

## Irish Foreign Policy

Apart from Northern Ireland, Irish foreign policy is concentrated in the European Community (EC) and the United Nations (UN). Successive Irish governments have been firmly committed to the European Economic Community, the UN and other multilateral bodies which permit the country to play a role disproportionate to its actual size and influence.

As one of the smallest EC members and as the only non-participant in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Ireland generally maintains a low profile within the community on political questions. It is particularly sensitive to any proposal that might encourage the adoption of a common defence policy.

The Irish maintain that their position enables them to play a modest, but constructive, neutral role, without seriously affecting Western European defence arrangements. Strong Irish support for the UN has led to Ireland's current participation, like Canada's, in virtually every UN peacekeeping operation, notably in Lebanon as a member of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and in Cyprus as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Cyprus.

The Irish filled the presidency of the EC for the six-month period from January 1 to June 30, 1990.