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PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE OSCE

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Statement delivered by Ambassador Brendan Moran
in response to the Russian Federation
Permanent Council No. 544, Thursday 10th February 2005

While recent developments in Northern Ireland (including the IRA statements of last week) are a matter of concern, the Irish Government does not believe that the IRA cease-fire is at serious risk.

The fall-out from the Northern Bank robbery in December – and its attribution to the IRA – has been a set-back for the efforts of both Governments to find a political way forward in Northern Ireland. It highlights the need for the activities which are frustrating political progress - namely, paramilitarism and criminality – to be brought to a definitive closure.

Nevertheless, both Governments continue to work in close partnership with each other to advance progress in Northern Ireland – in particular in implementing the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement.

Moreover, both Governments remain engaged in dialogue with the NI political parties, including Sinn Féin. While efforts to restore the devolved institutions in NI may have stalled for the present, there continues to be contact and dialogue among and between the political parties.

While the additional value of an OSCE Assessment Mission is not immediately apparent – particularly given that a similar Council of Europe exploration last year concluded that there was no role for a Council of Europe initiative there – my authorities would welcome fuller and more detailed information on the tasks which might be entrusted to such a Mission and the type of information it should gather.

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