

The Fifth Irish Presidency of the European Union: Some Management Lessons

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Foreword

This paper is one of a series commissioned by the Committee for Public Management Research. The Committee is developing a comprehensive programme of research designed to serve the needs of the future development of the Irish public service. Committee members come from the Departments of Finance, Environment and Rural Development, Health and Children, Taoiseach and Public Enterprise, as well as from Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and the Institute of Public Administration. The research is undertaken for the Committee by the research department at the Institute of Public Administration.

This series aims to prompt discussion and debate on topical issues of particular interest or concern. Papers may outline experience, both national and international, in dealing with a particular issue. Or they may be more conceptual in nature, prompting the development of new ideas on public management issues. The papers are not intended to set out any official position on the topic under scrutiny. Rather, the intention is to identify current thinking and best practice.

This paper summarises and discusses the main management lessons to be learned from the 5th Irish Presidency of the European Union (EU), during the period July – December 1996, as experienced by a number of the key personnel most directly involved in its planning, operationalisation and implementation. The study was commissioned by the Committee for Public Management Research (CPMR) and undertaken, during April – June 1997, in order to capture the experiences of these key individuals, whilst their recall was still fresh. This paper identifies lessons that can be learned from that experience which are of wider and more immediate application, within the context of public service reform.

We would very much welcome comments on this paper and on public management research more generally. To ensure the discussion papers and wider research programme of the Committee for Public Management Research are relevant to

managers and staff, we need to hear from you. What do you think of the issues being raised? Are there other topics you would like to see researched?

Research into the problems, solutions and successes of public management processes, and the way organisations can best adapt in a changing environment have much to contribute to good management, and are a vital element in the public service renewal process. The Committee for Public Management Research intends to provide a service to people working in public organisations by enhancing the knowledge base on public management issues.

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General information on the activities of the Committee for Public Management Research, including this paper and others in the series can be found on the world wide web site for the Department of Finance: www.irlgov.ie/finance/cpmr (this site is currently being developed).

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- Agriculture
- Enterprise and Employment
- Environment
- Finance
- Foreign Affairs, including the Office of the Permanent Representation to the EU (Brussels)
- Health
- Justice
- Social Welfare
- Taoiseach
- Tourism and Trade
- Transport, Energy and Communications.

In addition, I would like to thank the Minister of State for European Affairs during the Presidency for taking part in the study, as well as the Institute of European Affairs for its co-operation.

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Responsibility for the content of this paper however rests with the author.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 5th Irish Presidency of the European Union (EU), from July to December 1996, is regarded as having been the latest in a series of successful Presidencies over the past two decades. This research identifies a number of important management lessons that can be learned from the experience of that Presidency which are of application within the wider context of current public service reform. The research conclusions are based upon in-depth discussions with a wide cross-section of the key personnel most directly involved with its planning, operationalisation and implementation, in both Dublin and Brussels.

Drawing also upon other relevant international experience, the research analyses the management of the Presidency in relation to the role of political leadership and the centre; the development of a strategic framework and priorities; information/analysis; policy co-ordination structures and processes; policy implementation; resource and administrative issues. With regard to the EU Presidency specifically, a number of critical success factors are identified. These include the objectivity and impartiality with which Ireland prepared for and carried out the Presidency; the proactive establishment of good internal and external relationships with the key players; a consistent commitment to good strategic planning and management, as well as effective cross-departmental working and very high levels of motivation.

Using the experience of the 5th Irish EU Presidency as a case study of effective cross-departmental working, management lessons are drawn which are relevant to the implementation of the Strategic Management Initiative.

The Fifth Irish Presidency of the European Union: Some Management Lessons

Part One: Background and Overview

1.0 Structure of the Paper

This paper comprises three linked sections. *Part One* includes the purpose and terms of reference for the study; the research approach adopted and methodology employed; an outline of the role of the European Union (EU) Presidency and an analytical framework for the evaluation of the research evidence. *Part Two* uses that framework to analyse and evaluate the information collected under a number of key headings which have been identified by previous research and international experience to be important for major projects such as an EU Presidency. *Part Three* summarises the key points, identifies some critical success factors and draws out some of the important management lessons for the future.

1.1 Purpose and terms of reference

The 5th Irish Presidency of the EU, from July – December 1996, is regarded as having been the latest in a series of successful Presidencies over the past two decades (see Tonra 1996 and Ludlow 1997). This paper summarises and discusses the main management lessons to be learned from that Presidency as experienced by a number of the key personnel most directly involved in its planning, operationalisation and implementation. The study was commissioned by the Committee for Public Management Research (CPMR) in order to capture the experiences of these key individuals, whilst their recall was still fresh.

This paper does not attempt to be a comprehensive record or appraisal of the national or international policy achievements of the 5th Presidency, which would have been outside its scope. The macro-policy background to, and developments

during, that Presidency are already well documented: see for example, *Priorities for the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union* and *Developments in the European Union: Forty-Ninth Report*. Neither does this paper seek to provide a detailed handbook on how to organise a future Irish EU Presidency. Such an occurrence would not currently be scheduled until 2004 and it is not meaningful to anticipate the extent to which the experiences of 1996 will continue to be directly relevant eight years later in an expanded, rapidly developing and changing EU.

Rather this paper focuses on some of the management issues raised specifically by the 5th Presidency and identifies lessons that can be learned from that experience which are of more immediate application within the wider context of public service reform. The study's terms of reference were to summarise the main management lessons learned by:

- a) outlining the main objectives for the 5th Irish Presidency and analysing how these objectives were operationalised;
- b) identifying those processes of departmental and cross-departmental planning and implementation which contributed to the Presidency's perceived success and which were of more general relevance to the efforts to improve the handling of cross-departmental issues and the co-ordination of government activities identified in *Delivering Better Government* (1996) and;
- c) appraising the ways in which Ministers and officials interfaced during the planning and passage of the Presidency.

In addressing these terms of reference, the overall approach was to be applied rather than academic. It aimed to draw upon, report and evaluate the actual experiences and perceptions of key players rather than seek to contribute on a theoretical level to wider scientific debate. That did not mean that interest in the findings would be narrowly confined only to those directly involved in the 5th Presidency, although clearly it is hoped that goal is achieved. Interest in the management issues raised extends to other Member States planning a Presidency, especially for the first time, namely Austria, Finland and Sweden. Within Ireland,

many of these issues are relevant to the process of public service reform currently underway and should therefore be of interest to all those concerned with public management issues.

There is clearly a gap in research knowledge of such international phenomena. Metcalfe (1994) points out that, 'two of the most conspicuous trends in modern government are the internationalisation of governance and public management reform. Surprisingly, their paths have hardly crossed. They have developed along separate, and largely independent, tracks. While public management reform at the domestic level has been in progress in many countries for several years, the management implications of internationalisation for national governments ... have received much less attention. However, there is an increasing need to create the public management capacities that will ensure that international governance is conducted effectively' (p. 272). The 5th Irish Presidency of the EU provides an appropriate case-study to inform this debate.

1.2. Research Approach and Methodology

To capture, analyse and report back promptly on the management lessons learned, the Committee requested that the study be completed by the end of the Dutch Presidency in June 1997, i.e. within a two-month time-frame. This timetable required strategic design and methodology to ensure delivery and the following approach was adopted.

In addition to gathering background material already in the public domain (see *References*) and unpublished material provided by individual Departments, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 30 senior-level officials in a cross-section of Departments/Offices with different Presidency responsibilities¹: Agriculture; Enterprise and Employment; Environment; Finance; Foreign Affairs; Health; Justice; Social Welfare; the Taoiseach; Tourism and Trade; Transport, Energy and Communication. Members of the Permanent Representation in Brussels were also interviewed. An informal discussion with the Minister of State for

European Affairs during the Presidency was held in order to obtain a ministerial perspective. The Institute of European Affairs (IEA) was consulted, because of its important role as a European policy think-tank.

As a first step, however, it is important to clarify what an EU Presidency involves for an individual Member State, such as Ireland, and its public management systems.

1.3 The Role of the EU Presidency

The 1993 Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaties establishing the three European Communities (TEC) contain a number of provisions relating to the role of the EU Presidency². In summary, these specify that the Presidency will be held in turn by each Member State of the Union for a period of six months. The current sequence was determined by the Council on 1 January 1995 and is as follows: France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Finland, Portugal, France, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, Denmark and Greece. This sequence may be subsequently amended by unanimous decision of Council.

In addition to chairing the European Council³ and the Council of Ministers' meetings, the Presidency has specific responsibilities in the full range of EU Council business including the fields of economic policy, common foreign and security policy (CFSP), co-operation on justice and home affairs (JHA), as well as during the last three Presidencies, the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC)⁴. There are established procedures clarifying the Presidency's role in the Council's decision-making processes and its responsibilities in relation to the European Parliament (EP). However, as the General Secretariat of the Council (1996) points out, '...practice is the third well-spring for defining the role of the Presidency. Discounting the (more or less) marked aspects of the national character which can set their stamp on the role for six months, experience over the years has fleshed out the broad lines of the Presidency's role' (p.4).

Although Presidencies may vary in the light of each Member State's approach to its duties, many features are shared in common. Each Presidency is responsible for the chairing of all meetings covering the full range of EU activity from working group level to the Council of Ministers and the European Council itself. However, continuity is often required between one Presidency and another, e.g. on programmes such as the development of the internal market. To facilitate the biannual process of change and to ease the transition of business and responsibility between Member States, upcoming Presidencies tend to seek meetings with the current Presidency and the current Presidency tends to facilitate such meetings as much as possible. In the CFSP area, this process has been formalised into a Troika consisting of past, present and future Presidencies to ensure continuity in the EU's external relations with third countries. For its six-month period, the Presidency is also the representative of other institutions within the EU system and, in turn, represents the EU on external bodies in a wide range of fora including the United Nations (UN) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It also acts as EU spokesperson to the media.

As President, national concerns should be subsumed in the interests of forwarding the Union's agenda. The Presidency should remain impartial acting, where necessary, as honest broker between any conflicting interests or positions held by Member States and the Commission on internal or external matters. Neutrality and impartiality are vital to the success of the office. If significant divergence exists and/or there is a crisis in international relations during the Presidency period then the demands on the public management systems can be immense. Indeed, throughout each Presidency period, the Member State holding that office will also need to continue to have represented its own national interests at all appropriate fora. As a consequence of the need to both chair and be represented at meetings, the burden of double representation places a considerable workload on the often comparatively small numbers of people involved in Presidency duties.

In the light of the above, the successful organisation of an EU Presidency is a formidable challenge for any Member State. It represents an even greater challenge in small countries and/or those with comparatively small civil services. However,

this latter point is difficult to quantify satisfactorily due to difficulties of statistical interpretation⁵. Nonetheless, it was apparent, from the interviews conducted during this study, that a comparatively small group of personnel across the Departments/Offices carried the major responsibility and workload for planning and operationalising the Presidency.

The Council Secretariat (1996) itself acknowledges that ‘major deployment of the entire national administrative apparatus is required to get the Presidency up and running. Each Member State uses its own working methods conditioned by its traditions and culture, as well as more incidental considerations linked to its size or the nature of its interests. The size of this extra workload for national administrations (both capitals and Permanent Representations), even for the larger Member States, should not be underestimated. The success of a Presidency is largely determined by how it responds to this problem’ (p.6).

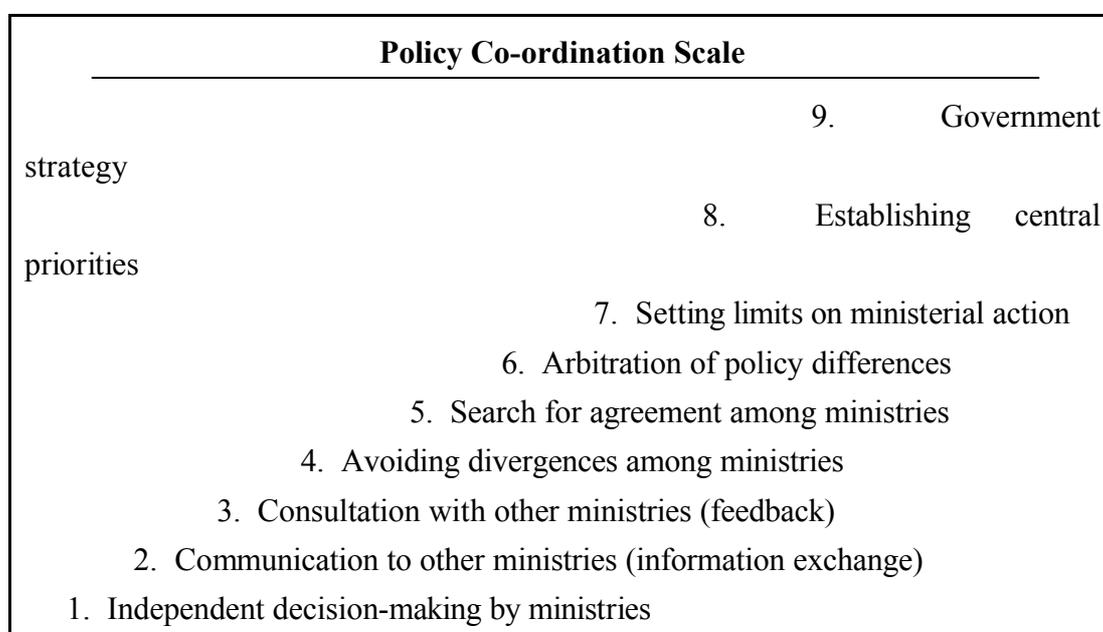
1.4 Analytical Framework

As indicated at 1.1 above, this study was applied rather than academic in its focus. However, that did not mean that appropriate analytical frameworks identified by previous research could not be helpful for summarising and evaluating the largely qualitative information obtained in the research interviews. Two previous studies of international policy co-ordination have been used primarily for this purpose because of their relevance to the study’s terms of reference.

Given his concerns for the comparative dearth of analysis from an international perspective, Metcalfe (1994), proposes ‘an approach to the analysis and measurement of policy co-ordination capacities which is useful for managing the development of the capacities required to cope with increasing international interdependence’. In particular, he argues that ‘the importance of international policy co-ordination for the effectiveness of international policy-making is frequently underestimated. Much international policy making (at EU level) involves multilateral negotiations and thorough preparation is needed to ensure that they are

effective' (p.271). Drawing upon a comparative study of policy co-ordination capacities in 12 EU Member States, he has developed a simple nine point scale along which administrations can be placed depending upon their characteristics and degree of development in policy co-ordination. At the most basic level, departments are engaged in independent decision-making, perhaps going so far as to exchange information with other departments, as a second step. At the most advanced end of the scale, a government policy co-ordination strategy is established which draws closely upon clearly established central priorities (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: Metcalfe (1994) p. 281

However, a useful framework for more detailed analysis, is provided by the OECD (1996). OECD synthesises the practical lessons learned from a large number of countries and defines a number of *tools of coherence*. These are 'organisational concepts which, translated into structures, processes and methods of work, have proved conducive to higher degrees of policy coherence in governments from different political and administrative traditions. Some may seem, at first glance, deceptively obvious. However, experience shows that putting them into practice

requires painstaking experimentation and careful adaptation to the legal, administrative and political requirements of each national system' (p.11).

The OECD identifies and defines the following tools:

- *Political Leadership and Role of the Centre*⁶ Commitment by the political leadership is a necessary precondition to coherence and a tool to enhance it.
- *Strategic Framework and Priorities* Establishing a strategic policy framework helps ensure that individual policies are consistent with the government's goals and priorities.

- *Information and Analysis*

Decision makers need advice based on a clear definition and good analysis of issues, with explicit indications of possible inconsistencies.

- *Policy Co-ordination Structures*

The existence of a central overview and co-ordination capacity is essential to ensure horizontal consistency among policies.

- *Policy Co-ordination Processes*

Mechanisms to anticipate, detect and resolve policy conflicts early in the process help identify inconsistencies and reduce incoherence.

- *Policy Budget Co-ordination*

The decision-making process must be organised to achieve an effective reconciliation between policy priorities and budgetary imperatives.

- *Policy Implementation*

Implementation procedures and monitoring mechanisms must be designed to ensure that policies can be adjusted in the light of progress, new information and changing circumstances.

- *Administrative Culture*

An administrative culture that promotes cross-sectoral co-operation and a systematic dialogue between different policy communities contributes to the strengthening of policy coherence.

The detailed management and operationalisation of the 5th Presidency is discussed and analysed within this framework (see *Part Two*). The general approach has been to identify management experiences common to more than one Department, based upon the findings from the interview survey. It must also be appreciated that each of these tools is closely interlinked, the achievement of one often depending on another. Therefore, whilst the information gathered in the study is presented within this OECD framework, the categories are not discrete but interconnected.

Part Two: Research Findings

2.1 Political Leadership and the Role of the Centre

The OECD (1996) sees commitment by the political leadership as a necessary precondition to coherence as well as being a tool to its achievement: ‘The capacity of governmental leaders to balance conflicting interests, while striving to maintain a consistent line of action based on the government's agenda, largely depends on the degree of political discipline which the leader can command, and the extent to which the centre can translate it into a corresponding degree of administrative discipline’ (p.12). It was clear from this research that, as with previous Presidencies, the national political leadership was demonstrably committed to the success of the Irish EU Presidency through the active involvement of the Taoiseach and senior ministers.

For the smaller Member States like Ireland, the Presidency provides a valuable opportunity to play a major international role not only with/on behalf of the EU and other Member States but on the wider world stage. A Presidency could not succeed without active endorsement at the highest levels within and across the government. It was also believed by interviewees that the goodwill engendered by a successful Presidency was likely to be reflected in subsequent dealings not only with other Member States and EU institutions but with other nations with whom the EU has a significant relationship. In recognition of the strategic importance of the Presidency to Ireland's national and international interests, the government gave a clear and sustained message to the Irish administrative system that a successful Presidency was to be of the highest priority. That system responded.

‘Ireland has now been a full participant in the process of European integration for a generation. We have benefited enormously from membership of the European Union, and have at the same time contributed constructively to the Union’s development....The benefits of membership in terms of financial transfers alone have

been considerable. By the end of 1995, total net transfers to Ireland, since accession, amounted to IR£18.45 billion ... However, Ireland's membership of the Union has always been about more than free trade and financial transfers, important as they may be. The period of our membership of the Union has coincided with an increase in national self-confidence, a strengthening of our identity and an increase in our international profile ... The successful conduct of the Presidency in the interests of the Union as a whole represents a significant challenge and a major priority for the Government' (Department of Foreign Affairs 1996, pp.59/60).

(a) Taoiseach's Role During the Presidency

Within this context, the Taoiseach's direct role and involvement during the Presidency is believed by officials to be extremely important. In the run up to and during the Presidency, there is very great demand placed on the Taoiseach because of his role as President in Office of the European Council. The extra demand placed on the Taoiseach was reflected both in the levels of his engagements and in the level of additional information and policy work which he was required to undertake personally. During the period October 1995 to January 1997, a total of 80 Presidency-related meetings were held by the Taoiseach with foreign VIPs. A number of key mandatory meetings also had to be attended. These included the Commission Presidency Meeting in early July, and the following Summits on the EU's behalf: EU/US; EU/Japan; OSCE; EU/Canada and World Food. In addition to a large number of meetings with Heads of State or Government (HOSG) of Member States in preparation for the Presidency, during the period of office itself, meetings were held with the HOSGs of Turkey and Middle Eastern and Accession States. The Taoiseach met most Parliamentary Groups of the EP and these meetings were believed by officials to have been extremely important for building up good will in the Parliament both before and during the Presidency.

A considerable investment was also made at the most senior level in preparing the groundwork for the Presidency with the EC Secretariat. The Taoiseach held regular meetings with the Secretary-General of the Council both before and during

the term of Office. In addition to the formal proceedings, a special televised cultural event was organised in early July in Temple Bar (Dublin), which was attended by the Commission and which gave the Taoiseach and the President of the Commission an opportunity to publicise the goals of the forthcoming Presidency more widely. Although there was no equivalent tour undertaken before the special October European Council⁷, the Taoiseach toured all the EU capitals, prior to the December European Council, to promote the government's message of what it hoped the Presidency would achieve, to monitor reaction to the Presidency's proposals as well as to get a briefing on the concerns of the other Member States. The Taoiseach and his staff were always centrally involved with any issues likely to arise at European Council level. A good example of this direct involvement in forwarding specific policy issues was the Dublin Declaration on Employment. An inter-departmental group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, was formed to help co-ordinate the drafting of a declaration but it was only on the eve of the European Council, in December 1996, and after extensive soundings in Brussels and EU capitals, that the Presidency finally decided to propose the Declaration. Negotiations on the text continued throughout the Council itself. The outcome of the Dublin European Council had been the focus of planning in the European Affairs Division of the Department of the Taoiseach since late 1995.

(b) Cross-Cabinet Support

To ensure the necessary political leadership and discipline at the centre on an on-going basis, all EU Policy is decided by the Government under the leadership of the Taoiseach. Responsibility for its implementation, as well as for advice on all external relations matters, resides with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who during the period of the Presidency was also Tánaiste. A European Co-ordinating Committee (ECC) was also chaired by the Minister of State for European Affairs. From February 1996 through to the end of the Presidency, overall co-ordination of the Presidency within the national government was overseen by a Cabinet-level group: the Ministers' and Secretaries' Group (MSG). Building upon the

groundwork undertaken to date, the MSG was formed specifically to co-ordinate and ensure appropriate policy inputs at the highest level throughout the Presidency. The MSG met 13 times during 1996 and was chaired by the Taoiseach, with the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of State for European Affairs and the Ministers of Agriculture⁸, Enterprise and Employment⁹, Finance (who dealt with ECOFIN and European Monetary Union: EMU), Justice¹⁰, and Social Welfare¹¹ also members. Other Ministers attended, as and when required. The Secretaries of these Departments, the Permanent Representative from Brussels, and other officials as necessary, also participated in the MSG.

(c) Political/Officer Interface

With regard to the role of officials, the OECD (1996) argues that ‘no other body in the policy-making system is in a better position to systematically monitor and evaluate the implications of new policy proposals for the overall coherence of the government agenda, and to highlight these implications in advice to head of government’ (p.12). Their close interaction with the political domain at a variety of levels was felt by those interviewed to have been an important factor in progressing the Presidency agenda successfully. A group of senior officials assisted in the preparation of the agenda for meetings of the MSG. Meetings of the MSG were primarily concerned with strategic policy direction and very important discussions took place on a number of key items which arose during the Presidency, e.g. in relation to the IGC, EMU, JHA issues (including drugs), employment, foreign policy and the December meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Wherever possible, problems that arose in relation to the management of the Presidency were dealt with at the senior officer group level. The OECD (1996) stresses the importance of the political-administrative interface because policy decisions are also political decisions. During the Presidency, this interface was further facilitated by joint attendance at planning, formal and informal meetings, below the level of the MSG. The OECD point out that such joint involvement gives officials the added incentive, if such were needed, to consult with colleagues in other departments prior to important meetings, to review proposals, and resolve

as many outstanding issues as possible at official level, explore compromise options and only present proposals requiring resolution at ministerial level. In this matter business is more effectively progressed. Evidence from the interviews indicated that this process generally worked well both within and between departments. The EU Presidency is characterised by many meetings both within Ireland and overseas requiring mutual involvement by ministers and officials and if an effective working relationship is not established between these personnel then it would have had very serious implications indeed for the carrying forward of Presidency duties.

Several officials reported satisfaction at the degree of close contact with the political domain that the day-to-day operationalisation of the Presidency demanded for it to run smoothly. Indeed, a number of officials expressed the view that such exposure to the political domain, e.g. below Assistant Secretary level, had been invaluable experience from a career development perspective. They also expressed a degree of regret that the end of the Presidency had resulted in a return to more traditional hierarchical relationships between ministers and officials. In many cases, a very effective working relationship had clearly developed between Ministers and their officials to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. As one Minister observed ‘Ireland has a first-rate civil service and the EU Presidency really showed its strengths’.

2.2. A Strategic Framework and Priorities

The OECD (1994) stresses the importance of governments defining and planning for longer-term policy objectives. ‘They must ... have the capacity to avoid being distracted from their objectives by immediate concerns of short-term problem solving ... A strategic framework provides objective criteria for policy decision. By establishing a comprehensive set of goals and priorities, and ensuring that policy proposals come within its parameters, decision makers are better able to pursue their common agenda more coherently. The centre can use the strategic framework as a tool to orient policy development in line ministries. This is facilitated if the government’s agenda is mapped out collectively, i.e. with the involvement of all

ministers who will be responsible for its implementation through sectoral policies' (p. 13, sic.).

The Government mapped out and published its Presidency approach and objectives at an early stage. In its *White Paper on Foreign Policy* (1996), it publicly underlined its objective role as President: 'The main obligation for any Presidency is to ensure that the European Union's business is discharged in an efficient, effective and impartial manner. During the six month period of the Presidency, Irish Ministers will chair approximately forty Council of Ministers' meetings and will supervise the work of approximately 200 working groups chaired by Irish personnel at official level. In carrying out their Presidency duties Ministers will endeavour to ensure that the political, economic and social agenda is advanced in a manner that will benefit the European Union' (pp. 60-61).

At the outset, it was made clear that the main focus of the Presidency would be the European Council organised for 13/14 December at Dublin Castle. Areas likely to feature on that agenda are therefore likely to be major priorities during the Presidency period, and included:

- the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) to review aspects of the European Treaties;
- preparations for third stage of the EMU;
- the themes of growth, competitiveness and inclusion;
- JHA issues such as drugs, immigration, extradition and organised crime;
- implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP);
- further developing relations between the EU and the applicant countries in preparation for further enlargement of the Union and;
- the continuing development of relations with other countries and regions outside the Union.

There was concern that these key themes/priorities of the Presidency should be presented in an accessible and understandable way. Accordingly, they were summarised as follows:

- secure jobs;
- sound money;
- safer streets and;
- a peaceful Europe.

Within this clearly defined strategic framework, specific Presidency priorities were identified, agreed and published for a number of priority areas (see Ireland: 1996, *Priorities for the European Presidency*). These were explicitly set, with a number of specific objectives: employment; drugs and organised crime; response to the concerns of the citizen, comprising equity, tolerance and openness, health, social affairs, cultural co-operation, education and youth, environment and research; EMU and other economic and financial issues; completion of the Single Market, as well as consumer policy, transport, energy, telecommunications and tourism; the common agriculture and fisheries policies; a Europe open to the world; enlargement and the IGC. A list of these objectives by priority area is given at *Appendix 1*.

2.3 Information/Analysis and Policy Co-ordination Structures

Within the context of the strategic framework and priorities clearly established by the government and the centre for the 5th Presidency, through the ECC and MSG, the demand for and use of quality, up-to-date information and policy analysis was to prove critically important in helping define the objectives that were to be set inter- and intra-departmentally. As the OECD (1994) points out, 'Providing strategic advice to the head of government is a key function of the centre. To carry it out effectively, the centre must maintain a capacity to develop strategic perspectives and options, and to bring them to bear on short term decision-making. This capacity is reliant on comprehensive, multisectoral information and analysis

concerning the global policy environment (including individual portfolio priorities), and the factors that can affect its evolution' (p.13). In fact the most important tool identified by the OECD for policy coherence is informed decision-making. Effective information flows have to be organised between the centre and line departments, within line departments and between the centre and the political sphere.

In recognition of this critical role, and in order for both the ECC and MSG to undertake their work effectively, detailed information gathering and analysis commenced in early 1994, some 26 months' prior to the opening meeting of Commission and Government to finalise the Presidency Agenda on 2 July. The ECC established an Inter-Departmental Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) in April 1994, chaired by a Counsellor from Foreign Affairs, and all those Departments/Offices with Presidential responsibilities were asked to nominate a Presidency Co-ordinator¹². The ICC met for the first time in June 1994 and addressed a number of key informational questions: (a) what would the timetable be for Council meetings; (b) who should be nominated for chairs and spokespersons for working groups; and (c) how should EU developments be monitored?(a) *Timetable for Council meetings*

In consultation with their Departmental colleagues seconded to the Permanent Representation in Brussels, the Presidency Co-ordinators identified prospective dates for the many formal and informal meetings which had to be scheduled during the Presidency (see Appendix 2). A number of essential factors were included in this exercise. August had to be kept as clear as possible, which reduced the formal meetings' period to only 5 months. In addition, the established pattern of Council meetings (including specific days of the week) needed to be accommodated wherever possible and close consultation maintained with the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU in Brussels. Finally, under the Council's Rules of Procedure, every future Presidency must circulate to Member States a draft list of Council meetings seven months in advance, i.e. by November 1995.

Departmental proposals for Council meetings were co-ordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs, in consultation with the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels, which in turn liaised with the Council Secretariat. Timetabling issues represented an immense management and logistical challenge. No fewer than 126 meetings, conferences and seminars were held in Ireland and hosted by Ministers or officials during the Presidency. Under the Council, a total of 244 formal committees and working groups, covering the full range of EU concerns, required Irish chairs and spokespersons. The timing and location of, and participation at, these meetings also had to be consistent with European Parliament plenary sessions in Brussels or Strasbourg, as well as the many other regular EU business meetings held in Brussels.

(b) Chairs and spokespersons

Each of these gatherings had to be chaired, serviced and resourced. After the Permanent Representation in Brussels had provided the ICC with the full list of working groups and committees for which the Presidency would be responsible, Presidency Co-ordinators were required to nominate, following consultations within their departments, persons who would act as chairs/spokespersons. Nearly 100 press releases were to be produced during the Presidency period.

(c) Monitoring EU developments

The ICC also played a vital role in gathering information, monitoring, analysing and reporting back to departments and up to the ECC/MSG on developments at EU-level. Briefing material was circulated within Departments to keep future chairs and spokespersons up to date with EU developments. Participation by the Permanent Representation to the EU at these meetings in Dublin proved to be extremely important for inputting the latest Brussels intelligence to the thinking and planning of Departments as well as feeding into Brussels the concerns and needs of Dublin. The discussions held both at the centre and with individual departments indicated

how critical the early warning systems and intelligence gathering role undertaken by the Permanent Representation in Brussels proved to be.

2.4 Policy Co-ordination Processes

OECD (1996) rightly states that, ‘Structures, while important, cannot guarantee successful co-ordination. Good co-ordination requires well-functioning processes. To a greater degree than structures, the effectiveness of processes depends on the commitment of the decision-makers and managers to the goals of co-ordination. Otherwise, the processes may only perpetuate the independence of the programmes’ (p. 20). The evidence from the interviews indicated that, with regard to the planning and implementation of the EU Presidency, decision-makers and managers were genuinely committed to the goals of co-ordination. Whilst the commitment of decision-makers and managers varied little, their length of experience of direct involvement with Presidency matters did.

For some areas, such as Agriculture, the advent of the Presidency to a considerable extent represented an intensification, for a particular period of time, of normal business, because the day to day EU content of that Department’s work is high. For some other Departments, like Justice, whilst there has always been an important international component to its work, the specific inclusion of JHA, in the Presidency agenda, was a post-Maastricht development and its identification by government as a specific priority for the 5th Presidency required new demands. In such instances, the sharing of information, experience and expertise cross-departmentally through fora such as the ECC, MSG and ICC was particularly valuable. Together they were vital in developing and promoting a clear, unified but diverse agenda for the Presidency.

This process was greatly assisted by enhanced information flow processes. ‘Regular exchanges of information between centre and line, and among line ministries is of paramount importance to the achievement of consistency at every stage of policy development. Information flows between ministries can be enhanced

through formal mechanisms, such as consultative or co-ordinating committees, structured along cross-sectoral lines. Such structures help build networks of officials and “policy communities”, which can be widened by creating overlapping networks of committees (obtained by cross-membership). Linkage of these structures with the centre can be assured either through the direct participation of centre officials in meetings, or through reporting mechanisms’ (OECD 1996, p.22). The development of good inter-departmental relationships and networks focused on Presidency issues, through interlinking formal and informal information exchange and decision-making processes proved extremely successful. A number of Departments had special International or EU Units, pre-existing the Presidency. During the period running up to, and during, the Presidency, such units played a key role in the early identification of issues and served a vital function in the interdepartmental policy co-ordination process by often linking with the specialist Attaché in Brussels and the Departmental management team in Dublin.

For example, a major task, from early 1996 onwards, was the process of agenda preparation and agreement for each Council meeting. The timing and content of this exercise were both critical. The Commission’s Work Programme for 1996 was analysed, together with developments taking place during the Italian Presidency. In addition, issues likely to arise during the latter half of 1996 had to be anticipated as far as possible. As a result of that process, based on cross-departmental collaboration and discussion, a document was prepared which could only be finalised after the end-of-term European Council of the preceding Presidency and the Commission Government meeting which took place on 2 July.

Whilst the overall agenda for a Presidency is largely determined by external EU events, each Presidency has some discretion in determining its particular priorities. In deciding upon the priorities to adopt for the Presidency, a number of key points were borne in mind by officials and Ministers:

- the need to be in tune with current developments. Deciding on a theme or priority too early ran the risk of being overtaken by events;

- the need to retain a number of options. Picking one theme for the Presidency (e.g. JHA or the IGC) would have run the risk of suffering irretrievable damage if that area was perceived to be a failure;
- the need to be able to show real progress.

The selection of the final key priorities became an important focus for the MSG (see 2.1 above). They were placed on the agenda for each meeting and daily contacts were maintained on them between the key Departments. On EMU, progress in ECOFIN was reported to the MSG by the Minister for Finance and at the very end of the Presidency, the Taoiseach made a number of interventions with the key players to help finalise the deal on the Stability and Growth Pact. On the IGC, the Taoiseach was kept fully briefed on developments and, where necessary, made personal interventions at HOSG level. As regards JHA, the Department of Justice identified real possibilities for progress at EU level in relation to combating crime, including drug trafficking and major progress was made on many of these during the Presidency.

Throughout this process, the Permanent Representation in Brussels (which consists of officials seconded from most Departments involved in EU affairs) played a pivotal role. Despite popular perception, the bulk of the work throughout a Presidency takes place in Brussels. Approximately 40 Council Meetings and 2,000 Working Group meetings took place in Brussels between July and December 1996, all of which were chaired by Irish officials. The burden of the organisation for these events falls primarily on the Council Secretariat and the Permanent Representation, where a well established infrastructure of accommodation, translation and IT facilities are in place. However, whilst of lesser number, the events in the host country and all the attendant events have to be organised by the individual Departments concerned in liaison with Brussels and the Embassies of the other 14 Member States in Dublin.

An indication has been given above of the number of events which had to be organised in Ireland during the 1996 Presidency (see Appendix 2). In addition,

visits by EP delegations had to be accommodated. Without doubt, the most significant event of any Presidency is the European Council meeting held towards the end of the six month period, in the immediate run-up to Christmas. The Dublin European Council in December involved the HOSGs and Foreign Ministers of every EU Member State and the President of the Commission all as members of the European Council. Finance Ministers met in Council in Dublin on the day before and attended a session of the European Council. In addition, the members of the European Council met the HOSGs and Foreign Ministers of the 11 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. Foreign Ministers met the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Turkey. The European Council held in Dublin in December 1996, was the largest diplomatic event every staged in Ireland. Over 2,000 media people attended. The management of events of such magnitude and intensity placed immense and unprecedented demands on those directly involved in Presidency matters. Any significant mistakes would have been visible both nationally and internationally.

2.5 Policy Budget Co-ordination

‘The budgetary process is a powerful tool of coherence. It affects all sectors of activity, provides a cyclical opportunity to set political and strategic directions for the future, and plays a determining role in the definition of the government’s economic and social priorities. ... It is also a statement, however implicit, of the Government's order of sectoral policy priorities, as it sets relative levels of outlays for different programmes and activities’ (OECD 1996, p.22). Given the level of priority afforded to the Presidency by the government, it was made known to the ICC, in mid-1994, that bids for additional resources would be considered by the Department of Finance, particularly from those Departments/Offices where Presidency involvement would be substantial. Presidency co-ordinators were asked to consult within their own areas to ascertain whether such a bid would be required or whether Presidency demands could be met from within existing resources. The Departments/Offices involved were advised of the outcome of their bids by Autumn 1995.

Responses from the interview survey indicated that there were a range of experiences with regard to the resourcing of the Presidency. In the Department of Foreign Affairs, additional funding was received to address needs arising from the Presidency. Most of the extra allocation received was used to cover the Department's salary costs for circa 100 additional temporary staff^{d3}, extra travel and subsistence expenses, additional communications and IT expenses and additional spend on press and information services e.g. for informational materials and services for the international media. Whilst it had been planned for some time, the Permanent Representation Office in Brussels also moved to be located directly opposite the Council of Ministers building and close by the European Parliament. Staff believed that this move to improved premises helped not only with the accommodation of the additional staff deployed to Brussels for the Presidency but it greatly aided the development of relationships with the Council Secretariat and Commission staff because of physical accessibility. Considerable time was also saved on travel within Brussels. Perhaps more critically still, the installation of improved IT facilities enabled the rapid transfer of documents and communications between Brussels, Dublin and postings elsewhere. At the drafting stage, officials felt that such links proved particularly vital.

While no other Department/Office had the level of expenditure of Foreign Affairs, other areas incurred additional expenditure for personnel, travel costs, IT or informational material. The European Affairs Division of the Department of the Taoiseach, for example, was also allocated additional staff resources because of its important role during the Presidency. From early 1996, the work of the Inter-Departmental Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) on planning the forthcoming Presidency was coming to fruition and the emphasis shifted to the Inter-Departmental Planning Group (IPG) which was tasked with operationalising the administrative and logistical aspects of the Presidency in Ireland. Chaired by another Counsellor from Foreign Affairs, this Group, in addition to Departmental representatives, included representatives from the Protocol and Economic/EU Divisions of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Office of Public Works (OPW) and

Dublin Castle, where most of the major Irish events would be staged (see Appendix Two).

In practice, it is extremely difficult to derive an overall estimate of Irish Presidency costs¹⁴. It is likewise impossible to estimate the number of hours worked by Ministers and officials to achieve the Presidency objectives set or to estimate the opportunity costs of activities forgone. However, what is apparent from this research is that the achievement of a successful Presidency was seen by many participants as of major national importance and of likely lasting benefit to Ireland's future standing in the European Union and beyond. Such factors could not be satisfactorily quantified.

2.6 Policy Implementation

‘Policy development and decision-making represent a comparatively small proportion of governmental activities. It is the implementation of policies that occupies most government resources, and because it is highly visible, that ultimately forms the basis on which the effectiveness and the coherence of the government's action will be judged’ (OECD 1996, p. 25). The careful attention to developing and implementing a strategic framework, and developing effective co-ordination structures and processes, supported by additional resources and sound informational analysis all helped to ensure the implementation of the political agenda for the Presidency which had the highest level support within government. The whole exercise was planned with outcomes in mind and undertaken with discipline and attention to detail. In so doing, both Ministers and officials were able to draw upon past experience and in a number of cases, e.g. within the Permanent Representation, invaluable expertise based on in-depth knowledge of the issues and key players.

It was noted in 1.1 that the 5th Presidency was the most recent in a number of such Offices that, from both Irish and international perspectives, have been regarded as successful. For the Presidency in 1996, considerable experience was drawn upon

within the Civil Service on how to establish a strategic policy framework and effective arrangements for co-ordination based on the lessons learned in 1975, 1979, 1984 and 1990. This experience resided not only in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), which of course had the lead role, but also in other Departments with previous EU involvement. That resultant expertise was shared with Departments/Offices comparatively new to EU involvement at Council level.

At the outset, and on the basis of past experience as well as intelligence gained on more recent experience with other Presidencies, the ICC identified a number of key factors that would need to be implemented for the policy objectives to be achieved. These included: (a) organisation of specialist training and (b) careful management of the relationship with the European Parliament (EP).

(a) Organisation of Specialist Training

In the summer of 1995, the Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD) contacted Departments to ascertain their training needs for the Presidency. Early on, it had been recognised by the ICC that the delivery of appropriate training would be of critical importance in facilitating the effective fulfilment of those Presidency roles required of Ministers and officials alike. As soon as the chairs and spokespersons had been identified at Departmental level, CMOD could assess their needs and provide the necessary training.

Whilst there was some customisation to meet the specific needs of Departments, the core training concentrated on developing chairing and language skills. The former included, in addition to detailed briefings on the EU, its structure, legislation, rules and procedures, simulated working group sessions where the chair sought to achieve agreement on a draft Directive between the other participants role-playing the positions of the Member States and the Commission. Future chairs also attended actual meetings in Brussels to familiarise themselves with their *modus operandi*. Intensive language training was provided, where necessary on a one to

one basis. At the beginning of 1996, CMOD also arranged for a series of specialist seminars on the EP, the Commission and the Council Secretariat.

(b) Relations with the EP

With the introduction of co-decision to important policy areas following Maastricht (1993), it was recognised at an early stage that it would be important to develop as good a working relationship as possible with the European Parliament to assist the progress of the agenda during the Presidency. At official level, visits were initiated in late 1995 and the Minister of State for European Affairs visited the Parliament three times during early 1996 to meet the leaders of the political groupings, the chairs of the key committees and to get to know key officials. In addition, most other Ministers visited the Parliament at least once during the pre-Presidency period and sat in on a Committee session for induction purposes. Combined with visits by the leaders of most of the EP political groupings to Dublin, where they met either the Taoiseach or the Tánaiste, it was felt by officials that this pre-Presidency preparation greatly facilitated the good interpersonal relationships which were to prove important for the success of the Presidency.

2.7 Administrative Culture

Finally, the OECD (1996) gathers together a number of other important *tools of coherence* under the broad heading of 'administrative culture'. Within this category they include the following features: (a) a consultation-orientated culture; (b) personnel management policies designed to foster co-operative networking; (c) interdisciplinary meetings helping to shape the administrative culture and (d) shared frameworks of understanding. Explicitly they feel that 'a predisposition to consult, and a willingness to resolve issues before they become contentious are essential tools for more coherent policy making ... One way to reduce those obstacles to coherence is to develop an administrative culture that encourages collaboration at all levels of the administration ... The capacity of officials to network can be enhanced through personnel management policies, designed, for example, to

facilitate the movement of officials among ministries as they pursue their careers. Officials who have worked in several ministries are less likely to have ‘territorial’ attitudes ... Bringing together officials from different policy fields to examine the interconnections between policies is an important way to foster a more co-operative administrative culture, at both the national and supranational levels ... Creating a shared language and framework of interpretation is central to the development of a more co-operative administrative culture’ (p. 27).

Responses during the interview survey indicated that the work of the European Co-ordinating Committee (ECC), the Ministers' and Secretaries' Group (MSG), the Inter-Departmental Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) and the subsequent Inter-Departmental Planning Group (which dealt with the administrative and logistical aspects of the Presidency) could all be cited as real examples of a collaborative administrative culture, which was remarkably unterritorial in its common effort to make the Presidency a success. Officials and Ministers from across policy boundaries often found themselves seeking to reach, or needing to reach, agreements on a range of issues from arrangements for meetings to draft policy documents in the interest of forwarding the Presidency agenda. At a practical, logistical level, examples were cited by officials of where the need for an unscheduled meeting or the over-run of planned meetings required staff from different agencies to collaborate effectively to get the job done. In major policy priority areas, such as employment and social policy, a range of Departments co-operated to progress the agenda e.g. Enterprise and Employment, Equality and Law Reform and Social Welfare. The jointly produced Action on Employment and Social Policy (1996) included inputs from non-Civil Service public sector bodies e.g. FÁS and the Health and Safety Authority. A high degree of flexibility and co-operation was also shown in areas, such as Health, where common positions were specifically developed with other health departments throughout the EU.

It was also apparent from the interviews that Dublin Departments/Offices were able to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of staff who had either previous knowledge of EU work, e.g. from within a specialist departmental EU/International

Unit, and/or staff who had worked or were working in Brussels (e.g. through the Permanent Representation) and were familiar with the scene. Often staff within an EU Unit were catalytic in their encouragement of interest in Presidency matters, at the planning stage, and/or acting as important conduits of information and knowledge to support specialist line divisions who interfaced directly with their equivalents in the European Commission. Additionally, the movement of staff within Departments, and particularly Foreign Affairs, to help cover for the extra duties created by the Presidency gave invaluable international experience to those staff involved. Indeed, as more than one interviewee observed, it was both extremely demanding but also challenging to have to master briefs and chair meetings in policy areas with no direct previous experience or indeed current national interest to Ireland.

Part Three: Management Lessons

3.1 Overall Evaluation

In her presentation to senior officials preparing for the Dutch Presidency, the Chair of the Inter-Departmental Co-ordinating Committee stated that, ‘We set out to run a Presidency that was efficient, effective and impartial in the conduct of the business of the European Union. We said publicly at the start of the Presidency that we would be judged by our results’ (Barrington 1996). The detailed analysis in Part Two of the considerable extent to which, and the ways in which, Ireland applied the *tools of coherence*, identified by the OECD (1996) as key to the successful management of complex multifaceted projects, clearly indicates that, overall, the 5th Irish Presidency of the EU was a considerable management success.

This evaluation is confirmed when other criteria are also brought to bear. In Part One, it was noted that, by drawing upon evidence from 12 EU Member States, Metcalfe (1994) had established a nine-point policy co-ordination scale against which Ireland’s performance could be measured. By referring back to Figure 1, it is also clear that Ireland scored very well because of the great attention given to the mechanisms and processes of interdepartmental consultation, reconciliation of any inter-ministerial differences and clearly setting out, and following through, a strategic framework with clear ownership of priorities and achievable objectives.

Other external observers have arrived at a similar conclusion. Peter Ludlow, Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) has observed, ‘The Irish Presidency was a success, partly because it did not have to bother as much as many had expected with the British problem and partly because it did not try to impose its own agenda, but most of all because it did what it had to do efficiently and unostentatiously ... Unencumbered by a British question, the Irish did very well. This may sound condescending. In reality it is high praise. Firstly, good presidencies are the exception rather than the norm. Secondly the presidency is an

increasingly important player in the politics of the EU. Finally, the job itself is ever-more demanding and complex. The media deal with the big events. The day-to-day reality of a presidency involves literally hundreds of committee or working group sessions, and innumerable meetings with parliament, the press, non-EU governments and multilateral organisations. It is a test even for a large country. For a small one, it involves the mobilisation of resources on a massive scale (p. 2).

3.2 Critical Success Factors

In the light of the overall success of the 5th Presidency from a management point of view, what did the personnel interviewed identify as the critical factors in achieving that success? On the basis of their experience with operationalising the Presidency, a number of key factors were identified.

(a) Objectivity and Impartiality

Speaking as Minister of Finance, Quinn (1997) observes that, 'Reflecting on the experience of the Presidency, it seems to me that there are a number of lessons to be learned, lessons which are invaluable as the EU develops and expands ... The first lesson ... is that small countries have a valuable role to play at the highest levels of decision making in the EU. Ireland showed that small country Presidencies can deliver big results. This may well be because smaller countries often have fewer vested interests than bigger countries. Thus they can be in a better position to act as honest brokers during tense and difficult negotiations' (Quinn 1997). This internal assessment of Ireland's objectivity and impartiality is shared externally.

In Ludlow's judgement (1997), 'Ireland passed the test with flying colours because they observed the two golden rules of any successful presidency. Firstly, the Presidency is an Office of the Union rather than a vehicle for the gratification of national ambitions. Secondly, efficiency is more highly esteemed than proud posturing amongst those most immediately affected, namely the member states and the EU institutions. The Irish were remarkably efficient and they did not try to

impose their own agenda ... The Irish got on with the job, however unfamiliar certain parts of it inevitably were (e.g. Bosnia), reinforcing their own resources, as every successful Presidency must, by working closely and well with both the Council Secretariat and the Commission' (p.2).

It would be a mistake to misrepresent the degree to which the Irish Presidency inevitably followed the line advocated by the European Commission in all cases. A number of interviewees were quick to indicate issues on which there was some divergence. However these same respondents were equally keen to point out the wisdom of working with, rather than against, those professionals at EU-level who have so much constructive support and advice to offer Member States during their period of Office. Irish officials knew that they were on view to their peers in other administrations and took seriously the commitment to take forward the EU's, rather than the national, agenda during the Presidency. This approach paid dividends. Interestingly it was felt by some interviewees that the lack of a direct national interest in a number of the policy areas was of benefit in avoiding, on occasions at least, potential difficulties arising from a conflict of presidential and national interests. Instead, Ireland was ultimately able to position itself within the middle-ground as an objective and impartial facilitator. 'People listened to us because we positioned ourselves neither at the front nor the back on many issues'. 'There was a general acceptance that the agenda was set elsewhere. What we needed to do, and did, was to set realistic and measurable objectives so that progress could be achieved and would be seen to be achieved by others'.

(b) Establishment of Good Internal and External Relationships

It is not intended to repeat here the points already made regarding the OECD's tools of coherence that were used so effectively by the Irish Presidency. However, it was clear from discussion with key personnel from across the Departments that the strong political steer given by government collectively and ministers individually greatly encouraged a proactive engagement by officials with the Presidency and its objectives. Respondents again and again reported a real sense of personal

satisfaction in the common purpose that developed between Departments/Offices. 'We were able to punch well above our weight because there were none of the usual turf wars'. 'Nobody had to argue the case. Everybody agreed that the Presidency was a matter of vital national interest'. During the Presidency, 'Ireland came of age internationally'. Above all, those involved felt that they were not only representing their departmental, ministerial and indeed career interests, but the interests of Ireland and its public administration overall. Given that the preceding Presidencies had been organised by larger Member States, there was also a healthy spirit of international competition to prove that it could be done and done very well, not only by small states generally, but Ireland in particular. It must also not be forgotten that, 'Presidential duties were often highly visible. Any failure would have been the subject of real and immediate criticism by other Member States which, in turn, would have been picked up in the Irish media'. Such a discipline also focused the mind.

In addition to the formal framework established for interdepartmental discussion and agreement, it was also clear that informal and frequent contact between the comparatively small number of key players was vitally important. In this regard, respondents felt that the comparatively small size of the networks and the mutual familiarity of their members helped considerably, particularly in times of urgency. Interpersonal relationships were felt to be vital. All the senior officials involved in Presidency business knew each other very well, relationships were business-like but also relaxed so that many issues that could have become problems were avoided by a telephone call. Those interviewed felt that such relationships did not exist to the same extent in the more formalised structures in a number of other Member States and were an important ingredient in the successful Irish approach.

The vital role of 'strategies rooted in trust' has been demonstrated by other research. In a recent analysis of relevant UK and international experience, Rhodes (1996) argues that 'Effective governance' requires a re-examination of the government's toolkit. Steering (the process of setting norms) is separated from directedness (the outcome of that process). The government needs tools to bridge

that gap. Intergovernmental management (IGM) claims to provide them...If there is one phrase that captures the nature of IGM, it is 'mutual adjustment'... managing inter-organisational networks, is both game-like and requires strategies rooted in trust. Planning, regulation and competition need to be supplemented with facilitating, accommodating and bargaining, the keys of effective network management' (pp. 664/665). Effective networks were certainly an important ingredient in the successful Irish approach. As one interviewee stated, to get the job done, 'there was great dependence and reliance upon other people. We just had to work as a team and people responded to that situation very well'.

With regard to external relationships, respondents actively adopted a policy of engagement with the Secretariat, the Commission and, particularly in the light of its enhanced role since Maastricht, the European Parliament. The general stance adopted, in advancing Presidency business, was to instil confidence and trust by operating openly, circulating drafts in advance of meetings, consulting in advance on potential sensitivities and not attempting to 'bounce' other Member States. In areas such as Health, other Member States were actively consulted in developing common policy positions. It had been noted by officials that previous Presidencies had not engaged with the EP as effectively as they might. In consequence, this had reflected badly on aspects of the Presidency overall. The EU Permanent Representation, strategically located near to the Parliament, and individual Departments took considerable care to familiarise both their ministers and staff with parliamentarians and EP officials and this deliberate strategy paid dividends.

(c) Planning and Strategic Management

In his broad review of developments in the area of new public management practices, Boyle (1995a) sounds an important note of caution, 'Much emphasis has been put on producing plans of all kinds – corporate, business, operational – and budgets. However, less attention has been paid to the process of planning and budgeting ... The danger is that unless they are rooted in a sound process, plans and budgets may be produced because they are required by the model, and then they

may be ignored as the “real work” continues’ (p.38). In his subsequent study, the same author observes that ‘The role of the civil servant as strategist is not simply that of a strategic planner.... the task of the civil servant is to stimulate strategic thinking and operationalise strategic processes rather than (simply) to plan. In order to fulfil this role, the civil servant will need to be able to scan the environment, select and prioritise options and secure benefits from developed strategies, and ensure that they are realised’ (Boyle 1995b, pp. 39/40).

Having discussed the development and implementation of the 5th Presidency with a cross-section of the key personnel involved, the consistent impression given by respondents is that not only was the planning by government and officials extremely well thought through and effective at the strategic level but considerable care was also taken to ensure that the leadership, framework, priorities and processes were in place to ensure delivery. Within the Department of Foreign Affairs, internal planning to develop this strategic framework commenced in 1993 and drew upon the wealth of experience available in Dublin, Brussels and elsewhere. From mid-1994, Presidency Co-ordinators and staff in line departments responsible for delivery in major policy areas galvanised their Ministers and colleagues through briefings and, where necessary, awareness raising to make clear the scale of responsibilities and their implications for workload that the Presidency involved. The Department of Finance responded positively through the provision of additional resources to make the Presidency effective, including the provision of well-designed and targeted training. Above all, there was a clear sense of ownership of the planning process and the work which had to be undertaken to deliver. It was not a ‘paper exercise’ or an activity undertaken by senior management alone. Planning was recognised as being critically important and was taken seriously by staff involved in its delivery.

(d) Team-working, Flexibility and Motivation

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) define a team as ‘a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals,

and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable’ (p. 45). In answering the question, why use teams, Boyle (1997) points out that, ‘Some studies have shown that teams create synergy – they can help ensure that the performance of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Teams are also used to tackle complex problems when time is short and flexibility and speed of response are required. In developing common goals and sharing complementary skills teams can facilitate communications and respond to new challenges more quickly than individuals’ (pp. 3/4).

The development and management of the 5th Presidency provides a good case study of the benefits to be derived from effective team working. Staff from across the Civil Service were brought together willingly to pool their skills and resources in pursuit of shared goals and achievement of their objectives. Officials were called upon to undertake entirely new tasks outside their normal realm of duties to which they responded positively. No only a ‘can do’ but a ‘must do’ culture prevailed. Many interviewees talked about the ‘buzz’ they got from Presidency duties and the sense of deflation afterwards. A tremendous energy and commitment were generated amongst most of those involved despite the exceptionally heavy workload. If only that energy and drive could be tapped for the future then there would be considerable scope for progress in other areas of strategic importance.

(e) Good Fortune

‘Much of the literature on the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and European Council underscores its essentially managerial nature. The duties of a presidency are to oversee a plethora of committee meetings, to broker agreements where necessary, to manage the policy agenda of the Union and report it externally. There appears to be little scope for dynamism or innovation (see Nicholl, 1994 and Dinan 1995) ... The presidency, however, is not simply a matter of good housekeeping. The approach of each state to the managerial tasks of its presidency is different. Membership of the EU gives Irish policy makers the means to influence the shape of the Union and the Union’s relations with the rest of the world. Within that

membership, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and of the European Council is a highly valued opportunity to make a particularly distinctive contribution. The traditional approach of Irish governments towards their presidencies might be best described as stewardship, in which patient brokerage predominates over dramatic brinkmanship. The legacy of the four previous Irish presidencies (1975, 1979, 1984 and 1990) is one to which Irish ministers and officials point with some pride. The first Lomé Convention, the “Dublin Formula” which facilitated the start of the Euro-Arab dialogue, the 1984 Dooge Committee which led to the Single European Act and the positive way the Community responded to German unification all owe something to Irish energy, ideas and skill’ (Tonra, 1996). However, the best stewardship can always be disrupted by unforeseen events, no matter how good the intelligence arrangements or contingency planning in place.

To some extent, the 5th Presidency was spared major external developments to divert its attention from the agenda agreed in March. However, to allow for such an element of good fortune in no way detracts from the significant managerial achievements of the recent presidency. Neither as Tonra (1996) points out was it an isolated occurrence. A more frequently cited concern by interviewees was the immense workload and pressure they experienced in the period immediately leading up to and during the Presidency. Good fortune also prevailed here. Staff health held up and potential disagreements between major states did not become unmanageable. However, staff cover was felt to be extremely thin on occasions, e.g. at international meetings outside the EU, and illness could well have caused real difficulties. Thankfully this hypothesis was not tested significantly and at some international meetings other Member States provided informal support to the Irish delegation because of the good will generated by their handling of the Presidency.

3.3 Looking Forward

From the viewpoint of management challenges faced, it is extremely difficult to conceive of any assignment as lengthy, politically sensitive, nationally important, as

high profile or as consuming of human and other resources as the successful organisation of an EU Presidency. Because of this unique character, a Presidency can attract cross-party support and the highest level endorsement from Government which is rarely replicated by other scheduled phenomena. Resources will be, and have been, made available to ensure Presidency success that would never otherwise be liberated. Staff were required, and often willing to undertake inordinate and often unremunerated additional hours of work over extensive periods of time. Whilst some staff received some recognition for the additional duties undertaken, this practice was not universal. Some staff made no leave plans for 1996. Ministers and their officials in support travelled hundreds of thousands of miles on EU duties during the Presidency Period. Such conditions are not generally reproducible. However, by using the 5th Irish EU Presidency as an illustrative case study, this research has identified some of the general management lessons that can be learned which are of relevance to wider issues such as the Strategic Management Initiative.

In their Second Report to Government (1996) *Delivering Better Government*, the SMI Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries identify the successful management of cross-departmental issues as a major challenge within the process of the current reform programme: 'There are many vital national issues which can no longer be resolved from within the functional remit and skill base of a single Department or Agency. Indeed, many of the most pressing issues which must be addressed require the expertise and commitment of a variety of Departments and Agencies in order to achieve a successful outcome. Increasingly, therefore, effective action necessitates new approaches to understanding, developing and managing the linked activities and processes that result in the desired outcome, whether the provision of services to the public or sound policy advice to Ministers and the Government. These new approaches challenge traditional Departmental and functional boundaries' (p.14).

Although the organisation of an EU Presidency imposes unique challenges upon the public management systems of any Member State, a careful appraisal of the planning, management and operationalisation of the 5th Irish Presidency does show what can be done cross-departmentally by the Civil Service when necessary. The

key elements which contributed to that success, and from which lessons can be drawn for the future, were:

- Strong political leadership, and widespread support both inside and outside the Government for a project which was recognised as being of vital national interest;
- This clear political consensus and steer engaged the senior levels of management within the Civil Service and enabled the establishment of effective mechanisms for co-ordinating, planning, developing and implementing the project with close interaction between Ministers and officials as well as between officials across Departmental boundaries, through the ECC, MSG, ICC and IPG.
- A coherent strategic framework was formulated, which had clear policy priorities and realistic objectives, in close consultation between those ministers and officials who would be accountable for delivery at the MSG;
- The process of policy development, decision-making and implementation was informed throughout by effective intelligence gathering and analysis which disseminated information both horizontally and vertically within the administrative system through the newly established cross-departmental groups/committees and network of departmental Presidency Co-ordinators;
- Effective linkages with the political sphere were developed and individuals or units within Departments/Offices were identified to champion the issues and lead the project within their specific policy sphere supported by their departmental management team;
- Regular meetings were held on a cross-departmental basis to co-ordinate the policy and logistical dimensions of the project and act as information and expertise sharers and receivers within and between Departments/Offices;
- Informal contacts and networks were used effectively to resolve issues as they arose;
- Motivation remained extremely high partly because of peer pressure but also because of a shared sense of national purpose.

As one respondent summarised the experience ‘the vital ingredients seem to be to understand at the outset what are the important issues, to ensure that these issues are developed in partnership with others and that each Department works internally as a coherent unit in its preparatory work and implementation’.

Overall, there is considerable encouragement that can be drawn from the EU Presidency experience for those concerned more broadly with the management of cross-departmental issues. Many of the strengths identified can be replicated in the taking forward of crucial cross-cutting issues, like unemployment or in representing vital Irish national interests in the context of Agenda 2000. The challenge for public service managers is also to translate the successful elements of a high-profile project like the EU Presidency to the less visible but no less important process of managing other cross-cutting issues, including organisational change.

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Appendix One

Priorities for the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

1. *Employment: Ensuring a Strong, Job Creating Economy in Europe*

Priorities:

- second Joint Report on employment, emphasis on youth unemployment, the long term unemployed and unemployed women
- development of ideas in the Pact of Confidence on Employment
- tripartite meeting of Social Partners
- local employment initiatives
- new multi-annual Programme for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- competitiveness
- the information society

2. *Drugs and Organised Crime*

Priorities:

- the fight against drugs
- activities on drug trafficking
- co-operation between national forensic science laboratories
- co-operation between customs authorities and the private sector
- protecting the Union's external borders from illegal drug importation by land, sea or air
- exchange and training of law enforcement officers
- the Community Action Programme on the Prevention of Drug Dependence
- harnessing the science and technology community in drug detection
- co-operation between EU countries and regions affected
- exchange of information and practical co-operation between the services of the Member States

- fight against illegal trafficking of persons
- immigration and asylum policies

3. *A response to the Concerns of Citizens: A European Union based on equity and tolerance and open and accessible to its citizens*

Priorities:

- the fight against racism and xenophobia
- equal treatment between men and women
- co-operation with the institutions of the EU and especially with the European Parliament
- transparent Union decision making

Health

Priorities:

- network for epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases
- programme on health monitoring
- blood safety and self-sufficiency
- tobacco as a threat to health
- Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders

Social Affairs

Priorities:

- future of social protection
- social security for migrant workers
- health and safety in the workplace

Cultural Co-operation

Priorities:

- promotion of a debate on European Culture Policy
- Audio-visual policy

- Community Action Programme in the field of Culture (ARIANE and RAPHAEL)

Education and Youth

Priorities:

- school effectiveness – principles and strategies to combat school failure
- lifelong learning
- in-career development of teachers

Environment

Priorities:

- review of Fifth Environment Action Programme: Towards Sustainability
- use of genetically modified organisms Directive
- regulation on the prohibition of leghold traps
- vehicle emissions, fuel quality and quality of drinking water Directives
- co-ordination of the Union's positions for International Conferences
- waste management policy

Research

Priorities

- Fifth EU Research and Technology Framework Programme
- Commission's Green Paper on Innovation
- mobilisation of scientific research in the fight against drugs

4. Economic and Monetary Union: and Other Economic and Financial Issues

Priorities:

- further progress towards ensuring a smooth transition to EMU
- stability in the Third Stage of EMU
 - arrangements for securing budgetary discipline
 - arrangements for promoting currency stability
- technical preparatory work on legal framework for the Euro

- reconfirmation of 1 January 1999 as the start date for EMU at Dublin European Council
- action against fraud and for sound financial management
- taxation issues
- financial services issues
- EU's 1997 Budget and financial aspects of Confidence Pact on Employment
- lending to Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and Latin America
- Loan Guarantee Fund

5. Completion of the Single Market

Priorities

- Commission's report on the effectiveness of the Internal Market
- Single Market elements of Santer Pact of Confidence on Employment
- legislative simplification
- the Citizens First Initiative
- harmonisation of the internal market with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

Consumer policy

Priorities:

- comparative advertising
- distance contracts
- unit pricing
- access to justice
- consumer credit
- guarantees and after sales service

Transport

Priorities:

- structure of European air traffic management

- European organisations for air safety regulation
- future of European railways
- negotiations with third countries
- Green Paper on the Citizens' Network and Green Paper on fair and efficient pricing in transport
- legislative framework for road freight and road passenger operations
- new maritime policy for EU
- safety of travelling public and of fishermen at sea
- revision of HAZMAT Directive on reporting requirements for ships to include irradiated nuclear materials

Energy

Priorities

- electricity and gas
- renewable sources of energy
- programme for energy analyses and forecasts

Telecommunications

Priorities:

- harmonisation of regulation of the telecommunications sector
- liberalising the postal sector

Tourism

Priority:

- multi-annual programme for tourism

6. The Common Policies:

Agriculture

Priorities:

- agreement on agricultural price package for 1996–97
- resolution of difficulties in the beef sector

- reform of the fruit and vegetable, wine, olive oil, banana and tobacco sectors
- measures to improve food safety, animal health and welfare and trading rules
- Rural Development: follow up to Commission Conference
- preparation of the Union's position on relations with third countries and of the Union's input into the World Food Summit

Fisheries

Priorities:

- conservation of fish stocks
- control and enforcement
- guidelines for the Fourth Multi-annual Guidance Programme on the restructuring of the fishing fleet
- total allowable catches and quotas

7. A Europe open to the World and Actively Contributing to International Peace, Security and Solidarity

Priorities

- strengthening of external relations and development of the CFSP
- protection of democracy, the rule of law and human rights
- financial situation of the UN and UN reform
- strengthening the OSCE's role as a pan-European security forum
- nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament
- first Ministerial Conference of the WTO
- implementation of the EU-US Action Plan and relations with Canada
- EEA and Switzerland
- relations with Russia
- support for implementation of the Peace Agreements in former Yugoslavia
- stability and good neighbourliness in South East Europe

- the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
- Cyprus
- relations with Turkey
- the Middle East Peace Process
- relations with the OAU and assistance to conflict prevention in Africa
- follow-up to the Europe-Asia meeting
- dialogue with the ASEAN
- relations with countries and regional organisations in Latin America
- narrowing the gap between rich and poor
- review of trade policies and preferential agreements

8. *Enlargement: Ongoing constructive engagement with potential members of the European Union*

Priority:

- development of relations with the countries that have applied for membership of the Union

9. *The Intergovernmental Conference: making the Union more effective and adapting it for the future*

Priority:

- bringing forward a general outline for a draft revision of the Treaties

Appendix Two

Meetings, Conferences and Seminars held in Ireland and Hosted by Ministers or Officials during Ireland's Presidency

The following list does not include meetings held outside Ireland.

Date	Description	Venue
<i>June</i>		
29 June – 3 July	IMPEL Network: 7th Exchange Programme	Cork
<i>July</i>		
2	Commission/Government Meeting	Dublin Castle
2 – 3	Visit of European Science and Technology Assembly	Dublin
3 – 4	Seminar on Police Customs Co-operation	Dublin Castle
4 – 5	COPOL	Dublin Castle
5 – 6	European Anti-Poverty Network Conference	Dublin Castle
5 – 7	Informal Meeting of Personal Representatives	Cork
8 – 9	Steering Group 1	Dublin Castle
8 – 12	EC Chief Veterinary Officers	Galway
9	Conference of NGOs	Dublin Castle
10 – 11	Informal Social Welfare Council	Dublin Castle

July Continued:

11	Joint Research Centre Information Day	Dublin
11 – 12	Education Committee	Dublin Castle
11 – 12	Informal Social Affairs Council	Dublin Castle
15	Better Environment for Industry Awards 1996	Dublin Castle
15	EU US Meeting	Dublin Castle
16 – 17	Steering Group 2	Dublin Castle
19 – 21	Informal Environment Council	Dublin Castle
22	Informal Planners Group	Dublin Castle
22 – 23	Steering Group 3	Dublin Castle
24 – 25	Conference of Chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees of National Parliaments	Dublin Castle
30 – 31	Seminar on Chemical Profiling & Youth Diversion	Dublin Castle

August No Meetings

September

2 – 3	Climate Change Workshop	Dublin Castle
3	Meeting of COSAC TROIKA	Dublin Castle
3 – 4	Conference on the Consumer and the Information Society	Dublin Castle
4 – 5	High Level Meeting on Fisheries Control	Dublin

September Continued

4 – 6	High Level Committee of Experts on Blood Safety & Sufficiency	Limerick
4 – 5	Campus Companies Workshop in association with Forbairt and EU EU Commission (DGXII)	Cork
7 – 8	Informal General Affairs Council	Kerry
9 – 10	K4 Committee	Dublin Castle
12	Sunday Business Post/Small Business Conference	Dublin Castle
12 – 15	COREPER 1 Visit	Waterford, Cork/Kilkenny
13	IFA Conference	Dublin Castle
16 – 17	Meeting of Chief Medical Officers	Dublin Castle
16 – 17	EU–US Task Force Meeting	Dublin
18 – 19	Conference	Dublin Castle
19 – 20	Joint Research Centre: Board of Governors Meeting	Dublin Castle
19 – 21	Inter-Regional Co-operation for European Development	Limerick
19 – 22	COREPER II Visit	Kerry
20 – 22	Informal ECOFIN Council	Dublin Castle
22 – 24	Meeting of Coal & Steel Committee	Cork
23 – 25	Meeting of European Parliament CERT Committee	Dublin/Cork/ Limerick
<i>September Continued</i>		
23 – 24	Informal Agriculture Council/	Kerry

Special Committee of Agriculture		
24	MARIS Seminar	Dublin
25	Financing Opportunities for Renewable Energy Development	Dublin Castle
25 – 26	Meeting of EU Cultural and Audio-visual Ministers	Galway
25 – 27	Budget Committee	Cork
26 – 27	Informal JHA Council	Dublin
26 – 28	European Foundation on Drug Helpline Conference	Dublin Castle
28	Law Enforcement Conference	Dublin Castle
30 – 1 Oct.	Colloquium on Social & Societal Implications of the Information Society	Dublin Castle
<i>October</i>		
2 – 4	Integrated Industrial Manufacturing Conference	Galway
2 – 4	Thermie Committee	Dublin Castle
3 – 4	MISEPS Correspondents	Dublin
5	Special Meeting of the European Council	Dublin Castle
6 – 8	Meeting of Directors General of Vocational Training	Limerick
7 – 8	Seminar on Mechanisms for Mainstreaming	Dublin Castle
<i>October Continued</i>		
8 – 11	Meeting of Competent Authorities of Health	Dublin Castle

	and Safety Authority	
9 – 13	Conference of EUROADVISORS	Kerry
10 – 12	Social Security: Beyond Equal Treatment Conference	Dublin Castle
14 – 15	Meeting of the High Level Committee on Health	Dublin Castle
15 – 16	Seminar on Improvised Weaponry	Dublin Castle
15	Meeting of Conference of European Affairs Committees of National Parliaments & European Parliament	Tipperary
16	Meeting of Conference of European Affairs Committees of National Parliaments & European Parliament	Dublin Castle
17	Meeting of Article 113 Committee on Textiles	Dublin Castle
17 – 18	EU–Seveso Competent Authorities	Cork
18	Committee of the Regions	Dublin Castle
18	Export Credit Policy Co-ordination Group	Dublin Castle
18 – 19	Seminar on Urban Delinquency & Drug Dependency	
18 – 19	MISSOC (information exchange)	Cork
18 – 19	European Music Symposium	Clare
21 – 23	Gender Equality for 2000 and Beyond	Dublin Castle
24 – 25	Red Cross EU Liaison Bureau Meeting	Dublin Castle
	<i>October Continued</i>	
24 – 25	Meeting of CREST (Technical Advisory Com.)	Limerick
24 – 25	Housing Ministers	Dublin Castle

28	Bosnia Pledging Conference	Dublin Castle
29	EU-US Meeting	Dublin Castle
29	Promotion of EU Transport Initiative	Dublin Castle
30	Planning Meeting for Forum on Electronic Records	Dublin
30 – 31	Economic Questions Working Group (Customs Union)	Clare
30 – 31	Dublin Group	Dublin Castle
30	Conference	Dublin Castle
30 – 1 Nov	Partnership for Competitiveness	Dublin Castle

November

1 – 2	Conference on Minority Languages of the European Union	Galway
4	International Conference on Innovation in Business in Association with DGXII of EU Commission	Dublin Castle
4	Annual North-South Innovation Lecture	Dublin Castle
5	Forfas National Innovation Conference in Business	Dublin Castle
5 – 6	Seminar on Drugs	
6	In-career Development in Education	Limerick
<i>November Continued</i>		
6	Meeting of Heads of Public Administration	Dublin Castle
6 – 9	European Conference on Rural Development	Cork

7 – 8	EU Council Research Group Meeting	Dublin
7 – 8	Meeting of Director Generals for the Public Service	Dublin Castle
9 – 10	Festivals and Employment in European Symposium	Dublin Castle
11 – 12	Local Development Conference	Dublin Castle
13	EU-Mercosur Journalists' Roundtable	Dublin
13 – 14	Seminar on Money Laundering	Dublin
13 – 15	Informal Meeting of European Youth Ministers and Senior Youth Officials	Cork
14 – 15	Conference of Directors of European Union Intervention Agencies	Wexford
14 – 15	COPOL	Dublin Castle
14 – 15	Seminar on Regional Policy	Cavan
14 – 16	New Directions in Social Welfare	Dublin Castle
18 – 19	Forum on Small and Medium Enterprises	Dublin Castle
18 – 19	Conference on Equal Opportunities for people with Disabilities	Cork
19 – 20	Seminar on Violence in Sport	Dublin Castle
20 – 21	Conference on Best Practices in Substance Abuse Prevention Programme	Dublin
20 – 22	IMPEL: Ninth Plenary Session	Dublin Castle
21	EU–US Task Force Meeting	Dublin
21 – 22	EU–US Senior Level Group Meeting	Dublin

21 – 22	Conference on 'Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders'	Limerick
22	Conference on Mobility in the EU – Implications for the ESF	Dublin Castle
22 – 23	Poverty and Access to Culture Symposium	Dublin
26	Marine Task Force	Dublin Castle
26 – 28	PHARE Training Seminar	Dublin
27 – 28	Conference of Chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees of National Parliaments & 12 Applicant States	Dublin Castle
28 – 29	International Conference on Health and Safety in Education	Dublin
29	Social Partners Conference	Dublin Castle
29	High Level Social Dialogue Meeting	Dublin
29 – 30	Meeting of Experts on Standards and Guidelines for the Storage of Archives	Cork
<i>December</i>		
2 – 3	Seminar on EU–US	Dublin Castle
2 – 4	Guidance in the Information Society	Dublin
12	ECOFIN Council	Dublin Castle
13 – 14	European Council	Dublin Castle
16 – 17	Conference on Seafarers Training	Dublin
<i>December Continued</i>		
19	EU–ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting	Dublin Castle
20	EU–ASEM Senior Officials Meeting	Dublin Castle

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ARIANE:	Proposed EU project to assist the translation of literary and dramatic works
ASEAN:	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASEM:	Asia-Europe Meeting
BSE:	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CEPS:	Centre for European Policy Studies
CFSP:	Common Foreign Security Policy
CM:	Council of Ministers
CMOD:	Centre for Management and Organisation Development
COREPER:	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CPMR:	Committee for Public Management Research
DFA:	Department of Foreign Affairs
ECC:	European Co-ordinating Committee
ECOFIN:	Economics and Financial Council
ECSC:	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA:	European Economic Area
EFILWC:	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EMU:	European Monetary Union
EP:	European Parliament
EU:	European Union
EURATOM:	European Atomic Energy Community
EUROSTAT:	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FÁS:	The Training and Employment Authority
HOSG:	Heads of State or Government
ICC:	Inter-Departmental Co-ordinating Committee
IEA:	Institute of European Affairs
IGC:	Inter-Governmental Conference
IGM:	Intergovernmental Management
IPA:	Institute of Public Administration

IPG:	Inter-Departmental Planning Group
IT:	Information Technology
JHA:	Justice and Home Affairs
MERCOSUR:	Southern Cone Common Market (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay & Uruguay)
MISEP:	Mutual Information Systems on Employment Policies
MSG:	Ministers and Secretaries Group
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE:	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OPW:	Office for Public Works
PHARE:	Programme of Assistance to the Countries of Central & Eastern Europe and the Baltic States
RAPHAEL:	Commission proposed cultural heritage programme
SME:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TDs:	Teachtaí Dáil (Members of Parliament)
TEC:	Treaties of the European Communities
TEU:	Treaty on European Union (Maastricht)
US:	United States
UN:	United Nations
WTO:	World Trade Organisation

NOTES:

1. Following the General Election (May 1997) and the formation of the 28th Dáil, a reallocation of Departmental responsibilities occurred. However, to avoid confusion, the titles of Departments/Offices current during the period of the 5th Presidency are retained in this report. These titles accurately reflect the scope and content of the Presidential duties undertaken.
2. The main provisions overall are contained in Article 146 of the TEU, as amended by Article 12 of the Act of Accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden. Article 147 TEC and corresponding Articles in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and EURATOM Treaties
3. The European Council (EC) consists of the Heads of State or Government (HOSGs) of the EU Member States and the President of the Commission. These are assisted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States and a member of the Commission. The EC meets at least twice yearly in the Presidency country and is chaired by the Presidency. The Council of Ministers (CM) consists of a Ministerial representative of each of the 15 Member States. The CM includes all of the following areas of EU responsibility: Agriculture, Budget, Consumer, Culture, Economic and Finance (ECOFIN), Energy, Education, Environment, Fisheries, General Affairs, Health, Industry, Internal Market, JHA, Labour and Social Affairs, Research, Telecommunications, Transport. A useful summary is provided by Hayes–Henshaw and Wallace (1996).
4. In the field of economic policy, Article 103 (4) TEC gives the President of the Council certain tasks (e.g. explaining the Council's public recommendations to EP Committees). Article J.5 TEU lays down the Presidency's responsibilities for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Article K6 TEU defines its responsibilities regarding JHA and Article N(1) TEU gives the President the task of convening the Conference of Representatives of the Member States (IGC) to adopt amendments to the Treaties upon which the EU is based.
5. Within the context of Irish administrative and official statistics, the difficulties of definition are considerable and have been known for some time, see for example Humphreys (1983), Ross (1986) and Humphreys & Gorman (1987). Such difficulties are compounded when cross-national comparisons are undertaken (see, for example, Martin 1997). Consistent cross-national statistics of public service employment, such as those relating to 'general government' (OECD) or 'public administration' (Eurostat) are not suitable because they relate to many

more staff than simply those directly engaged in Presidency duties in individual Member States.

6. The OECD (1994) defines the 'centre' as the body or group of bodies that provides direct support and advice to the head of government and cabinet. It concentrates on the role of permanent, administrative (apolitical) functions, though recognises that in all systems the centre includes important political elements.
7. This was a special meeting of the European Council called for at the Florence European Council to review progress in the IGC with a view to a draft revision of the Treaties being produced for the European Council in December. Unlike a regular European Council, no written conclusions were issued following this meeting.
8. Agriculture is of key national interest and the importance of this portfolio in relation to Ireland's Presidency was increased due to the BSE crisis.
9. Due to the priority that was attached to employment in the Presidency priorities (see 2.4).
10. The JHA area was identified as a key area under the Presidency.
11. Due to his role as leader of one of the three parties in Government and also his responsibility for elements of the Employment/Social agenda.
12. Departments represented on the ICC were Agriculture and Food*; Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht; Attorney General's Office; Central Statistics Office; Education; Enterprise and Employment*; Environment*; Equality and Law Reform; Finance (including CMOD)*, Foreign Affairs* (including Permanent Representation to the EU*); Health*; Justice*; Marine; Office of Public Works; Social Welfare*; Tánaiste; Taoiseach*; Tourism and Trade*; Transport, Energy and Communications*. Departments/Offices included in the study sample are indicated (*).
13. Approximately 85 of these were civil servants recruited from either inter-ministerial promotion or recruitment panels. The remaining 15 were employed on temporary contract, including a small number of retired Department staff and locally recruited staff at overseas missions. A further 30 staff were redeployed within the department for Presidency duties. Overall, these additional temporary staff were used to strengthen those divisions in Dublin and diplomatic missions abroad most directly involved in the Presidency, including the Permanent representation in Brussels, the permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva and New York and the delegation to the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Vienna).

14. Within the scope of this study, it was not practicable to prepare a comprehensive estimate of the financial costs and/or benefits of the 5th Presidency from either a public expenditure or broader macro-economic perspective. For example, media coverage at the commencement of the Presidency estimated that the Department for Foreign Affairs alone would spend circa £9.0 million during 1996, in addition to the £3.5 million spent in 1995 on preparatory work, e.g. on IT systems, additional staffing and refurbishments (see Smyth, 1996). The same source suggested that up to £25,000,000 would be generated for the national economy through, for example, the 40,000 bednights for the 13,000 or more visitors expected during the Presidency period.

It was not within the scope of this study to either confirm or query such estimates. Rather it was necessary to provide a broad indication of the overall financial dimensions of the Presidency from a public expenditure perspective. The Department of Finance has provided estimates for 1996 EU Presidency expenditure by Departments. Additionally, some indication of other costs can be obtained from the Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts (1995). During the period 1994-1995, Departments/Offices were able to submit bids to the Department of Finance for additional staffing and other resources related to the additional activity generated by the Presidency. During 1996, estimated EU Presidency costs by Department totalled £16,246,000, of which circa. 50% was accounted for by Foreign Affairs. In addition, the 1995 Appropriation Accounts indicate that £12,386,000 was spent on the continued refurbishment of the Dublin Castle complex, which was used extensively for Presidency purposes. This expenditure related specifically to the renovation of the Coach House/Garden as well as the Ship Street properties, all of which, together with the new site for the Chester Beatty Library, provided media briefing facilities for the large press corps attending. Such facilities were not uniquely provided for Irish Presidency purposes. However, their timetabling enabled their usage during that period.