

Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland  
and President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers

Mr Peter Barry, T.D., to the

European Parliament

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Only the spoken text is valid

Ireland assumed the Presidency in the immediate aftermath of the Fontainebleau European Council. The achievements of Fontainebleau were generally acknowledged as notable, especially the decisions on increased own resources and arrangements for the British and German budgetary rebates. But the very success of that Summit served to obscure somewhat the reality that there still remained to be solved other issues of considerable importance for the Community's functioning and for its further development. It was clear that before the end of 1984 the Community would reach the 1 per cent VAT limit and it was imperative that a way be found to finance the shortfall in the Budget for this year. There was of course also the task of drawing up the Budget for 1985 which it became increasingly clear in the early part of the Irish Presidency would only be approved by the Council if it kept within the 1 per cent limit. Much work remained to be done in the negotiations for the Lomé III Convention. Fontainebleau had affirmed that the negotiations with Spain and Portugal should be completed by the 30th September of this year. But we, in assuming the Presidency, soon realised how unrealistic this target date was, given the fact that the Community itself had yet to agree on common positions to put to the applicant countries on all the major issues.

Also outstanding when the Irish Presidency commenced was agreement between Member States on a definitive text on budgetary discipline. It became clear as the Presidency progressed that, unless and until such agreement was reached, progress on certain other budgetary issues would be blocked. Our Presidency had the further task of setting up the two ad hoc Committees - one on Institutional Affairs and the other on a People's Europe - and getting their work under way.

Thus, the Irish Presidency was faced with what I think it is fair to describe as a formidable set of issues which demanded to be tackled with urgency and decisiveness. Hopes had been raised by the Fontainebleau decisions that the relaunching of the Community in all its elements could finally get under way. But the climate within the Community seemed still uncondusive to the exercise of the necessary political will to enable a number of major decisions to be taken.

In accordance with established practice, I propose in my statement to you to set out the progress made in the various important areas during the Irish Presidency. I should of course point out that some three weeks remain before we shed our Presidency responsibilities. During this period there will be a number of important Councils. I would very much hope that we shall be able to make further advances in Community affairs before the end of the year.

Enlargement

I shall start with enlargement - appropriately, I would suggest, since we have from the very beginning of our Presidency made this an issue of the utmost importance and priority. Spain and Portugal applied for membership in 1977. Yet in July of this year the Irish Presidency was faced with a situation where the central and most difficult chapters of the negotiations were still outstanding. These included agriculture, wine, olive oil, fisheries, industrial tariff dismantling and social affairs. The Presidency set for itself as an immediate priority the achievement of agreed internal Community positions on this range of issues. Clear negotiations between the Community and the applicant States could be serious and substantial only when Spain and Portugal could assess Community offers across the board and not on a piecemeal basis.

As a result of the agreements we were able to reach at the Foreign Affairs Councils in October and November and later at the European Council last week in Dublin, the Community has now put forward proposals on all the major negotiating issues, subject of course to the reserve which our Greek colleagues have placed on enlargement generally.

The status of the negotiations has been transformed in recent months. We still, of course, have serious, difficult and sensitive negotiations in front of us. In many ways, the enlargement negotiations remind me of a marathon race. They have, for instance, been in progress now for over six years. At times, during that period, many were doubtful about whether they could ultimately be brought to a finish. We are now, however, in the final lap. The irreversibility of the integration of Spain and Portugal into the Community, to use the language of the Solemn Declaration which we signed with Portugal in October, can no longer be questioned. The commitment to 1 January 1986 as the date of accession must be honoured.

I am delighted, therefore, to tell the European Parliament, always a staunch supporter of enlargement, that our Europe of free and democratic nations, which for perhaps too long has been turned inwards on itself, has now found the courage, the sense of self-confidence and the political commitment necessary to make enlargement an early reality. The primary objective of the Irish Presidency has, therefore, been realized.

I believe that the dynamic created by our breakthrough on enlargement will have a profoundly positive impact on all areas of Community activity. The Community is on the move again. But the speed of this movement will depend to a significant degree on how committed to reform we can show ourselves to be. My own position is quite clear. I have always held, to paraphrase a nineteenth century Irish political leader, that no one can set a boundary to the march of a nation. In the future there seems to be no reason why this should not hold equally true for the Community.

#### 1984 Supplementary Budget

The most immediate problem facing us last July was the threat that the Community would run out of funds before the end of the year. We have faced this problem and I believe a satisfactory solution has been found. A supplementary budget was agreed in Council on 2 October. I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank Parliament for its co-operation with the Council in recognizing and appreciating the extent of the difficulties and in expediting the adoption of the supplementary budget. In addition to securing agreement in the Council the difficult problem of funding for the proposal was overcome. An intergovernmental agreement for reimbursable advances will provide the means of overcoming the limitations on Community funding pending the introduction of new own resources.

#### 1985 Budget

You have presently before you the draft General Budget for 1985. I realise there are strong views on the draft Budget submitted by the Council in this House. I would ask you, however, to consider the degree to which the recent Budget Council on 29 November has sought to move towards the position of Parliament. I ask you also to consider just what would be the likely effect of any protracted blocking by the Parliament of final agreement on the Budget. It would extend for yet another year the divisive financial problem which has preoccupied the Community for so long. I put it to you that it is in everyone's interest to ensure there is no impediment in the way of Community financing in 1985.

#### Budgetary Discipline

On 4 December the Council adopted its conclusions on budgetary discipline. It also adopted its position on co-operation with the European Parliament and the Commission. The conclusions on budgetary discipline in no way affect Parliament's powers as part of the budgetary authority. At that Council we decided that we will invite a delegation of the Parliament to meet with the Council shortly before the meetings at which we are due to fix the reference framework for the year. In addition, the Council decided that it will invite both the Parliament and the Commission to examine ways of securing the co-operation necessary for a budgetary discipline common to all three institutions.

Ad Hoc Committees

Another crisis which faced the Community six months ago was - and still is - the general impasse in decision-making and the loss of momentum towards European integration. There is a perception among our citizens that the Community, in the wake of the long wrangle over the British rebate and the delay in tackling the difficult problems of common policies, is somewhat paralysed and that it is lacking in the will to break serious deadlock. A lack of progress in the implementation of such basic principles as freedom of movement and right of establishment has added to the perception of Community inadequacy. The European Council at Fontainebleau was very conscious of this perception and decided to set up the two ad hoc Committees with the task of bringing forward suggestions to break this deadlock, to reform the administrative processes, to put a human face on the Community and generally to re-establish the idealism which guided the founders of the Community. We have been pleased during our Presidency to inaugurate these Committees and yesterday the Taoiseach gave you an outline of their progress. I am sure that Parliament will be anxious to see both Committees bring forward ideas imbued with imagination and flair which will give the Community a genuine sense of purpose and will make the Community both comprehensible and relevant to our citizens.

Relations with Parliament

In my address to you last July I said that the question of a good relationship with Parliament was an issue of substance for us and that we saw it as more than a token gesture that had to be made. I hope you will agree that the obligation which we entered into at that time has been fully discharged. Every session of Parliament was attended by an Irish Minister in his capacity as President of the Council of Ministers. By the end of this month Committees of the Parliament will have been addressed by Irish Government Ministers on twenty-three occasions. Our desire for a good relationship was, I think, further demonstrated by the Taoiseach's prompt, positive response to your request, Mr President, for a meeting between the ten Foreign Ministers and the Enlarged Bureau of Parliament. I believe the meeting and the friendly exchanges which marked it were a milestone of the Presidency and a further stage in the evolution of a good Parliament-Council relationship. I would like also, Mr President, to take this opportunity to say how glad I was to welcome you to Ireland during your recent visit.

Economic and Social Situation

The President of the European Council, the Taoiseach, Dr Garret FitzGerald, pointed out to you yesterday that the European Council had welcomed the priority given to the problem of unemployment in the Commission's Annual Economic Report and supported the guidelines set out in the Report. As An Taoiseach said the European Council agreed that the Community and the Member States should take measures to reduce regional imbalances. Significant progress has been made in recent months towards the completion of the Internal Market. The restoration of the Community's competitiveness and the strengthening of its technological base are now major objectives. The conclusions of the European Council are pointers for Community action - action which is vital for our well-being - which I am confident will be carried forward in the period ahead.

Unemployment

In the social affairs area we are focussing attention on unemployment. A number of Resolutions have already been agreed in such areas as youth unemployment and the situation of unemployed women. The Irish Presidency is seriously concerned about the increasing number of long term unemployed. Approximately one third of those unemployed in the Communities have been out of work for more than a year. Long term unemployment was discussed at the informal Social Affairs meeting held earlier in our Presidency and was also a central item on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Employment. The adoption of a resolution on long term unemployment is a priority and we shall be seeking the agreement of the Social Affairs Ministers when they meet tomorrow to draft a Resolution on action to combat this problem. We also hope for proposals on a programme of action and research to combat the problem of poverty. In addition we expect progress on positive action in favour of women and the exchange of young workers. Insofar as the draft Directive on Information and Consultation is concerned (formerly known as the Vredeling Proposal) I am pleased to be able to report that a report will be submitted to the Social Affairs Council on the draft Directive on Information and Consultation.

Lomé Convention

In my speech before this Assembly in July I indicated that the conclusion of the negotiations for a new Lomé Convention was the second major priority of the Irish Presidency. I am pleased to inform you that at a meeting with my ACP colleague, Mr NAMALIU, Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, on 22 November, that objective was achieved. Last Saturday in Lomé I had the honour to sign the third ACP-EEC Convention on behalf of the Council of Ministers.

The new Convention is another milestone in the development of the Community's relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States. It contains all the major features of its two predecessors and a number of innovations which will, I am sure, make it even more effective. With regard to the financial envelope, the new Convention will have at its disposal a combined total of 8,5 billion ECUs (made up of 7,4 billion for the 6th European Development Fund and 1,1 billion for the European Investment Bank). For the 6th EDF this represents an almost 60 per cent increase on the corresponding Lomé II figure. I think you will agree that, in the light of the present stringent financial situation for the Community and the consequent cutbacks which have taken place in other aid programmes, this is a considerable achievement. It clearly demonstrates the Community's continuing commitment to the ACP.

The development of self-reliance and food self-sufficiency in the ACP countries will be the main objective of the new Convention. We want to see this achieved in the agricultural sector by means of integrated rural development and food strategies. The Convention wants to ensure that aid reaches the poorest sectors of the population, particularly in rural areas. It emphasizes the importance of small farming training and development of distribution networks and outlets within the ACP countries concerned. This will be backed up in the industrial sector by an emphasis on handicrafts and small and medium enterprises.

Another important feature of the new Convention is that for the first time in the history of ACP-EEC Co-operation special financial resources will be made available to tackle the alarming environmental deterioration in the countries of the Sahel and other parts of Africa. Our efforts must be increased to counteract the devastating effect of drought and desertification on the lives of millions of people in these countries. I am certain that it is only through a combination of environmental and food security actions of the kind foreseen in this Convention that we can imagine a day when famine and calamity such as we are now witnessing in Ethiopia and other African countries will be a thing of the past.

International Trade and Community International Relations

During these six months the Irish Presidency has consistently advocated the strengthening of the world trading system. We have taken every opportunity at international fora such as the GATT and at the bilateral level to encourage our trading partners to strengthen the recovery. In line with this policy, the Council of Ministers decided to propose to move forward the Tokyo Round tariff cuts due on 1 January 1986 to 1 July 1985. In order to assist developing countries tariffs on a number of products of particular interest to them will be rolled back with effect from 1 January next. We recommend this exercise to all our trading partners as worthy of support. We also welcome the positive outcome of the recent annual meeting of the Contracting Parties to the GATT, which laid the foundation for future multilateral discussions. We hope that this will lead to a better functioning world trading system.

In recent months the Community has found it necessary to express concern at the increasing recourse to protectionism by some of our major trading partners. For example, we cannot accept the proposition that problems in certain sectors of the United States economy can be attributed to competition from Europe. While we were pleased that the US Trade and Tariff Act as passed took into account some of our objections, we remain concerned about several features of this legislation. Most recently we have seen the unilateral action taken by the US in restricting imports of steel pipes and tubes from the Community. This action is contrary to the spirit and probably the letter of the GATT. We are at the moment considering the most appropriate and effective response.

The Community's trade deficit with Japan remained unresolved during the period. Both the Commission and the Presidency have been in sustained dialogue with the Japanese. We want to see measures adopted that will open up the Japanese market in order to achieve a more balanced trade flow.

We have continued to develop our links with the EFTA countries with whom we share the largest free trade area in the world. Work has progressed on putting the elements of the Joint Declaration adopted at the meeting of Community and EFTA Ministers in Luxembourg last April into effect.



Internal market

The process of completing the Community's internal market has been moved ahead. The effect that the full integration of our huge European market can have on the Community economy is being increasingly recognized.

The Internal Market Council on 9th October agreed in principle on the basic regulation concerning the introduction of a single administrative document to simplify customs formalities between Member States. This breakthrough has been welcomed by representatives of trade and commerce throughout the Community. Considerable progress has already been made by experts from the Ten on the form of this document. They have been asked to expedite their work so that the document can be brought into use at the earliest possible date.

The simplification of formalities in trade between the Member States will have a positive impact on the further development of intra-Community trade. In particular it will provide an incentive for firms, especially small ones, to view their activity in terms of the whole of the internal market.

The elimination of obstacles to trade in such areas as standards, Government purchasing policies, telecommunications equipment and information technology will significantly improve the effectiveness of our common market. The recent Council recommendations to open up public markets for telecommunications equipment are further steps along this path.

Transport

On transport policy as I speak to you the second Council is in session in Brussels. I am able to report that we have made solid progress on a number of fronts. We have been attempting to resolve the difficulties which arise in relation to the measures agreed in principle at the May Transport Council; in particular, difficulties over harmonization of Weight and Dimensions of commercial road vehicles. We can only hope that the present Council will be able to reach final decision on the measures involved, which also include aid for transport infrastructure and increases in the Community quota for road haulage. The Council is also considering the reports of two important high-level groups set up by the May Council, one on the Community's air transport system, the other on the future programme of work in inland transport. These reports will be of great value in furthering the development of the Common Transport Policy in the years to come; I share your conviction that we need a new sense of urgency and real political will to make progress in this vital part of the Community's work as in others.

Energy Policy

At the Energy Council on 13 November 1984 progress was made in the different aspects of the Community's energy policies, particularly as regards decreasing oil dependence and energy savings.

The Council agreed that progress in each Member State and at Community level towards long-term energy objectives should continue to be monitored. They invited the Commission to propose new energy objectives into the 1990's, on the basis of a study of energy supply and demand options to the year 2000.

The Council adopted the decision on granting support of 35 million ECU to hydrocarbon technology projects. It requested the Commission to submit a new proposal for a programme to cover the next few years.

Differences of approach are evident in relation to the Commission's proposal to aid solid fuel production. Ministers resolved to achieve the goal of a balanced and global Community strategy for solid fuels. In particular, they decided to continue their efforts to increase the share of fuels in the Community energy balance.

Environment policy

The most significant package of proposals before the Environment Council at present is undoubtedly the group of draft Directives relating to air pollution. This is a reflection of the growing importance attached to the need to find a solution to the problem, especially in the light of the acid rain problem in Scandinavia and North America and the problem of forest damage in Central Europe, particularly Germany. This Parliament has devoted considerable effort and time to examining the problem and proposing solutions to it. International discussions are also taking place in the broader international community and particularly at the Executive Body of the Geneva Convention on long range transboundary air pollution to which, of course, the Community is a contracting party.

At the Environment Council on 6 December the Ministers reached agreement on the text of a proposal whereby lead-free petrol must be available throughout the Community from 1 October 1989 and Member States were invited to make lead-free petrol available in the market in advance of this date if possible. Agreement on other technical aspects of this proposal was also reached.

While agreement was not reached on the more difficult question of vehicle exhaust emissions, the High Level Group established since November was asked to seek a solution on the basis of a differentiation between large and smaller vehicles and is to report back by the end of January.

The importance which the Community attaches to trying to solve environmental problems is reflected in the decision of the European Council to have a substantial discussion on environmental issues at the next European Council meeting in March 1985.

#### Common Agricultural Policy

In the agricultural sector work has proceeded during the Irish Presidency on a wide range of important technical issues. I should like to mention briefly that, following difficult and protracted negotiations, agreement was secured at the European Council in Dublin last week which has enabled the Community to agree a reform of policy in the wine sector.

#### Common Fisheries Policy

With regard to fisheries, the Presidency has been pressing to secure agreement on the Total Allowable Catches and Quotas which will apply in 1985. In this regard it is necessary that we complete the consultations with certain third countries, particularly Norway and Sweden as soon as possible. The Presidency attaches particular importance to obtaining before the end of this year, a Council Decision on provisional Total Allowable Catches and Quotas for 1985 so that Community fishermen may plan their activities with a clear idea of the opportunities which will be open to them. This is of vital importance to our fishermen.

Mr President, I would now like to review the work undertaken during the Irish Presidency in the field of European Political Co-operation.

During this period, the Ten have continued to consult and co-ordinate effectively on the major international issues which confront them. Common positions have been elaborated on a wide range of complex topics. While our task has not always been an easy one, we have endeavoured to speak out on international developments with a single European voice.

Under the Irish Presidency, the Ten have marked particular concern for peace and stability in the Middle East. We availed of a relative lull in diplomatic activity in the region to engage in a careful analysis of the situation there. At its meeting in Dublin last week, the European Council reaffirmed the Ten's policy in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In continuation of this policy, and having considered a report on the Middle East situation, the European Council also considered that contacts should be developed with all parties with a view to seeking ways to improve the situation in the region.

The Ten have also reasserted their commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and have called for the withdrawal from Lebanon of all foreign troops except those whose presence is agreed by the Lebanese Government. The beginning of the Israeli-Lebanese talks at Naqoura recently has been a welcome development. We hope that an agreement will be reached enabling early withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

The Ten's position on the Iran-Iraq war remains unchanged. We have continued to express our profound concern at the loss of life and material damage caused by this conflict. We have pressed for a negotiated solution and an end to military activities. We have also called on both sides to comply with the principles of humanitarian international law in armed conflicts.

When I addressed this House last July, I said that the overall picture of East/West relations was not encouraging. I promised that the Ten would do all in their power to reduce tensions and to promote a more stable and co-operative relationship between East and West.

During this difficult period, the Ten sought consistently to keep open all possible channels of dialogue between both sides and also supported the efforts of others directed to this end. In this connection, we welcome very much the forthcoming high-level contacts between the United States and the Soviet Union. In our view, sustained dialogue both between the United States and the Soviet Union, and between Europeans in East and West, is indispensable and complementary in the pursuit of improved East/West relations and the consequent enhancement of international security.

During the Irish Presidency, the Ten have made clear the importance they attach to the achievement of balanced and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements. We have consistently supported the resumption of the vitally important negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on intercontinental strategic nuclear weapons and intermediate nuclear forces. In view of the urgent need to avert the danger of an arms race in outer space, we have also advocated the initiation of talks on this subject between the two leading space powers. We, therefore, welcome the announcement of the meeting between Mr. SCHULTZ and Mr. GROMYKO in January in Geneva and hope very much that this will lead to agreement on how to carry forward negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on these various questions.

The Ten attach great importance to the CSCE process which has a central place in East/West relations. We have continued to urge full implementation of the Helsinki and Madrid provisions by all CSCE participating States in order to bring about more secure, more co-operative and more human relations in Europe. Under the Irish Presidency, there was close, effective and fruitful co-ordination among the Ten at a number of meetings held in the CSCE framework. At the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, the Ten have been working to achieve negotiated agreement on concrete measures which would increase confidence and security by making military behaviour more open and military intentions more calculable. The Ten also co-operated successfully at a CSCE Seminar on Mediterranean co-operation which was held in Venice recently and at a meeting held in Budapest to prepare next year's CSCE Cultural Forum in that city.

We have continued to pay close attention to events in Poland. On 23 July last, we welcomed the announcement by the Polish Government of an amnesty for political prisoners. We expressed the hope that the Government's decision reflected a desire to meet the aspirations of the Polish people for dialogue and reform and would be followed by further measures designed to promote national reconciliation. We recalled that it has consistently been our wish to return to more, normal relations with Poland as developments in that country permit. More recently, however, we were shocked by the murder of Fr. Popieluszko, which we roundly condemn. We have noted the stated intention of the Polish authorities to pursue the perpetrators of this atrocity.

As regards nuclear non-proliferation, I should mention that the Ten Foreign Ministers recently adopted a declaration of common policy on the consequences of the adoption by the ten Member States of the London Guidelines, which represent a common discipline in regard to nuclear exports.

In turning to the situation in Central America, which has been a source of continuing concern for the Ten, I would like with your permission, Mr President, to respond to Oral Questions Nos O-42/84 and O-45/84 on the subject of the Ministerial Conference held in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 28-29 September, in which the European Community and its Member States participated along with Spain and Portugal, the countries of Central America and the Contadora Group. The aim of the Ten at this Conference was to give practical support, both political and economic, to the efforts of the countries of Central America themselves to bring peace, social justice, economic development and respect for human rights and democratic liberties to the region. We were conscious throughout of the intimate connection between under-development and inequitable social and economic structures on the one hand and political instability and violence on the other. It is for this reason that the final communique of the meeting reflects both Europe's political support for peacemaking efforts, particularly those of the Contadora Group, and Europe's firm intention to intensify economic co-operation with Central America. The communique records the agreement of both sides to continue the political dialogue, begun at San Jose, through further meetings at regular intervals in the future. Both sides also declared themselves ready to start discussions as soon as possible with a view to negotiating an inter-regional framework economic co-operation agreement.

At San Jose, all the participants expressed their firm conviction that the problems of Central America cannot be solved by armed force. They can only be solved by political solutions springing from the region itself. In this conviction, we affirmed our support for the Contadora process which provides the best opportunity to achieve a solution to the crisis. The communique recognized that the revised draft Contadora Act is a fundamental stage in the negotiating process for peace in Central America.

The Central American countries, we hope, will shortly reach full agreement on a final text of the Contadora Act.

The Ten have also been following the deteriorating situation in Chile with concern. In a statement on 11 September, we expressed preoccupation at the acts of violence and repression which had followed political demonstrations aimed at the restoration of democracy in that country.

Political developments in Africa have also continued to claim our attention. The situation in South Africa was the subject of a declaration on 11 September in which we expressed concern at the arrest and detention of those involved in the boycott of the recent elections to the coloured and Indian Assemblies in South Africa. Later, we formally expressed this concern to the South African authorities and sought the immediate release of those detained without charge.

While further improvements have still to be made, it is clear nonetheless that the Code of Conduct for European Community companies with subsidiaries in South Africa has had a positive effect on conditions for black workers there. On 20 November, the Ten Foreign Ministers approved the Fourth Community Analysis of the Member States' national reports on implementation of the Code of Conduct.

Under the Irish Presidency, the Ten developed still further their relations with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). I attended the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference with the dialogue partners in Indonesia last July. In addition, the 5th EC/ASEAN Ministerial meeting was held in Dublin on November 15-16. In the Joint Declaration following that meeting, the Foreign Ministers of the Ten and ASEAN expressed their satisfaction with the wide degree of consensus reached on current international and regional political problems. We paid particular attention to the two major threats to peace and stability in Asia, namely the situation in Kampuchea and Afghanistan. Discussions on the economic part of the agenda focussed largely on the EC/ASEAN Co-operation Agreement. Agreement was reached on the importance of increasing European investment in the ASEAN region and it is planned to study the means whereby this may be achieved. It was also agreed to convene a special meeting of relevant Community and ASEAN Ministers early in the new year for the purpose of reviewing the operation of the Co-operation Agreement to date and examining ways in which co-operation might be strengthened to our mutual benefit.



During the Irish Presidency, the Ten continued and developed their co-ordination on a wide variety of issues within the framework of the United Nations. On behalf of the European Community and its ten Member States, I delivered a statement at the 39th UN General Assembly in which I outlined Ten policy on the leading international issues.

Within the UN framework, we have also maintained our close co-ordination on human rights issues. In my statement to the 39th General Assembly, I underlined the Ten's determination to continue to speak out against human rights violations wherever they occur and to promote international agreement on standards and procedures with which human rights can be defended.

We also adopted a set of principles in relation to the increasingly serious problem of international terrorism and the abuse of diplomatic immunity.

Mr President, I have been asked by the Parliament to respond in the course of my address this morning to a number of Oral Questions put down by Members on the subject of the Western European Union. It will, I trust, be understood that, as only seven of the Ten are members of the WEU, the Ten as such cannot take a position on discussions which may take place in the WEU framework. Discussions within the WEU are not a matter for European Political Co-operation.

In conclusion, Mr President, it is appropriate that I should recall the significance which the Ten have attached, under the Irish Presidency, to their dialogue with the European Parliament on matters arising in the framework of Political Co-operation. This dialogue, in our view, is rich in benefits for both sides and can, no doubt, be further developed. As President-in-Office, I have availed of the various channels open to me to keep the Parliament fully informed of developments and to engage in a wide-ranging exchange of views with Members on the major political issues with which the Ten have been confronted. Speaking personally, Mr President, I have greatly valued the opportunities I have had to hear the views of Members on these issues. I have drawn the attention of my colleagues in Political Co-operation, as a matter of course, to Resolutions adopted by the Parliament on political topics. The formally expressed views of this House are thus fed directly into the deliberative processes of the Ten and make an important contribution to our work.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the Irish Presidency has made considerable efforts to reach agreement on solutions to outstanding Community issues. We have, in fact, as I have detailed, succeeded in bringing a number of important issues to a successful conclusion. But the essential task of relaunching the Community in all its elements remains uncompleted. This task would, of course, be beyond the scope and capacity of any one Presidency. We have made our contribution. But work on the unfulfilled mandate of Stuttgart must continue. I can assure this House, Mr President, that Ireland will continue to play a full and responsible role in meeting this formidable challenge.