The Europeanisation of Irish Foreign Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

This article will argue that there has been a shift in the identity of Irish foreign policy and will pursue the implications of this for the study of European Union (EU) member states' foreign policy. Membership of the EU and Ireland's consequent participation in a system of foreign and security policy cooperation in the EC/EU have had an impact upon the content and conduct of Irish foreign policy.[1] The nature of this impact, however, is contested: while foreign policy managers conclude that Irish policy has been empowered by its participation in this system,[2] some foreign policy activists complain that this very system has constrained Irish policy options and that a principled, independent foreign policy voice is being lost.[3]

This article also aspires to contribute to an emerging field of study, the Europeanisation of national policy-making.[4] In the context of foreign policies, this field is theoretically based in the study of an emerging EU foreign policy regime and has a good conceptual and theoretical grounding.[5] It is, however, lacking in empirical case studies. The ways and means by which the foreign policy and foreign policy structures of a small western European state have been transformed by participation

[1]Paul Sharp, *Irish foreign policy and the European community: a study of the impact of interdependence on the foreign policy of a small state* (Dartmouth, 1990); Patrick Keatinge, *European security: Ireland's choices* (Dublin, 1996); Ben Tonra, 'Ireland in European Political Cooperation: the victory of substance over form', *Irish Political Studies* 9 (1994), 99–118; Ben Tonra, 'Dutch, Danish and Irish foreign policy in EPC/CFSP 1970–1996', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Dublin, Trinity College, 1996).

[2]Padraic MacKernan, 'Ireland and European Political Co-operation', *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 1 (4) (1984), 15–26.

[3]Joe Noonan and John Maguire, *Maastricht and neutrality* (Dublin, 1992).

[4]S. Andersen and K.A. Eliassen, *Making policy in Europe: the Europeification of national policy-making* (London, 1994); and ARENA, *Dynamics of Europe* (ARENA's Research Profile: http://www.arena.nfr.no/profile.shtml).

[5]Knud Erik Jorgensen, 'POCO: the diplomatic Republic of Europe', in Knud Erik Jorgensen (ed.), *Reflective approaches to European governance* (New York, 1997), 167–80.

in a broader European political system will be reviewed and the role of policy-makers in that transformation and the way in which their understanding of the process and their beliefs contribute to policy formation will be highlighted.

SOME THOUGHTS ON EUROPEANISATION

European integration poses something of a challenge to our understanding of the international system. In particular it leads us to ask what exactly is the nation-state and what constitutes a national policy.[6] This does not presume that our concepts must necessarily be altered. It simply means that we must be able to factor European integration into whatever conceptual framework or theoretical model we wish to apply to the social world. It is not sufficient—to abuse an early metaphor in the field of European studies—to ignore the bewildered elephant standing in our living room because it fails to match the wallpaper.

The change being considered in this article is that which has been wrought upon the foreign policies and foreign ministries of those states that are members of the EU. This impact may be disaggregated as (1) that deriving from initial European Community (EC) membership and (2) that resulting from a programme of foreign policy cooperation begun in 1970 with European Political Cooperation (EPC) and continued, from 1993, under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Overall, this process may usefully be dubbed Europeanisation.[7] It is important to establish what is meant by that term.

One must begin with the premise that CFSP is something more than a 'de minima' expression of lowest common denominator politics, although this is not an uncontested proposition.[8] However, if one argues that CFSP is a simple balance of power equation—in which the 'interests' of less powerful states are bought-off or marginalised, or where such states are forced to adapt themselves to the 'interests' of the larger players—then one cannot logically talk about any 'Europeanisation' of foreign policy.[9] Instead, one is looking to identify the power relationships between the larger member states, and one must cast any policies arising from CFSP as representing the settled will of a condominium of these states that does not threaten the core interests of any participating state. In looking at the foreign policy and foreign policy structures of a smaller member state, therefore, we should expect to see no significant shift or adaptation other than that entailed by a surrender of peripheral national foreign policy 'interests' (that have been traded or bought-off).

If one does suspect that CFSP is greater than the sum of its individual parts, one is faced with the necessity of seeking out evidence of an adaptation/evolution that can properly be described as 'Europeanisation'. In such a case, however, this evidence must lead to a conclusion about the nature of such Europeanisation, which in turn

[6]Stanley Hoffmann, 'Reflections on the nation state in Europe today', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21 (1), 21–37; S.S. Andersen and K.A. Eliassen, *op. cit.* in note 4.

[7]Tom Christensen, *Adapting to processes of Europeanisation: a study of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* ARENA Report no. 2/96.

[8]Alfred Pijpers, *The vicissitudes of European Political Co-operation: towards a realist interpretation of the EC's collective diplomacy* (Gravenhague, 1990); F. Scharpf, 'The joint decision-trap: lessons from German federalism and European integration', *Public Administration* 66, 239–78 .

[9]Hans Mouiritzen, 'The two Munsterknaben and the naughty boy: Sweden, Finland and Denmark in the process of European integration', *Cooperation and Conflict* 28 (4), 373–402.

may contribute to our understanding/explanation of European integration more broadly.

Complex interdependence

There are perhaps two primary ways by which Europeanisation may be understood and that relate to the fact that the nature of European integration remains contested.[10] The first model sees European integration largely as an ideal-type of 'complex interdependence'.[11] In this analytical model an institutional regime has been established by self-regarding and rational state actors through which national interests are pursued. The role of the state in this instance is to aggregate competing domestic interests, to establish a hierarchy of those interests and then—alongside its European partners—to set about maximising its gains through a complex system of collective bargaining. This process of negotiation, which in the European context is highly institutionalised, establishes the norms of the resulting regime. These in turn are fed back into the EU system for application and enforcement.

The crucial point, here, is that in this model there can be no 'actor' at the collective centre. Whatever common institutions are established (Commission, Court of Justice, Parliament etc.), they have no substantive or independent capacity to influence the direction or nature of the EU regime. They are simply the forum of inter-state bargaining and/or offer a modest regulative capacity to give effect to the norms agreed by the member states. As applied to European integration this approach has its supporters.[12] The effects that we would expect this kind of Europeanisation to have upon national foreign policies and ministries are significant. M.A. East has identified the likely general implications of complex interdependence for national foreign policies, and it is useful to examine these in a European context.[13]

1. Foreign ministries can expect to suffer from an overloaded agenda. As issues of high politics (peace and war) became less immediately germane (although no less important) to the European agenda, new welfare issues will make their presence felt. With a larger and heavier agenda, problems might then be expected to arise in establishing foreign policy priorities.
2. There may be a duplication or overlap of functions between foreign ministries and their domestic counterparts. As the place of welfare issues grows on the foreign affairs agenda, especially through the role of the General Affairs Council of the EU, there is the expectation that work programmes will overlap. In an EU context, therefore, it is to be expected that the General Affairs Council and the Technical Councils will be pursuing the same policy process agenda and that the potential for duplication will expand considerably between the foreign and domestic ministries.

[10]Gary Marks, L. Hooghe and K. Blank, 'European integration from the 1980s: state-centric versus multi-level governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (3), 341–78.

[11]Robert Keohane and J. Nye, *Power and interdependence* (New York, 1977).

[12]Geoffrey Garrett, 'International cooperation and institutional choice: the European Community's internal market', *International Organisation* 46, 533–60; Andrew Moravscik, 'Negotiating the Single European Act: national interests and conventional statecraft in the European Community', *International Organisation* 45, 19–56; Wolfgang Streeck, 'Neo-voluntarism: a new European social policy regime', in Gary Marks *et al.* (eds), *Governance in the emerging European Union* (London, 1996), 64–94.

[13]M.A. East, 'The organisational impact of interdependence on foreign policy-making: the case of Norway', in C.W. Kegley and P. McGowan (eds), *The political economy of foreign policy behaviour* (London, 1981).

3. Foreign ministries may lose relative influence within the administrative superstructure. As functions and tasks are duplicated, as the comparative expertise and professional mystique of the foreign ministry is lost, other institutional players will come to predominate. Those whose stars may be expected to rise are the finance, trade and large welfare ministries (including agriculture), which see themselves increasingly as running their own foreign policies.
4. The rise of the welfare and economic/finance departments may also be reflected within the foreign ministries. Here, in an effort to 'keep up' with the new foreign policy agenda, the foreign ministries will increasingly prioritise the economic over the political. The traditional domination of the diplomatic grades will weaken, while that of specialists and technicians (economists, lawyers, trade specialists etc.) will rise. This is also likely to be reflected in the shape of overseas missions, which will increasingly focus upon the delivery of services to economic actors (trade missions, market access, attraction of inward investment etc.), while the traditional diplomatic role of political reporting will be downgraded.
5. This broadening of the foreign ministries' agenda may in turn cause them to lose their policy niche or specialisation. As they struggle to mirror the domestic departments in fields such as trade, agriculture, social policy and economics, foreign ministries are likely to lose or to devalue their expertise in political analysis, diplomacy and area specialisation.
6. The transformed foreign ministry may face increasing challenges related to its coordinating capacity. The intervention of new domestic actors (such as prime ministers' offices, through their activities in the European Council), as well as the internationalisation of domestic ministries, will force the Department into greater and greater efforts at administrative coordination rather than policy specialisation. This also promises to worsen the capacity problems faced by the ministry. In an EU context the foreign ministry ultimately becomes a European 'post box' for the domestic departments. In sum, while European integration may have served to rescue the nation-state, it has in the process thrown the traditional foreign ministry overboard.[14]

Polity-forming

An alternative approach to the above model of Europeanisation is to argue that the key dynamic in integration and within EU decision-making is not just one of bargains and balancing expressed 'interests' but also one of evolving beliefs and norms or, in other words, polity-forming. Here, one would expect to see a process of transformation in which the self-regard and beliefs of the policy actors evolve over time and have an impact upon the construction of the 'interests' that they pursue. In some respects one might even talk in terms of the 'fusion' of national political systems around a European core.[15] In any event, policy actors are in the business of constructing, pursuing and implementing policy norms and collective values deriving from this evolving political system, which is itself developing a policy capacity that feeds back

[14]Alan Milward, *The European rescue of the nation-state* (London, 1992).

[15]Wolfgang Wessels, 'An ever closer fusion? A dynamic macropolitical view on integration processes', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 35 (2), 267–99.

directly into 'national' policy-making. Thus, as we consider the impact of Europeanisation upon national administrations—especially upon the foreign ministries that lie close to the heart of the EU system—we should expect to see impacts other than (or perhaps in addition to) those predicted by the model offered under complex interdependence.

Firstly, we should see evidence of new sets of norms derived from collective action at the EU level. Such norms would be expected to be formal (in so far as they will be written and codified), but more important norms may be informal. The power of such informal rules would underline the extent to which, even without explicit regulatory mechanisms, such norms were observed in both day-to-day practice and in conditions of crisis. The existence of formal and informal rules would in turn suggest that national foreign policy actors behave differently than heretofore, that they have internalised rules as part of the policy process itself and do not see them as an external constraint to the 'normal' national policy process.

Secondly, under this model of Europeanisation we would expect to find evidence that national 'interests' had undergone some evolution. Rather than such interests being seen as chips in an especially complex poker game, brought to the table by the individual players, they would be expected to change through participation in the game itself. Interests would therefore be developed/constructed endogenously (i.e. within) the collective policy process rather than being established exogenously (i.e. formulated within the domestic sphere and then brought to the negotiating table). This should be seen as something more than a 'socialisation effect' or *esprit de corps*, in which individual actors adapt their own behaviour to accommodate the expectations of their role. A better term might be 'structural socialisation', in which bureaucratic units and their occupants adapt themselves to incorporate the expectations and procedures of the collective policy-making system.

With the foregoing in mind, the next section of this article will assess the evidence for both types of 'Europeanisation' within the foreign policy and foreign policy structure of one member state, namely Ireland.

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EUROPE

The Department of Foreign Affairs (Department of External Affairs from 1922 to 1971) initially had a very limited profile within the early Irish administration, focused on its pursuit of what might be called constitutional diplomacy.[16] Until the state was declared a republic in 1948, the Department played a significant role in establishing its status within the British Commonwealth and the League of Nations. Thereafter, it was dedicated to the political and diplomatic struggle against the 'partition' of the island. Only with UN membership, in 1956, were the Department's horizons significantly broadened. There its staff played a key role in developing a distinctive Irish profile through the advocacy of disarmament, support for peacekeeping missions and votes for de-colonisation motions in the General Assembly. The Department's activism at the UN served, in part, to define its role as the agent for high global politics, leaving matters such as regional trade and economics to other

[16]Patrick Keatinge, 'The formative years of the Irish diplomatic service', in *Éire Ireland* 6 (3), 57–71.

departments, especially Finance, and Industry and Commerce.[17] The Department remained distant from the mainstream of Irish government administration.

In the post-war period Irish policy-makers had only a very limited engagement in regional European politics.[18] The Irish government had sided with the UK and the Scandinavian governments in opposing a federalist orientation to the Council of Europe in 1948/9.[19] It had rejected membership of NATO in 1949. It did not pursue membership of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952, or of the EEC in 1957.[20] When it became clear that the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) would not address agricultural trade, membership of that organisation was ruled out. Only after a fundamental reorientation of national economic policy in 1958, did the then taoiseach, Seán Lemass, press forward a strategy that led in 1961 (alongside the UK) to Ireland's first membership application to the EC.

The Department led the accession negotiations for EC entry in 1970–2, despite the fact that the earliest focus on Irish EC membership in 1961 had come from the ministers and officials of the Departments of Finance, of Agriculture and—with considerably greater scepticism—of Industry and Commerce.[21] With EC membership, the Department of Foreign Affairs (as it was by then named) was assigned the central coordinating role *vis-à-vis* the Community. In 1973 the European Communities Division was established from what had been the Economic Section, with the explicit function of coordinating national policy.

The self-perceived role of the Department today in European matters is that of strategist. Senior Department officials acknowledge that domestic departments such as Finance and Agriculture pursue—as they always have done—their own clearly defined external agenda. In the context of the EU the latitude for domestic departments to set their own agenda through the Technical Councils is also acknowledged to be considerable. These policy-makers draw a distinction, however, between horizontal and vertical policy dossiers. Where a department, such as Finance, has an unambiguous responsibility for a policy area, the voice of the Department of Foreign Affairs is marshalled within the standard system of interdepartmental coordination. Where, however, the implications of a policy dossier are evident across a broad range of departmental interests, Foreign Affairs tends to function more as coach or referee, seeking to focus varying departmental interests and priorities into a coherent 'national' strategy. They see their comparative advantage as an ability to keep an eye on the 'larger picture' of Irish interests in the Union. As a result largely of this, its own officials see the Department as the second most important department of state after Finance.

It is difficult if not impossible to disentangle the general agenda of the Department from what might be seen as its European vocation. Its overall role is described in government publications as being that of the vindication of Ireland's international

[17]J.M. Skelly, *Irish diplomacy at the United Nations 1945–1965: national interests and the international order* (Dublin, 1997).

[18]Patrick Keatinge, *A singular stance: Irish neutrality in the 1980s* (Dublin, 1983), 138.

[19]Miriam Hederman-O'Brien, *The road to Europe: Irish attitudes 1948–1961* (Dublin, 1983).

[20]Ian McCabe, *A diplomatic history of Ireland 1948–1949: the Republic, the Commonwealth and NATO* (Dublin, 1991); D. Maher, *The tortuous path: the course of Ireland's entry to the EEC, 1948–1973* (Dublin, 1986).

[21]Gary Murphy, 'The Irish EEC application', in Nick Rees and Ben Tonra (eds), *Aspects of Europe: Proceedings of the European Studies Postgraduate Research Conference* (Dublin, 1997), 1–12.

economic, political and cultural interests.[22] The main issue areas with which the Department sees itself dealing are Northern Ireland, Irish prosperity in a global economy, international peace and security through the UN and assistance to the developing world. However, Irish membership of the EC is understood to have been a crucial turning point in Ireland's foreign policy and one that—for key policy-makers—has had implications for all Irish foreign policy concerns and interests.

While European integration was never seen as defining a significant part of the solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland, it was explicitly seen as capable of contributing to such a solution. Membership of the EC, it was argued, would eliminate North/South economic borders and promote greater prosperity and stability.[23] Since 1995 the EU's financial contribution to cross-border and inter-community projects in Northern Ireland is explicitly presented as a contribution to the peace process.[24]

More broadly, however, membership was seen as redefining Irish foreign policy—and not just in the sphere of the international economy, where an EC competence was clear. In a 1978 parliamentary debate the then minister for foreign affairs insisted that 'EEC membership is not simply another area of activity in our foreign relations...[it is] a new and open ended commitment to construct something wholly new'.[25] European Political Cooperation was also seen as defining the context within which Ireland related to the rest of the world. Today, this European dimension permeates every field of Irish foreign policy. It is the 'central framework within which we pursue our foreign policy objectives'.[26] As was noted by Padraic MacKernan, the then Irish ambassador to Washington, 'Ireland's accession to the European Community was probably the most important and far-reaching development in our foreign policy since independence'.[27] Together with the conflict in Northern Ireland, membership of the EC was one of the two factors that, according to the minister for foreign affairs, 'affect the national [interest] as a whole and change the emphasis which must be placed on the main aspects of foreign policy for the future'.[28]

Within the EU the goal of the Department of Foreign Affairs is the effective representation of what is deemed by the government to be the 'national interest'.[29] Its function is to ensure coordination in the Irish approach and to pre-empt the creation of contradictory or cross-cutting demands being made of the Union institutions or from Ireland's EU partners. The effective execution of the Department's EU role is also seen as a means of acquiring political capital within the Union. Ireland has held the presidency of the Council of Ministers on five occasions since its accession in 1973—most recently in the second half of 1996. Through the Department's central role in organising the presidency its officials see themselves as establishing credibility and goodwill, which, almost as a form of political currency, might be deposited for later expenditure towards policy goals.

[22]Government of Ireland, *Challenges and opportunities abroad: White Paper on foreign policy* (Dublin, 1996).

[23]*Ibid.*

[24]*Ibid.*

[25]*Dáil Debates*, vol. 306, col. 352, 4 May 1978, 352.

[26]Government of Ireland, *Pursuing Ireland's external interests: strategy statement of the Department of Foreign Affairs* (Dublin, 1997), 8.

[27]MacKernan, *op. cit.* in note 2, 177.

[28]*Dáil Debates*, vol. 265, col. 741, 9 May 1973, 741.

[29]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 22, 58.

The structural organisation of the Department of Foreign Affairs is based firmly in the Westminster tradition inherited by the state at its formation. The individual holding political responsibility for all actions of the Department is the minister for foreign affairs, who may be assisted by one or more ministers of state. At the head of the Department's permanent administrative and policy structure is the secretary-general of the Department. There are eight divisions within the Department, usually headed by an assistant secretary (currently, the Anglo-Irish Division is headed by an official at the grade of second secretary).

The staff of the Department comprises general, diplomatic and specialist grades. The focus of the diplomatic service is the representation of Ireland overseas. Ireland's diplomatic network is both small and unevenly distributed. While Ireland maintains formal diplomatic relations with 95 countries, there are only 42 Irish embassies overseas, with four multilateral missions (EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UN New York and UN Geneva). There are seven Irish consulates (including Cardiff and Edinburgh established in 1998) and a network of 65 honorary consuls. Diplomatic relations with 54 states are conducted on the basis of non-resident, secondary accreditation. About two-thirds of overseas missions are concentrated in North America and Europe. Asia, Africa and Latin America together have fewer than twenty resident missions, with just two Irish embassies situated in Latin America. Even in Europe there have been remarkable gaps—the announcement of a resident embassy in Turkey was made only in June 1998. In addition, all missions are relatively small: over half comprise just one or two diplomats, and only nine Irish missions overseas boast more than four resident diplomats. In total, the Irish foreign service is about half the size of comparable EU partners such as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece or Portugal.[30]

Ireland's overseas profile is shared between a number of other government departments and state agencies. The Department of Finance, for example, plays a crucial role in international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is, through its minister, responsible to the Oireachtas for national agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, which *inter alia* is responsible for trade promotion. Its precursor took over most international trade functions from the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and there is now an established system for the secondment of officials from Foreign Affairs to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The latter is also responsible for IDA Ireland (which is the lead agency for the attraction of inward foreign investment) and the issuance of trade licences for the export of 'dual use' (civilian and military) goods. The Department of Justice is responsible for issues related to immigration and visas, in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Department of Agriculture and Food holds responsibility for agencies such as Bord Bia (Irish Food Board) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (Irish Sea Fisheries Board), which, among other duties, promote the sale of these Irish products overseas.

With such a profusion of state agencies and departments sharing some responsibility for Ireland's perceived overseas interests, it is not surprising that efforts to coordinate policy are at times problematic. Traditionally, a lack of coherence has been perceived

[30]*Ibid.*

in the representation of the totality of Irish interests. This is especially so in the linkages between Ireland's political interests (seen as primarily a responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs) and its economic interests, which, as we have seen, rest with a number of state departments and executive agencies. Efforts to sharpen the definition and pursuit of Irish political interests have been matched by an attempt to improve the linkage between these and economic interests.

One significant effort in this regard is the 'Ireland House' concept. Mooted in the early 1990s, the idea was to provide, at a single identifiable location, a base for all Irish interests in major international centres. Since 1993 a number of such centres have been formally established and in some instances the deputy heads of mission at embassies are also officials of the state agencies responsible for trade promotion. Initially, the Ireland House concept was seen largely in terms of cost savings. The Department of Foreign Affairs and state agencies such as IDA Ireland and Bord Fáilte Éireann (Irish Tourism Board) would be able to share staff and infrastructural costs at a net saving to the Irish exchequer. In practice this has not always proved to be the case. In New York, for example, a prestigious location on Park Avenue certainly augments the status of the consulate there, but perhaps at a price to other state agencies, which might have found more cost-effective accommodation in other parts of the city. Ireland House was also advocated, however, as a means whereby the activities of state agencies might be better coordinated and directed. This can only be determined on a case-by-case basis. In Germany, for example, while the political centre has moved from Bonn to Berlin, financial and industrial centres such as Frankfurt and Düsseldorf remain the prime locations for key Irish state agencies.

In addition to this physical coordination, there is also an effort made towards policy coordination. Ambassadors in Ireland's nine largest overseas markets chair coordination committees that bring together local representatives of those agencies involved in economic promotion. The interdepartmental Foreign Earnings Committee (FEC) then reviews their efforts in Dublin. This committee comprises senior officials of government departments and state agencies most directly involved in the promotion of foreign earnings and inward investment. Interestingly, while the ambassadors chair the overseas coordination committees, it is a junior minister at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment who chairs meetings of the FEC in Dublin. Incidentally, the recommendation of this committee is important in the decision-making process leading to the opening of new embassies.

From time to time, a minister for state has assisted the minister for foreign affairs on European issues. In addition, such junior ministers have also been assigned to the Department of the Taoiseach with specific European responsibilities. In advance of and during the 1996 Irish presidency of the Council of Ministers, for example, a junior minister was assigned to both departments in order to coordinate the government's preparations for the presidency. The key role of the Department of the Taoiseach is also underscored at a more senior level, where the taoiseach chairs the Ministers and Secretaries Group (MSG). This is the central, Cabinet-level body responsible for coordinating national policy in the EU. While the precise membership of the group varies over time and there appears to be no established schedule to the frequency of its meetings, it assembles the ministers and most senior officials of all government departments with a major European interest.

Within the Department of Foreign Affairs itself, the Economic Division takes lead responsibility for what might be called, under the Maastricht Treat, first-pillar issues.

That division is then subdivided into sections handling Community institutions, treaty reform, internal policies and external relations. The Political Division of the Department is then responsible for all matters arising under the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty). That division also monitors and manages Ireland's broader international interests through a system of geographic desks and sections covering the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, security and disarmament issues, and human rights.

While the Economic Division and the Political Division are the leading Departmental units managing the EU agenda, they are by no means the only institutional players. As suggested above, the Department of the Taoiseach plays an important role, particularly in relation to its European Council responsibilities: a small staff within that department, headed by an assistant secretary, covers EU-related issues for the taoiseach in close cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs. Other departments too play a large role in the European agenda. Through the various technical councils, domestic ministries formulate and pursue policy within the Union. Pre-eminent among these is the Department of Finance through its role in the Ecofin Council. *Ad hoc* interdepartmental committees may also contribute to the management of European affairs. An interdepartmental committee on drug abuse played a significant role in defining Irish policy at the EU level towards measures designed to tackle the trafficking in illicit narcotics. In sum, the EU 'has involved a range of domestic Departments, at ministerial and official level, in the decision-making process at Brussels. At the same time membership has involved the Department of Foreign Affairs in the day-to-day operations of domestic Departments to an unprecedented extent'.[31]

One key structure seeking to ensure coordination of national policy across government departments within the Union is the Irish Permanent Representation (PermRep) in Brussels. Most government departments second staff to this mission, which is managed and directed by the Department of Foreign Affairs. It is these officials who act as the eyes and ears of their home departments and who play a crucial role in the day-to-day management of interdepartmental interests. The domestic departments place a high value on their representation in the PermRep and on the role that the Department of Foreign Affairs plays in coordinating and supporting the work of that mission.This value can be measured by the fact that during the most recent Irish presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Department of Justice for the first time seconded a total of five officials to the PermRep to work on third-pillar issues; at the conclusion of the presidency it repatriated just one of those individuals.

REFORM AND ADAPTATION TO EUROPE

The Department of Foreign Affairs' adaptation to its increased range of responsibilities arising from membership of the EC/EU has been both structural and substantive, entailing increases in staffing and in Ireland's overseas representation, and changes to its organisation.[32] In his budgetary estimate speech of 1974 the then minister for

[31]MacKernan, *op. cit.* in note 2, 178.

[32]Brigid Laffan, 'Irish foreign policy', in David Coombes (ed.), *Ireland and the European Communities: ten years of membership* (Dublin, 1983); Patrick Keatinge, 'The Europeanisation of Irish foreign policy', in P.J. Drudy and Dermot McAleese (eds), *Ireland and the European Community*, Irish Studies 3 (Cambridge, 1984), 33–56.

foreign affairs, Dr Garret FitzGerald, noted that an increase in diplomatic staff from 143 to 190 individuals was a direct consequence of additional responsibilities arising from EC membership. In 1973 the number of overseas missions was just twenty. New residential diplomatic missions were established in Moscow (1973), Tokyo (1973), Luxembourg (1973), Lebanon (1974), Egypt (1974) and Austria (1974)—these were justified on the basis of Ireland's European duties in both the Community sphere and through EPC. This expansion also required some imaginative measures to be taken. For the first time, multiple accreditation was employed on a broad scale so as to increase the reach of a limited diplomatic infrastructure. Diplomatic relations were therefore established between 1973 and 1975 with thirteen states in the Middle East, Asia, North Africa and Eastern Europe on this non-residential basis. Exceptional recruitment measures were also employed. A number of secretaries from other government departments were recruited into the Department of Foreign Affairs, while the Irish language requirement for appointment to posts within the diplomatic service was relaxed.

In 1986 an effort was made to divide the Department of Foreign Affairs into two ministries as part of a general reshuffle of Cabinet responsibilities. A new Department of European Affairs, at full cabinet rank, was thus proposed. In discussions with the then taoiseach, however, the minister-designate of this new department raised a number of questions about the precise division of labour between the two departments. The scope for overlap and duplication of effort was deemed by her to be considerable.[33] In the event, political difficulties within the coalition government forced a rethink and the proposal was dropped. Department officials today insist that any such proposal would be misguided. They argue that the Department's coordination of EU policy offers unique synergies that would be lost in any attempt to 'ring-fence' European policy in another department. Concern is also expressed at the impact such a development would have on the career structures of the diplomatic service.

However, an echo of this initiative emerged in the formation of the June 1997 coalition government. In the first declaration of his Cabinet appointments, the taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, indicated that the minister for defence would also hold a portfolio for European affairs. This, it was originally suggested, would involve that minister operating 'under the direction of the minister for foreign affairs' and would have entailed the defence minister being given a part-time office at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Following challenges from opposition leaders, who questioned the legality and constitutionality of placing one Cabinet member under the direction of another, the proposal was dropped. Instead, it was announced, the defence minister would, at the request of the taoiseach, deputise for the minister for foreign affairs.[34]

THE IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION

Just after Ireland joined the European Communities in 1973 a new minister for foreign affairs convened the first ever conference of all of Ireland's heads of mission from its embassies worldwide. The avowed purpose was to study the implications of this new European context for the conduct and principles of Irish foreign policy.

[33]Gemma Hussey, *At the cutting edge: Cabinet diaries 1982–1987* (Dublin,1984).
[34]*Irish Times*, 27 and 28 June 1997.

Nearly 25 years later the minister for foreign affairs reflected upon that impact by noting that membership of the EU 'has become the biggest single factor in our international relations and is crucial to our economic development...[it] also enhances our ability to exert an influence on the wider international stage'.[35] For the Department of Foreign Affairs this broader and deeper level of responsibility has not occurred without some difficulty. As the current secretary-general of the Department put it several years ago: 'as the scope of what constitutes foreign policy has broadened, and the range of players has grown correspondingly, the task of giving coherence and direction to the foreign policy process is increasingly challenging'.[36]

In its own mission statement the function of the Department of Foreign Affairs in its EU role is, firstly, to advise and to support the minister and the ministers of state in their EU capacity.[37] Secondly, the Department sees itself as supporting the taoiseach in tasks related to the EU agenda, in particular the European Council. Thirdly, the Department's aim is to cooperate with other departments in elaborating a coherent approach to the evaluation and pursuit of Ireland's national interests within the EU. Finally, the Department seeks greater public understanding of developments in the EU and of their importance to Ireland.

From the beginning of Ireland's membership of the EC, European Political Cooperation was seen as a corollary of membership and was understood to be a political rather than a legal commitment. Its relationship with the broader EC agenda was clearly understood: 'if the Irish contribution to foreign policy consultation...is a credible and substantive one, this can enhance our credibility when we advance specific solutions or advocate particular policies with regard to issues arising in the Community framework. It is logical to suggest that the reverse would also apply.'[38]

A number of diplomatic consequences arose. The Department had to respond to a greater range and depth of foreign policy issues than heretofore: one minister for foreign affairs noted in 1973 that 'as a member of the European Communities we must now concern ourselves more closely than at any time in the past with policy issues in many parts of the world, issues upon which we are called on month by month to express a view.'[39]

Moreover, the clear conviction of analysts of, and practitioners in, Irish foreign policy is that EPC and CFSP have improved the effectiveness, broadened the range and increased the capacity of Irish diplomacy.[40] The greater quantity and quality of information available, the unparalleled access to international decision-makers, significant administrative expansion and restructuring, and a positive and dynamic diplomatic culture have all been identified as resulting from participation in this process.

Membership of the EU has undoubtedly expanded the horizons of Irish diplomats. Their involvement in global issues today is wider and deeper than at any time in the history of Irish diplomacy. Through EU foreign policy working groups and the CFSP Secretariat, through presidency activities, through the Committee of Permanent

[35]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 26, 3.
[36]MacKernan, *op. cit.* in note 2, 178.
[37]*Ibid.*
[38]*Ibid.*, 181.
[39]*Dáil Debates*, vol. 265, col. 748, 9 May 1973, 748.
[40]Ben Tonra, Ireland in European Political Cooperation: the victory of substance over form', *Irish Political Studies* 9, 99–118.

Representatives (COREPER), and in support of the General Affairs Council, Irish diplomats now engage with their European colleagues across the entire range of global issues. In the eyes of Irish foreign policy managers, this has more than offset the need to devote attention and resources to economic welfare issues and inter-departmental coordination on the EC agenda. Moreover, even within the Economic Division, the arts of diplomacy are seen to be highly valued in Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) treaty negotiations and the management of EU external relations.

The socialisation of Irish diplomats into a European diplomatic regime is also evident. This is most obvious at the level of political director and European correspondent but also at official level through the many EU foreign policy working groups (which resulted from the merger of previously distinct CFSP and External Relations working groups). The commitment to something like a 'European foreign policy' is identifiable. While some officials will speak of the Union as being an amplifier for 'national' policy, others—especially younger diplomats—tend to speak more in terms of the credibility and efficacy of the collective European policy. Indeed, there is sometimes a degree of frustration expressed towards aspects of the national foreign policy tradition that are seen to be anachronistic or unhelpful towards the establishment of a credible and effective European policy. This, however, is placed firmly in a context defined as one where such a common policy would have 'greater impact in reflecting Irish foreign policy values' and 'concerns'.

This internalisation of norms can sometimes be made explicit. Department officials, for example, have said that there is a 'habit of thinking in terms of [an EU] consensus'. Another, echoing Simon Nuttall's identification of a 'consultation reflex' within EPC, notes that 'where there is ever any new foreign policy initiative in the making, the first reflex is European. The question is now "what will our European partners say—what is the opinion in Europe".'[41] The more senior officials tend to be guarded in their assessment as to how far this process has changed the context of national policy-making. Several, however, have insisted that this EU context is what gives meaning, substance and significance to Irish foreign policy.

What is popularly described as Irish 'neutrality' has been, and continues to be, a powerful touchstone in the Irish body politic. Its genesis as government policy (first becoming operational at the outbreak of the 1939–45 war) has since been transformed by a contemporary mythology and has been folded firmly within a political discourse related to Irish independence, identity and sovereignty. As a result, it is popularly viewed as a key indicator of Ireland's distinctiveness and of what it means to be Irish.

Some commentators have characterised Irish neutrality as being a 'significant stumbling block to European security co-operation'.[42] It is perhaps more correct to say that Irish neutrality has been successfully camouflaged in the jungle that surrounds the debate on competing Atlantic and Continent-centred visions of European security. This position is now under closer scrutiny as the undergrowth in that debate has been cleared by decisions taken in consecutive EU, WEU and NATO summits. Crucially, this scrutiny has not lessened with the accession of other small European states with an even more assertive and more widely acknowledged tradition of neutrality.

[41]Simon Nuttall, *European Political Cooperation* (Oxford, 1992); Ben Tonra, 'The impact of political cooperation', in Knud Erik Jorgensen (ed.), *Reflective approaches to European governance* (New York, 1997).

[42]This argument is made by a former senior policy-maker in Tonra, *op. cit.* in note 41,188.

In March 1996 the first comprehensive White Paper on Irish foreign policy was published. This document was originally presented as the means by which the Irish people would take ownership of 'their' foreign policy.[43] The White Paper witnessed a restatement of Ireland's commitment to its military neutrality and an assurance from that government that this policy would change only following a consultative referendum – a position that had been formally endorsed by all major political party leaders on the eve of the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. The White Paper did, however, open the door towards establishing a framework within which an Irish contribution might be made to a broader European security policy through the so-called 'Petersberg Tasks' of the WEU.[44]

The Amsterdam Treaty has given effect to this possibility.[45] However, its provisions on integrating the Petersberg Tasks and employing the WEU as the EU's security agent remain controversial. In referenda on Irish ratification of EU treaty change (SEA, Maastricht and Amsterdam) the provisions on foreign, security and later defence policy have been the focus of critical comment and significant political opposition. While to date this ratification process has not been seriously threatened by such opposition, it is an area of tension and sensitivity for consecutive Irish governments. In part response to this, the government set limited parameters to its participation in Petersberg-type operations.[46] Nonetheless, the trajectory of EU foreign and security policy development is clearly putting traditional core foreign policy interests and preferred security/defence structures under pressure.

Within the more limited parameters of CFSP the national veto remains a vital safeguard in the eyes of many Irish foreign policy managers, even as they identify its negative implications for a strong collective policy. It is also clear that the dividing line between compromise and confrontation in CFSP remains some definition of perceived 'national interest'. It is equally clear, however, that as foreign policy coordination has evolved, the threshold of that 'go-it-alone' position has been pushed higher and higher. It is not yet clear to what extent the provision for a 'constructive abstention' under the Amsterdam Treaty will affect the decision-making dynamic within CFSP.

Irish officials note the potential impact of enlargement on what they see to be, at base, an intergovernmental decision-making procedure in CFSP. Before the 1995 enlargement, one Irish diplomat noted: 'With twelve member states, you can still create a sort of family atmosphere—when there aren't a lot of knives flashing around—but the bigger the table gets, the more difficult that becomes.'[47] It is acknowledged that consensus will be more difficult to achieve with enlargement. Thus, a key indicator of Europeanisation in this context is the extent to which a strong and effective European foreign and security policy emerges as an Irish foreign policy objective in its own right. As noted above, at least some younger Irish diplomats are thinking in these terms.

[43]Article by Dick Spring launching new foreign policy White Paper, *Irish Times*, 27 March 1996.

[44]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 22, 117–49; and Patrick Keatinge, *European security: Ireland's choices* (Dublin, 1996).

[45]Patrick Keatinge, 'Security and defence', in Ben Tonra (ed.), *Amsterdam: what the treaty means* (Dublin, 1997), 107–118.

[46]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 22, 140.

[47]Tonra, *op. cit.* in note 1, 116.

The physical changes wrought in the Department of Foreign Affairs as a result of EU membership have been reviewed above. Both the presidency of the Council of Ministers and the responsibilities associated with EPC were initially linked with more than doubling the number of Irish overseas missions (from twenty in 1973 to 51 in 1998), as well as organisational adaptation within the Department. The impact on individual embassies has also been significant, and has been paralleled by a reassessment of the role of Irish embassies.

The Ireland House concept underlines the new role and function that Irish embassies are destined to play in the future. The economic focus of these missions, however, should not be associated with any diminution in their avowed political function. Indeed, in at least one important respect that political function is augmented. Overseas missions may now have an important role in pursuing perceived Irish interests within the Union. As the White Paper on Irish foreign policy puts it: 'Embassies now have an important additional function in influencing the relationship between their host country and the European Union; ensuring that the host country's policies towards the European Union are as favourable as possible to Irish interests and that the [host] country is familiar with and responsive to Irish policies across the whole spectrum of activities covered by the European Union'.[48]

In this last respect, scope is also left open for some level of cooperation with EU partners and institutions. On a value-for-money basis, flexibility and innovation are invoked as a basis for the possible co-location of Irish missions with those of EU partners. According to the White Paper this is an option that 'will be fully explored' in further consideration of diplomatic expansion.[49] There has also been discussion of the possibility of co-location with European Commission delegations overseas where Ireland is without direct diplomatic representation. The government also seeks to strengthen treaty provisions that provide for consular protection being extended to Irish citizens by the embassies of EU partners in countries where Ireland is unrepresented. The government is 'actively participating in moves to give clearer and more legally binding expression to such cooperation...to include matters such as the emergency evacuation of EU nationals and the welfare of abducted minors and of people with disability'.[50]

CONCLUSION

How does the foregoing analysis square with our contending models? Firstly, it would appear that, in the Irish case at least, there is an identifiable process of Europeanisation under way—that European cooperation is indeed greater than the sum of its individual parts. Ireland's membership of the EU and its consequent participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (and its predecessor EPC) has not entailed the abandonment of an Irish foreign policy, the wasting away or marginalisation of the Department of Foreign Affairs or—at least through the eyes of foreign policy managers—a diminution in Ireland's international effectiveness as an actor. If these conclusions are valid then they challenge the

[48]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 26, 324.
[49]Government of Ireland, *op. cit.* in note 22, 325.
[50]*Ibid.*, 288.

'balance of power' thesis, which would have assumed the marginalisation of Ireland within the EU's emerging 'foreign policy'.

The assessment of the Irish case in relation to the first model of Europeanisation is nuanced. The Department of Foreign Affairs does indeed have a much broader agenda than it did before EC membership and much of that enlarged agenda relates to the economic and welfare issues associated with EC/EU membership. The available evidence suggests, however, that this enlarged agenda has not led to any appreciable difficulties in setting policy priorities. The Department of Foreign Affairs has not sought to monopolise EC/EU issues unto itself, is anxious to portray itself as a team player, and has been successful in offering itself as a resource and coordinator. The determination of senior officials to defend their European role is also significant. In that connection there does not seem to be any significant duplication or overlap of functions between the Department and its domestic partners. There appears to be a clear division of labour between vertical and horizontal policy dossiers and a coherent, if somewhat *ad hoc*, managerial framework for EU policy coordination to which the Department contributes but for which it is not solely responsible.

The Department, far from losing relative influence within the administrative superstructure, has in fact grown in stature and responsibility. The domestic departments have not usurped Departmental policy areas but have instead augmented their own capacity through the EC/EU, while the Department itself has taken on a modest coordinating role and specialised further in its own area of comparative advantage. This latter development, it must be said, is largely thanks to the development of EPC/CFSP, which has offered the Department a means by which its own unique professional capacities could be brought to bear within an EC/EU-centred policy framework.

In part because of the development of CFSP, the Department's comparative advantages remain a point of strength. There has been no significant shift towards functional specialisation, although the Department of Foreign Affairs has had to modify the structure of some of its overseas missions to accommodate personnel from other departments and state agencies. Again, it contributes to policy formation in the areas of trade, export promotion and foreign direct investment but it does so from a base of its own policy specialisation.

The importance of political analysis, diplomacy and area specialisation to the work of the Department remains a priority and remains the focus of demands for additional resources. No changes have occurred in recruitment strategies, in diplomatic grade structures or promotional priorities that would appear to contradict this conclusion.

The intervention of new domestic actors (such as the Department of the Taoiseach through the European Council), and the Europeanisation of domestic ministries, has indeed forced the Department into greater efforts at administrative coordination. This has put pressure upon the Department's staff and administrative capacity, but it is not clear that it has occurred at the expense of policy specialisation.

In sum, the conclusion to be drawn from this study of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and the impact of European integration is that the Department has been strengthened and empowered through its European involvement. European integration has been the key factor in the physical growth and increased substantive reach. The Europeanisation of domestic ministries has not occurred at the expense

of the Department but in parallel with the Department's own growth. In part, this may be due to the peculiarly limited political role that the Department had before joining the EC. In a sense, EC membership provided a core justification for the Department's growth and development. In this respect, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs may be exceptional when compared with other small EU member states that had a more developed diplomatic infrastructure on entry.

Employing the alternative model of Europeanisation there is a somewhat greater match between the expectations and the analysis set out above. There does appear to be evidence of new norms being established from the collective policy-making process of CFSP. The internalisation of these norms is also apparent—in so far as CFSP is seen as part and parcel of the Irish foreign policy process rather than as an external constraint. At the same time there is also evidence that some Irish diplomats continue to see CFSP as an arena through which national interests are bargained. Confidence in the ability of the veto to protect these national interests also underlines the strength of this perspective.

What is striking is the extent to which relatively weak formal rules may be set against apparently stronger informal norms —of consultation and the pursuit of consensus. The acid test here (and on this point the conclusion of this study is inconclusive) is the extent to which the strength and efficacy of CFSP have become Irish foreign policy objectives in their own right. Were that to be the case, in this instance or in other studies, then the argument about the transformatory power of EU membership would be very strong indeed.

There is stronger evidence, however, to indicate that longstanding national 'interests' are under some transformatory pressure. In the Irish context this pressure is most clearly evident in the debate surrounding neutrality. While it is problematic to attempt to disaggregate the 'European effect' from broader systemic or regional influences, it is clear that in the national context the debate does surround the impact of CFSP and EU reform as the forge within which the traditional model of Irish neutrality is being challenged. More broadly, it is clear that the agenda of Irish foreign policy is, to a very large extent, set by that of CFSP. This is a point that seems to be unremarkable for Irish policy-makers close to the heart of the policy process.

It would appear from the foregoing that a concept, or model, of Europeanisation based upon shifts in identity and in the belief structures of state actors possesses comparatively greater explanatory power in the case study of Irish foreign policy and the development of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. Clearly, that explanatory power must be tested and re-tested not only in the instance of Ireland's EC/EU membership and that of other smaller EU member states but also against a broader cross section of member states.