

Statement for PC on Thursday 29 March 2007

Recent Developments in Northern Ireland

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to make a brief statement on behalf of the delegations of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Participating states have on numerous occasions expressed their interest in developments in the Northern Ireland political process and their support for a long-term solution in Northern Ireland. The delegations of the UK and Ireland have undertaken to keep the Permanent Council informed of significant developments in the process and today I am pleased to be able to report significant progress.

On Monday 26 March the leadership of the two principal political parties, Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionists, made an unprecedented public commitment to enter into power-sharing government on 8 May 2007. This development is regarded as very positive by the British and Irish Governments and has the potential to transform the future of Northern Ireland.

Legislation to facilitate the new date for the formation of an Executive passed through both Houses of Parliament in London and gained Royal Assent on 27 March.

The British and Irish Governments are committed to ensuring that the final steps of the political process are successfully completed through partnership and cooperation.

Further significant developments in the political process will be brought to the attention of the Permanent Council.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.