

CFSP WATCH 2004 – Ireland – by Hugo Brady, Yvonne Campbell and Ben Tonra¹

1. What are the priorities for your government in CFSP in 2004? What are the key issues for your country in 2004 (after EU enlargement, after the Iraq conflict)?

Ireland prioritises the projection of its national foreign policy interests through agreed EU positions and action. In this regard it was well positioned to enjoy a successful EU presidency in the early half of 2004. Since the main political parties share a broad consensus on Ireland's approach to international affairs, the government received constructively critical support during this period.

In addition to the events to which a country must simply react, Ireland sought to push 'effective multilateralism' and EU support for the UN, a positive and constructive transatlantic agenda, revitalisation of the EU's engagement and cooperation with Africa, conflict prevention, human rights and disarmament and non-proliferation higher up the EU agenda. These priorities represent traditional tenets of Irish foreign policy, both nationally and on the European stage.

Other standard objectives for CFSP included:

- Middle East and Mediterranean: To maintain and develop the role of the European Union in the - International Quartet.
- Iran: To maintain a common EU position on an overall approach to Iran, inter alia, its nuclear programme.
- Iraq: To seek a common EU position on the reconstruction of Iraq where possible and minimise differences where it was not possible.
- Asia: To revitalise the ASEM process.
- Western Balkans: agreement on Croatia's candidature and opening of negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement.
- Russia: Achieve agreement on EU review of EU-Russia relations as a basis for relationship with Russia focusing on substance over process.

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- Turkey: To encourage implementation of wide-ranging legislative reforms introduced over the past eighteen months with a view to the Commission's report and recommendation on Turkey's progress towards accession.
- Cyprus: Before enlargement, a possible settlement on the basis of the UN's Annan Plan.
- Terrorism: Continued implementation of the EU Action Plan against terrorism.
- Non-Proliferation: To ensure early implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD, in particular, to work towards a common EU position at the NPT Third Preparatory Committee meeting in May 2004 and to secure an adequate follow up to the 2003 EU-US Declaration on Non-Proliferation of WMD.

The issue of the Chinese arms embargo was deliberately played down by the Irish government as it was well aware of the possible spillover effects of this particular issue on its priorities in the transatlantic area and elsewhere. As outgoing presidency, Ireland took a deliberately muted approach to statements in the context CFSP during the latter half of 2004.

2. National Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP Issues in 2004

a) The perceived success and/or failure of CFSP/ESDP (e.g. taking into account current developments like the Iraq conflict);

- Improving transatlantic relations in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq was a major priority of the Irish presidency's external relations agenda. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern reported to the Irish Dáil (parliament) on 30 June that the Ireland had achieved significant results in improving the prevailing political atmosphere by hosting a successful bilateral EU-US summit where agreement was reached on a broad range of economic and international issues.

- Four other summit meetings were also held during the course of the presidency (Canada, Russia, the Latin American and Caribbean countries and Japan). Media coverage of these events obviously raised Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's profile as the leader of a small country.

- Several thousand people travelled to the EU-US Summit in Dromoland Castle, County Clare to protest against the visit of President Bush and the Iraq war. Public opposition to the Iraq war in Ireland was significant with 100,000 people attending an anti-war rally in Dublin organised by the Irish Anti-War Movement, the NGO Peace Alliance and the Peace and Neutrality Alliance in 2003.

- All of the above groups oppose Ireland's involvement in EU operations with military implications and involvement in developing EU ESDP instruments. Along with the political party Sinn Fein, they warn that the EU Constitutional Treaty would "militarise" the EU and have for this, among other reasons, announced their intention to campaign against the constitution's ratification in a forthcoming referendum (expected in late Autumn 2005).

- Under the heading of effective multilateralism, the Irish presidency prioritised the elaboration of EU-UN modalities for cooperation in crisis management giving particular priority to the areas of planning, training, communications and best international practices. This was underlined as a national priority by the visit of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to Ireland in October 2004. In a speech to the National Forum on Europe, Mr Annan emphasised the value of EU initiatives such as battlegroups to provide specialised skills and to deploy more rapidly than UN-generated forces.

b) The position of your country towards NATO after enlargement (in relationship with the ESDP), as well as NATO's role in Afghanistan and in Iraq;

- This is a less relevant issue for Ireland which is not a NATO member.

- However, the government worked closely with NATO to prepare for the anticipated EU takeover of the SFOR military mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the provision of a police assistance mission in the DRC.

- Public perception tends not to deal with the fact that many enlargement countries joined NATO at the same time as the EU. At the public discussion forum on Europe, visiting politicians are queried as to why they inextricably link the two.

c) The role of the EU in crisis management e.g. in Europe and Africa

- The government has participated in each EU crisis management activity with the exception of Operation Concordia in Macedonia where the absence of an UN Security Council resolution (consequent upon a Chinese veto) was the deciding factor.
- There is low public awareness overall of Irish participation in EU-led crisis management operations even though an Irish police commissioner, Kevin Carty, heads the EU Police Mission (EUPM) to Bosnia-Herzegovina. By contrast, Ireland's contribution to UN peacekeeping is a matter of some considerable public pride and comparatively greater media attention.
- The Irish presidency promoted conflict prevention throughout Africa, particularly through the dialogue with Ethiopia and Eritrea. It gained agreement on an integrated EU approach to West Africa where Ireland maintains one of the largest peacekeeping forces on the African continent.

d) The perceived impact of EU enlargement on CFSP/ESDP (old versus new Europe?)

- Generic concerns did exist in relation to securing agreement on CFSP/EFSP matters in an enlarged Union. However given the positive internal experience in agreeing the Constitutional Treaty since 1 May 2004 these fears are less pronounced. The government enjoys excellent relations with all newly enlarged Member States, most of whom appear to have settled into a 'listening exercise' upon joining.
- These countries, especially the smaller, are seen as helping to bring balance to an EU external agenda traditionally driven by the large member States.
- The Irish government identified enlargement as an opportunity to further develop EU military and crisis management capabilities, including through the incorporation of the capability commitments of the 10 acceding States.

e) The view of the European Security Strategy (ESS) as a instrument for enhancing coherence in the EU's security policy; how does your country view the ESS and which issues are of particular importance?

- The Irish government considered that a central and particularly welcome feature of the Strategy was its holistic approach to security, going beyond the purely military aspects and welcomed the contribution it might make in highlighting the importance of international humanitarian law and civil-military coordination in crisis management as well as cooperation between the Union and the United Nations.

- It welcomed the document as readable, accessible and clearly structured and was satisfied with its input both at official and political level into the document's wording.

The Irish presidency priorities emanating from the strategy's adoption and mandate for follow-up work were: the 'critical challenge' of supporting and sustaining effective multilateralism (cf EU-UN relations), aspects of countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and supporting conflict prevention as a means for preventative engagement with third countries.

As presidency in June 2004, Ireland submitted a progress report on the European Security Strategy to the European Council. Its chapter headings included: effective multilateralism, the non-proliferation/report on the implementation of the WMD Strategy, action plan on terrorism, action plan on relations with the Arab world and a comprehensive strategy for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

3. The Results of the Intergovernmental Conference 2003/2004 on the Constitutional Treaty

At the IGC, in general Ireland wished to ensure that new arrangements under the Constitution were consistent with and would not prejudice its security and defence strategy and in particular made statements to the effect that ESDP arrangements should be clear and accountable.

a) External Representation: What is the final position of your country on the European foreign minister and the President of the European Council? Is your country in favour of double hatting?

- The final position of the Irish government in relation to external representation has been justified in relation to several key principles it brought into the negotiation. These included the need to ensure continuing balance between the Union's institutions (not strengthening one to the disadvantage of the others) and the need to ensure that the Union is served by institutions that can act effectively and efficiently after enlargement. It has pronounced itself fully satisfied that the new arrangements deliver that result.
- The Irish government originally opposed the prospect of the EU Foreign Minister chairing the Foreign Affairs Council. It is seen to be unwise to allow the initiator of policy to also chair the Council. There are also issues of accountability involved.

b) Decision-making: Does your country opt for an extension of qualified majority voting in the field of CFSP? Did your country support the Italian presidency proposal for qualified majority voting to be applied when a proposal is submitted in CFSP by the Foreign Minister?

At the very start of the Convention process, the Irish government expressed its very strong view that a necessary condition for CFSP's success was the political will of the Member States and that they were therefore 'strongly wedded' to CFSP decision making by unanimity. The government views the treaty outcome as a 'reasonable balance' between unanimity for key issues and a certain degree of flexibility.

c) Crisis management: What is the official position on expanding the Petersberg tasks and making reference to tasks that involve military resources? Which regions does your country consider as particularly promising for EU crisis management (e.g. Africa, Southern Caucasus)?

- The Irish government supported the updating and expanding of the Petersberg tasks as being necessary to enhance the Union's ability to make a meaningful contribution in the world and fully in keeping with Ireland's traditional approach to peacekeeping.

- Development policy directed at selected countries in Africa features high on Ireland's foreign policy agenda and the government would see the development of crisis management capabilities for EU missions there as important for providing the stability needed to apply development policies. At the National Forum on Europe (8 January 2004), Minister of Foreign Affairs Brian Cowan made this point publicly to High Representative Solana. Pushing African issues higher up the EU's agenda was a major priority of Ireland's presidency, in particular supporting African-led initiatives in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management.

d) Defence: What is your country's position towards the establishment of the civilian-military cell at the EUMS? Was your government in favour of creating a full-fledged operational EU headquarters?

- Ireland supported the compromise proposal agreed on by France, Germany and UK to establish a civilian-military cell at the EUMS. The Irish government was not overtly supportive of the establishment of a full-fledged operation EU headquarters, re-stating that it would not participate in EU missions outside the scope of the Petersberg tasks or its parliamentary requirements (the so-called 'triple lock'.)

e) What is the official position of your country on the new provisions for permanent structured cooperation, the final wording of the mutual defence clause, and the role and tasks of the defence agency? Should the agency become the institutional nucleus for European procurement and a single budget for defence?

- Permanent Structured Cooperation

The government initially expressed itself as being positively disposed towards participation in ERF battlegroups. However, constitutional and operational difficulties have subsequently been identified which are the subject of ongoing discussions between a number of government Departments and the Attorney General's Office. In particular the government is considering whether Irish involvement in battlegroups is consistent with the so-called triple lock procedure. This provides that Ireland cannot commit troops to any overseas military mission without the approval of the government, the Dáil (Parliament) and a legitimating UN Security Council resolution. Other constitutional and legal issues have been raised concerning

the training of Irish soldiers abroad and the presence of uniformed foreign troops on Irish soil. The Minister for Defence has commented publicly on government deliberations as 'dragging a bit'.

No consideration is being given to Irish participation in permanent structured cooperation given Irish non-participation in military alliances (neutrality).

- Final wording of the defence clause

Ireland's position on this wording is well known. While Ireland will not stand in the way of others, it cannot participate in a common defence without the prior consent of the people in a referendum. A provision to this effect was added to the Irish constitution so as to facilitate passage of the Nice Treaty in referendum. The government has made it clear that this requirement will be retained.

- European Defence Agency

Ireland's position on the tasks of the agency was that it should help to ensure that the defence forces of EU Member States are properly equipped and suitably interoperable to carry out crisis management missions, not least in respect of protecting of forces themselves. Participation should be open to all Member States. However Ireland is neither an arms producer nor a large consumer of weapons – although there is some domestic debate on the extent to which Ireland is a significant exporter of "dual-use" goods. The government's case for the EDA is that by having more cost effective and coordinated approaches, there will have less wasteful defence expenditure in Europe than at present. The government has not made a statement on a single budget for defence since no such proposal has been made but it would be likely to oppose this. During the Irish presidency, fears from other member States that Ireland, because of its military neutrality, would not wish to move the agency forward proved ill-founded.

Sources:

Irish presidency Priorities and reports, CFSP statements and press releases

www.eu2004.ie

www.dfa.ie

www.iiea.com

Parliamentary questions and Dail debates

www.oireachtas.ie

Meeting transcripts and press releases

www.forumoneurope.ie

Media reports

The Irish Times

www.ireland.com

4. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related Research

Academic Institutions

The academic discipline of International Relations remains comparatively underdeveloped in Ireland. In the universities, only University College Dublin (UCD) and Dublin City University (DCU) offer academic structures for the study of international relations. UCD is establishing a new School of Politics and International Relations while DCU several years ago set up its own Centre for International Studies. Also at UCD there has been established a Jean Monnet Chair in EU Foreign, Security and Defence Policy while at DCU national research funding has been awarded for a major academic project on Irish security and defence policy. In the main, the field of International Relations is split between the disciplines of political science and modern history with only limited focus on the European Union as a discrete international actor.

The field of European foreign, security and defence studies rests therefore upon fragile academic grounds in Ireland and is most often to be found represented in undergraduate or postgraduate programmes whose focus is that of European Studies. In undergraduate programmes, this is true for University College Cork, University of Dublin (Trinity College) and the University of Limerick. At postgraduate level, this is the case at the Centre for European Studies at the University of Limerick and University College Dublin's Dublin European Institute (host to the FORNET programme). The Royal Irish Academy's National Committee for the Study of International Affairs has also devoted its attention, from time to time, to aspects of EU foreign, security and defence policy

Think-tanks

The Institute for European Affairs Dublin is the main policy institute in Ireland on European affairs with access to key policy-makers and experts who analyse the issues, options and implications of European developments for Ireland. The IEA hosts an elite-level study group dedicated to CFSP/ESDP issues, convenes seminars and hosts guest speakers on this issue, addresses associated foreign policy issues with other dedicated study groups (eg Balkans, relations with Russia, EU-US relations etc), publishes analytical texts on CFSP/ESDP and Irish involvement therein as well as the regular distribution of newsletter on CFSP/ESDP developments to key policy making constituencies.

The European Movement acts as an advocacy coalition for Irish membership of the European Union and plays a role during referenda campaigns providing information on Irish EU membership – including the implications of CFSP/ESDP

Useful General Sources

Primary Sources:

government Publications:

D/FA (1996) *Challenges and Opportunities Abroad: White Paper on Foreign Policy*, government Publications.

D/Defence (2000) *White Paper on Irish Defence*, government Publications.

Parliamentary Debates and Reports:

Dail Debates

Seanad Debates

Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs Reports

Newspapers & Journals:

Irish Times (www.ireland.com)

Irish Independent (www.unison.ie)

Sunday Independent

Sunday Business Post

The Examiner

National Forum on Europe:

www.forumoneurope.ie

Relevant Current Affairs Television & Radio Programmes:

'Prime Time' (Thursday nights, 10pm Radio Teilifis Eireann, R.T.E.1)

'Questions and Answers'(Monday nights, 9.40pm R.T.E.1)

'The Week in Politics' (Sunday nights, R.T.E. 1)

'The Sunday Show' (Sundays at 12pm, Radio 1)

'Five-Seven Live' (Weekdays, 5pm, Radio 1)

'Morning Ireland' (Weekdays, 7am-9am, Radio 1)

'Saturday View' (Saturdays, 12:00 noon, Radio 1)

'Tonight with Vincent Brown' (Weeknights, 10:00 pm, Radio 1)

all of the above at <http://www.rte.ie>

Websites:

Irish Political Parties

Fianna Fail <http://www.fiannafail.ie>, also www.fiannafail.ie/ffineurope.php4?id=430

Fine Gael (1999;relaunched 2003) Beyond Neutrality: Ireland's Role in European Defence and Security (Dublin:Fine Gael), <http://www.finegael.ie/main.htm>

Fine Gael <http://www.finegael.ie/main.htm>

Labour Party <http://www.labour.ie/policy>

Sinn Fein <http://www.sinnfein.ie/>

Green Party <http://www.imsgrp.com/greenparty/neutral.htm>

Socialist Workers' Party <http://www.dojo.ie/socialist/home.html>

NGOs, Government Departments, Think Tanks etc:

Afri (<http://www.afri.buz.org/>). (Action from Ireland NGO)

Peace and Neutrality Alliance

The European Movement

The Institute of European Affairs, (www.iiea.ie)

The National Platform (<http://www.nationalplatform.org/>)

government/Oireachtas (Parliament)/State Department sites:

Defence Forces (<http://www.military.ie>)

Garda Siochana (<http://www.garda.ie>)

Department of Foreign Affairs <http://www.irlgov.ie/iveagh>

Department of Defence (<http://www.gov.ie/defence>)

Department of Justice (<http://www.justice.ie/>)

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- Specific remarks on your country (e.g. on the relation between national foreign and security policy and CFSP, on costs/benefits of one country's membership in the EU with regard to CFSP/ESDP)

1. Basic Views of CFSP/ESDP in your country.

In general, the CFSP and ESDP have been viewed through the prism of 'neutrality' as understood and practised in Ireland. As a consequence, the Irish public debate on CFSP tends to take place within a somewhat defensive context, focusing – in most political quarters – upon the protection of Irish neutrality against the inroads of CFSP and ESDP, and with specific concerns about 'mutual defence', military spending and arms control, the relationship with NATO, 'enhanced co-operation', the impact of CFSP on Ireland and associated erosion of 'sovereignty'/independence.

The debate is further complicated by the domestically contested notion of 'neutrality', its historical practice, its disputed contemporary relevance in a globalised world, its current implications for Irish foreign, security and defence policy, its conflation with Irish independence and its use as a synonym for an ethical/pacific approach to international relations. In consequence, European defence has been a difficult subject for consecutive Irish governments. A central political concern has been to downplay the issue lest it foment popular suspicion that Irish neutrality was in any way threatened by EU membership or subsequent treaty change/evolution.. It is not at all clear if stronger political leadership would effect any change in this attitude.

This sensitivity is seen in Ireland as contrasting somewhat with the public debates in other member states and even in other 'non-aligned'/neutral member states. At both elite and public levels, security and defence debates in Ireland are seen as being 'different' to those in other countries. A 2003 survey (The Irish Times, May 17) conducted for the Irish Times found that a majority (58 percent) believes that Ireland should consider joining a EU common defence provided that the state can decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to join any particular military action. A further 10 percent support unconditional membership of such a common defence, while 31 percent opposed membership of any military alliance. Opposition to a EU common defence is highest among women and the 18-24 age cohort.

That opposition may be said in general to focus upon (a) armaments/sale of arms causing or contributing to conflicts – and the role of the larger Member States therein (b) involvement in EU defence being equated to a dependence on nuclear weapons (with special reference to France and the UK) (c) the alleged "resource wars" statement attributed to Delors and an associated view that the EU is the ambitious imperial-minded successor to the larger Member States and their own dark colonial

pasts (d) the "do you want your grandchildren to die for NATO?" argument with a special reference to the prospect of military conscription. However, several qualifications may be made to this general stereotype.

Ireland is not so unique

Firstly, Ireland is not as unique or anomalous as is sometimes assumed – either within or outside Ireland. In essence, Irish 'military neutrality' roughly approximates to the current policy of nonalignment/independent defence of Austria, Finland and Sweden. In terms of public debate, Ireland has much in common with Sweden, given the similar sensitivities about identity and the historical development of their neutrality policies, which are both somewhat identity-driven.

In policy terms, Ireland perhaps shares even more with Finland, especially given that Irish policy-makers view Finland as an excellent example of what is sometimes described as an 'active' neutral i.e. Finland is not isolationist but an engaged non-aligned actor and has no explicit self-interest in the arms industry. All EU non-aligned actors are seen by Irish elites as operating with a broad understanding of security and of their status as small states. Such an understanding implies a multilateral response to security threats, with CFSP and ESDP posited in that context.

Movement towards hard security in CFSP and ESDP provokes considerable domestic political controversy.

Europeanisation

Secondly, it is important to note that there has been a shift in Irish foreign, security and defence policy that accords somewhat to the concept of 'Europeanisation'. Particularly since the early 1990s, there has been a greater willingness on the part of Irish policy-makers to frame Irish foreign, security and defence policy within a broader European context. Numerous academic and public policy seminars have been organised on the topic of Ireland's role within the CFSP/ESDP that have generated substantial elite-level debate. However, there is a continued inability to communicate this deeper engagement with CFSP/ESDP to a broader mass of Irish citizens.

The Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat government has continued – as have all past governments –to reassure the electorate that nothing fundamentally has changed in Irish security and defence policy and that Ireland maintains its traditional policy of ‘military neutrality’. Strikingly, no political party has formally called for any fundamental reappraisal of that policy.