



Annual Report 2006/2007: Irish Section

The Irish Section of the AEJ has concentrated its energies during 2006/7 on the organisation of the Annual Congress in Dublin in November 2007. We received a great deal of support in that endeavour from European and Irish official bodies as well as from private companies.

Of course, our regular lunch meetings at the St. Stephen's Green and Hibernian Club have continued to thrive, with attendances ranging between 25 and 50. In every case, the meetings were covered by the Irish media; sometimes, we even made the lead story.

In October 2006, we hosted Michael McDowell TD, then Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. In November, we heard from Dr Maurice Manning, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission, who said some unflattering things about the Garda Síochána (Irish Police). Following tradition, we were invited by the current Irish EU-Commissioner, Charlie McCreevy, for a Christmas lunch in December.

The New Year was opened in January by Pat Rabbitte TD, the then leader of the Labour Party and then hoping to form an alternative government. This was not to be. In March, we were again invited by the Director of the European Commission Representation Office in Dublin, Martin Territt, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the EU. We were addressed by Noel Tracey TD, then Minister for European Affairs. The event was co-hosted by the German Embassy in Ireland, who held the European presidency at the time, with the ambassador present, too.

The Irish General Election at the end of May absorbed members' attention but we had a lunch in May with Pat Farrell, chief executive of the Irish Bankers Federation, who gave us his insights from the time when he was General Secretary of Fianna Fáil, the largest political party in Ireland.

After the summer break, we hosted the new Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in September. Eamon Ryan TD is one of the Cabinet ministers from the Green Party who have joined government for the first time after the election.

The Irish Section, accompanied by a strong delegation from the British AEJ, visited Cork in October at the invitation of the Irish Examiner newspaper group where the Group Chief Executive, Anthony Dinan, hosted a lunch in their new corporate headquarters on the South Mall. We were even treated to a night at the opera!

The Irish Section is happy to offer all the insights it gained during the build-up to the Dublin Congress 2007 to any future host section.

Eileen Dunne, Chair
Martin Alioth, Secretary
Tim Ryan, Treasurer

October 2007