



Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

Inter-parliamentary Cooperation with Romania

31 October – 2 November 2015

Report of the Delegation

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

Inter-parliamentary Cooperation with Romania

1. A delegation of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs visited Romania from 31 October - 2 November 2015. The delegation of the Joint Committee was led by the Chairman, Dominic Hannigan TD, who was accompanied by Eric Byrne TD, John Halligan TD and Derek Keating TD.
2. The Joint Committee accepted an invitation of Ms. Ana Birchall, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee, Parliament of Romania. The purpose of this visit was to advance inter-parliamentary cooperation between the European Affairs Committees of both Parliaments and to discuss matters of mutual interest, and followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Parliaments, in preparation for Romania's first Presidency of the European Union.
3. During the visit the delegation held a total of 5 formal meetings (*the full programme is appended*).
4. The Joint Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the Parliament of Romania for hosting the Irish delegation, in particular Ms. Ana Birchall and for the very generous hospitality during the visit. The Joint Committee would also like to thank Mr. Vlad Oprea, Mayor of Sinaia City and all those who met with the delegation during their time in Romania. The Joint Committee also expresses its gratitude to the Irish Ambassador to Romania, Mr. Derek Feely and to his staff for their assistance in relation to the visit.



Dominic Hannigan, T.D.
Chairman

16 December, 2016

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Summary of Meetings Held

Sunday 1st November 2015

I. Meeting with Mr. Vlad Oprea, Mayor of Sinaia City

The delegation met with Mayor Oprea. The Chairman began by expressing his sympathy to Mayor Oprea on the tragedy in Bucharest. During the meeting an exchange of views on tourism and EU funding took place. Mayor Oprea outlined the steps taken to invest in Sinaia City in order to increase tourism and the difficulties they have found in drawing down EU funds, with difficulty around the red tape they have encountered. The meeting concluded with a tour of the mayor's office.

Monday 2nd November 2015

II. Meeting with Mr. Sorin Ioniță, Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The delegation met with Mr. Sorin Ioniță, Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The discussion focused on TTIP, the situation in Moldova and Brexit. Mr Ioniță outlined the position regarding Moldova and that they continue to support Moldova for EU membership. They will also continue to support stability and reform.

In relation to TTIP the view was expressed that the debate should focus on the pros and cons of the proposed trade deal, such as its potential to boost both economies. During the discussion concerns were expressed around the negotiating process and lack of transparency with the Chairman concluding that an informed debate was needed especially if the agreement is a mixed agreement.

Regarding EU/UK relations or 'Brexit', Romania's position is the same as Ireland's position, that a UK exit from the EU is not desirable. Ireland particular concerns were acknowledged and the Romania side expressed support for Ireland's position on Brexit.

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III. **Meeting with members of the European Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate**

The delegation met with Mr. Mihai Tararache and Ms. Ana Birchell from the EU Affairs Committee, and Ms Anca Daniella Boagiu and Ms. Gariela Cretu from the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Chairman began by expressing his sympathies to the members on the tragedy in Bucharest. Discussion focused on the Memo of Understanding between the Houses of the Oireachtas and Romanian Parliaments which had recently been signed and also the migration crisis in the EU. On the latter, Ms. Birchell outlined how the Romanian Parliament did not support the measures introduced by the European Commission in relation to the relocation of migrants. Ms. Boagiu stated that Romania originally supported the EU position, but feels that the EU needs to tackle the problem and that imposing measures on member states will not work. Discussion on the causes of the migration and Deputy Eric Byrne spoke about the Irish position on migration and the various operations in place to accommodate the migrants that Ireland has agreed to take.

On Brexit, Ms Birchell confirmed that the Romanian side were very aware of the details of debate taking place on the various reforms sought by the UK. She expressed the view that the place of the UK is within Europe. The Chairman outlined Ireland's concerns around a possible UK exit and in particular the detrimental impact on Ireland, if the UK left the EU. Other issues discussed included the Eastern Partnership and TTIP.

IV. **Meeting with the Committee for the Romanian Communities Living Abroad**

The delegation met with members of the Committee for the Romanian Communities living abroad. Following an introduction by Chairman, Mr. Lubanovici, a discussion took place on the Irish perceptions of Romanian people living in Ireland. Other issues such as voting rights for the diaspora and how Ireland engages with its citizens abroad was also discussed. Ambassador Feely spoke about Ireland's Global Irish Network.

V. **Meeting with the Friendship Parliamentary Group with Ireland**

The delegation met with Mr. Ninel Peia and other members of the friendship group. Discussion centred on the migration crisis currently facing Europe, including the causes and complexity of the issue. Mr. Peia explained that the Romanian Parliament had rejected the European

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Commission's proposals on mandatory quotas. Deputy Byrne referred to the Eastern Partnership and how Ireland ratified it very early on.

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Appendix

PROGRAMME

Visit by Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Union Affairs to Romania

October 31st – November 2nd 2015

Saturday, October 31st 2015

17.25 - Arrival of the Irish Parliamentary Delegation in Bucharest

Met by Ms. Ana Birchall, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies and H.E. Mr. Derek Feely, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ireland to Romania

19.00 - Attendance at Informal Dinner organised by the Embassy of Ireland

Sunday, November 1st 2015

9.00 - Travel to Sinaia city with stops at Peleş Castle and Bran Castle on route

17.00 - Arrive Sinaia City

18.00 - Meeting with Mr. Vlad OPREA, Mayor of Sinaia and members of the City Council

19.00 - Official dinner hosted by Ms. Ana Birchall, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, with the attendance of local authorities and MPs representing Prahova county

Monday, November 2nd 2015

09.30 - Depart for Bucharest

12.00 - Meeting with Mr. Sorin Ioniță, Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

12.45 - Lunch in the company of members of the Friendship Parliamentary Group with Ireland

14.30 - Meeting with members of the European Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (EAC Meeting Hall)

Note

For discussion: BrExit/TTIP/Migration and Future of Europe/Scrutiny Systems

15.30 - Visit of the Palace of Parliament

16.00 - Meeting with Mr. Mircea Lubanovici, Chairman of the Committee for the Romanian Communities Living Abroad and with other members of Committee (Foreign Policy Committee's Meeting Hall- venue TBC)

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- 17.00** - Meeting with Mr. Ninel Peia, Chairman of the Friendship Parliamentary Group with Ireland and members of the Group (EAC Meeting Hall)
- 18.30** - Dinner with the Chairpersons and members of the European Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate
- 19.45** - Transfer to the International Airport "Henri Coandă"
- 21.45** - Departure of the Delegation for Ireland

General Notes:

1. Transport in Romania will be ensured by the host Chamber, by midi-bus
2. Starting from Sunday, November 1st, the Irish Delegation will be accompanied by Mr. Cosmin Arsene, counselor at the Cabinet of the Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, Mrs. Rodica UNGUREANU, Head of the Protocol Service and Mrs. Lidia GIANCOLA, counselor in the Protocol Service