

Questionnaire reply for the COSAC Conference (Ireland)

1. The Joint Committee on European Affairs received revised orders of reference in 1997, following the assembly of the Dáil and Seanad elected in June of that Year. The Committee's orders of reference now include an explicit reference to the role of the Joint Committee in representing the Houses of the Oireachtas at COSAC. The Joint Committee also instituted a new system of examination of EU Legislation. This involves the engagement of an independent consultancy to examine both legislative proposals by the European Commission and secondary legislation made by the Government to implement EU Directives.
- 2 & 3 The Joint Committee continues to receive Commission legislative proposals from the Department of Foreign Affairs. The time available for the examination of legislation depends on the date of receipt of documents. The protocol on national parliaments contained in the Treaty of Amsterdam has set out six weeks minimum time frame for the examination and this places for the first time a deadline on the whole process. The period of time has not in any case as yet been commented on by the Committee.
4. The Joint Committee has not commented on this question in any of its reports. In any case, the Department of Foreign Affairs sends the Committee other documents such as the agendas for Permanent Representation meetings which include the list of the issues discussed at that level.
5. The Oireachtas regularly receives the reports of two other parliaments' European Affairs Committees and other parliaments reports from time to time. The Committee has substantial contacts with committees in other parliaments mainly through COSAC and occasionally bilateral links.
6. The Joint Committee participates in European Parliament's meetings as these arise. Other Oireachtas Committees also participate in such meetings, depending on the subject areas being discussed