

NORTH SOUTH ECONOMIC COOPERATION

1 There is a wide range of cooperation between agencies, Government Departments, State Companies and non-Governmental Institutions, North and South. Appendix 1 details the involvement of 35 agencies, which have been consulted. Other agencies also have involvement such as the Arts Council, CSO and OPW.

2 Cooperation takes the form of All Ireland institutions and links between related individual agencies North and South and through joint projects involving a multiplicity of agencies working together. Most joint projects are funded through the EC INTERREG Programme (details of which are given under the entry on the Department of Finance, Foreign Affairs and other individual agencies), and under the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) (details of which are set out in Appendix 1, section 26 and under individual agencies).

3 A major boost to cooperation has been the series of Ministerial meetings under the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (AIIGC) (see Foreign Affairs section) which has lead to a more focused approach and speeded up developments. The Minister for Industry and Commerce and his Northern counterpart held discussion at the meeting in March 1992 on North-South trade and the implications of the Single European Market for the Island of Ireland. The Conference underlined the importance of the Single European Market in meeting the economic challenge facing both parts of Ireland as among the most peripheral regions of the European Community. The Conference welcomed increasing interest and new initiatives in North/South cooperation as well as the continuing work of the economic development agencies, the International Fund for Ireland, the CII/CBI Joint North-South initiative, the Chambers of Commerce and other bodies working together to improve the economic position of the island. The Conference reviewed joint initiatives to expand North-South trade and promote economic cooperation, particularly in respect of research, technology and innovation and of the opening up of public sector markets. The Conference agreed arrangements for officials to undertake further work to encourage cross-border trade and economic co-operation. It was proposed - that a North/South group be established, headed by the Department of Industry and Commerce in the South and the Department of Economic Development in the North. The group would:-

- (i) Explore ways of overcoming obstacles to cross-border trade (including administrative difficulties and communication problems).
- (ii) Support the CII/CBI initiative on cross-border trade and other such initiatives by representative bodies.
- (iii) Pursue measures on the opening up of public sector markets North and South.
- (iv) Promote further North/South cooperation in the industrial research and technology areas.
- (v) Examine the development of joint courses (by third level colleges) in areas having a bearing on trade/economic development. The Group has

been established and has held 4 meetings focusing on technology and trade cooperation. The Chairperson of the Southern side of the Group is Agnes Aylward, Office of Trade and Marketing.

4 In June 1992 the Government published a study Ireland in Europe, A Shared Challenge : Economic Co-operation on the Island of Ireland in an Integrated Europe which identifies the main areas of cooperation and suggests areas for development of further cooperation.

5 The idea of a Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor has been the subject of much recent attention and is the subject of an Inter-Agency Working Group.

(See details of membership under IDA 22.12, and section 29 on ideals)

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Submission by the Irish Government Delegation
Possible Institutional Structures

Need to cater for both identities and allegiances:

1 In the submission dealing with "Identity, Allegiance and Underlying Realities put forward by the Irish Government on 28th August, we stated that "the heart of the problem in Northern Ireland is a conflict between two separate identities. They involve conflicting allegiances which transcend the confines of Northern Ireland itself."

2 This analysis of the problem is very widely shared. We note that the Sub-Committee of Strand One agreed at its meeting of 7th May 1992 that "each individual and community had the absolute right to define their own identity and that right and identity should be respected, and furthermore that "any new political institutions should be such as to give expression to the identity and validity of each main tradition."

3 It follow from this analysis that new structures to address the problem must cater adequately for both sets of identities and allegiances, on terms each can identify with. The Irish Government believes, in the words of the Forum Report (5.2(4)) that "Both of these identities must have equally satisfactory, secure and durable political administrative and symbolic expression and protection."

4 Northern Ireland is a divided society. Its fundamental problem, a the British White Paper of 1973, has been, from its establishment down to the present day, "disagreement not just about how Northern Ireland (should be governed, but as to whether it should exist at