



How the
European institutions work
Northern Ireland in Europe seminar

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agendaNi seminar
part of the **government explained** series

Northern Ireland in Europe: Engaging the EU effectively

For those unfamiliar with its workings, the various institutions of the EU can seem complicated and confusing. The idea of bringing issues to the attention of what is seen as a far-away organisation, augmented by the perception of language and cultural barriers can seem like a huge challenge. However the EU is becoming increasingly relevant to an ever growing number of businesses, as well as public and voluntary sector organisations. Much of the legislation that impacts upon individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland originates at EU level and in order to influence this it is vital to gain an understanding of the various institutions, their role and how they work, and how they potentially impact upon Northern Ireland. It is even more important to learn how to communicate and interact effectively with the EU, in all its various forms.

agendaNi has put together this seminar to provide some insight to our readers on all these issues. The seminar will be relevant to people at all levels within organisations – both those who have some understanding of ‘Europe’ and how it works, as well as those who are totally new to the area. The seminar will be delivered by a high profile panel of experts, with considerable expertise and experience in their various areas, who will share their insight and knowledge with attendees.

Who should attend? If you work in...

Public affairs or communications

This seminar is a must if you work in the public affairs arena. ‘Europe’ should form a key part of any integrated public affairs or communications strategy, and an understanding of how Europe works and how to interact successfully with the various institutions should form part of the essential ‘toolkit’ of any public affairs professional.

Northern Ireland public sector

Knowing how the entire political system operates, including at a European level, is vital to the role of any public official. This seminar will provide a valuable understanding of the institutions of Europe and how they work, as well as an overview of how Northern Ireland fits into Europe.

Business sector

European legislation impacts upon a wide range of businesses and public sector organisations in Northern Ireland. The seminar will provide insight into the European legislative process and highlight how organisations can keep informed of, and get involved in, the process.

Voluntary or community sector

European funding has been vital for the survival and success of many organisations within the third sector in Northern Ireland. This seminar will outline the future funding landscape.

Session one:

Introducing the European Union

This opening session will provide some of the history of the European Union, as well as outlining its purpose and objectives and an introduction to how it works and its various institutions. The session will be chaired and introduced by Maurice Maxwell, Head of the European Commission office in Northern Ireland who will outline why Europe matters to Northern Ireland and provide some overview on how the Commission works in practice. He will be joined by Dr David Phinnemore, Jean Monnet Chair in European Political Science at Queen’s University who will give an overview of the European institutions.

- 09.30 **Chair and introduction:
Why Europe matters to Northern Ireland
and how the European Commission works
in practice**
Maurice Maxwell, Head of European Commission
Office in Northern Ireland
- 09.50 **An introduction to the institutions of
Europe**
Dr David Phinnemore,
Jean Monnet Chair in European Political Science,
Queen’s University
- 10.15 Questions and discussion
- 10.30 Refreshments / Networking break



Session two:

The European Union in operation: The institutions of Europe

The European Union is comprised primarily of the 'institutional triangle' of the Council, the Commission and the Parliament, supported by the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors, and five further institutions: the European Central Bank; the Economic and Social Committee; the Committee of the Regions; the European Investment Bank and the European Ombudsman. This session will provide an introduction to some of the key organisations within the EU. The three local MEPs will participate in the session and will be available for a Q&A/panel discussion session - this provides a valuable opportunity for organisations wishing to learn more about engaging with Europe to have their questions answered and to seek advice and guidance from the experts.

11.00 **Representing Northern Ireland in Europe: Panel discussion**

Jim Nicholson, MEP
Bairbre de Brún, MEP
Diane Dodds, MEP

Discussion themes:

- The role of the MEP;
- Importance of Europe to Northern Ireland;
- Key issues transacted on behalf of Northern Ireland in Europe;
- Advice on accessing the European Parliament/MEPs;
- Experience of committees;
- How to get things done in Europe.

11.45 **The European Economic & Social Committee**
Jane Morrice, Northern Ireland representative & former Head of the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland

12.05 **Representing Northern Ireland in Europe**
Speaker tbc, Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels

12.25 Questions and discussion

12.45 Networking lunch

Session three:

Engaging with Europe: A practical guide

The afternoon session will provide insight and advice on how to effectively engage with Europe. Any public affairs or communications strategy should have Europe as an audience or stakeholder and this session will provide those with an interest in bringing their issues to the European arena with a practical guide on how to do this successfully. Participants in the session include a number of seasoned experts in transacting with Europe including Weber Shandwick and the Federation of Small Businesses. The OFMDFM Committee at the Northern Ireland Assembly earlier this year concluded an enquiry into European issues and Committee Chairperson Danny Kennedy MLA will outline some of the findings to the seminar. Also participating in the afternoon session is Pat Colgan from SEUPB who will outline the future European funding landscape.

13.45 **Enhancing the role of the Northern Ireland Assembly in Europe**

Danny Kennedy, MLA, Chairman
Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

14.00 **Engaging with Europe: A users guide**

Jon McLeod, Chairman
Corporate Communications and Public Affairs
Weber Shandwick

14.20 **Case study: Transacting the business agenda with Europe**

Speaker tbc
Federation of Small Businesses

14.40 **The future European funding landscape**

Pat Colgan, Chief Executive
Special EU Programmes Body

15.00 Questions and discussion

15.15 Chairman's concluding remarks



Speaker panel



Pat Colgan is Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). He joined SEUPB in September 2004 from the Austrian Institute for Spatial Planning and Regional Development where he was Head of the INTERACT Secretariat - an EU funded Programme which provided assistance to cross border, interregional and transnational co-operation programmes. Pat has been involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of EU funded programmes and other public policy programmes in all of the member states. Pat has worked with the Irish Management Institute, KPMG and the former Irish Goods Council (now part of Enterprise Ireland).



Diane Dodds MEP was elected as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the DUP in 2009. She is a member of the European Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and is part of the delegation for relations with Israel. She is a substitute member of the Fisheries Committee and of the delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand. She was an MLA for West Belfast from 2003-2007 and also sits on Belfast City Council.



Bairbre de Brún MEP has been a Sinn Féin Member of the European Parliament (MEP) since 2004. She is a Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Petitions. She is a Substitute Member of the Regional Development Committee. Bairbre was an MLA for West Belfast from 1998 to 2004 and was Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in the Northern Ireland Executive from 1999 to 2002.



Danny Kennedy is Chairman of the Committee of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, which earlier this year published a report, entitled 'Consideration of European Issues' which contained recommendations for the Northern Ireland Executive, the Assembly Commission and the Speaker together with actions for the Assembly's statutory committees for improving links with Europe. Danny is also a member of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee and is the Ulster Unionist Party's Deputy Leader. He has been MLA for Newry & Armagh since 1998.



Maurice Maxwell was appointed Head of the European Commission Representation in Northern Ireland effective 1 September 2008. Prior to this he opened a new European Commission Delegation in New Zealand, where he represented the Commission as Head of Delegation until September 2007. Maurice joined the European Commission in 1983 and has worked in the fields of research and development, enterprise policy, small business policy and the internal market. He subsequently worked closely with Commissioner Neil Kinnock's team charged with the reform of the internal management of the Commission.



Jon McLeod is Chairman, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs with Weber Shandwick. Jon went into public affairs in 1994, having spent six years in financial and legal journalism. His specialisms include: parliamentary and lobbying campaigns, coalition building, national media relations, litigation and legal communications, and strategic counsel. He has worked in a variety of industry sectors, including transport and infrastructure, financial services, food and agriculture, property and planning, legal and professional services, healthcare, the voluntary sector and information and communications technology.



Jane Morrice is former Deputy Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, former Head of the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland, and former BBC Correspondent. Jane is currently Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Equality Commission. She is also one of Northern Ireland's two members of the Brussels-based European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and is a member of the EESC Transport and Energy Section and the Social Affairs Section.



Jim Nicholson MEP has been the Ulster Unionist Member of the European Parliament (MEP) since 1989. Jim sits with the Conservative delegation in Parliament which, with 25 MEPs, constitutes the largest national grouping in the European Conservative and Reformists group (ECR). He sits on two committees: Agriculture and Rural Development and Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. At the beginning of the new legislature Jim was appointed as co-ordinator for the ECR group for the policy area of agriculture. In 2004 Jim was elected by his fellow MEPs as a Quaestor and served for five years as a member of the bureau, the internal decision-making body of the European Parliament.



Dr. David Phinnemore is Senior Lecturer in European Integration and Jean Monnet Chair at the School of Politics and International Studies, Queen's University Belfast and Visiting Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. His research and publications are primarily in the areas of EU enlargement, EU external relations and EU treaty reform.

Key elements of the seminar

- Background to the European Union
- Overview of the main European institutions: their role and how they interact
- The role of the MEP
- The committee system within the European Parliament
- Introduction to the European Economic & Social Committee
- Lobbying case study: Federation of Small Businesses
- The future European funding landscape



Benefits of attending

- Gain an understanding of the role of the EU - how it has evolved and its purpose, the benefits it can offer to member countries
- Hear directly from people with first hand experience of working within the EU – Maurice Maxwell, Jane Morrice, Diane Dodds, Bairbre de Brún, Jim Nicholson, Pat Colgan
- Learn how interacting with the EU can benefit individuals and organisations – what the EU can offer
- Find out how to formulate and transact a public affairs agenda at the European level, including practical advice on meeting MEPs, briefing committees, visiting Brussels/Strasbourg etc
- Get the latest update on the future of European funding
- Opportunity to engage directly with our three MEPs on key European issues

agendaNi: a full European affairs agenda



agendaNi, Northern Ireland's public policy magazine, in addition to covering local issues, carries regular news and analysis of European affairs as they relate to the province. Each month the magazine features a page 'Brussels to Belfast' looking at key developments in Europe, particularly as they relate to Northern Ireland. During 2009 we carried extensive coverage of the European elections both in the run-

up to polling day (including interviews with the candidates) and after the result had been declared profiling the three elected MEPs and their manifestoes. More recently we have covered the Northern Ireland Assembly OFMDFM Committee enquiry into European issues which proposes how the local legislature could engage better with the European institutions.

