

IRELAND

Date: 21st February 2006 (17-19:30)

Location: Newman House, 85/86 St. Stephan's Green, Dublin 2.

Organised by: Mr Noel J. Travers (Irish national correspondent), Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7.

Number of experts present: 16

1. Experts present

- Ms Margaret Barry, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Professor William Binchy, Professor of Law, Law School, TCD, Dublin 2
- Mr Alan Buckley, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Ms Anna-Marie Curran, Solicitor, A&L Goodbody Solicitors, IFSC, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1
- Mr Arran Dowling-Hussey, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Ms Elaine Fahey, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Mr David Hourihane, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Mr Patrick Leonard, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Ms Jane Pilkington, Solicitor, Eugene F. Collins Solicitors, Temple Chambers, 3 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4
- Ms Sinead Ryan, Solicitor, Eugene F. Collins Solicitors, Temple Chambers, 3 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4
- Mr Ralph MacDarby, Solicitor, Deloitte & Touche, Deloitte & Touche House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2
- The Honourable Mr Justice Roderick Murphy, Judge of the High Court of Ireland, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Ms Jane Murphy, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Mr Ailill O'Reilly, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
- Mr Michel de Rooij, TMC Asser Institute, 2500 GL, The Hague, The Netherlands
- Mr Noel J. Travers, Barrister, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7.

2. Report on the meeting

Mr Noel J. Travers BL, the Irish national correspondent, opened the meeting by welcoming Mr Michiel de Rooij of the TMC Asser Institute. Mr Travers then outlined the main objectives of the feasibility study, to wit why a European Research Network covering the acts adopted by the EC pursuant to its competences under Title IV of the EC Treaty was under discussion, why it constituted a highly topical subject and one of significant potential importance to both legal academics and practitioners in Ireland.

Mr De Rooij then made an address based on his pre-prepared Powerpoint Presentation in which he outlined the origins and objectives of the feasibility study. He also outlined the perceived need for a European Research Network, the objectives that could be pursued by such a Network, the possible role(s) of the participants in the Network and the possible formats that it could take.

The experts present all agreed that the idea underlying the creation of some form of European research network in private international law was sound.

Professor Binchy of TCD expressed the view that he saw little need for anything approximating a European standing conference or association of private international law was necessary, at least at this stage. He felt that, in so far as the Commission may need specific assistance from national experts in private international law, it was likely to be best served by retaining the services of a small number of experts from each Member State. There was general support for this view.

Mr Mac Darby stressed the need to involve those civil servants at national level charged with drafting the national laws to implement the rules adopted at EC level. In his view, they would be able to bring interesting insights to the work of any network.

Ms Margaret Barry opined that the lawyers working for the Legal Aid Centres around the country should be involved, as they would potentially valuable insights to make regarding family law and related issues in particular.

The general consensus of several of the attendees was that a virtual network could work quite well. It might be useful to have a small steering group which could oversee the input of Irish information into the network and coordinate relations with existing bodies with which a good working relationship should be established. Delegates had in mind, in particular, the *Irish Centre for European Law*, *The Irish Society for European Law* and the *Institute for European Affairs*.

The overall consensus of the meeting was that there would be wide-ranging support for the idea of a network amongst the Irish legal community: it could provide a forum for disseminating information about EC PIL initiatives and for providing feedback to the Commission about the implications of such initiatives for existing substantive and procedural rules in Ireland. Practitioners in particular felt that the availability on a dedicated website, in more readily accessible languages, of European-wide information about the implementation of EC measures across the Union would be a very good development.

Dublin, 21.02.2006
Mr Noel J. Travers BL