

Canada - Europe
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Europe

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary
Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of
Europe and its Parliamentary Mission to Ireland, the country
that will next hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of
the European Union**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Strasbourg, France and Dublin, Ireland
October 1 to 10, 2012**

Report

Introduction

From 1 to 5 October, 2012, a delegation of five parliamentarians from the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association (CEPA) travelled to Strasbourg, France to participate in the Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The delegation was led by Mr. David Tilson, Member of Parliament (M.P.) and President of CEPA; and included Mr. Scott Simms M.P.; the Honourable David Tkachuk, Senator; the Honourable Joan Fraser, Senator; and Ms. Joyce Bateman, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Association Secretaries Mr. Philippe Méla and Mr. Maxime Ricard and by Association Advisor, Ms. Karin Phillips.

The delegation then travelled to Dublin, Ireland from 5 to 10 October, 2012 to participate in meetings related to Ireland's upcoming term as rotating President of the Council of the European Union beginning in January 2013. In Ireland, Ms. Annick Papillion, M.P. also joined the delegation. However, Senator Tkachuk was unable to participate in the mission to Ireland. In addition, the delegation was hosted in Ireland by His Excellency Loyola Hearn, Canada's Ambassador to Ireland, who also accompanied the delegation to some of its meetings, along with Ms. Jackie Ellis, General Relations Officer from the Embassy of Canada to Ireland.

Prior to departure, the delegation was briefed by officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Natural Resources Canada, Department of Finance Canada and Elections Canada. In addition, they met with His Excellency Ray Basset, Ireland's Ambassador to Canada.

This report provides an overview of the delegation's participation in the Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as meetings attended in Dublin, Ireland focussing on the priorities of the country's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU.

FOURTH PART OF THE 2012 ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A. Overview of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which aims to:¹

- protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- find common solutions to the challenges facing European society: such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, bioethics and cloning,

¹ Council of Europe, "Our objectives," <http://www.coe.int/aboutCoe/index.asp?page=nosObjectifs&l=en>

terrorism, trafficking in human beings, organised crime and corruption, cybercrime, violence against children; and

- consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe has now reached a membership of 47 countries from the Azores to Azerbaijan, and from Iceland to Cyprus, with Montenegro joining as its newest member in May 2007.² The Council's main objective is to promote and defend democratic development and human rights, and to hold member governments accountable for their performance in these areas. However, it is also very active in fostering international cooperation and policy coordination in a number of other areas, including legal cooperation, education, culture, heritage, environmental protection, health care, and social cohesion. The Council of Europe is responsible for the development of more than 200 European treaties or conventions, many of which are open to non-member states, in policy areas such as human rights, the fight against organized crime, the prevention of torture, data protection and cultural co-operation.³

The Council's main institutions are the Committee of Ministers (its decision making body, composed of member states' foreign ministers or their deputies), the Parliamentary Assembly, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.⁴

The Parliamentary Assembly consists of 636 members (318 representatives and 318 substitutes), who are elected or appointed by the national parliaments of the 47 Council of Europe member states from among their members.⁵ The parliaments of Canada, Israel and Mexico currently hold observer status with PACE.

The Assembly elects the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council's Commissioner for Human Rights.⁶ It is consulted on all new international treaties drafted by the Council, holds the Council and member governments accountable, engages in studies on a range of issues of common interest to Europeans and provides a common forum for debate for national parliamentarians. The Assembly has played an important role in the process of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe and actively monitors developments in member countries, including national elections. It meets four times a year in Strasbourg, with committee meetings taking place more frequently. Council and Assembly decisions and debates are often reported widely in the European media.

The Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly bring together policy and decision-makers from a range of politically, culturally, and geographically diverse countries.⁷ Together, the Council and Assembly provide the primary forum for the

² Council of Europe, "The Session: The Information Guide for Plenary Sessions of PACE, 1-5 October, 2012" <http://assembly.coe.int/Sessions/2012/SessionMag/2012004TheSession.pdf>

³ For a complete list of the Council of Europe's treaties, see: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?CM=8&CL=ENG>

⁴ Council of Europe, "The Council of Europe in brief," <http://hub.coe.int/>

⁵ Council of Europe, "The Session: The Information Guide for Plenary Sessions of PACE, 1-5 October, 2012" <http://assembly.coe.int/Sessions/2012/SessionMag/2012004TheSession.pdf>

⁶ Council of Europe, "PACE: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe," <http://assembly.coe.int/Communication/Brochure/Bro03-e.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

formation of a trans-European political community committed to democracy and human rights. The Parliamentary Assembly also provides parliamentary oversight functions for several key international organizations, including the OECD, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This wide-ranging role in international policy-making and in the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights makes the Council and Assembly an important venue for pursuing and advancing Canada's multilateral and bilateral engagement in Europe.⁸ Canada is an observer to both the Committee of Ministers, where it has participated actively in a number of policy areas (the other observers are the Holy See, Japan, Mexico and the United States) and the Parliamentary Assembly (where the other observers are Israel and Mexico). Since gaining observer status, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association has sent delegations to participate in the four annual part sessions of PACE.

B. Overview of the Fourth Part Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The fall session included a full order of business⁹ with a wide range of topics being debated in committees¹⁰, political groups¹¹ and in the Assembly.¹² The Assembly held regular debates on the following topics¹³:

- Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee;
- A free debate on any topic relating to the mandate of the Council of Europe;
- The honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation;
- For more democratic elections;
- Political parties and women's political representation;
- The activities of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011-2012;
- The definition of a political prisoner;
- Human rights and foreign policy;

⁸ DFAIT, "Canada and the Council of Europe," http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/eu-ue/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/council_europe_conseil.aspx?lang=eng&view=d

⁹ The Agenda of the session is available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=18996&Language=EN>

¹⁰ There are 7 regular PACE committees: the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy; the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; the Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development; the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media; the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination; and the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member states of the Council of Europe.

¹¹ A political group is the equivalent of a parliamentary party or caucus. There are five political groups in PACE: the Socialist Group (SOC), the Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD), the European Democratic Group (EDG), the Liberal, Democratic and Reformers Group (ALDE), and the Group of the Unified European Left (UEL).

¹² Regular Assembly debates focus on a draft resolution (a decision or statement by the Assembly) and/or recommendation (a proposal addressed to the Committee of Ministers), as well as an explanatory memorandum, which are prepared by a rapporteur for the relevant standing committee. The committee adopts-and usually amends-the resolution prior to the Assembly debate. Assembly debates open with a statement from the rapporteur (s), followed by statements from representatives of the five political groups, after which the debate is opened to other speakers. Speakers have to register in advance. Speakers unable to participate in the debated due to time constraints can submit their intervention in writing, so it becomes part of the official record.

¹³ The Agenda of the session is available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=18996&Language=EN>

- The European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria;
- Code of conduct of members of the Parliamentary Assembly: good practice or a core duty?
- The right to freedom of choice in education in Europe;
- The Safarov case;
- Restoring social justice through a tax on financial transactions;
- The consolidation and international openness of the European Higher Education Area; and
- Governance of higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area.

The Assembly also heard from the following guest speakers:

- Mr. Edmond Panariti, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania;
- Mr. Nicolae Timofti, President of the Republic of Moldova;
- Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of Albania
- For detailed information about the session, the transcripts and summaries of all the debates, reports discussed, and the resolutions and recommendations adopted are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website:
http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=http://assembly.coe.int/Sessions/2012/ESessionNew2012_4.htm

C. Canadian Activities during the Session

The Canadian delegation participated actively in the debates and committees held during the Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of PACE. In addition to its participation in debates and committees, the delegation had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mr. Angel Gurría, to discuss current economic affairs both in Canada and globally. Canadian delegates also had meetings with other parliamentarians and organizations within the Council of Europe. The sections below summarize their participation in PACE debates and committees, as well as other meetings held during the course of the session.

1. Interventions in Assembly Debates

Canadian delegates actively participated in Assembly debates. Mr. Tilson, Mr. Simms, Senator Tkachuk, Senator Fraser, and Ms. Bateman gave a total of nine speeches. The topics of debate and the text of their interventions are provided verbatim below.¹⁴

Senator Tkachuk made the following intervention in the "Free Debate":

¹⁴ All speeches delivered by delegates, whether delegates of member or observer delegations become part of the verbatim record of the proceedings of the Assembly and made available to the public. For a full record of all debates, please see: http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/CRListingSession_E.asp?IDSession=346

Mr TKACHUK (Canada) – I am an Observer from the Parliament of Canada. Canada is home to the third largest deposit of crude oil in the world, the oil sands of western Canada. The majority of this resource is in Alberta but a significant amount is in Saskatchewan, my home province. Saskatchewan is also a large supplier of heavy oil and a refiner of it as well. Since 1990, industry and Canada’s provincial and federal governments have worked very hard to reduce our carbon footprint. We have regulations governing reclamation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and on overseeing, regulating and recycling water use from the Athabasca River. That is of particular importance given the intensive use of water in the extraction process.

Oil sands production is easily criticised by environmental groups because extraction requires the disturbance of land and forest, and can be portrayed as a degradation of a once pristine environment. I point out that we have strong reclamation laws that require the land to be put back to its original state. The area concerned is, in the scheme of things, rather insignificant.

Oil sands production makes the world less dependent on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. That is not a bad thing. More oil in the world keeps prices stable, and that is good for economic development in North America and across the world. In Canada, oil sands development provides families with jobs in extraction, transportation, science, manufacturing and production. Demonising the people and the families dependent on it is something that Canadians take very seriously. The EU’s preoccupation with the fuel quality directive makes us uneasy to say the least. We need your help to end this attempt to demonise this enterprise.

The life cycle of the greenhouse gas emissions of crude oil from oil sands is similar to, or actually less harmful than, that of the heavy oil imported into Europe from the Middle East; it is even less harmful than that of light oil from Africa or Russia, which use extensive flaring. Canadian oil is ethical oil from an ethical source, and it is from a country that is always working on improving human rights, not only at home but throughout the world. The same cannot be said of many nations that supply oil to Europe, such as Nigeria and Angola.

The fuel quality directive that the European Commission is attempting to get politicians to approve unfairly stigmatises Canadian oil from oil sands by giving preferential treatment to heavy crude that has a greenhouse gas intensity that is identical to, or worse than, that of crude from oil sands. It ignores the greenhouse-gas-intensive heavy crude that the EU imports, but targets crude from Canada. Thank you.”

Ms. Bateman made the following intervention in the debate on “Political parties and women’s political representation”:

Ms BATEMAN (*Observer from Canada*) – It gives me great pleasure to participate in today’s debate on the role of women in the political process. Although women play many important leadership roles in community and informal organisations, our representation in public office remains considerably lower than that of men, both internationally and in Canada. The Inter-

Parliamentary Union and the UN have established 30% as the minimum level for political participation of women and this benchmark is now widely recognised as a goal.

Currently, the worldwide average for women's representation is almost 20%. I am proud to share that in Canada, the federal elections on 2 May 2011 saw women win 76 of the 308 seats in the House of Commons, putting them at 25% representation in the lower house. I am pleased to note that the proportion of women in the House of Commons has been rising steadily from 2006 onwards from the previous level, established for decades, of 20%. Canada now ranks in the top 40 countries internationally in the representation of women in the lower house of our national parliament. The representation of women in Canada's Senate, our upper house, is considerably higher than in the House of Commons. Thirty-seven of the 105 appointed seats are held by women, more than 35% of the Senate.

Our experience in Canada is that if more women candidates run for office, more women are elected to office. I am proud to govern with a party that sees women as equally capable as men in both winning nominations and winning elections. We are achieving positive results. Since 2006, the percentage of women nominated as candidates for Canada's four major political parties has risen from 25% to 31%.

Throughout my previous career as a chartered accountant, and now as a parliamentarian, I am happy to say that I have always seen genuine and spontaneous mentorship occurring in the workplace. This matters, this is wonderful and this continues to make a real difference, as my colleague from Finland said earlier. We can see the results in Canada's current Parliament, and I believe that matters will continue to improve in the future for women parliamentarians.

Mr. Simms made the following speech as part of the debate on, "For more democratic elections":

Mr SIMMS (Observer from Canada) – I thank the Assembly for allowing me to speak here today, for several reasons. I congratulate the rapporteurs on their report; it is very thorough and the points made in it are very tangible. To us as Canadians, I would say that the report is ideal. Throughout the history of our relatively young country, we have developed to the point where I think we have a pretty good electoral system that is based on administrative transparency.

I would like to touch on two points. First, I want to talk about the administration of our elections through a body that we call Elections Canada. It is at arm's length. The second point is financing, which is also a major issue when it comes to political parties as well as political elections.

On the first point, I was struck by the following in the report: "The Assembly is in particular concerned that the following election-related violations still persist...lack of independence and neutrality of the electoral administration", which it says is key. That is a very good point. Being arm's-length has to be

practised and has to be enshrined within legislation, and that is what we have. All the major parties in our legislature, including the governing party, have at some point in the past few years faced disciplinary action. We exercised our right to defend ourselves, but at the same time that disciplinary action was accepted by the parties. That proves that Elections Canada has the independence and resources to do this. That has to be enshrined in every nation in order to achieve the goals set out in this particular resolution, which I congratulate you on.

The second point is financing. It is interesting to note what is happening now in the United States of America. I saw a report a few days ago based on the horse race between two candidates, Romney and Obama. It was not about opinion polls; rather, they were gauging success by how much money the candidates were able to raise. They were therefore describing it not as a contest between two candidates but as a contest between two corporations, answerable to their shareholders. When did we get to that point? In Canada, we have strict limits on what you can donate – nothing from corporations or from trade unions, and we have an \$1 100 limit on donations from individuals. That is key because it is a good way of providing transparency. It also provides limitations that make our elections fair.

I have one point about representation. We are at 25%, and the UN goal is 30%. I humbly submit to this Assembly that, despite all of that, the goal for all of us here is 50%, with no exceptions.

Mr. Tilson intervened in the debate on “The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011-2012”:

Mr TILSON (Canada) – I begin by thanking you for this opportunity to participate in the debate on the activities of the OECD. The Canadian delegation attaches great importance to this debate, as it gives non-European OECD members an opportunity to examine the activities of the OECD and its role in addressing the key issues facing us today. I thank the rapporteur for incorporating many of the suggestions made by the Canadian delegation.

I will focus my remarks today on Canada’s response to the global recession and its position on a global financial transaction tax. As has been noted by the OECD, Canada’s economy withstood the global economic recession due to a timely macroeconomic policy response and a solid banking sector. From 2009 to 2011, the government of Canada’s economic action plan provided over \$60 billion in support of measures aimed at stimulating the economy. As a result, Canada has more than recovered all of the output and all of the jobs lost during the recession, and real GDP is now also well above pre-recession levels.

According to the Canadian Department of Finance, almost 770 000 net new full-time jobs have been created in Canada since July 2009, the strongest job growth among G7 countries over the recovery period. In Canada, the unemployment rate has dropped 1.4 percentage points lower than at the peak of the recession in August 2009. According to the OECD, employment rates among Canadian youth now stand 4 percentage points higher than in 2008. By international comparison, Canadian youth are faring well in terms of

employment, which has been attributed at least in part to Canada's relatively rapid recovery.

As the worst of the recession begins to pass, government policy is now shifting towards returning to budgetary balance. The OECD expects that Canada will have one of the fastest growing G7 economies from 2012 to 2013. However, the sovereign debt crisis in Europe continues to pose a risk to global economic recovery, and the Canadian economy is no exception.

I shall now outline Canada's position on the introduction of a financial transaction tax. The government of Canada has maintained its opposition to the introduction of a financial transaction tax for several reasons. First, such a tax could disadvantage the Canadian financial sector and the jobs it provides, and could eventually lead to distortions in global markets. We also have concerns over the administrative complexities and inefficiencies involved in such an initiative. Moreover, without universal participation, some jurisdictions could reap large benefits from non-co-operation. Canada's position is in line with that of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Turkey, Mexico and China.

Last year marked the OECD's 50th anniversary. Our debate today illustrates the continued importance of this organisation as it provides us with guidance and advice in meeting the challenges of today, while preparing us at the same time for those to come.

Ms. Bateman also participated in the debate on the activities of the OECD:

Ms BATEMAN (Observer from Canada) – I welcome the opportunity to participate in this important debate on the activities of OECD. As the report notes, the Canadian delegation does not support a financial transactions tax, and I echo the comments made by my colleague, David Tilson. As our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has highlighted on a number of occasions, the Canadian Government believes in lower taxes and so does not support the introduction of an additional tax on financial transactions. I say, with all due respect to Mr Gurría, that the Canadian Government views a financial transactions tax on over-the-counter derivatives to be particularly problematic. Our government supports and is actively participating in the work on regulatory reforms in respect of such derivatives, which have been agreed to by the leaders of the G20 countries. Given the advanced state of these reforms in G20 countries, we believe that it would be inappropriate to introduce this tax at this time – it could even be counterproductive to the G20's current regulatory efforts.

To achieve long-term prosperity, we need to create jobs and true economic growth. We do not need to impose job-killing incremental tax structures on an economy that can make a difference. That is the Canadian Government's position. As David Tilson said, the creation since 2009 of 770 000 net new jobs, 90% of which are full-time, value-added positions, shows that Canada's approach is achieving positive results. We are not complacent and we remain keenly focused on achieving long-term prosperity. We do not want to mortgage the futures of our children, so we are working hard to get back into balance.

I thank the rapporteur for exploring this topic, and we very much welcome the OECD's contributions to this important discussion.

Senator Fraser intervened in the debate on “Code of conduct of members of the Parliamentary Assembly: good practice or a core duty?”

Ms FRASER (Observer from Canada) said that this report was an excellent first step, and the premises contained within it were quite correct. She had a few remarks based on her experience in the Canadian Senate and believe that she could usefully share them with various members present.

Many elements of our code resemble those proposed here, but I will talk about three that are different. First, one thing we have found to be key to the acceptance and good functioning of our code is that it is not administered by the regular senate administration or leadership – the clerk, the speaker and the political leaders. Instead, we have an independent senate ethics officer whose appointment is ratified by the senate but who comes from outside the senate system. That greatly heightens confidence in his impartiality. He advises senators, administers the code and reports to the senate through a bipartisan committee.

Secondly, our rules explicitly require senators who have conflicts of interest to refrain from voting on or even debating questions in relation to which conflicts arise. Thirdly, we require confidential disclosure to the SEO of the nature, but not the value – the dollar amount – of both income and assets, and not only of senators but also of their spouses. The SEO then posts a summary of that information on his website.

You can imagine how controversial this rule was; senators feared that there would be glaring headlines about their private affairs. But the opposite has turned out to be true. The mere fact that this information is public seems to have calmed all the old suspicions that we must have scandalous things to hide. In fact, sunshine works. It works for us parliamentarians and for democracy, and I am sure that it will work for you, too. I wish you all success as your code comes into play.

Mr. Tilson also delivered a speech as part of the debate on “Restoring social justice through a tax on financial transactions”:

Mr TILSON (Observer from Canada) – Debates about financial transactions taxes, such as the one we are having this morning, have emerged recently in response to the global financial crisis. The Canadian Government is opposed to the introduction of a global or domestic financial transactions tax for several reasons. First, such a tax could disadvantage the Canadian financial sector, and the jobs it provides, and lead to distortions in global markets. Secondly, Canada has concerns about the administrative complexities and inefficiencies associated with such a tax. Moreover, without the universal imposition of a financial transaction tax, some jurisdictions could benefit from non co-operation as entities engage in what is sometimes known as jurisdiction shopping. For example, it was found that the implementation of a securities transaction tax in Sweden resulted

in a massive migration of trading in Swedish stocks from Stockholm to London. Finally, it is important to note that Canada's position is in line with that of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Turkey, Mexico and China. I am therefore opposed to the draft resolution.

Instead, I believe that the resolution should place greater emphasis on the enhanced regulation of the financial sector. Canada's financial system continues to be recognised as one of the soundest in the world, thanks to our robust and responsive regulatory system. To maintain the strength of our financial services sector the Government of Canada has enhanced the supervisory powers of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada and provided the Minister of Finance with the power to approve substantial foreign acquisitions by Canadian banks. In addition, the Government of Canada is also introducing the central clearing of standardised over-the-counter derivative transactions.

Mr. Simms also participated in the debate on "Restoring social justice through a tax on financial transactions":

Mr SIMMS (Observer from Canada) – I have been intrigued by this whole debate in the past hour or so for several reasons. I would like to quote some of the people who have taken part in the debate. First off, though, I would like to say that I am an observer; I do not have the right to vote but I have the right to speak, and I thank the Parliamentary Assembly for giving me that opportunity.

First and foremost, we all suffer from what has happened since 2008. I congratulate the rapporteur on her report. I strongly suspect that I would not vote in favour of it if I had the opportunity, but I would have a great deal of trepidation in not doing so. I do not speak on behalf of my own government in Canada – thank goodness that you have varying degrees of opinion allowed in this Assembly, which is why I like coming here – but, from my own point of view, the intention in the report is one that should be looked at, probably more in a broad scope than anything else.

My first problem with this tax is that if it operates in only one designated area, its accomplishments will be very few and its problems will be greater. We can only look to somewhere like Sweden, which went through this in the early 1990s. Granted, this notion that prices will eliminate some of the volatility in trading by imposing a tax like this is not genuine, because markets have a great ability to adjust. As one of my colleagues said earlier, the problems within the eurozone started with Lehman Brothers in the United States of America –we do not operate in the vacuum that we like to think that we do. The problem is that having one jurisdiction do something, as Sweden proposed in the early 1990s, allows capital to move. That is unfortunate but there is no getting around it.

Some other people, such as Mr Hancock, said that this is a step in the right direction, which I agree with, while others have said things like, "address this imbalance of the tax burden". Here is what I like about this and what we should address: as my colleague from Canada said earlier, and as the IMF and the OECD are saying, the regulation part of the proposals should be put under a larger microscope. However, the one thing about a financial transactions tax is

that the revenue that it creates is very simple. Instead of looking behind in order to make reparations, we should be looking ahead to create a cushion like we did in Canada several years ago so that, when we find ourselves under very strict austerity measures, we are able to cushion that from a social perspective. I thank you again for allowing me this opportunity.

2. Meeting with Mexico's Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The Canadian delegation had the opportunity to have an informal meeting with Mexico's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. After an exchange of greetings, the discussion focused on issues in Canada-Mexico relations. The Mexican delegation raised concerns regarding Canada's imposition of visa restrictions on Mexican residents and the problems this posed for students and temporary workers. However, the Mexican delegation also recognized that the Government of Canada needed to respond to the issue of unfounded refugee claims. The Canadian delegation outlined the efforts being undertaken to address these issues, including streamlining the visa process, establishing a new visa office and a new Business express program. The Canadian delegation also raised concerns regarding security issues in Mexico and how it affects Canadian tourism to the country. Mexican delegates explained that most of the violence was occurring in the border regions. Furthermore, part of the problem lies with the media portrayal of the violence. They further explained that the roots of the violence in the border regions are a product of social disintegration and the drug war. They said that some of the steps involved in resolving the violence include linking economic and social development. They indicated that the towns in the region are now focusing on building community groups and social infrastructure, such as schools and sports facilities to address the issue.

3. Briefing Session with Mr. Alain Hausser from the Mission of Canada to the European Union

As part of its preparations for its meetings in Ireland, the Canadian delegation was briefed by Mr. Alain Hausser from the Mission of Canada to the European Union, who met with the delegation in Strasbourg. Mr. Hausser began his briefing with an overview of the Euro crisis, indicating that there was some cautious optimism about the measures being undertaken by the European Central Bank to address the crisis. He then focused on the impact of French presidential elections on the handling of the crisis, as well as the role of the media in shaping expectations about its possible outcomes. Mr. Hausser further noted that Europeans are concerned about high unemployment rates among youth and possible social unrest. Turning to the Canada-Europe Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), Mr. Hausser explained that the agreement is seen as a possible "good news" story for the EU in the face of economic uncertainty. Consequently, Canada is no longer seen as a "demandeur" in the negotiations process. The Canadian delegation raised questions about the possible challenges that the agreement might face in the ratification process in the European Parliament. While the agreement itself would not be seen as problematic, Mr. Hausser indicated that other issues, such as the imposition of visas on Bulgaria and Romania and objections to the seal hunt could pose challenges in the ratification process. Finally, Mr. Hausser also

explained Canadian concerns regarding the Strategic Partnership Agreement that is currently being negotiated between Canada and the European Union. This includes the language of human rights clause in the agreement, which was seen by the Canadian government as too broad.

4. Meeting with Mr. John Ringguth, Executive Secretary, MONEYVAL

The Canadian delegation also had the opportunity to meet with Mr. John Ringguth from MONEYVAL, the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism. Mr. Ringguth provided the delegation with an overview of Moneyval, which is responsible for ensuring that its member states have in place effective systems to counter money laundering and terrorist financing and comply with relevant standards in these fields. Mr. Ringguth explained that relevant standards include those of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)¹⁵ of which Canada is a member. Mr. Ringguth explained that 28 members of the Council of Europe are part of Moneyval, including members who were not already part of the FATF. According to Mr. Ringguth, MONEYVAL achieves its objectives through the development of standards, monitoring of their compliance, as well as providing technical assistance to its members for their implementation. He also explained that Moneyval's statute requires that its members follow up on the implementation of its recommendations, further promoting compliance with its standards. The delegation inquired into recent examples of MONEYVAL's efforts to monitor member states and Mr. Ringguth provided an overview of some of its findings in relation to the Holy See and Serbia. The delegation also asked Mr. Ringguth what were the main challenges facing the investigation and prosecution of money laundering. Mr. Ringguth discussed possible role of lawyers in reporting money laundering and the need for independent bodies to act as a buffer between the state and law enforcement in the collection of intelligence on money laundering activities. Mr. Ringguth also raised the Council of Europe's Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism, a statute that goes further than existing international statutes in combating money laundering by enabling states to make a formal order that financial institutions stop a suspicious transaction. Mr. Ringguth encouraged Canada to consider possibly ratifying this statute, also known as the "Warsaw Convention".

5. Meeting with Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

As part of its participation in the Fourth Part Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Canadian parliamentary delegation traditionally meets with the Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mr. Angel Gurría, to discuss current economic affairs both in Canada and globally. Mr. Gurría began the meeting by presenting the Canadian delegation with the OECD's latest Economic Outlook for Canada. He also noted that the

¹⁵ The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. FATF currently has 34 member jurisdictions and 2 regional bodies. FATF, "About us," <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/pages/aboutus/>

OECD has a good relationship with the Government of Canada and finds it accessible in terms of providing information to the organization. Mr. Gurría then turned to the priorities of the OECD in terms of promoting economic and social development within its member states. In support of this aim, Mr. Gurría explained that the OECD has adopted the following concepts: Go Structural; Go Green, Go Institutional; and Go Social. The delegation asked Mr. Gurría whether there were any OECD member states that had been successful in finding a balance between economic growth and sustainable development. According to Mr. Gurría, Korea is an example of a country that has integrated environmental policy into its financing, innovation, education and technology policies. The delegation also asked Mr. Gurría about the social implications of rising inequality globally and specifically, how this issue could be addressed in Canada. Mr. Gurría explained that Canada had been in a good position entering the recession and therefore was able to spend itself out of a recession. He therefore articulated that maintaining a cushion during times of economic growth is essential. The delegation also asked for the Secretary-General's views on placing a price on carbon. Mr. Gurría was of the view that there needed to be a price on carbon to create an incentive to tackle emissions. Finally, the delegation was interested in policy advice on how Canada could boost its labour productivity and how other countries were fairing in this area. According to Mr. Gurría, Germany had successfully increased labour productivity through wage moderations; reduced hours of labour with increased investments in training for those labourers.

PARLIAMENTARY MISSION TO IRELAND, THE NEXT COUNTRY TO HOLD THE ROTATING PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

After the Canadian delegation participated in the Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, it then travelled to Dublin, Ireland to participate in meetings related to that country's upcoming term as Rotating President of the Council of the European Union (EU), set to begin in January 2013. The purpose of these meetings was for Canadian parliamentarians to learn about Ireland's priorities for its term as rotating President, as well as provide Canadian parliamentarians with the opportunity to advance Canadian positions on key EU-related issues, as well as learn about policy debates and developments within the EU more generally. Background information and a summary of these discussions are provided in the sections below.

A. Background Information on the Rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union made up of 27 Member States: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania. In addition to its member states, the EU also consists of institutions that are responsible for the development, adoption, coordination, implementation, and judicial review of EU legislation, policies and programs in a broad range of areas. The EU's key decision-making bodies are outlined in the table below.

1. Table 1 – Description of EU's Main Decision-making Bodies

Institution	Description	Powers
European Parliament	<p>The European Parliament is made up of 736 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). They are directly elected every 5 years to represent interests of the people of Europe. They do not sit in national blocks, but in Europe wide political groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament has the power to adopt, amend or reject legislation proposed by the European Commission; it shares this power with the Council of the European Union. • Ratifies international treaties negotiated by the European Commission, including trade agreements. • Exercises oversight over the European Commission; may dismiss the Commission. • Parliament shares joint authority with the Council of the European Union for approving the EU's annual budget.
The Council of the European Union	<p>The Council of the European Union is one of the main decision-making bodies in the EU. It is made up of 27 national government ministers representing each of the EU Member States in a broad range of policy areas, including: foreign and security policy, economic and financial affairs, social policy and health, transport, the environment, agriculture, fisheries, education, justice and home affairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the approval of the EU's budget and the development of legislation in a broad range of policy areas. • It shares its legislative and budgetary authority with the European Parliament.
European Council	<p>The European Council is made up of 27 heads of state and governments of EU Member States and the President of the European Commission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It gives the EU its political direction and sets out its main priorities.
European Commission	<p>The European Commission is the executive organ, which represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. The Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts proposals for new legislation, which it presents to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament.

Institution	Description	Powers
	consists of 27 men and women appointed from each respective Member State. They are assisted by 24,000 civil servants. The President of the Commission is chosen by EU Member States and is endorsed by the European Parliament.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforces EU treaties and laws. • Manages the day-to-day implementation of EU policies and spending of EU funds.

Source: Information provided in the table was adapted by the author from European Union, *Panorama of the European Union*, http://ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/eu_glance/79/en.pdf

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union rotates every six months among EU Member States. The rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union follows a trio formula whereby three EU Member States develop a common 18-month program that sets out the policy agenda for the European Union in a broad range of policy areas, except for foreign and security policy. The Republic of Ireland's six month term as rotating President begins in January 2013 and will be carried out as part of an 18 month program that is developed in conjunction with Lithuania and Greece. The policy areas covered by their 18 month program include: economic and financial affairs, social policy and health, transport, the environment, agriculture, fisheries, education, justice and home affairs. This program is carried out by each trio member for a six month period. During the course of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Member State is responsible for chairing the different working groups of the Council; finding consensus between the different Member States; and formulating proposals for compromises to be made between different Member States.¹⁶ In addition, the Presidency country also plays an important role in negotiating with other EU institutions with legislative authority, such as the European Parliament.

As result of the entry into force of the *Treaty of Lisbon*¹⁷ in December 2009, the Council of the European Union's Council of Foreign Ministers, which is made up of the Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States and is responsible for developing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, will no longer be chaired by the rotating Presidency country. Instead, the *Treaty* established a new appointed position, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy, to chair the Council of Foreign Ministers and represent the EU in international affairs.¹⁸ The High Representative is also the Vice President of the European Commission and participates in the work of the

¹⁶ Government of Poland, "The main tasks of the Presidency," <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/ministry/polish-presidency-of-the-eu-council/the-main-tasks-of-the-presidency/>

¹⁷ On 19 October 2007, the 27 EU Member State governments concluded the *Treaty of Lisbon*, a treaty that amends the two foundational treaties of the European Union, *The Treaty Establishing the European Community* and *the Treaty on the European Union*. The Lisbon Treaty introduces a number of institutional reforms aimed at streamlining the EU decision-making process, enhancing democratic accountability, strengthening EU institutions and giving the EU a stronger presence in international affairs. It came into force in December 2009, after it had been ratified by all 27 EU Member States. European Union, "Lisbon Treaty at a Glance," http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/index_en.htm.

¹⁸ General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, "Treaty of Lisbon," *Information Note*, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/111652.pdf.

European Council.¹⁹ The current EU High Representative is Catherine Ashton. The overall aim of these changes is to ensure consistency and coherence in the EU's external activities.

Finally, the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union is also no longer responsible for chairing the European Council, which is responsible for establishing the EU's overall general political direction and priorities. Under the *Treaty of Lisbon*, a new position of President was created to chair the European Council.²⁰ The President of the European Council is elected by the Members of the European Council for a renewable term of two and a half years. The current President of the European Council is Mr. Herman van Rompuy.

B. Program and Summary of Discussions

1. Briefing at the Canadian Embassy to Ireland

The Canadian delegation began its program in Ireland with a briefing session at the Embassy of Canada to Ireland with His Excellency Ambassador Loyola Hearn and embassy officials, including: Suzanne Cormie, Deborah Rogan and Jackie Ellis. The Ambassador began the briefing session by providing the delegation with an overview of Canada-Ireland Relations. He explained that the two countries have an excellent trade relationship with no irritants, focussing primarily in pharmaceuticals, life sciences and information and communication technologies (ICT). Recent trade missions to Canada have resulted in increased investment from Irish companies and an increasingly vibrant and dynamic Ireland-Canada Business Association. From the Ambassador's perspective, the proposed Canada-Europe Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) would further enhance Canada-Irish trade relationship, as Ireland often served as a jump off point for companies looking to do business in the EU. He also noted that Canada and Ireland cooperate extensively in science and technology in areas such as: clean technology, agriculture, fisheries and oceanology. The Ambassador also highlighted the recent expansion of the International Experience Program, which allows skilled Irish youth to enter Canada and work. The delegation learned that the number of Irish skilled workers allowed to enter Canada through this program will be increased from 5,350 to 6,350 for 2013 and will reach 10,000 beginning in 2014. These workers will also now be able to stay in Canada for up to two years. The briefing session then focused on the political and economic situation in Ireland. The Ambassador explained that despite the difficult economic circumstances, Ireland was doing relatively well, meeting the targets of the bailout provided by the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Irish Government. The Irish government is meeting the targets through a combination of taxes and a reduction of public sector salaries. The Ambassador noted that the measures had been received with little or no protest in contrast to other parts of Europe, but unemployment remains high at 14.8% posing a longer term risk. Furthermore, there are tensions within the coalition government over labour cuts. Finally, the briefing session also focused on

¹⁹ The European Commission is the EU's administrative body responsible for policy development and implementation, as well as safeguarding the foundational treaties of the European Union. The European Commission, "About the European Commission," http://ec.europa.eu/about/index_en.htm.

²⁰ General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, "Treaty of Lisbon," Information Note, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/111652.pdf.

challenges that the embassy faces in consular affairs, including the lack of an extradition treaty between Canada and Ireland and mutual recognition systems for driver's licenses. The delegation inquired into bilateral agreements between Irish and Canadian universities, as well as the connections between life sciences research in Quebec and Ireland. The delegation also asked about challenges in labour mobility, including the recognition of foreign qualifications.

2. Meeting with the Institute for International and European Affairs

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with Brendan Halligan, Chairman and Alan Dukes, Tony Browne and Eoin McDonnell of the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA). Mr. Halligan began the meeting by providing the delegation an overview of the think tank, which develops policy options and analysis rather than takes specific positions on issues related to European affairs and international relations. Mr. Halligan explained that IIEA worked closely with government departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of European Affairs. The discussion then focused on the Sovereign Debt Crisis in Europe and Ireland's experience. Mr. Halligan explained the origins of the sovereign debt crisis in Ireland, including how lax bank lending standards had resulted in the creation of a property bubble that subsequently burst. The banks in turn then needed to be bailed out by the state, which then led to a sovereign debt problem. He further explained that a European wide solution lay in a deeper integration, including a banking union and the coordination of budgetary discipline. However, moving towards deeper integration also meant that there was a risk for fragmentation within the EU or different member states evolving on two or three different tracks. For example, Mr. Halligan noted that the Conservative Party in England remained opposed to deeper integration and may continue to opt out of measures focusing on greater coordination in the area of budgetary policy. He further explained that one of the main challenges with addressing the Eurozone crisis is that while the crisis requires swift action, the decision making process within the EU is slow and markets are not willing to wait to form judgments on the possible outcomes. The Canadian delegation asked about debates surrounding austerity in Europe in addressing debt problems in Greece, Italy and Ireland. Mr. Halligan indicated that the problems in Greece ran deeper than debates surrounding austerity, instead reflecting the country's transition from a dictatorship to a modern functioning state, whereas Italy and Ireland both have the capacity and apparatus to address debt problems. The delegation also asked about IIEA's views on what Europe should do in the Middle East. From their perspective, there is a need for a cohesive approach but the lack of agreement with the United Nations (UN) Security Council meant that no action would be forthcoming, as the EU would not participate in a mission in Syria without a UN mandate.

3. Briefing with Officials from the Department of An Taoiseach

The Canadian delegation met with government officials from the Department of An Taoiseach (the Office of the Prime Minister of Ireland), including Geraldine Byrne Nason, Lorcan Fulham, Kyle O'Sullivan, Jeffrey Keating, Barry Tumilty, Karl Gardner and Gerard Monks, to learn about Ireland's priorities for its term as rotating President of the Council of the European Union. Officials explained to the delegation that the

Presidency presents both a risk and opportunity for the country. According to officials, Ireland is still facing considerable challenges, including high unemployment, slow export growth, high household debt and difficult banking conditions. Officials further indicated that Ireland's deficit targets of 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are hard to reach. However, they felt that the agreement brokered in the European Council in June 2012 for the creation of a banking union was a vital step in addressing the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. Indeed, the creation of a banking union would break the vicious circle between sovereign debt and the banking sector. Officials indicated that the creation of a banking union would be a key part of the country's Presidency agenda. Other priorities would include: stimulating economic growth and job creation, completing negotiations for the EU's Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU's total budget for 2014-2020, meeting the targets for the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy,²¹ green growth, as well as promoting the EU's trade agenda of pursuing trade agreements with both developed and developing countries. Officials also explained that they would actively engage with the European Parliament to ensure the passing of necessary legislation, as well as with their trio partners, Lithuania and Greece. The delegation asked about their views on CETA and the Strategic Partnership Agreement currently being negotiated between Canada and the EU. Officials indicated that both agreements are seen as positive steps from the Irish perspective and will serve to enhance the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The delegation also inquired whether there were any challenges posed by CETA, including possible concerns about supply management or the EU's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Officials indicated that market access for beef and dairy are definitely of importance to the Irish but that these issues would be worked through in negotiations. The delegation was also interested in the high level of personal debt in Ireland and what steps were being taken to address this issue. Finally, Canada's Ambassador to Ireland also raised several issues in Canadian-Irish relations, including the need for a system of mutual recognition for driver's licenses and an extradition treaty.

4. Meeting with Mr. Francis Jacobs, European Parliament Information Office

The Canadian delegation had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Francis Jacobs from the European Parliament Information Office. Mr. Jacobs provided the delegation with an overview of the European Parliament, including how its powers had increased since the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. The increasing powers of the European Parliament have meant that it is playing a more active role in EU affairs and is exerting its influence, as reflected in its recent rejection of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). He noted that this could also have implications for the ratification of the CETA Agreement, as the European Parliament cannot be controlled and majorities are built on specific issues rather than based upon positions on the political spectrum, making the institution a lobbyists' paradise. Consequently, it is very easy for lobbyists

²¹The Europe 2020 Strategy identifies five headline targets to promote high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion within the EU by 2020. These targets are: 75% of the population aged 20–64 should be employed; 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in research and development (R&D); climate/energy targets should be met; the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a post-secondary degree; and 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty. European Commission, Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, 3 March 2010, http://europa.eu/press_room/pdf/complet_en_barroso_007_-_europe_2020_-_en_version.pdf. Also see http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

within the European Parliament to make linkages between CETA and other concerns such as seals, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and other environmental concerns. The discussion then turned to current challenges related to negotiations towards the EU's budget or the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, including the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the structure of farming in different EU Member States. The delegation also asked about voter turnout for European parliamentary elections. Mr. Jacobs said that overall it was 45% in Europe, but was higher in Ireland at 60%.

5. Meeting with the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, the Oireachtas²²

The Canadian delegation met with Irish parliamentarians who are members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Union Affairs to learn about Ireland's EU Presidency priorities from a parliamentary perspective. After exchanging opening remarks, members of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs explained the importance of the Presidency for Ireland for regaining its standing within the EU and bolstering confidence in the Irish economy. Dominic Hannigan, Chairman of the Committee, provided an overview of some of the challenges facing the Irish economy, including the need to focus on different economic sectors, including agriculture and pharmaceuticals, rather than the building sector alone, which had represented two thirds of all revenue prior to the recession. The discussion then shifted to the close nature of Canada-Ireland ties, which are based upon immigration and common values. Members of the committee emphasized the importance of ongoing cooperation between Canada and Ireland in the context of the G8, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). They also expressed gratitude for Canadian involvement in the Irish peace process and the International Fund for Ireland, which had been successful in creating tangible change in the lives of Irish youth. Members of the committee then asked the Canadian delegates about the jobs currently being offered to young skilled Irish workers in Canada and Canadian responses to the recession. The Canadian delegation responded by explaining that Canada is facing a shortage of skilled workers and the jobs being offered through the International Experience Program would provide Irish workers with positive experiences of Canadian communities, as well as relevant work experience. They also noted that Canada has been successful in addressing the economic crisis by having a sound banking system and introducing stronger mortgage requirements. The Canadian delegation also reiterated the strength of personal ties between Canada and Ireland, as well as raising the importance of the ratification of CETA by EU Member States.

6. Meeting with the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Oireachtas

The Canadian delegation also met with members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade for a wide ranging informal discussion. Members of the committee began by outlining the strong bond between Ireland and Canada based upon people-to-

²² The Oireachtas is the official Gaelic name for the Parliament of Ireland. The Oireachtas consists of the President and two Houses of Parliament: Dáil Éireann (the House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate). For further information, please consult: the Houses of Oireachtas, "About the Oireachtas," <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/about/>

people ties, economic linkages and tourism. The Canadian delegation asked members of the committee whether there were tensions between Irish foreign policy and that of the EU. Members of the committee explained that Ireland has remained a neutral country since 1939 and is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but supports the EU's development of Common Security and Defense Policy. They also explained that Ireland is a strong supporter of a Palestinian state, reflecting its own history of internal religious and political conflict. They felt that it no longer serves to continue going over yesterday's atrocities to solve today's problems. Members of the committee then asked about Canada's pro-Israel stance, as well as its decision to close its embassy in Iran. Members of the delegation explained that Canada had closed its embassy in Iran due to security concerns, as well as the fact that Iran had been unresponsive to Canadian diplomatic efforts. Moreover, Canada recognizes Israel's concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear program. The discussion then focused on Syria and the need for an alternative regime to coalesce in the country. The Canadian delegation also asked whether there are any concerns among Irish parliamentarians regarding CETA in areas such as supply management and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Members of the committee indicated that challenges related to GMOs had been addressed through challenges in the World Trade Organization. Finally, Ambassador Hearn brought up some of the challenges in Canada-Ireland relations, including the recognition of driver's licenses and the lack of an extradition treaty. Members of the committee thanked the Ambassador for bringing these issues to their attention.

7. Meeting with the Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and Gaeltacht, the Oireachtas

The Canadian delegation then met with members of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and Gaeltacht to discuss the European Union's Fuel Quality Directive (FQD).²³ The meeting began with Mr. Tilson providing the committee with an overview of the Government of Canada's position on the European Commission's proposed implementing measures for the Fuel Quality Directive, explaining that the Canadian government is concerned that the baseline measurements of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions used to implement the FQD do not accurately reflect the GHG emissions associated with heavy crude oils currently being imported by the EU and unfairly discriminate against oil sand emissions. Members of the committee inquired about the extraction process for oil sands crude and whether this compared to fracking. Senator Fraser explained both the extraction process of oil sand bitumen and the differences between fracking and oil sand development. Mr. Tilson further explained the environmental regulations in place governing oil sands development, as well as efforts to ensure that development of the oil sands remains sustainable. Ms. Papillon indicated that while regulations are in place, further efforts could be made to reduce the amount

²³ The EU's Fuel Quality Directive aims to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from the combustion of road transport fuel. It requires that suppliers reduce the GHGs associated with their entire fuel production chain, or life cycle by 6% by 2020. DIRECTIVE 2009/30/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2009 amending Directive 98/70/EC as regards the specification of petrol, diesel and gas-oil and introducing a mechanism to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and amending Council Directive 1999/32/EC as regards the specification of fuel used by inland waterway vessels and repealing Directive 93/12/EEC, Official Journal L140, 05/06/2009 P.0088-0113, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:140:0088:01:EN:HTML>.

of water used in the extraction process. Members of the committee further inquired about the European Commission's response to Canadian concerns. Mr. Tilson explained that European Commission is currently undertaking further study and consultations in relation to the FQD. In addition, he explained that Canada's Minister for Natural Resources is having high level discussions with both the European Commission and the European Council on this matter.

8. Meeting with Mr. Niall Burgess, Director General for North America, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House

The Canadian delegation met with Mr. Niall Burgess from the Government of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss Canada-Irish relations. Mr. Burgess began the meeting by providing an overview of Canada-Irish relations, indicating that it had been a good year with the Speaker of the Oireachtas leading a delegation to Canada, a mission that had reinforced people-to-people ties between the two parliaments. Mr. Burgess also explained that trade relations are strong, as Ireland is Canada's 6th largest destination for foreign direct investment. It was expected that trade relations would be further enhanced by the conclusion of CETA negotiations, as well as those for the Strategic Partnership Agreement. The delegation asked Mr. Burgess whether there were any stumbling blocks concerning CETA from the Irish perspective. Mr. Burgess indicated that though agriculture could pose a concern, he was confident that negotiators would be able to address this concern and an agreement was within reach. Mr. Burgess also stressed the importance of Canada's engagement in the peace process with Northern Ireland, including: its support for the Good Friday Agreement and the International Fund for Ireland. The discussion then focused on Ireland's economy. According to Mr. Burgess, Ireland is recovering from its sovereign debt crisis and is experiencing higher levels of foreign direct investment, particularly in the next generation of information communication technology, such as Google and Facebook. Ambassador Hearn also noted that there was also more interest in resource development in Ireland. However, though Ireland is progressing, these successes have yet to trickle down to the average person and as a result there remains an overall pessimism about the Irish economy. The delegation then inquired about the current impact of personal debt levels and overall mortgage rates on the Irish economy.

9. Meeting with Professor John FitzGerald from the Economic and Social Research Institute

The Canadian delegation met with Professor John FitzGerald from the Economic and Social Research Institute, an organization that produces research focusing on economic and social change in the new international context and aims to inform public policymaking and civil society in Ireland.²⁴ Professor FitzGerald began the meeting by providing the delegation with an overview of the context of Ireland's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. He explained that what is going on in the United Kingdom has implications for the Republic of Ireland's relations with Northern Ireland. In particular, the prospect of Scottish independence is raising questions about what would happen to Northern Ireland as a result. According to Professor FitzGerald,

²⁴ ESRI, "About ESRI," http://www.esri.ie/about_us/

unification with Northern Ireland would pose challenges to Ireland's fragile economy. Professor FitzGerald also explained that the US economic recovery would have a big impact on the Irish economy, as US firms are heavily invested in Ireland. Finally, Dr. FitzGerald also indicated that EU environmental policy would pose a challenge to the Irish presidency, as Ireland would be unable to meet its emission quotas as they came from natural sources such as livestock. He further noted that Ireland would have less influence in carrying out its agenda in comparison to the past because the presidency is less important than it used to be due to the Treaty of Lisbon. The delegation asked Professor FitzGerald whether Ireland could play an active role in pursuing its agenda given the neutrality of the presidency, and whether the country would have influence in promoting CETA. According to Professor FitzGerald, in order to maintain its influence, a small country like Ireland needs to find support among other players, such as Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands or the countries in Central Europe. He further noted that Ireland needed to engage a big player like the United Kingdom, but this would remain challenging given the UK's disengagement with the EU, as reflected in its veto of the fiscal compact treaty.²⁵ The delegation also asked about the challenges Ireland is facing with regards to youth unemployment. According to Professor FitzGerald, though youth unemployment remained high at 14.4%, it is also having a positive impact. He explained that sixty percent of girls in Ireland pursue higher education, while forty percent of boys work in the construction industry. The recession has meant that young men are returning to school, either completing high school or pursuing additional qualifications or higher education as a result. Therefore, in order to address youth unemployment, governments needed to put resources into training and education and focus on engaging youth in these programs.

10. Meeting with the Canada Ireland Friendship Group, The Oireachtas

The Canadian delegation also met with the Canada Ireland Friendship Group, which was chaired by Ms. Olivia Mitchell, member of the Dail. The meeting began with a discussion of Irish political history and an overview of the origins of the Fine Gael and the Sinn Fein, two of the main political parties in Ireland. Irish parliamentarians spoke of the need to remember and learn the lessons of history but move on towards creating the Ireland that they now want. The discussion then focused on the strong ties between Ireland and Canada, including negotiations towards CETA which is seen as an agreement with benefits for both sides. Irish parliamentarians explained that increasing trade ties is critical to Ireland's economic growth and therefore, it is also supportive of deepening trade ties with South America and China. Irish parliamentarians highlighted the importance of recent initiatives to promote labour mobility between Canada and Ireland through Canada's International Experience Program and recent job fairs.

²⁵ The European Union's Stability and Growth Pact is a rule-based framework for the coordination of national fiscal policies in the EU's economic and monetary union (EMU). It was established to safeguard sound public finances, a requirement for the EMU to function properly. It constrains both government budgets and government debt of member countries by imposing a 3% deficit-to-GDP ratio and a 60% debt-to-GDP ratio on all member countries. In December 2011, European Union Heads of State or Government, with the exception of the United Kingdom, agreed to adopt a "Fiscal Compact" as part of an overall strategy to tackle the sovereign debt crisis in the Euro area. As the UK vetoed its adoption as an EU treaty, other EU Member States agreed to adopt it as an international treaty instead. On 30 January 2012, 25 EU Member States formally agreed to the *Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union* and signed it in March 2012. *The Treaty builds on the EU's current Stability and Growth Pact*, requiring that eurozone members keep their structural budget deficit below 0.5% Gross Domestic Product (GDP). House of Commons Library, "The Treaty on Stability, Co-ordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union: political issues," Research Paper 12/14 27 March 2012.

However, they noted that the emigration of Irish youth remains an emotional issue for them, as many thought that those days, where Irish youth had to leave the country for work, had finally passed. Canadian delegates explained how Irish immigration has enriched Canadian culture, which is reflected in the many Celtic studies programs at Canadian universities and the special ties between Ireland and the Province of Newfoundland.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. David Tilson, M.P.
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Fourth Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Mission to Ireland, the country that will next hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union
DESTINATION	Strasbourg, France and Dublin, Ireland
DATES	October 1 to 10, 2012
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. David Tkachuk The Hon. Joan Fraser
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Joyce Bateman Ms. Annick Papillon Mr. Scott Simms Mr. David Tilson
STAFF	Mr. Maxime Ricard, Association Secretary Mr. Phillip Méla, Association Secretary Ms. Karin Phillips, Association Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 58, 283. 23
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 16, 366. 19
HOSPITALITY	\$ 2, 872. 60
PER DIEMS	\$ 7, 254. 20
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 538. 36
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 36. 08
TOTAL	\$ 85, 350 .66