

**An Comhchoiste um  
Ghnóthaí Eorpacha**  
Teach Laighean  
Baile Átha Cliath 2



**Joint Committee on European  
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## **OIREACHTAS EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO TOUR THE COUNTRY**

### **THE LISBON REFORM TREATY**

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs is planning to hold meetings at a number of regional venues to stimulate public debate on the Lisbon Reform Treaty and to assess the views of the general public on its contents.

Following an initial public meeting at Dublin City University on April 7 the tour will bring the Committee to Galway on April 17, followed by meetings in Cork, Dundalk and Athlone, winding up in Limerick on May 15 (see attached schedule for dates and venues). The schedule is predicated on the referendum being held in late May or early June and is, therefore, subject to change. Time permitting, additional meetings may be possible.

The Treaty will have to be ratified by all 27 Member States of the EU before coming into force in January 2009, as foreseen. Apart from Ireland, no other Member State will hold a referendum but will ratify the Treaty by parliamentary vote. A number of them have already done so.

The Treaty Programme was announced in Leinster House today (Thursday, February 28) by the Committee's Chairman, Deputy Bernard Durkan, T.D., following a meeting of the Committee with the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margot Wallström.

He said: "The main purpose of our initiative is to stimulate awareness among the general public of the Treaty and its contents. We want to give as many people as possible an opportunity to debate the issues and to get themselves fully up-to-speed on its key points before they are asked to vote. The last thing we want to see happening is people voting 'No' because they don't know. That is in nobody's interest.

"We see this primarily as an informational exercise since, as an all-Party Committee drawn from both the Dáil and Seanad, our role is not to seek to promote a particular point of view or to influence the vote. However, we have considerable knowledge and expertise in EU affairs within our membership and we feel it will be helpful to put that at the disposal of the general public around the country".

The meetings will feature members of the Committee as well as invited experts. All meetings will be open to the public and will be widely publicised in local media. Our aim is to have all shades of opinion represented. Members of the audience will be able to put questions to the

panel or express their opinions and, at the end of each meeting, they will have a chance for a more informal chat with panel members.

Views expressed at these public meetings will be evaluated and fed into the Committee's own ongoing discussions on various aspects of the Treaty. The Committee plans to issue a formal report on the views expressed to it during the tour, as well as its own opinion on the Treaty, which will be presented to the both Houses of the Oireachtas. The Committee will also provide information on the Treaty via its website, [www.euaffairs.ie](http://www.euaffairs.ie), where visitors will be able to take part in an on-line debate in the pre-referendum period.

The Committee has already held a series of meetings with representatives of the Social Partners. The wide variety of views expressed at these meetings is summarised in an Interim Report which was published yesterday (Wednesday, February 27) and presented to both Houses of the Oireachtas. The full text of the report can be accessed on the Committee's website.

Deputy Durkan added: "We regard our tour as a two-pronged exercise in democracy. On the one hand, we will hopefully provoke a lively debate on an issue which is of crucial importance both for Ireland and for the future of Europe as a whole; on the other, we will be taking part of the Oireachtas out of Leinster House and giving people throughout the country the opportunity to participate in the political process in a very direct way."

**For further information please contact Public Relations Office, Houses of the Oireachtas: 618 3066/3166**

#### **Members of the Committee**

##### **Deputies:**

Barry Andrews (FF)  
Pat Breen (FG)  
Joe Costello (Lab)  
Lucinda Creighton (FG)  
Timmy Dooley (FF) Vice-Chairman  
Bernard Durkan (FG) Chairman  
Michael McGrath (FF)  
Michael Mulcahy (FF)  
Mary O'Rourke (FF)  
Billy Timmins (FG)  
Noel Treacy (FF)

##### **Senators:**

Déirdre de Búrca (GP)  
Paschal Donohoe (FG)  
John Hanafin (FF)  
Terry Leyden (FF)  
Phil Prendergast (Lab)  
Feargal Quinn (Ind)

## JOINT COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

### SCHEDULE OF REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS ON THE LISBON REFORM TREATY

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOWN/CITY AND VENUE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<b>Monday 7 April</b>	<b>Dublin</b> <b>Venue:</b> DCU (Mella Carroll Lecture Theatre, School of Nursing)	<b>6.30 pm</b>
<b>Thursday 17 April</b>	<b>Galway</b> <b>Venue:</b> Harbour Hotel (John B Keane Suite)	<b>8.00 pm</b>
<b>Thursday 24 April</b>	<b>Cork</b> <b>Venue:</b> UCC (Room G18 , Kane Building)	<b>8.00 pm</b>
<b>Thursday 1 May</b>	<b>Dundalk</b> <b>Venue:</b> Fairways Hotel (Tain 3 Suite)	<b>8.00 pm</b>
<b>Monday 5 May</b>	<b>Athlone</b> <b>Venue:</b> Radisson Hotel	<b>8 .00 pm</b>
<b>Thursday 15 May</b>	<b>Limerick</b> <b>Venue:</b> Limerick IT	<b>8 .00 pm</b>