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Review of the Irish Presidency, including the MFF agreement
Council and Commission statements
Strasbourg, 2 July 2013

The Taoiseach delivered the speech in Annex I (check against delivery).

President Barroso on behalf of the Commission delivered the speech in Annex I, in which he made an overview of the IE Presidency's achievements, which he praised as a very successful one.

On behalf of political groups,

M. Mitchell, EPP, IE, warmly congratulated the Taoiseach for what he saw as a very successful IE Presidency, the seventh since its accession but the first one under the new treaty arrangements. He welcomed Croatia and stated that EU membership brought more sovereignty and strength to Member States.

Mr. Swoboda, S&D, AT thanked and congratulated the outgoing IE Presidency. On the MFF, he stated that a deal could have been reached earlier if the Council Secretariat had allowed it. He particularly welcomed the deal with regard to youth unemployment measures and the aid for the most deprived persons. He considered that one of the most important issues the EU had been faced with over recent months was a complacent banking sector which was blocking reforms - notably on bonuses - with the active support of some governments.

Ms. Jensen, ALDE, DK praised the achievements and hard work of the IE Presidency. On the MFF, she conceded that the deal was not as ambitious as the European Parliament had wished, in particular on spending priorities. She said that the EP would work on the basis of the flexibility and review clause and try to improve the MFF in due course. She called for a more transparent decision-making process from the Council and European Council in future.

Mr. Cohn-bendit, Greens/EFA, FR was the most critical of the outcome on the MFF, which he considered very disappointing. He did not share the support from his colleagues for a deal which had agreed on insufficient funding to tackle youth unemployment across Europe. He stated that the EU had missed a historic opportunity to lift Europe out of the crisis. He criticized the UK Prime Minister and other EU leaders as feeding national self interest and regretted that the EP had failed to oppose this trend. He stated that the Council of the EU wanted to dominate over Europe, but was not keen on democracy.

Mr. Ashworth, ECR, UK congratulated the Presidency on what he saw as a highly effective negotiation on the MFF deal, which he considered as sensible and pragmatic. He stated that its implementation, especially on measures to tackle youth unemployment and support SMEs, would be key. He welcomed the flexibility clause, which would enable changing priorities to be addressed. He said that there was no substitute for austerity measures and a return to sound public finances.

M. Murphy, GUE, IE considered that the success story portrayed was not accurate, as IE was returning to recession and the next MFF would be the first austerity budget in the EU's history. He called for the suspension of EU-US talks on trade and was highly critical of US espionage against the EU. He called on Member States to grant asylum to Snowden.

Ms Dodds, NI, UK congratulated the IE outgoing Presidency on the conclusion of difficult negotiations on the next MFF, whilst regretting the lack of focus on the inter-institutional disputes which had arisen during the talks.

In their individual interventions, MEPs stressed in particular following points:

Mr Lamassoure, chair of the budgets committee and head of the EP negotiating team on the MFF paid tribute to the IE Presidency for its negotiating skills and achievements, while stressing that the EP had been realistic in making important concessions. He said that the MFF budget was financed by Member States and that there was therefore no margins of manoeuvre to go beyond the proposed amounts given the current context of austerity. He agreed with M. Cohn-Bendit that the deal struck would not be sufficient to meet the EU's needs and that therefore the EP would work on the basis of the 2016 review, based on the proceedings of a "mini-convention" devoted to the issue of future financing. He called on his colleagues to accept the deal and said that the European Parliament would formally adopt it once the Draft Amending Budgets (DABs) for 2013 have been adopted by the Council. Mr. Dehaene, EPP, BE said that the MFF compromise was acceptable given the wider context, but was not providing the EU with the resources to meet its objectives. He called for the creation of own resources as a means to lower the pressure on national budgets and contributions, and for an end to the unanimity rule on the MFF. M. Kalfin, S&D, BG stated that the MFF compromise had been very difficult to reach. He considered the overall amounts to be insufficient to finance the EU's political priorities, but hoped that the mid-term review in 2016 would allow for the necessary adjustments. He called on the Council to open up negotiations on the CAP and to adopt the DABs for 2013 as a pre-requisite for an EP agreement on the MFF compromise.

Ms Trüpel, Greens, DE stated that her group would vote against the MFF agreement, which in her view was not future-oriented and did not focus on the right priorities, which are R&D, education, SMEs.

M. Sefcovic on behalf of the Commission warmly congratulated the IE Presidency for its achievements, as well as the Ministers in charge and staff.

The Taoiseach in his concluding remarks stated that his government had hoped for a more ambitious MFF, but had to work within the current context. He considered however that the overall amounts together with the flexibility and review clause provided a balanced outcome. In response to Mr. Cohn-Bendit and others, he stated that the 960 billion Euros secured by the deal were a significant amount, which if well used could make a difference.

He therefore invited the European Parliament to work towards the objective of effective implementation of the next MFF. In response to M. Murphy, he said that the suspicions over spying by the US ought to be dealt with in the appropriate way, and expressed the hope that the trade talks with the US could proceed in due course, as their successful conclusion would benefit the economy and create growth and jobs.

Speech by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD to the European Parliament

Strasbourg, 2nd July 2013

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

President of the European Parliament, President of the European Commission, distinguished leaders of the political groups, members of the European Parliament.

As Taoiseach, I'm proud to speak to the European Parliament, in this **Review of the Irish Presidency** and the **MFF**.

Ireland's seventh Presidency of the Council concluded on Sunday. A hectic final week, ending an extraordinarily-busy and productive six months. Through the support and partnership of the European Parliament, Ireland's Presidency achieved significant results. I thank you for your confidence and your commitment as we discharged our Presidential duties.

When I last addressed you it was to mark a new Presidency in a New Year. I spoke of what we would do of the urgent need to get results. Today I am proud to say we have achieved them.

President Schulz, Honourable Members.

Six months ago, I set out our objectives, based on the three pillars of **Stability, Jobs and Growth**. We set out to make good on our commitments, in particular, those made at the highest political level.

We could do no less.

Since, at this difficult juncture, it was imperative that our citizens and the markets see clear evidence that our Union could and would, follow through on commitments made. Such follow-through has been the hallmark of the Irish Presidency. I believe what we have achieved in that regard has bolstered the credibility of our Union its role and work in the eyes of our people.

Since we assumed the Presidency after a particularly torrid period achieving and sustaining stability was an obvious and key goal.

Banking union was of critical importance. We needed to repair and renovate our banks to do two vital things. Firstly, generate sustainable economic growth. Secondly, to prove to our citizens they

could depend to us to do what we said we would do at the meeting of Heads of State and Government. Which was to sever the link between banks and sovereigns. The follow-through achieved in the Irish Presidency was seen in three further developments. The new, single supervisor, stronger capital rules for banks and, just last week, in agreeing new rules for bank wind downs. These new **bank resolution rules** will protect taxpayers from having to bail out the banks again.

Equally in our Presidency, we also worked to put in place positive drivers for **growth and job creation** across Europe.

When it comes to those all-important jobs, to sustain our families, our communities, **trade** is crucial. So we concentrated on securing agreement on the **mandate for EU-US** talks. Such agreement is essential to what should be a game-changing Transatlantic Partnership – one based on an equal and open relationship. This will allow us to turn the enormous potential for jobs and growth into reality.

SMEs are the lifeblood of job creation. So we made Europe's small businesses a priority, every step of the way. For example, we managed to achieve the political agreement that will make it easier for our SMEs to access the EU's two trillion euro **public procurement** market through a simpler and cheaper bid process.

With this everybody wins.

More bids, governments can get better value for money; our small businesses can really compete and expand.

Research and Development is something this Parliament holds dear. The 70-billion euro **Horizon 2020** programme agreed in principle last week is crucial in terms of R&D. The proportion of such funds taken up by SMEs should go up by one-third.

But we could have done little or none of this without the close co-operation of the institutions.

Securing agreement with the European Parliament on the EU's **Common Agricultural Policy** for the next seven years has been one of our Presidency's most important achievements. It will greatly enhance our efforts to transform our **agriculture and fisheries industries** into sustainable, 'green' sectors for growth.

I welcome the Parliament's strong support for the **16-billion euro Erasmus-Plus programme**. Like many here, I am a fan of Umberto Eco. We believe that it is indeed 'culture not war that cements our amazing 70-year-old peace'.

I am especially happy with work done on the **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund**. This will provide real support for an important section of our society - our redundant workers. We can never underestimate the layers or depth of trauma of a hard worker being made redundant.

Throughout our Presidency, we maintained a strong focus on **those all-important** high-potential sectors, such as **digital**. Equally, we made major progress on **data protection** and legislation on **e-identification**. Both of which I know are at the heart of your own agenda.

We made headway too on issues such as the **European Protection Order, Access to Lawyers in Criminal Proceedings, and Insolvency**.

We concluded, successfully, the historic negotiations that will allow the Union to accede to the European Convention of Human Rights.

Extending the same standards of protection to our citizens in their dealings with the EU institutions as when dealing with their own governments.

We have also shown significant leadership in the area of **CSDP** (Capability Development, Maritime Surveillance and Cyber Security).

In addition we have laid the initial groundwork for the thematic discussion on Defence at the December European Council.

But there has been one, signal issue of Ireland's Presidency.

Our absolute commitment to ending the horror of youth unemployment. It is an abomination against our young men and women. Too many of whom have reached working age, but have yet to know and feel what it is like to get up and have a job to go to. The sense of purpose and pride and dignity of a job well done. Our Union must be 100 per cent sure that we will not allow youth unemployment to lock our young men and women out of their futures, out of the happy and successful lives they could and should and with this initiative can now be living.

I am heartened then that in just the second month of our Presidency we managed to secure the commitment of all member states to the **Youth Guarantee**. It will give young people under the age of 25 the chance of training or a new job within four months of their becoming unemployed.

It is clear to all of us that to tackle youth unemployment we must press ahead with **adapting our education and training systems** to 21st century norms including partnerships with employers.

To boost employment and employability we have taken important decisions on cross-border mobility. Including a stronger **EURES** job-search facility. Presidency agreements on the expanded **Erasmus-Plus** programme and on **professional qualifications** will make an important contribution to this area. As will agreement with the Parliament on the proposal on portability of **pension rights**.

In all of this, and in particular to front-load funding for the Youth Guarantee, we worked with you, the Parliament.

But there was one more urgent issue.

The MFF.

President Schulz, Honourable Members.

Our work on the MFF has underpinned so much of our Presidency endeavours and achievements. It was just last Thursday in Brussels that President Schulz and the Presidency, along with President Barroso, reached a long and eagerly-awaited agreement on the MFF.

As Parliament you vote on this agreement tomorrow. You cast your vote on a complex series of texts dealing with important technical and financial matters. You know that the negotiations to this point were long and difficult and highly sensitive for both Council and Parliament. The result identifies the best way to ensure that the almost 1 trillion Euros for MFF is released as soon as possible into the real economy.

From the outset you made it clear that the priorities for the Parliament were the arrangements for flexibility Review/Revision, Own Resources, and the Unity of the Budget. In many ways, those priorities shaped the agenda for subsequent negotiation.

The Parliament's insistence on greater flexibility in how we manage our resources was a very significant step forward and I welcome that. This will help to ensure that we get the maximum out of our budget at a time when every single euro counts.

But there were times when the Council and Parliament differed sharply. Times when it was so very difficult to make progress in the negotiations. Times when there was frustration and disappointment on both sides.

But we refused to be daunted or remain divided. We built on the trust we had nurtured, on the relationships we had developed. We didn't give up. We kept at it. And because we did, we got there. Now the detail of what we agreed is before you.

Yes, we listened to the Parliament. By listening actively, I believe we managed to address the main issues of concern identified by you in your 13th of March Resolution.

As in all good negotiations, the outcome struck a balance. Not everyone in the Council was happy, something of an under-statement. But not everyone in the Parliament is 100% satisfied either!

I am happy to say today that it was the Parliament that championed many of the important measures. Not least jumpstarting Research-and-Innovation resources earlier than planned.

The flexibility you introduced allows us to advance more money for youth unemployment. You worked to ensure that aid for the Most Deprived stays at current levels and is not reduced. No one institution has a monopoly of wisdom. And the Parliament has made the MFF a better instrument.

The signal that we now send to our struggling peoples our struggling businesses and especially to our young men and women is that yes Europe is capable Europe is competent it is worthy your trust it is deserving of our confidence.

Because it can and does decide. It can and does deliver.

Today, 500 million members of the European family face what are, for all of us, unprecedented challenges in our economy our society. The MFF is the single, biggest investment tool we have at our disposal. We need to come together and use it forthwith

President Schulz, Honourable Members.

At the New Year, I described the Parliament as our partner. on our six-month Presidency journey. At the height of the summer we can look back and say what a journey we have had. We have invested considerable time and effort in growing and tending to our relationship.

From the outset, we worked intensively with you. In fact, since long before our Presidency started. The long hours of negotiations at all levels and across the full spectrum of the Union's work. I believe that we have respected the role of this Parliament and its mandate.

That respect has been a characteristic of the Irish Presidency. Equally we have done our best to represent and always faithfully, the role and mandate of the Council. We have come to know each other to become familiar with and to value each other's perspectives.

Our Minister for European Affairs is now well-known to you all. She has been a regular presence in this chamber representing the Council and listening to the diverse views of your members. Here today, I thank her. for her invaluable contribution.

Yes for all of us the Presidency, Parliament and Council the work has been challenging. At times daunting. But individually and especially together we have been equal to it. Because we are strengthened and uplifted in our common cause.

Our proud people and their proud and prosperous and peaceful future.

President Schulz, Honourable Members.

As you know, managing a Presidency places considerable demands on any administration. This is particularly so in the case of smaller Member State such as Ireland.

As my Government first came to office, we began to plan for this Presidency. We believed a country making the journey to recovery would be well placed to lead a Union committed to the same destination. I believe we were right.

Our Presidency has been good for Ireland, I hope good for our Union, and very good for our urgent agenda of Stability, Jobs and Growth.

Today I am proud to say to the Parliament that I am very deeply European.

I believe in the idea of Europe as 'home'. And because I do I believe as Europeans we do ourselves an injustice by failing to marvel at what we have made and above all what we have made together from the wreckage of war, atrocity, chaos.

Lithuania, a new and old European, assumes the Presidency.

I'm drawn to the words of the man who called himself "the last citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the Nobel laureate who was perhaps best known as a Polish writer". I refer, of course, to Czeslaw Milosz, so beloved of our own Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney.

Milosz wrote:

“Undoubtedly, I would call Europe my home. But it was a home that refused to acknowledge itself as a whole. Instead, as if on the strength of some self-imposed taboo, it classified its population into two categories members of the family (quarrelsome but respectable) and poor relations.”

Today we Europeans are what we must strive to be very much a whole very much one family. Our shared identity exists beyond the realm of mere economics or currency. or money. It is in our literature, our music our culture and above all our people. For we are the early generations lucky enough to be not merely ‘Europeans’ but European.

President Schulz, Honourable Members

In Ireland we have an old saying that a wound heals from the margins in. I hope that what we achieved at the Western margins will bring new healing and with it new hope, new prosperity to our European people, our European home.

One where there is room always for God’s goodness, human kindness, dignity, joy.

Review of the Irish Presidency including the MFF agreement
Speech by José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission
At the European Parliament
Strasbourg, 2 July 2013

Mr. President,

Taoiseach,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Honourable members,

Let me first thank you, Taoiseach, Dear Enda Kenny, for the excellent cooperation during this Council Presidency and very sincerely congratulate you on the impressive work and results. Let me add a special thanks to the Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore and the Europe Minister Lucinda Creighton, to all your political colleagues and civil servants, for their dedication and their competence, which made this a focused and very successful Council Presidency.

Honourable members,

The core priorities of the last months were clearly set out at the start of the Irish Presidency and carefully maintained thereafter: stability, growth and jobs.

We have made further progress in updating the European Union's architecture to the pressures of the 21st century economy, showing that we are learning the lessons from the crisis.

Some of the main deliverables of the past months were in the field of financial services, where political agreements were found between co-legislators on two cornerstones of the Banking Union: the Single Supervisory Mechanism and the Capital Requirements Directive and Regulation. A general approach was also agreed in Council on Bank Resolution and Recovery, on the Directive and Regulation on Markets in Financial Instruments and on Packaged Retail Investment Products.

A political agreement in second reading on the Deposit Guarantee Schemes still needs to be found, indeed, there has been a standstill for one and a half years.

On the economic governance front, the two pack has entered into force, the European Semester method is gaining strength, and we have started debate on ex-ante coordination of major economic reforms and on the Convergence and Competitiveness Instrument, which is the way forward to guarantee the responsibility of, and the solidarity between member states in the future.

Let me specially thank the Irish Presidency for the support given to the consolidation of the European semester. As I said in the previous debate, I think now we have a much more structured and credible exercise of collective economic governance in the European Union.

As we made clear from the previous debate, we have made progress on measures that can help create more growth and jobs directly.

Today we can say that youth employment is at the top of the priorities of European Union action and of course the Irish Presidency gave certainly a very important contribution for this.

Following the Commission initiative, the recommendation on the European Youth Guarantee was adopted earlier this year, one of the main elements to break the cycle of youth unemployment, and with the preparations during the past months and the decisions taken just last week I believe we are making sure we will meet that challenge, together. Now the key is implementation. Let's create no illusions about what the European level can do. A lot has to be done at national level, but I believe we have now the political momentum to make this a reality – the success of the fight against youth unemployment.

We have also during the Irish Presidency launched negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with Japan and we have now a mandate to start negotiations on the transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the United States. Both negotiations will be difficult and sensitive, but the potential benefits of ambitious deals would be unprecedented. Ireland clearly understands the importance of the boost these deals can bring, and I thank you for your support and leadership in the Council.

In taxation, one of the priorities of the May European Council and so important for the legitimacy of every other effort we make in terms of public finances, we now have a mandate for negotiating savings taxation agreements with non-EU third countries, as well as a Council decision authorising enhanced cooperation for a Directive on Financial Transaction Tax.

And in the area of enlargement, the historic decision to open negotiations with Serbia was confirmed and the Council agreed to open negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo.

So it was an eventful six months.

But no deal was more important than the political deal reached on the Multiannual Financial framework last week.

Last week's agreement represents a good compromise between the interests of the Member States and the objectives of the European Parliament, and as you know is the result of the longest and the most hard-fought budget negotiations ever.

I believe the final result sends out an important signal that the institutions of the European Union are able to work together and agree on a budget that will help the EU emerge from the crisis.

The European Commission has fully played its role and I am happy that the President Schulz and the Taoiseach were able to meet with myself first to unblock the negotiations and then to build on that to come to an agreement at political level on the MFF. Of course, we hope this to be formally endorsed by all.

The dynamics of the negotiation process – unanimity in the Council, consent by absolute majority in Parliament – requires that all sides move towards a consensus. I want to praise all those that have worked for this objective, namely the negotiating teams of the European Parliament - without their commitment this would not have been possible - but also of the Irish Presidency and of the Commission.

For the European Commission, the objective has been to ensure that the future budget is workable and manageable. As you know our initial proposal was more ambitious, but the final outcome respects those principles, maintains the necessary balance and keeps the basic structure of the initial proposal intact. From the beginning, the Commission called for a maximum possibility of flexibility and we have strongly supported the European Parliament in this demand, so I'm satisfied that this was finally achieved.

The role of the European Parliament throughout the negotiations has been very significant and successful. In addition to the flexibility of payments and commitments, the European Parliament was able to secure a number of important breakthroughs. Let me just mention some – on the mid-term review of the MFF, on support for measures against youth employment, education, research and SMEs, on the consolidation of the programme of aid to the most deprived, and of course the clear commitments regarding the amending budgets for 2013, which need to be fully honoured... And of course I would also like to remind the decisions concerning the follow up about the own resources issue. Taken together, they show how the European Parliament was able to use its consent power responsibly and effectively.

For this reason, after Member States in the European Council have already given the MFF their full backing, I hope this House too, in its political resolution, will support it tomorrow.

We need this budget. Not for the European Union institutions, but for our citizens, for our regions, namely these that are in a more difficult situation where the investment coming from the European Union is by far the most important part of the public investment.

In the context of the MFF, I also need to refer to the very important achievements on some of the sectoral MFF programmes during the Irish Presidency. Let me just name a few of them as examples:

An important agreement was reached on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013 – another of the Irish priorities - strengthening the position of farmers within the food production chain, making direct payments fairer and greener, and making the CAP more effective and more transparent.

An agreement on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy was also reached.

And in terms of the other sectoral MFF proposals, some of them very innovative with which the Commission is especially proud like COSME for SMEs, like Connecting Europe facility, like Creative Europe, like Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, there is now a political deal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, the Irish Presidency had all the elements of a successful one: a clear set of priorities, genuine political commitment, technical knowledge and drive, and a safe pair of hands to manage it all. And the capacity, as you underlined Taoiseach, to build and reinforce on the relation of trust and respect between the Presidency of the Council and the European institutions like the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Thank you for the hard work and close cooperation.

We will all benefit from that in the next six months which, under the first ever Lithuanian Presidency, promise to be just as important for Europe's economic and political future.

I thank you for your attention.