fatah ruled

West Bank. The Palestinian public's faith in ever achieving a negotiated two-state solution is dwindling rapidly and negotiations are increasingly seen as a trap to keep them inactive while Israel continues to seize their land for settlements. This frustration has been leading many younger Palestinians to a despairing, nihilistic return to violence, characterised in the 'lone wolf' attacks on Israelis which have been prominently reported in recent months.

The 'final status issues' which need to be resolved in negotiations are: borders; security issues; Jerusalem (essentially a particularly complicated case of the borders issue); water; and a resolution of the issue of Palestinian refugees (particularly the 1948 refugees, i.e. those from what is now Israel itself).

### **Irish position**

At the EU Foreign Affairs Council and bilaterally, Ireland has indicated general support for the French initiative. While the make-up of the two conferences is not yet finalised, we would wish to ensure that EU participation is reflective of the range of views within the EU on the MEPP.

Ireland's view can be summed up in a number of propositions:

- The Israeli-Arab dispute, although complex and long running, *is* resolvable. The shape of an overall agreement has been clear for years, and the details and options exhaustively raked over.
- The window for such an agreement, and the space on which it might be built, is however being rapidly closed by Israeli settlement building.
- While only a process of direct negotiations can end the conflict, any talks will fail so long as Israel enters them intending to avoid an agreement. The first international priority should thus be to bring Israel, by persuasion and (carefully modulated) pressure, to a position where it wants to end the occupation, and enters talks genuinely seeking to bring this about.
- The EU should therefore focus primarily on combatting the critical Israeli policies on the ground – both to preserve the two state solution and to convince Israel that the occupation is a dead end from which they need to break free.

Finally, while much domestic pressure in Ireland calls for a much more strident policy on the MEPP – such as banning settlement goods, banning trade with Israel itself, suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement, expelling the Israeli Ambassador – successive Irish Governments have considered that such a policy would be both futile and counter-productive, diminishing our influence on the MEPP not just in Israel (where we are seeking to persuade) but also within the EU and with the US.

Instead, while remaining strongly critical of some Israeli policies, we work also to demonstrate that this is not the sum total of our relationship with Israel, and to build normal good relations and cooperation in other areas, both EU-Israel and bilateral Ireland-Israel links.

Irish Aid engagement with the Palestinian people (see DCD briefing) complements all these areas – supporting administrative capacity and state building in the Palestinian government, supporting NGOs on both sides who work on justice issues, and humanitarian support for people affected by occupation and conflict.

### *Recognition of Palestine*

In November 2012 Ireland and 12 other EU partners voted in favour of Palestine being seated at the UN General Assembly as an 'Observer State'. 13 EU MSs abstained and one voted no. In September 2015 Ireland was one of 10 EU members to support a motion to allow the Palestinian flag to be flown at the UN (after those of member states), the other EU MSs abstained. In both cases the motions were passed at the UN by very large majorities.

Bilateral recognition of the Palestinian State by Ireland would be a further step. The Seanad and Dáil passed motions, in October and December 2014 respectively, calling for recognition as a further contribution to securing a negotiated two-state solution. In both cases, the Government did not oppose or seek to amend the motions, which were passed without a vote. The decision, including considerations in relation to timing as to when it might have the most positive impact, is a matter for the Government.

### **Iran**

The completion of the nuclear deal with Iran - the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – and the subsequent lifting of most EU sanctions on Iran, has generated a degree of excitement in business communities across Europe, including in Ireland. There has been interest in the food, aviation, medical technology and financial technology sectors. Ireland's trade with Iran was modest even before the introduction of sanctions, reflecting the fact that it is not always an easy place in which to do business. One significant change which has come about in recent years is that a large number of Irish companies now have a base in the Gulf (primarily in the UAE), which can serve as a base for those wishing to explore the Iranian market.

Serious concerns persist about human rights in Iran, including the use of the death penalty. In addition, there are concerns about Iran's role in the region. These issues have been raised by Ireland with the Iranian authorities, including at the political level.

### **The Gulf**

Ireland's relationship with the countries of the Gulf has deepened in recent years for a number of reasons. These include the opening of a second Embassy in the region (in Abu Dhabi) in 2009, a rapidly growing Irish population (more than 8,000 in the UAE alone) and a significant growth in trade with the region. Saudi Arabia and the UAE were designated as priority markets for Ireland and there has been a significant investment of resources by the State agencies in the region.

The economic partnership that we have with Saudi Arabia, however, does not prevent us from raising human rights issues in the appropriate channels. We will continue to maintain relations with Saudi Arabia: economic, for the benefit of our economy and trade; and diplomatic, to facilitate our continued engagement with the Kingdom on human rights and also on other matters as they arise, including bilaterally and at the Human Rights Council. The execution of 47 people by the Government of Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the year brought widespread international condemnation, including from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### **Syria**

The Syrian crisis is the principal threat to regional stability and security in the Middle East region and has carried a very high human cost.

Bashar Al-Assad's regime, and forces supporting it, are overwhelmingly responsible for the civilian deaths and casualties. The core issue in the conflict and in the UN-led negotiations taking place in Geneva since February 2016, has been control of the Syrian state, and in particular Assad's absolute power in Syria.

The conflict has also become a proxy conflict for regional rivals. Russia and Iran (as well as Iran's regional ally, Hezbollah) have backed the Assad regime, while Turkey and some of the Gulf Arab States have supported armed opposition factions. While all of these stakeholders, as well as the UN, EU, other Arab countries and Permanent Members of the UN Security Council are members of the International Syria Support Group, which has backed the Geneva



III talks, it remains unclear if all stakeholders either possess sufficient leverage to ensure a political resolution, or if they are in fact willing to use to the fullest extent possible the leverage available to them for this purpose.

The flight of millions of Syrians from the conflict is a cause of growing international tension. Lebanon and Jordan are widely acknowledged to be facing burdens which are unsustainable over the long term and a threat to their national stability. Turkey has accepted over 2 million Syrian refugees. The prolongation of the conflict, and the hardship for refugees in neighbouring countries is increasing the pressure on the EU, which is increasingly attracting larger numbers of Syrians who see no future in Syria or the region.

The conflict in Syria, as well as sectarianism and political instability in neighbouring areas of Iraq, weakened the legitimacy and control of both Iraqi and Syrian state institutions, especially security institutions, in adjacent areas of eastern Syria and western Iraq populated by Sunni Arabs. It created an opening for the extremist Sunni non-state actors such as the hard-line jihadist group known as Da'esh/ISIS. This has led to rising terrorist attacks across the Middle East and in Europe from groups associating themselves with Da'esh, including attacks in which Irish citizens have been murdered and wounded.

**Ireland will not be a leading international actor on the Syrian crisis, but can be a strong voice for principled political outcomes.** The Government has provided €42million in humanitarian assistance since the beginning of the Syrian crisis through DFAT, and have at the February 4 London Conference and has pledged a further €20million in 2016. Ireland has accepted over 200 refugees from the Syrian conflict through its annual UNHCR resettlement programme since 2013 and has offered a further 4000 places under the Governments Refugee Protection Programme. We have pressed for UN Security Council referral of the Syrian situation to the International Criminal Court in order to ensure accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity. In concert with our EU and other international partners, Ireland has strongly supported the UN-led process. In the event of a successful outcome, issues that might arise could include providing financial support for the reconstruction of a post-conflict Syria and contributing to international mechanisms to monitor security in a post-conflict Syria.

## **Libya**

The political situation, though improved of late, remains tense and unstable. Terrorism remains a major concern and the humanitarian situation is “dire”.

In December, the **Libyan Political Agreement** was signed and a **Presidency Council** formed, which nominated a **Government of National Accord**. Under the Agreement, this Government had to be endorsed by the **House of Representatives** (parliament) but despite issuing two statements of support, no formal endorsement has taken place. Undeterred, in March the Presidency Council moved into Tripoli (until then held by a rival Islamist government) where it set up the Government. A number of **European Foreign Ministers** have visited Tripoli in a show of support (France, Germany, Italy and the UK), but the unendorsed Government does not have the support of the whole country (militias remain in control in many places) and has not yet even succeeded in fully securing the capital. Lack of formal endorsement by the House of Representatives remains a barrier to the Government's legitimacy and control of the country.

Combatting **Daesh**, which has several Libyan footholds, is one of the few points on which the majority of the various militias in Libya appear to agree, and lends urgency to the Government's attempts to take control of the entire country. This would also help ease the **Mediterranean migration crisis**, by stemming the flow of migrants transiting through Libya.

Ireland's influence and interest is focussed on **working with our EU partners** in supporting the formation of a functioning government in Libya, in particular through support to the **UN Support Mission in Libya** (UNSMIL) and UN Special Representative Kobler, the promise of a **€100 million assistance package** (set out in the April FAC Conclusions), and the provision of support in areas such as **border control** (through EUBAM, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya) and **migration** (through Operation Sofia, the EU naval operation against human smugglers in the Mediterranean; April FAC Conclusions committed to look into assisting with capacity building for the Libyan Coastguard).

### **Yemen**

The current conflict in Yemen has led to a dire humanitarian situation. Iranian-supported Houthi forces allied with former President Saleh are fighting those loyal to the exiled President Hadi, who has been supported by Saudi Arabia in his efforts to secure control of the country (along with the support of other GCC countries such as the UAE). The turmoil has facilitated the strengthening of Da'esh and Al Qaeda, particularly in South and East Yemen.

Saudi Arabia's involvement in the conflict has been controversial, with some reports of their missiles striking civilian infrastructure, including schools, residential areas, markets and hospitals. However, Saudi Arabia claims it is making every effort to avoid civilian casualties. Most recent reports from the Saudi-led coalition are that the fighting is drawing to a close, and that the next phase of reconstructing the country is beginning. There have also been reports of talks between the two sides.

Ireland has very limited engagement with Yemen. Aside from significant humanitarian support, interaction with Yemen is limited to supporting the UN and EU efforts at promoting a political solution to the conflict.

## **Security Policy**

### **UN Peacekeeping**

Ireland has a long and distinguished record of participating in UN peacekeeping missions. Relative to our size and available resources, Ireland is a significant and highly regarded peacekeeping contributor. We currently provide 370 peacekeepers to seven UN peacekeeping missions.

The majority of Irish troops are deployed to three UN missions in the Middle East region: 198 troops at UNIFIL in South Lebanon, 138 at UNDOF along the Golan Heights and 13 at UNTSO which provides observers at a number of locations in the region. In November 2016, Ireland will take over command of the UNIFIL Finnish/Irish Battalion and will deploy an additional Company of approximately 150 personnel to the mission.

Ireland has also sought to strengthen the UN's capacity on peace and security by engaging in various initiatives at UN Headquarters and in UN field missions. A national submission was made in 2015 to an Independent Review of Peace Operations. We are currently co-funding a review of the UN Police Division. More generally on funding, Ireland is currently the twelfth largest donor to the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

### **EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an integral part of the EU's common foreign and security policy. CSDP is focused on peace support actions outside the EU, undertaken in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. Member States contribute civilian and military personnel and capabilities to these peace support missions: Ireland currently deploys up to 15 civilians in missions in Afghanistan, Georgia, Kosovo, Mali, Palestine, Ukraine and a further 17 personnel to military missions in Mali and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Much of the EU's focus is on enhancing the effectiveness of these external missions and on ensuring that the European defence market has the capacity to deliver necessary capabilities for peace support operations.

The June 2016 European Council will consider a framework (Capacity Building for Security and Development) for enhancing EU assistance and capacity building in partner countries and regional organisations to prevent and manage crises. A Communication on preventing and countering Hybrid Threats will also be considered. The draft focuses on encouraging Member States to bolster the resilience of critical infrastructure (transport, energy, banking etc.), the effectiveness of their responses, and on how the EU can best complement Member States efforts.

CSDP's focus remains on external peace support action outside the EU rather than internal defence. Although the EU Treaty envisages the progressive framing of a common EU defence policy, it makes clear that this will only arise when the European Council unanimously decides. Ireland's participation in a European Common Defence is prohibited by article 29.4.9 of the Constitution and reinforced by the Irish Protocol to the Lisbon Treaty. Any change in that position could take place only with the approval of the people in a referendum to amend the constitution.

### **PfP – NATO review of partnership issues**

Ireland's relations with NATO are conducted through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) which we joined in 1999. The PfP is based on the principle of "self-differentiation" which allows Ireland to tailor cooperation with NATO to levels and areas fully consistent with our policy of military neutrality.

PfP enables Irish personnel to participate effectively and more safely in EU-led or NATO-led missions mandated by the UN. Irish military personnel are currently assigned to the UN-authorized Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through PfP, access to a wide range of training courses promotes the "interoperability" of Irish personnel with personnel from other PfP members in areas such as communications, command structures and logistics.

PfP does not equate to membership of NATO, nor is it a stepping stone to it. There is a substantial overlap between membership of the EU and of NATO. Ireland and five other EU MS (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Malta and Sweden) are not part of NATO. The two organisations cooperate at practical and political levels in areas such as sharing information and best practice. We have agreed to such cooperation on the basis that it is consistent with and recognises the separate and autonomous roles of the two organisations.

Ireland contributes to PfP by providing training and expertise, including through courses at the UN Training School in Kildare. Areas where Ireland is seen to have key expertise include responding to Improvised Explosive Devices and implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (women and peace and security). We have also contributed more than €1 million since 2002 to Trust Funds supporting initiatives in areas such as de-mining and disarmament.

It is possible that an invitation may be extended at Ministerial level to a Partnership meeting in the margins of the next NATO Summit, scheduled to take place in Warsaw on 8-9 July. The Minister for Defence attended a similar segment of the 2014 Summit (DFAT was represented at senior official level).

### **Use of Shannon**

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has primary responsibility for the regulation of activity by foreign military aircraft in Ireland. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has primary responsibility for overflights and landings by civil aircraft, including chartered civil aircraft carrying military personnel. Both Departments cooperate closely on issues of common interest.

Ireland's location means that a high proportion of foreign military overflights are undertaken by US aircraft, while US aircraft also account for the majority of landings by military aircraft at Shannon Airport.

Permission for landings may be granted subject to strict observance of conditions: aircraft must be unarmed, carry no arms, ammunition or explosives, must not engage in intelligence gathering and the flights in question must not form part of military exercises or operations.

The use of Shannon by US military aircraft remains an issue of significant interest, both politically and with the wider public. A substantial number of Parliamentary Questions are tabled on the topic. A Red C poll undertaken at the end of January 2016 found that 55% of respondents were opposed to US use of Shannon.

In accordance with international practice, foreign military aircraft passing through Ireland with the permission of the Government automatically enjoy sovereign immunity and are not subject to search or inspection. Details provided by diplomatic missions are accepted in good faith as being accurate.

Critics also argue that the use of Shannon is inconsistent with military neutrality and the Hague Convention V of 1907 (which imposes obligations on neutral states at a time of war). Responses have noted that arrangements with the US have been in place for more than 50 years and do not amount to any form of military alliance. It has further been stated that as Ireland is not party to the Hague Convention, its application does not arise.

An inquiry into policy and practice on US use of Shannon was undertaken by the Joint Committee on Public Oversight and Petitions. The Committee heard evidence from the then Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Transport, Tourism and Sport, as well as from the Secretary General of this Department. Its report, issued in January, did not draw any conclusions on Shannon but it recommended that there should be a debate in each House on neutrality. In this regard, it should be noted that Dáil debates and votes took place in March 2015 on two Private Members Bills which proposed to insert provisions on neutrality into the Constitution.

## **Terrorism**

Atrocities perpetrated by Da'esh in Iraq and Syria and an increased number of attacks further afield including in Belgium, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mali, Tunisia and Turkey, demonstrate that terrorism does not respect international borders and requires a coordinated international response.

Ireland's approach to preventing and countering terrorism is guided by the UN Charter and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. These include Resolution 2178(2014) on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, which Ireland and all EU MS co-sponsored and Resolution 2249 (Nov 2015) which calls upon MS that have the capacity to do so to take all necessary measures on territory under the control of Da'esh. Resolution 2249 makes clear the need for action to comply with international law, human rights and the UN Charter.

Ireland has stressed the need to address underlying causes and through diplomacy to seek to resolve crises that contribute to the terrorism threat. In the absence of political solutions to the underlying crises, our efforts to combat terrorism will be in vain. We have highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach which includes promoting a counter narrative, working to prevent radicalisation, sharing information more effectively, deterring and disrupting terrorist travel and ultimately bringing perpetrators to justice.

Cooperation at EU level is central to Ireland's approach. Justice and Home Affairs Councils focus mainly on internal EU security, while Foreign Affairs Council deal with external aspects such as cooperation with and capacity building in third countries. The European Council brings both strands together.

## **UN Coordination**

### **Appointment of UN Secretary General**

The United Nations will appoint a new Secretary General before the end of 2016. Hitherto, in practice the General Assembly's (GA) role has been limited to the formal act of appointment. An expanded involvement for the GA seems to be envisaged this time around although the decisive say will remain with the Security Council. The key issues will most likely include **regional rotation** – while there is no established practice, the Eastern European Group (EEG) is likely to make much of the fact that it is the only region which has not yet provided a UNSG; and **gender** – there has never been a female UN Secretary-General.

Ireland has been inputting into proposals for reform of the selection process, in particular through our participation in the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) – a cross regional grouping of member states. We have also joined the 'Group of Friends in favour of a Woman Candidate for Secretary General of the United Nations'. We can expect to be lobbied on behalf of candidates in view of our involvement in the GA hearings process.

### **Security Council Reform**

Negotiations on reform of the UN Security Council have been proceeding, with little success, for the best part of two decades in the UN General Assembly. UN General Assembly Decision 62/577 identifies five elements of UN Security Council Reform: categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the Council, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. Positions remain polarised and, while negotiations will continue, there is little prospect of an early breakthrough.

Ireland recognises that there is a need to expand the membership of the Security Council so that it better reflects twenty first century realities in a regionally balanced way and increases the opportunities for member states that play a particularly significant role in the UN system. We are not yet convinced that this would be best achieved by an increase in the number of permanent seats. In recognition of the fact that agreement on this issue will be difficult to achieve and that compromise will ultimately be required, we have suggested a compromise position whereby a new category of non-permanent members might be created with an extended 8-year term, possibly with an option to seek re-election for a second 8-year term. We would firmly oppose the conferral of veto powers on any new Members. Ideally we wish to see the veto rights of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5) ended and, in the meantime, we are supporting initiatives which would at least limit its use. Ireland would want to prevent any diminution in the capacity of smaller member states to serve as non-permanent members on a rotating basis at regular intervals.

## **OSCE**

Over the past two years, much of Ireland's engagement with the OSCE has been in the context of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and relations with Russia. An intergovernmental regional security organisation comprising 57 participating states from Europe, Central Asia and North America, the OSCE has a key role to play in dialogue with states east of Vienna. It operates by consensus and embraces a comprehensive concept of security addressing political and military, economic and environmental and human aspects of security across three 'dimensions'

Building on our very successful Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE in 2012, Ireland continues to play its full part in the OSCE's activities, including in Ukraine. The crisis has hamstrung reform initiatives and dented the willingness of participating States to invest the necessary political will to make compromises. On the other hand the current situation provides profound reasons for renewed engagement in the OSCE, and many commentators have argued that the organisation's relevance has been enhanced as a result of its reaction to the crisis. The OSCE is perceived as an impartial actor by both parties to the conflict which was crucial for the successful negotiation of the Minsk Agreements. It is now tasked with overseeing the implementation of these agreements through the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). It will be recommended that the Minister attend the annual OSCE Ministerial meeting in Hamburg under German Chairmanship in early December.

## **Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU)**

The Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was established in 2007 to enhance Ireland's contribution to international peace and security.

The experiences and knowledge accumulated through the process of peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland conflict has informed Ireland's approach to crisis management, which includes broader assessment of the causes and aftermath of conflict itself. Investment in conflict prevention (in which early warning concerning emerging threats and tensions is transferred into early action by states and institutions), and an increased focus on post-conflict reconciliation and other forms of peacebuilding demonstrate Ireland's more nuanced approach to achieving sustainable peace.

Ireland's **lesson-sharing work** has been largely undertaken in response to demand from international organisations working in a number of conflict situations in countries throughout the world. The Northern Ireland Peace Process is seen as one of a relatively small number of positive models for conflict resolution. Since the start of 2015, relevant lessons from Ireland's experience of promoting peace support and post-conflict reconciliation have been shared in the contexts of conflicts and peace processes in Colombia, Ukraine, Turkey and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Ireland sees the **Women, Peace and Security** agenda as an integral component of the conflict prevention and resolution framework. Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018) includes the prevention of conflict as one of its four pillars, and commits Ireland to contributing in a strategic manner to the promotion of peace, stability and security. The National Action plan emphasises the empowerment and participation of women in decision making, including in peace negotiations, and commits Ireland to the promotion of the WPS agenda in international, regional and national arenas.

## **Human Rights**

Advancing Human Rights is one of the signature policies of *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World* which was published in January 2015. The Human Rights Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for the development and delivery of Ireland's international human rights policy. In 2015, an Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights was established to ensure the coherence of the promotion and protection of human rights in our foreign policy, including through the ratification and implementation of key international human rights treaties and timely reporting to UN human rights bodies. This Committee is chaired by the Minister of State.

Ireland's membership of the UN Human Rights Council from 2013-2015 provided an opportunity to make an enhanced contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and to pursue our well-established human rights priorities including: freedom of religion or belief; the rights of the child; the protection of human rights defenders; and the rights of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex) persons. During this period we also led two initiatives, on the promotion and protection of civil society space and on preventable mortality and morbidity of children under five years of age. We will continue to address these issues through our bilateral, EU and UN engagement on human rights.

Achieving better governance, human rights and accountability is one of the three goals of Ireland's development policy as set out in the One World, One Future published in May 2013 and the Unit works closely with colleagues in the Development Cooperation Division to ensure that our human rights and development policies are coherent and mutually reinforcing.

The Human Rights Unit maintains close contacts with Irish civil society organisations, including through the Joint DFAT-NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights which is chaired by the Human Rights Director and the organisation of the Annual DFAT Forum on Human Rights.

In addition to ongoing contacts on a range of human rights issues, standing events which have featured in the calendars of previous Ministers and Ministers of State include: the National Holocaust Memorial Commemoration (January); the DFAT Annual Forum on Human Rights (February); the High-level segment of the UN Human Rights Council (March) as well as Chairing regular meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights.

### **Disarmament & Non-Proliferation**

Ireland has a long-standing commitment to Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, reflected in the Foreign Policy Review where it is one of Ireland's five signature foreign policies.

We have historic associations with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and our role in bringing forward the 'Irish Resolutions' beginning in 1958, which led to the negotiation of the NPT, was recognised when we were invited to be the first to sign. Ireland continues to play a leadership role in this area, notably as founding members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), together with Brazil, Egypt, New Zealand, Mexico and South Africa. This cross-regional grouping is widely respected for its work on how to give effect to the disarmament pillar of the NPT. Ireland is also actively part of a 'core group', together with Austria, Mexico, and South Africa which is increasing awareness of the catastrophic Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (HINW). The main achievement of this core group to date has been the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), mandated to make recommendations on effective measures for nuclear disarmament. It will convene again in May and August with a view to reporting back to the General Assembly in October. Resistance is anticipated from nuclear possessor states which have concerns that the OEWG (which is not bound by consensus) may agree ambitious recommendations without regard to the role of nuclear deterrence in their security doctrines.

In recent years, Ireland has also played a leading role in bringing the horizontal issue of gender and disarmament to the fore in international negotiations, both in terms of the gendered impact of conventional and nuclear weapons and the need to ensure greater women's agency in all disarmament-related discussions and negotiations.

Ireland is active in a variety of fora dealing with weapons of mass destruction and convention arms, including: the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), Anti-Personnel Landmine Ban Convention (APLC), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which entered into force in December 2014 and is the first legally binding instrument to regulate global trade in conventional arms.

Another important focus of our work is the evolving international discussion on Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems (LAWS) and Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA). Austria has organised a high-level side event on "Preventing civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas" which Ireland has agreed to co-sponsor at the World Humanitarian Summit, which takes place from 23-24 May.

The Department is consulted on export licence applications for military and dual-use goods. While the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation ultimately makes the decision, we provide observations and background checks.



## **Protocol Division**

**Protocol Division** supports the Department's objectives through its work

- planning and delivering visits abroad by the President and visits to Ireland by Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers, heads of international organisations, and other international dignitaries;
- liaising with the international diplomatic community accredited to Ireland (59 resident, and 80 non-resident missions; and some 1,100 people, between Embassy personnel and their dependents, accredited to Ireland); and
- managing high-quality events hosted by Ministers of the Department (involving, during 2015, over 100 events attended by some 8,000 guests)

Issues in the weeks ahead include

- Plans underway for visits to Ireland by UK dignitaries in late May, and possibly from the US in late June. Proposals are developing and the Minister will be kept informed.
- A Memorandum on Visits to Ireland at Head of State/Government (HOSG) level, and on visits abroad by the President is prepared annually. A Memorandum on such visits for the rest of the year will be submitted shortly.
- Ambassadors may seek appointments with the Minister in the short-term. Subject to the Minister's wishes, an event with Heads of Missions (remarks followed by opportunity to mingle informally) could be arranged in Iveagh House. This could serve both to offer an opportunity to share views with the diplomatic community through an address to them, as well as an opportunity to meet with all/many at one event.

### **Visits to Ireland by Heads of State and/or Government, Foreign Ministers and other international dignitaries; Visits abroad by the President**

Protocol lead on coordinating arrangements for visits to Ireland by Heads of State and/or Government, Foreign Ministers and other international dignitaries. Protocol also works on visits abroad by the President.

Protocol works closely with other areas of the Department, Áras an Uachtaráin other Departments, and stakeholders such as State Agencies to develop and deliver programmes for high-level visits that support the promotion of Ireland's interests internationally and contribute to the development of strong economic, political and cultural links. In so doing, Protocol officers work particularly closely with Irish Embassies abroad, foreign Embassies in Dublin and with Foreign Ministries on ensuring that the host of details associated with a successful high-level visit are attended to, and that this happens in a way that respects national and international norms.

A State Visit is the highest level of official visit from one country to another, and involve State and military ceremonial elements. Few of these take place (e.g. we had two last year: the President of Germany made a State Visit to Ireland, and the President made a State Visit to Portugal), but many more official visits take place and some of them can involve a high level of complexity. The President is always accompanied by a representative of the Government on a State Visit, and is often accompanied by a Minister on official visits.

Protocol officials keep the Secretary General and the Minister's Private Secretary informed so as to be able to take account of the Minister's views on the matter of ministerial accompaniment.

Issues in the weeks ahead include

- Plans underway for visits to Ireland by UK dignitaries in late May, and possibly from the US in late June. Proposals are developing and the Minister will be kept informed.
- A Memorandum on Visits to Ireland at Head of State/Government (HOSG) level, and on visits abroad by the President is prepared annually. A Memorandum on such visits for the rest of the year will be submitted shortly.

### **Ireland's foreign diplomatic community**

Protocol Division works closely with the foreign diplomatic community accredited to Ireland. There are 57 resident diplomatic missions in Dublin<sup>2</sup>, with approximately 1,100 people accredited, between personnel and their dependents, as part of the diplomatic community. There are a further 79 non-resident diplomatic Missions accredited to Ireland, most of which are based in London.

The legal framework for Ireland's relations with foreign Embassies accredited is the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. This Convention is an international treaty and it has the force of law in Ireland by virtue of the Diplomatic Relations and Immunities Act, 1967.

Protocol Division offers guidance and assistance to diplomatic Missions across a range of areas in keeping with Ireland's obligations under this Convention. Protocol is the first point of call for foreign diplomatic Missions on many issues, in particular on administrative and legal issues. Areas of responsibility include accreditation of new Ambassadors; provision of official identification documents, and keeping up to date the publicly-accessible 'Diplomatic List'; participation of diplomatic community at State events; coordination of process whereby permissions for foreign military aircraft to overfly or land in Ireland, and for naval vessels to visit Irish ports are assessed, and also for securing diplomatic clearance for the Irish air corps to over-fly and land abroad, and for Irish naval vessels to call on foreign ports; and advice to Missions on privileges and immunities (see below) and management related issues, working closely with foreign Missions and with relevant Irish authorities (including Revenue, local authorities, Dept of Justice etc).

An area that can achieve prominence from time to time is that of 'immunities'. The Vienna Convention provides *inter alia* for privileges and immunities for diplomats and certain other persons working in embassies. Diplomatic immunities are intended to facilitate the conduct of effective diplomatic relations without envoys being fearful of being impeded in their functions. The Vienna Convention states that the purpose of immunities is to ensure the efficient performance of diplomatic functions and not to benefit individuals, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, British, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Palestine. Sudan is in the process of opening an Embassy also (Government approval was granted for same in 2015).

Convention expressly requires diplomats to respect the laws and regulations of the host State. Moreover, immunities can be waived by the sending state.

Issues in the period ahead include

- Ambassadors may seek appointments with the Minister in the short-term. Subject to the Minister's wishes, an event with Heads of Missions (remarks followed by opportunity to mingle informally) could be arranged in Iveagh House. This could serve both to offer an opportunity to share views with the diplomatic community through an address to them, as well as an opportunity to meet with all/many at one event.

### **Events Management / Official Hospitality**

Protocol works with all Divisions of the Department in organising and delivering high-quality, cost-effective events. The Department is increasingly active in hosting events that offer a platform to reach out to a broad range of public and private sector interests relevant to the Department's goals. Conferences such as the Global Irish Economic Forum, and the Department's Iveagh House Lecture Series, offer very useful fora for developing contacts and initiatives and are the subject of very positive feedback. Networking events in Iveagh House during 2015 hosted by the Minister on economic themes and on cultural themes brought together key stakeholders that are active nationally and internationally. Regular events are hosted by Ministers where visiting international delegations – representing public and private sector interests – have the opportunity to meet with Irish contacts. Iveagh House is also used increasingly as a resource by other Ministers and Departments for conferences and other events.

Protocol organise official hospitality associated with high level visits, such as the government dinner hosted last year on the occasion of the visit of China's Premier, working lunches with visiting Foreign Ministers hosted by the Minister, and other working lunches and dinners hosted by Ministers of this and of other Departments.

During 2015, over 100 events, involving 8,000 people were organised by Protocol. This is an increase of nearly double the number of participants (4,600) at 70 events in 2013, and three-times the number of participants (2,600) at 59 events in 2014.

## **Trade Division**

### **Trade Division – Proposed short-term priorities for incoming Minister**

- *Convene an early meeting of the Export Trade Council (ETC), bringing together incoming Ministers, the CEOs of the State agencies and private sector representatives. This ETC meeting might focus on a new agenda for the period ahead (including possibly new members and new support structures). Key tasks will be ensuring the effectiveness of our trade promotion overseas, assessing the impact of the UK referendum on EU membership, and developing the parameters for a successor approach to the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy, which expired at the end of last year.*
- *Announce the roll-out of initiatives flagged in the Economic Diplomacy Strategy speech last January, including the decision to appoint a first tranche of five locally-recruited Commercial Attachés to Embassies.*
- *Discuss the participation of the incoming Minister in a number of Ministerial-led Enterprise Ireland trade missions to priority destinations (China, Canada, Australia/New Zealand and the US have been tentatively flagged as possible such destinations).*

### **Role and Focus of Trade Division (TrD)**

Trade Division's role is to contribute to sustainable economic and jobs growth through the mobilization of resources at home and through our Embassy network, to support Ireland's economic and trading interests overseas, its reputation, visibility and cultural profile, and to work closely with Government Departments, State agencies and the private sector.

The Division is headed by a Director General/Assistant Secretary and comprises two units/sections headed at Director/Counsellor level (Trade Divisions I and II: a new Policy, Research and Coordination Unit will be established shortly).

On broad and cross-cutting economic, reputational and cultural issues, TrD acts in effect as the lead coordinating interface between our Embassy network and other Government Departments, State agencies and the private sector, including organisations such as the Irish Exporters Association and IBEC. (The geographic Divisions and Units maintain lead responsibility for all bilateral issues, including bilateral trade promotion and economic relations, and have their own contacts within these bodies).

Trade Division acts as the convenor and secretariat of the Export Trade Council which brings together these stakeholders and which coordinates the implementation of the Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy.

The Division represents the Department on a number of important sector-specific committees in the areas of food, aviation, financial services, innovation and preparation for Ireland's bid for the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

The Division also chairs the Department's new Trade Coordination Group, which brings together all of the geographic Divisions and units in the Department to consider trade matters on a monthly basis.

### **Departmental transfer of functions**

Following a decision by the last Government, certain trade promotion functions were transferred from the then Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to the (then) Department of Foreign Affairs on 1 June 2011.

Recognising the significant role that the Department with its Embassy network already played in this area, this transfer gave the newly constituted Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) an enhanced role in trade promotion, including responsibility for the management of the ***Export Trade Council***, which is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and which oversees the implementation of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy. It led to an enhanced role in supporting the Enterprise Ireland programme of ***Ministerial-led trade missions*** to develop and expand Ireland's exports to existing and new markets abroad. It also transferred responsibility for a bilateral ***Joint Economic Commissions*** with a number of high growth and emerging countries.

Responsibility for trade policy, including multilateral trade negotiations, remains with the Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (D/JEI). The State Agencies - with which TrD and the Embassy network co-ordinate at HQ level and in the local market teams led by our Ambassadors abroad – also continue to report directly to other parent Departments and have their own separate boards e.g. Enterprise Ireland and the IDA report to D/JEI and Bord Bia reports to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (D/AFM).

### **New Economic Diplomacy Strategy**

***In the upcoming period, TrD plans to enhance the trade-promotion expertise of Ireland's Embassy network, to supplement and support the work of the State agencies.***

Supporting Irish exports is a central element of the Action Plan for Jobs and its objective of creating an additional 200,000 jobs between now and 2020. Market diversification is crucial for Ireland's long term economic resilience which works in tandem with expanding our indigenous trade and promoting Ireland as a leader for FDI in our strongest sectors, including bio-pharma, medtech, financial services, agri-business, tourism, aviation and ICT.

Exploring economic opportunities for Irish business in new markets led the Department to expand its Mission Network in recent years. In 2014, the government opened new missions in China (Hong Kong), Indonesia, Thailand, Kenya, Texas and Brazil – all now fully operational and available to support Irish businesses. A key part of the enhanced Irish trade is ensuring that our Mission network is up-skilled to become active and open business hubs for our exporters.

Recognising the key role that exports play in supporting Irish jobs, Trade Division is spearheading an enhanced focus on Economic Diplomacy and a stepped-up approach by the Department and our Mission network to trade. There are three key pillars to this initiative:

- a) The roll-out of new and more flexible market promotion funds – subject to availability of additional resources - to give the Embassy network more capacity and autonomy to pursue trade and wider promotional opportunities;

- b) The recruitment of locally-hired commercial attachés to extend the range and impact of the Embassy network's activities in support of trade. It is envisaged that five such attachés will be recruited this year, with the focus on emerging and exploratory markets;
- c) The provision of enhanced data on and knowledge about Ireland's productive sectors and its key exporting business. This includes broadening the Department's network of contacts with key economic stakeholders at home with an eye to market opportunities identified by our Mission network.

The new approach is intended to augment the already important work that the Department and the Embassy network undertakes, in association with state agencies, on a daily basis to promote Irish business. It will be supported within Trade Division with the establishment of a Policy, Research and Coordination Unit and with secondment of personnel from other Agencies (an IDA secondment has been working in TrD for a number of years; discussions regarding a placement from SFI are advanced; discussions on an EI placement have been broached).

### **Export Trade Council and Local Market Teams**

The primary aim of the Export Trade Council (ETC) is to strengthen cooperation and coordination across all Government Departments and State agencies involved in the international promotion and development of trade, tourism and investment, and to oversee the progressive implementation of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy.

Members of the Council include the Ministers for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Transport, Tourism and Sport; Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Education and Skills; and the Minister of State for Trade and Development. Other relevant Departments are represented at Assistant Secretary General level or above, while the CEOs of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Bord Bia, Tourism Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland are also members. In addition, the private sector is represented on the ETC through representatives of IBEC and the IEA, as well as through the participation of a number of individuals from the private sector with a track record in the relevant industry sectors. The Council meets twice a year in plenary format and the Director of Trade Division 1 is the Secretary. Local market teams, headed by Ambassadors and including representatives of State agencies, are in place in all 27 priority countries. These market teams submit annual plans for the promotion of our trade, tourism and investment objectives in that market which are reviewed by the ETC.

Over the last year, the format of the ETC has been revitalised to encourage interactivity and a focus on topical challenges in the trade promotion area. Consideration can be given to continuing this process in the upcoming period. In terms of an enhanced agenda for the ETC and generally improved coordination at a national level, there is certainly a case for the current ETC preparatory group of officials to be upgraded to a steering committee of senior Departmental and Agency officials meeting on a regular (monthly) basis.

## **Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy**

From 2013, TrD led a process involving other Government Departments and State Agencies to review the Government Trade Tourism and Investment strategy and this was published in February 2014. The Review introduced a New Market Approach, disaggregating our Priority Markets into High Value markets and Established and Developing Markets, and identifying seven new Exploratory and High Potential Markets (new Embassies have since been opened in two of these this year - Indonesia and Thailand). The Review also updated the 2015 TTIS targets for trade, tourism and investment promotion; introduced a target for the promotion of international education; and aligned the Strategy with the Action Plan for Jobs.

All targets included in the Review of the Strategy were achieved by the end of 2015. The question of a follow-on approach now arises and was the subject of a discussion at an informal dinner after the last Export Trade Council on 26 January. It seems clear that any revised approach that seeks to drive trade, tourism and investment for Ireland should include two principles: deeper coordination across the relevant Government Departments and State Agencies; and sector-specific coordination with business.

## **Economic Messaging**

Effective economic messaging conveys to a global audience Ireland's economic performance and encourages awareness of Ireland as a place to invest and do business. TrD ensures that the Embassy network is equipped with current, comprehensive and accurate briefing on the Irish economy and our trade, tourism and investment messages for use in their briefings to political, official and business contacts and with international media. It coordinates closely with D/Finance, other Departments and State agencies to ensure our message is consistent and effective. This includes key economic messages, detailed briefing on corporate tax issues and other sectoral developments, including information on Ireland's economic strengths and international rankings. In recognition of increasing skills shortages in certain sectors, it has also been agreed that the Department will place a particular emphasis during 2016 on attracting talent to Ireland.

As part of the new approach to economic diplomacy, TrD has begun to develop learning modules on strategically significant sectors in the Irish economy such as aviation, education, financial services and agri-food. A key part of this work has been the organisation of a series of learning seminars, where a combination of public and private sector practitioners brief the Department and the Embassy network on the sector and how the Department can support them.

TrD also runs the Department's Economic Diplomacy Scheme (EDS). The EDS provides the Embassy network with funding to support the participation of speakers or experts from Ireland in economic diplomacy events abroad and/or the organisation and hosting by the Embassy network of seminars involving local and Irish participants focused on economic, trade and investment issues, including sectors of specific relevance to the Irish economy.

## **Trade missions**

The programme of Ministerial-led Enterprise Ireland trade missions is intended to be formally agreed by this Department each year with the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation based on the proposals submitted by Enterprise Ireland and focused on the priority markets of interest to their client companies. The Enterprise Ireland proposals take account of the various Ministerial portfolios in relation to the main focus of each mission. In the region of 15-20 Ministerial-led Enterprise Ireland trade missions take place each year to countries and

been identified as priority markets for Irish exporting companies. The 2016 schedule of Ministerial-led trade missions has yet to be finalised pending the formation of government.

These trade missions, usually involving delegations of Enterprise Ireland client companies, are all directly supported by the Embassy network and TrD arranges those which are led by the Minister and the Minister of State for Trade and Development. The Embassy network is also central to the organisation of many more high-level outward visits with a significant economic or promotional dimension (c.120 in 2015).

### **St. Patrick's Day**

The Embassy network, in coordination with the State agencies, rolls out an extensive St Patrick's Day programme of activity to support trade, tourism, investment and build Ireland's positive reputation internationally. The programmes include dedicated business events, high-level political meetings, cultural events linked to St. Patrick's Day and in assisting Tourism Ireland in delivering its "Global Greening" campaign.

The programme of Ministerial visits is prepared and coordinated by Trade Division, following consultation with the Embassy network and State agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Bord Bia and Science Foundation Ireland. This year, the acting Taoiseach, Tánaiste and eight Ministers travelled abroad to six priority markets (the USA, Italy, UK, France, Spain and India) for the promotion of trade, tourism, investment and education services.

The Division also has responsibility for developing a comprehensive set of key messages sourced from across a number of Government Departments and State agencies. Key messages are prepared quarterly, with the first set being developed for use by all of Government over the St. Patrick's Day period.

### **Joint Economic Commissions**

Ireland has four active Joint Economic Commissions (with Russia, Saudi Arabia, Korea and China - a JEC with Libya is currently in abeyance). A Joint Economic Commission is a formal bilateral intergovernmental structure which provides a forum for discussing issues that relate to trade development between the two countries involved and serves to further the development of economic and business, as well as scientific and technological cooperation. The JEC with Russia has been headed at Minister of State level. Other JECs are led by the Director General of Trade Division.

Formal sessions of the JEC are traditionally scheduled every two years - alternatively in Ireland and in the partner country. There are three JECs due to take place in 2016 – China (in June), Saudi Arabia (in October) and Korea (in December).

JEC activities are supported by a €200,000 fund which is administered in co-operation with D/JEI and Enterprise Ireland. It is proposed to restructure the funding disbursed by TrD over the coming year, to allow a greater number of markets to draw from it.



### **Small Advanced Economies Initiative**

***Ireland is to host the fourth plenary session of the Small Advanced Economies Initiative (SAEI) at Dublin Castle 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> September.***

Initiated by the New Zealand Government in June 2012, the SAEI is a collaboration between Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand and Singapore. All the countries are advanced economies by International Monetary Fund standards, and are of similar scale in terms of population with around 5 to 10 million inhabitants. The SAEI brings together a network of senior officials from 'small advanced economies' to discuss particular growth challenges and opportunities and foreign policy issues in an increasingly interconnected world. A light SAEI Secretariat is operated by officials from New Zealand. Three plenary sessions have taken place so far in Auckland, Copenhagen and Jerusalem.

In September, Ireland will host the next meeting of the SAEI in September. This is a joint responsibility shared by this Department, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Science Foundation Ireland. It is an excellent opportunity to showcase Ireland under the Initiative's three streams, namely Science and Innovation, Foreign Affairs, and Economic Policy. The Department will present two key papers namely a plenary item "Ireland's relationship with the UK" and a Foreign Affairs stream item on "Science, Society and Economy: Mobilizing the Diaspora". It is proposed that the Department will host an opening reception at Iveagh House on 5 September with delegations welcomed by the Minister (if available).

### **Cultural Relations**

Trade Division II manages the main part of the Department's Cultural Relations work, including administration of its budget for 'Cultural Relations with Other Countries', which supports promotion of Irish culture overseas through events organised and supported by the Embassy network. The Division supported 262 cultural events across the Embassy network in 2015, and so far in 2016, 133 events have been supported by this scheme. Such events form the bulk of the Embassy network's cultural activities, with a sizeable proportion taking place as part of St. Patrick's Day festivities worldwide each year. The Division has seen a significant increase in applications to the scheme in recent years, reflecting the importance of cultural diplomacy as a means of enhancing Ireland's profile and image overseas and of supporting trade, tourism and investment.

The Cultural Budget also provides annual grant funding of €150,000 to the *Centre Culturel Irlandais* at the Irish College in Paris, in support of its cultural programming, and approximately €110,000 to support Irish Studies programmes overseas. Currently, we support Irish Studies programmes in the EU and at universities in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Poland and the United States, and anticipate that further agreements will be developed over the coming months.

In addition, TrD's cultural relations work also includes the development and touring of a number of travelling exhibitions around the Embassy network and, more recently, the development of the Iveagh Cultural Exchange, an informal network comprising the Department's diplomatic staff and national cultural and arts bodies and organisations. Finally, the Division also acts as the Department's coordinator for the international dimensions of national cultural initiatives which, last year, included both Yeats 2015 and Irish Design 2015.

TrD's cultural relations remit is quite distinct from the work of Culture Ireland, a division of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which works to promote Irish artists overseas and enable them to access new markets. TrD maintains a close working relationship with Culture Ireland to ensure that the cultural programmes of both organisations are complementary and to ensure the most effective return for the State. The Director General of TrD is *ex officio* a member of the Expert Advisory Committee of Culture Ireland, with the Director of Trade Division II deputising as necessary.

## Strategy and Performance Unit

### Background

Strategy and Performance Unit (SPU) was established in 2009. The Unit is led by a Director at Counsellor level and reports directly to the Secretary General. It is the focal point for the Department's implementation of its commitments under the Programme for Government and our Statement of Strategy. SPU has responsibility for ensuring the High Level Goals in the Statement of Strategy are translated into targets and outputs across the Department and reflected in Business Plans at home and abroad. The Unit contributes to public sector reform through Civil Service Renewal and supports the work of the Secretary General and Management Board in refining and enhancing the structures and systems of the Department to best serve Irish citizens and their interests. SPU supports the work of the Management Board in embedding risk management across the Department, driving initiatives to enhance gender equality, and delivering business process improvements through the Knowledge Management and Innovation Taskforce.

### Short-Term Issues

In the coming months, and working under the direction of the Minister and the Management Board, this Unit will lead in developing the Department's **new 3-year Statement of Strategy**. This will articulate the High-Level Goals of the Department for the coming years, drawing on the new Programme for Government and the Department's recently published foreign policy review '*The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*'. The Minister will present the Statement of Strategy to the Taoiseach upon finalisation and it is subsequently laid before the Oireachtas. The outcomes targeted in the Statement of Strategy will be integrated into Business Plans at home and abroad.

Strategy & Performance Unit will also lead on planning for a **next Department Conference, including all Heads of Mission serving overseas, on 29-30 August, 2016**. This will be an opportunity for the Minister to speak to Departmental staff on the foreign policy priorities of the new Government and to meet with diplomats involved in promoting our values and interests in 80 locations worldwide.

### Long-Term Issues

Under the guidance of the Secretary General and the Management Board, this Unit will periodically prepare advice for the Minister and senior management on the development of the Mission network and of our Departmental structures at home.

SPU also inspects the performance of 10-12 Missions abroad annually through Mission Reviews, which are ordinarily led by members of the Management Board. Mission Reviews seek to enhance the contribution made by Embassies, Consulates and Permanent Representations in pursuit of the Department's High Level Goals and to promote best practice in the management of resources. Reports are shared with the Comptroller & Auditor General.

