



**Department of Transport**  
*An Roinn Iompair*



**Department of Transport**

**First Annual Report on the Programme for Government 2007-2012**

**Prepared by Management Services Unit  
September 2008**

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## Foreword

The Agreed Programme for Government mandates the Department, inter alia, to:

- Cut travelling times
- Improve safety
- Deliver real commuting choice
- Reduce congestion, and
- Protect the environment

This Progress Report sets out our progress in these and other related areas.

In accordance with our mandate the Department of Transport adopted the following Mission Statement in our Statement of Strategy:

***To deliver a quality transport system which underpins Ireland's sustainable development.***

A 'quality transport system' is one which is sustainable, safe, secure and integrated. "Sustainable development" is used in our Mission Statement in the context of the Brundtland definition: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

It is also widely accepted that sustainable development is aimed to contribute now and in the future to economic growth, social cohesion and the protection of the environment. All three of these elements are essential for sustainable development and must therefore be held in balance.

# The Economy

## *Competitiveness and Innovation*

*Under Transport 21, our national infrastructure will be overhauled and upgraded with positive consequences for business costs and productivity.*

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### **Progress:**

Under Transport 21, €34 billion is being invested in this country's transport infrastructure from 2006 to 2015 to improve the quality and increase the capacity of our road and public transport networks.

Creating a strong transport system is key in supporting economic development across the country and this capital investment is essential in maintaining the country's economic success both by facilitating existing business and in attracting new investment, both North and South.

Transport 21 provides for an accessible, integrated transport network to assist in developing competitiveness in industrial, commercial and tourism markets across this island.

Cumulative expenditure in the first two years of the programme, 2006 and 2007, was €4.7 billion. The total Exchequer allocation for 2008 is €2.6 billion.

# Keeping Ireland Working

*We are committing ourselves as a Government to a coordinated series of steps to support the creation of 250,000 jobs over the next five years.*

## **Guiding Principles**

*Our policies to achieve this target will fit within a key set of principles:*

- *Keeping taxes on employment low.*
- *Investing in research and development.*
- ***Significantly upskilling the Irish workforce at all levels.***
- *Developing a growing focus on the dynamic SME sector.*
- *Where possible reducing the regulatory burden faced by business.*
- *Ensuring that employment standards are met throughout the economy.*

## **Managing Economic Migration**

*We are determined to manage economic migration in a way that protects the rights of all workers, maintains unemployment at the lowest possible level and ensures successful integration. We will:*

- *Ensure that employment permit applications are not approved for wages below the REA/ERO rate or the National Minimum Wage, and that there is **full enforcement of employment law to protect workers from being abused.***

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## **Progress:**

### ***Significantly upskilling the Irish workforce at all levels:***

Under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) international convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW), which deals with the training of seafarers worldwide, there is a requirement for each Member State to have its administration and implementation of the requirements of the convention assessed by a panel of experts appointed by the IMO. Ireland's implementation consistently meets the requirements of this important international benchmark on training standards.

### ***Full enforcement of employment law to protect workers from being abused:***

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 sets out clear principles and rights for seafarers while allowing a sufficient degree of national discretion to deliver those rights with transparency and accountability. Work has commenced on reviewing maritime legislation to progress Ireland's ratification of this ILO Convention.

# Transport

*Overall, it is our intention to implement a programme under Transport 21 of investment and service development which will:*

- *Cut travelling times*
- *Improve safety*
- *Deliver real commuting choice*
- *Reduce congestion*
- *Protect the environment*

*We are committed to the implementation of Transport 21 on time and on budget.*

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## **Progress:**

To date 37 projects have been completed under Transport 21 and a further 29 are under construction. Much progress has been made in the planning and pre-construction phases of other projects including Metro North.

The majority of projects are being completed on time and in budget. Some delays have inevitably occurred as more projects come on line. These generally arise from the public consultation, planning and public procurement processes involved and have not to date impacted on the implementation of the Transport 21 programme as a whole.

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## ***Public Transport***

*Recognising the importance of long-term planning in public transport investment, the Government will, in 2011, commence preparation of a successor to the 2006-2015 Transport 21 programme. We will:*

*Substantially improve and expand Luas services in Dublin by:*

- *Joining the Green and Red Luas lines.*
- *Extending Luas to Docklands.*
- *Extending Luas to Citywest.*
- *Extending Luas to Cherrywood.*
- *Extending Luas to Lucan.*
- *Extending Luas from the City Centre to Liffey Junction (Broadstone/Cabra).*
- *Extending Luas to Rathfarnham subject to a feasibility study.*

*Improve rail services under Transport 21 by:*

- *Reopening the Western Rail Corridor from Ennis to Claremorris.*
- *Examining the feasibility of reopening the line from Claremorris to Sligo.*
- *Opening the Cork-Midleton rail service.*
- *Providing a commuter rail service between Galway and Athenry.*
- *Opening the Navan rail line.*
- *Exploring the use of high speed trains on the Cork-Dublin route*

- *Building the interconnector between Docklands and Heuston stations. The interconnector will allow the integration of all existing and new Dublin suburban rail lines and facilitate interchange between them. Given the importance of this project to the delivery of a fully-integrated public transport network in our capital city, we will immediately investigate ways of expediting this project.*
- *Opening Metro North, the first Metro for Dublin, from St Stephen's Green to Swords via Dublin Airport.*
- *Opening Metro West connecting Tallaght and Ballymun through Clondalkin, Liffey Valley and Blanchardstown.*

*Improve bus services under Transport 21 by:*

- *Reforming bus licensing to facilitate the optimum provision of services by providing a level playing field for all market participants.*
- *Continuing to develop QBCs in Dublin and the regional cities.*
- *Doubling the length of bus priority schemes to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of the fleet of buses serving the Greater Dublin Area (i.e. Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow).*
- *Introducing integrated ticketing and smart-card technologies, which will allow a differential pricing system to be put in place.*

*We will plan and deliver strategies for the future development of integrated public transport. In co-operation with the relevant local authorities, we will conduct integrated transport and land use plans in the Spatial Strategy hubs immediately taking into account both current and future needs. We will conduct feasibility studies to be completed within two years into Luas-style light rail transit systems in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.*

*Going forward we will introduce a multi-criteria analysis of all transport projects to take into account environmental factors on a whole project basis*

*The Government will continue to review our transport needs and where agreed will proceed with new transport projects.*

*Following the ongoing review of the 'Platform for Change' plan for Dublin, we will review the potential to introduce further public projects to complement the expanding network.*

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### **Progress:**

#### **Joining the Green and Red Luas Lines (Line BX) and extending Luas (Line D) from the City Centre to Liffey Junction (Broadstone/Cabra):**

- Earlier this year, the Minister for Transport mandated the Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) to proceed with planning the delivery of Line BX/D, based on the Agency's preferred route for Line BX and the use of the Old Broadstone railway alignment for Line D.

- The RPA is now progressing with detailed planning to implement this decision, with the objective of making a single railway order application for the combined Line BX/D to An Bord Pleanála in the latter part of next year.

**Extending Luas to Docklands (Line C1):**

- Construction works to extend the existing Luas Red Line from Connolly Station to the Docklands commenced in June 2007.
- Good progress is being made and the project is on target for completion at end of 2009.

**Extending Luas to Citywest (Line A1):**

- An Bord Pleanála granted a Railway Order to the RPA in June 2008. This Railway Order became enforceable in August 2008.
- Construction of this line is expected to be completed by end 2010 with services operating on the line in early 2011.
- A consortium of local developers will be responsible for the delivery of a substantial part of the works as well as providing land and making a capital contribution in respect of the project.

**Extending Luas from Sandyford to Cherrywood (Line B1):**

- Construction works on this line commenced in June 2007.
- The extension is scheduled to be operational by end 2010.

**Extending Luas to Lucan (Line F):**

- In September 2007, the RPA published possible route options for this line which marked the start of a public consultation focusing initially on selecting the best overall route corridor.
- The RPA is currently giving consideration to the views expressed during the public consultation.
- A preferred route is expected to be selected in the coming months following which work will get underway on the detailed design of the chosen route in preparation for the submission of a Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála.

**Extending the Luas to Rathfarnham subject to a feasibility study:**

- The RPA completed its technical assessment of the feasibility of this line and published its report in May 2008.
- The RPA has invited the views of interested parties, including residents, before reaching final conclusions on the feasibility of such a line.

**Western Rail Corridor and Athenry-Galway Commuter service**

Work is advanced on phase 1 of the WRC (Ennis to Athenry) and is due for completion in mid 2009. The Ennis to Athenry section (Phase 1) involves the introduction of scheduled train services between Limerick and Galway, the enhancement of existing commuter services between Ennis and Limerick and the development of the Galway Commuter Rail service between Galway and Athenry.

**Cork Commuter Rail Service**

Construction work commenced in February 2008 on the Middleton-Glounthaune line and is due for completion in May 2009.

**Phase 1 of Navan Rail Line**

An Bord Pleanála granted a Railway Order in February 2008 to construct the line from Clonsilla on the existing Dublin-Maynooth commuter line to the M3 Interchange at Pace, north of Dunboyne. Subject to the outcome of the tender process presently underway, it is anticipated that construction will commence in late 2008, to ensure the line reopens in 2010.

**Dart Underground (Interconnector)**

The preliminary design of the project has been completed and Iarnród Éireann is now proceeding to detailed design and the preparation of an application for a Railway Order, which it aims to submit in 2009.

**Metro North from St. Stephen's Green to Swords via Dublin Airport:**

The initial phase of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) public procurement process was conducted in 2007 resulting in the formation of four pre-qualified consortia for the purpose of tendering for the project. The tender documents were issued to the four PPP consortia in May 2008. The bidders are now putting their bids together with a view to submitting them early in 2009.

In January 2008, the Government approved the funding structure for the Metro North PPP, including an Exchequer provision for advance works ahead of the main PPP contract and a capital contribution during construction.

Advance works have commenced, detailed planning and design work on the project is ongoing and the RPA expects to lodge an application with An Bórd Pleanála for a railway order in the current year.

**Metro West connecting Tallaght and Ballymun through Clondalkin, Liffey Valley and Blanchardstown:**

In July 2007, the Minister for Transport and the RPA announced the emerging preferred route corridor for this line. The RPA is currently undertaking further public consultation to feed into the detailed design; this involves extensive consultation with key stakeholders and the public. This process will define the exact alignment of the Metro West route, stops, Park & ride facilities and tram depot.

**Bus Services**

During 2007, investment continued in the bus priority measures in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and in the regional cities. Over €40 million was invested in traffic management in the GDA, approximately 80% of which went towards bus priority measures, while a total of €8.8 million was invested in similar measures in the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. At the end of 2007, the length of the Quality Bus Network in the GDA was 190km. Seven of a proposed 10 Green Routes (bus priority routes) have been established in Cork. In Limerick, the County Council sections of two of three proposed Green Routes have been completed, with work on the third due to be completed later in 2008. Work is also progressing on developing bus priority in Galway and Waterford.

The Agreed Programme for Government includes a commitment to improving bus services under Transport 21 by reforming the bus licensing provisions of the Road Transport Act 1932, to facilitate the optimum provision of services by providing a level playing field for all market participants, both public and private. It is the

Minister's intention that proposals for a new bus licensing regime will be contained in a Public Transport Regulation Bill which will deal with the replacement of the Road Transport Act 1932 and the provisions of the Transport Act 1958 that relate to the provision of bus services by the State bus companies. It is envisaged that the new licensing structure will apply in respect of all commercial bus services, including those provided by Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann and will also encompass provisions relating to the subvented bus market outside the Greater Dublin Area. It is expected the Bill will be published before the end of the year.

### **Integrated Ticketing**

Integrated tickets have been developed by public transport operators in recent years based on magnetic strip technology which facilitates travel between bus and rail, rail and LUAS and LUAS and bus services.

The migration to integrated tickets, based on smart card technology, is underway on a progressive basis. Smart card tickets are currently available for travel on LUAS, and Dublin Bus is now rolling out a disposable smart card system on its buses. All buses have now been fitted with smart card validators.

The new Public Services Card (PSC), being developed by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, will also be usable as a smart card on the transport system for those entitled to free travel.

In late 2009 the smart card system will be able to offer integrated ticket products within the GDA on the services of Dublin Bus and LUAS.

It will be extended to Irish Rail DART and commuter rail services within a further twelve months, and Bus Éireann on a pilot basis on a number of its commuter routes. It is also envisaged that a number of private bus operators will join the scheme over this timeframe.

### **Feasibility Studies**

The Minister for Transport decided in 2007 that the proposed studies into the feasibility of Luas-style light rail systems in the regional cities should also include consideration of the feasibility of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems. Following discussions between the Department of Transport and the relevant local authorities, consideration of the feasibility of light rail and/or BRT has been included in the update of the Cork Area Strategic Plan and in the Limerick Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study, both of which are now underway. Terms of reference for feasibility studies to address the issues of light rail and BRT have also been agreed with the relevant local authorities in Galway and Waterford and work on these studies is progressing.

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### ***Dublin Transport Authority***

*Given the complexity and scale of the public transport plans for Dublin contained in Transport 21, the Government is committed to expediting the establishment of the Dublin Transport Authority. In applying this policy nationally, the Government will examine the need for a National Transport Regulator in the context of the*

*fundamental review of the entire economic regulatory regime which will be established immediately.*

*We will establish and support the work of the Dublin Transport Authority (DTA), which will have overall responsibility for surface transport in the Greater Dublin Area. The principal functions of the proposed Authority relate to:*

- *Strategic Transport Planning.*
- *Procurement of Public Transport Infrastructure.*
- *Procurement of Public Transport Services.*
- *Regulation of Public Transport fares, routes, and service levels.*
- *Delivery of integrated ticketing, integrated passenger information and integrated fares.*
- *Ensuring effective traffic management.*

*A critical change to the present arrangements is that current and capital Exchequer funds will be allocated by the DTA to the public transport operators for the provision of public transport infrastructure and services.*

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### ***Delivery of an Integrated Public Transport System***

*An Authority with the necessary powers to ensure delivery is critical to putting in place the integrated public transport system envisioned under Transport 21. These powers of the DTA as set out in the legislation can be summarised as follows:*

- *Responsibility for the allocation of Exchequer funds gives the DTA the power to ensure the delivery of priority transport projects.*
  - *The power of the DTA to contract for services allows the integration of services and infrastructure and will, for example, allow the DTA ensure that bus services are effectively integrated with the metro on its completion.*
  - *The DTA is required to deliver public transport infrastructure projects through existing agencies, but should it consider it more efficient and expeditious to do so it can deliver a project itself. This mirrors the powers of the NRA in respect of national roads and has been used successfully by the NRA in relation to PPP projects and national road signposting.*
  - *The DTA can issue a direction to a transport agency requiring it to deliver or take a particular action in delivering a project. Should the transport agency refuse, the DTA can “step-in” and take over the project and all contracts will transfer to the DTA. This power, which might only be used in extreme circumstances, ensures that where a recalcitrant agency is not following the directions of the DTA, the Authority can ensure the delivery of a project in accordance with its direction by doing the project itself.*
  - *The DTA also has a power of direction in relation to issues such as ensuring compliance by transport agencies with integrated ticketing, integrated passenger information and integrated fares. Again the DTA can issue a direction requiring a transport agency to take certain actions. If the agency refuses, the DTA is empowered to go to the High Court and obtain a court order requiring the agency to abide by the direction. Where an agency continues to refuse to abide by the direction, it will be in contempt of court.*
- It will be open to the court to apply the relevant sanctions for such contempt.*

**Progress:**

The Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 was enacted in July 2008. It provides for the establishment of a new transport authority with overall responsibility for surface transport in the Greater Dublin Area. Preparations are being made for the formal establishment of the new Authority.

Its proposed functions are fully in accordance with the commitments in the Programme for Government.

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**Roads**

*The development of a high-quality route network will deliver significant benefits for our competitiveness, balanced regional development and the safety of our roads. This Government will complete:*

- 1. The five inter-urban motorways connecting Dublin to Belfast, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.*
- 2. The Atlantic Road Corridor connecting Letterkenny and Waterford through Sligo, Charlestown, Tuam, Galway, Gort, Ennis, Limerick, Mallow and Cork to motorway standard.*
- 3. The Border Road Corridor connecting Dundalk to Sligo via Enniskillen.*
- 4. High quality road corridors to the Border, the North West and the West connecting Mullingar and Westport/Ballina/Sligo, Kells and Belturbet, as well as Ardee and Monaghan.*
- 5. The Eastcoast N11 dual carriageway to Rosslare.*
- 6. The Dublin to Letterkenny/Derry dual carriageway.*
- 7. Preparations for the delivery of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route.*
- 8. Bypassing of the traffic blackspot of Claregalway by 2012.*

*Once this essential network is completed, the primary task of the National Roads Authority will turn to maintenance of the network.*

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**Progress:**

- 1. *Inter Urban Motorways:*** In 2007, the first of the five planned MIUs was completed, with the opening of the final section of the M1 Dublin Border motorway. By the end of 2007, over 600 kilometres of the planned 738 kilometres of MIUs was either open to traffic or under construction.

To end August in 2008, five major projects have been completed with four projects commencing construction. By end 2008, all the five planned MIU's will be either open to traffic or under construction and are very much on target for full completion by 2010.

In accordance with 'Transport 21' and the 'National Development Plan (NDP), 2007 – 2013', completion of the five MIUs within this timeframe is a priority for the NRA.

## **2. *Atlantic Corridor (Letterkenny to Waterford)***

Letterkenny-Sligo-Galway-Limerick-Cork-Waterford are linked by a number of national routes (viz N13, N14, N15, N4, N17, N18, N20, and N25). The total route length is approximately 575 km. This is known as the Atlantic Corridor.

The development of the Atlantic Road Corridor from Letterkenny through Sligo, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford will connect the National Spatial Strategy Gateway Cities. It has been a longstanding concept in the national roads upgrade programme and has now been re-enforced by Transport 21. It is envisaged that the route will be upgraded substantially to dual carriageway road standard.

A number of significant projects have been completed on the route in recent years. These include the Sligo Inner Relief Road (2005) and the N15 Bundoran/Ballyshannon Bypass (2006) and the Ennis Bypass (N18) (last phase in 2007).

In addition, the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase 2 (Limerick Tunnel) (N18) and Waterford City Bypass (N25) are currently under construction and will be completed by 2010. The N18 Oranmore to Gort and Gort to Crusheen schemes have also been prioritised in the National Development Plan (2007 – 2013).

Furthermore, the NRA has identified 3 projects on the Atlantic Road Corridor which will be undertaken as unitary payment (i.e. non – tolled) Public Private Partnerships (PPP). These are the N20 Cork to Limerick (2 projects) and the N17 Galway to Claremorris. Preparatory work on the procurement of these projects as PPP's is underway.

An extensive programme of planning and design work on the Atlantic Corridor and other routes is also underway in conjunction with local authorities throughout the country.

## **3. *Border Road Corridor connecting Dundalk to Sligo via Enniskillen***

Cavan County Council as the lead Authority for the East West Link Route from Sligo to Dundalk are currently undertaking the tender process to appoint Engineering Consultants and bring the scheme through the design stages. The design of the section from Dundalk to Cavan falls under the Regional and Local Roads Programme and the section from Cavan to Sligo will be the responsibility of the NRA.

## **4. *High Quality Road Corridor to Border / North West & West***

The M1 MIU from Dublin to the Border was completed in August 2007. Planning and preparatory work on the N2 including the Slane Bypass, Ashbourne to Ardee routes and other sections of the N2 is ongoing.

Planning and Design work on a range of projects on these routes is ongoing, including the Compulsary Purchase Order and Environmental Impact Study stages.

Progress in relation to the regional roads is as follows:-

#### Cross Border Bridges, County Monaghan

The replacement of two Cross Border Bridges in County Monaghan (Knockaginny and Annaghroe Bridges) is currently at planning stage both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. Preliminary design work is complete and the tender process for the appointment of a contractor is proposed to commence following a satisfactory outcome of the planning stage. This project is being progressed under the auspices of the North/South Ministerial Council.

#### Narrow Water Bridge, County Louth

The proposed Narrow Water Bridge in County Louth is currently at Preliminary Design and Bridge Options stage. The first public consultation has taken place with the second due to be held in early September 2008. The tender process is underway to appoint a contractor for site investigation; the planning process both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic is proposed to commence following satisfactory completion of the preliminary stage. This project is being progressed under the auspices of the North/South Ministerial Council.

### **5. *The Eastcoast N11 Dual Carriageway to Rosslare***

A budget of €6.15 million has been allocated to the N11 in 2008 to progress the tender process for the construction of the N11 Arklow / Rathnew scheme.

### **6. *Dublin to Letterkenny / Derry***

The Government has agreed to provide funding of €80 million in a roads investment package for Northern Ireland which will contribute to the upgrading of the A5 road from Aughnacloy to Derry/Letterkenny to dual-carriageway status. The management arrangements for the upgrade of this section of road serving the Northwest Gateway have been established and consultants are engaged in a route corridor study. It is expected that a preferred corridor will be identified by the end of 2008 and a preferred route selected by mid 2009/10.

### **7. *Leinster Orbital Route***

In 2007, the NRA completed an updated feasibility study, which built on an earlier 2001 study, which considered, in particular the costs and benefits of what has become known as the Leinster Orbital Route. The updated NRA study, which was forwarded to the Department of Transport in 2007, finds that

there is considerable merit in an Orbital Route linking Drogheda, Navan, Trim and Naas.

Neither Transport 21 nor the National Development Plan provides any funding for such a scheme to be constructed in the period to 2015. The Government has already made it clear under Transport 21, that priorities for the roads investment programme after the completion of the major interurban network in 2010, will be the Atlantic Road Corridor as well as the improvement of other key national primary routes and the targeted improvement of certain national secondary routes.

The Leinster Orbital Route proposal remains an important potential element of our longer term infrastructure development. The Department will continue to liaise with the roads and planning authorities concerned to ensure that route options are preserved free of impediment for this potential project.

#### **8. *Bypassing of the traffic blackspot of Claregalway by 2012***

Approval in principle has been given for the design stage of the Claregalway Inner Relief Road.

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#### ***Road Safety***

*We will support the work of the Road Safety Authority and continue to promote safety education programmes such as extending the Safe Routes Programme, introducing a National Cycle Route, and a Dublin Coast Walk and Cycle Route in order to reduce road deaths. We will also extend traffic calming measures around the country.*

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#### **Progress:**

##### **Road Safety Strategy 2007 – 2012**

A new Road Safety Strategy 2007 - 2012, developed by the RSA, was approved by Government in October 2007. It contains 126 actions under the headings of Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation, with named responsible agencies and target completion dates.

Its primary target is to reduce road deaths to no greater than sixty fatalities per million of population by the end of 2012, which equate to an average of 21 road deaths per month or 252 deaths per year. The average number of road deaths per month in 2007 was 28.

The RSA has confirmed that all actions in the Strategy identified for completion in 2007 have been completed in full. These include publication of a revised Rules of the Road, road safety awareness events, integration of RSA enforcement activity with An Garda Síochána, Customs and the HSA, and publication of various consultation documents including one on compulsory training for motor cyclists.

Road deaths in Ireland have dropped by 30 per cent in the period from 1997 to 2007. A total of 472 people lost their lives on our roads in 1997 compared to 338 in 2007. This downward trend, which has continued into this year, was achieved despite the fact there has been a 40 per cent increase in the number of drivers and a 70 per cent increase in the number of vehicles on our roads.

The results of approximately 30,000 Mandatory Alcohol Testing checkpoints monthly continue to be seen. Since its introduction, there has been a marked reduction in the number of people who died on our roads.

### **Ireland's position on road safety in Europe**

According to the European Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) programme, which is run by the European Transport Safety Council, (ETSC), Ireland is now ranked in the top ten best performing EU countries for road safety performance.

### **Expenditure on road safety**

Expenditure on road safety in 2007 by the RSA, the Medical Bureau of Road Safety and the National Roads was over €66 million.

### **Regulation of vehicle and driver safety**

The Road Safety Authority has been supported through the introduction by the Minister of a number of new regulations in relation to vehicle safety

Reforms in relation to driver licensing have also been introduced. A key measure was the introduction of a new learner permit on 30 October 2007 for all new first time licence applicants and for those renewing provisional licences after that date. This is the first step in the introduction of a graduated licensing system for Ireland.

Following the allocation of additional funding, the RSA has significantly reduced the waiting period for driving tests with the result that, since June, tests are now being arranged within ten weeks of the making of an application.

# Energy

## *Environmental Sustainability*

*We will:*

- *Promote the enhanced deployment of green energy technologies and the sustainable use of energy in transport.*
- *Work with our EU partners to require biofuels used in transport to comply with an environment certification system which incorporates sustainability criteria in terms of biofuels production.*
- *Promote the sustainable use of energy in transport.*

## **Progress:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that 10% of energy used in transport by 2020 is sourced from renewable resources, which are sustainable, reduce fossil fuel dependency and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the full life cycle. The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources will be launching a public consultation paper shortly on his proposals to introduce a Biofuels Obligation in 2010. This will require that a certain percentage of the road transport fuel sold in Ireland in 2010 will be biofuels and will allow this target to be changed in the medium term to ensure that Ireland meets its renewable energy target for the transport sector by 2020. In meeting the 10% target for renewable energy in transport by 2020, we will maximise the contribution from second-generation biofuels, and will ensure that both imported and indigenous biofuels meet EU sustainability criteria.

# Environment

## *Climate Change: A Challenge for the Whole World*

- *Introduce a minimum requirement for the use of bio-fuels in State-owned and public transport vehicles. Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann will move their existing fleet to a 5% bio-diesel blend and will achieve a 30% bio-diesel blend in their new buses.*
  - *Continue to use the taxation system to encourage good environmental behaviour and discourage poor practice: for example, through rebalancing the VRT and Motor Tax system to reward the purchase of greener cars.*
  - *Implement all aspects of Transport 21 so that the use of public transport becomes a real option for more and more people.*
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## **Progress:**

CIÉ have already been instructed to prepare a plan to move all existing buses to a 5% biofuel blend and new buses to a 30% blend as soon as is possible. Furthermore, a prototype hybrid electric double-deck bus will be trialed by Dublin Bus in 2008. We will take the conversion of the public transport fleet to a new level by requiring all Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann urban buses to be hybrid electric or battery electric vehicles, depending on technological advances and commercial availability, by 2020 and all inter-urban vehicles to be fueled by biogas generated from waste or liquid biofuels such as biodiesel or pure plant oil, depending on availability and suitability. Furthermore, any other public transport providers funded by Government will be required to meet similar environmental standards in providing their services and we will also use the proposed new route licensing regime to encourage this. The Department also notes the proposed Directive on the Promotion of Clean and Energy Efficient Vehicles, which offers a template to internalise the costs of fuel consumption, greenhouse gases and air pollutants across the full life cycle operational cost and this will ensure that sustainable public transport fleets are cost-effective.

A new system of Motor Tax to encourage the use of smaller, cleaner, fuel-efficient cars as an initiative against climate change was introduced with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2008. The rate of motor tax is determined by the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions level of the car instead of the longstanding system based on engine capacity (c.c.). The new motor tax system is administered through the Department's National Vehicle and Driver File (NVDF).

A key element of the initiative to rebalance the VRT and motor tax regimes on the basis of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the introduction of a new labelling system designed to reflect the seven emission/tax bands. The new labelling system came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to coincide with the introduction of the new CO<sub>2</sub>-based tax structure for cars. We will support the EU proposals to reduce average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for cars to 120g/km for all new vehicles by 2012 through an integrated approach of improved engine technology/fuel economy and other technological improvements, e.g. more efficient air conditioning, gear shift indicators, etc. Other elements of this strategy

include a separate target for vans, support for research aimed at further reductions in emissions from new cars to an average of 95g/km and measures to support the purchase of fuel-efficient vehicles. The Government will provide further incentives to encourage a switch to electric vehicle technology, for example an exemption from VRT/motor taxation and/or free parking. We will require local authorities to provide on-street plug-in parking bays for such vehicles and examine other more innovative ways of providing a recharging service. Our target is to have 10% of the total fleet operated by electric vehicles by 2020.

The issue of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from ships is under discussion at the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC). In addition agreement has been reached at MEPC on further controls of other harmful emissions such as SOx<sup>1</sup> & NOx<sup>2</sup> in ships exhaust emissions and a revision of Annex VI of the MARPOL (Marine Pollution) Convention, which covers these issues, is expected to be formally agreed at MEPC58 (Marine Environment Protection Committee) in October 2008. The ICGMA continues to work with our European partners at MEPC so as to ensure continued progress on these matters.

### **Sustainable Travel and Transport Action Plan**

20:20 Vision – Sustainable Travel and Transport: Public Consultation Document was launched on 25 February 2008 with a call for submissions from interested parties by 18 April 2008. The deadline for receipt of submissions was subsequently extended to 13 May 2008 and nearly 500 submissions were received. In response, the Action Plan is being developed in consultation with other Departments and a draft of it is at an advanced stage.

### **National Cycle Policy**

In context of STTAP, a national cycling policy is being developed to encourage greater uptake of cycling as a form of transport

### **Green Schools Travel Module**

Recognising the need to achieve significant modal shift, the Minister made €2 million available in 2008 to enable a significant expansion of support by DTO to An Taisce's Green-Schools Travel Module which is running on a pilot basis. The Module aims to reduce dependency on car transport for journeys to and from school and will be an important element of the Sustainable Travel and Transport Action Plan. It would also link to a National Cycle Policy.

### **Brief Results of the pilot programme**

The pilot programme, which involved 49 schools and 20,000 pupils in the Greater Dublin Area in 2007 has produced encouraging results with an average 10% decline in car use for school journeys in the participating schools. This decline was replaced by an 8% increase in walking / cycling and 1% increases in reliance on public transport and mixed mode travel. In addition, there are important potential long-term benefits for travel habits and health - as children mature, it is to be hoped that they

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<sup>1</sup> Sulphur Oxide

<sup>2</sup> Nitrogen Oxide

will see non-car based travel as a realistic option for shorter journeys rather than slavishly depending on cars to meet virtually all transport needs.

A new element to the initiative is that the Minister would set up a stakeholder group to liaise with the DTO and An Taisce. Terms of reference for the Group have been drafted and the Group will meet in September. It is hoped that the Group will provide potentially valuable co-ordination with other school initiatives (for example, the Road Safety Authority have a road safety programme for schools and the local authorities would be an important player in providing safe routes to schools).

# Tourism

## *Enhanced Access*

We will:

- *Open Terminal 2 at Dublin Airport in 2009.*
  - *Enhance the capacity of the regional airports to attract more direct international services through the €86 million Regional Airports Capital Grant.*
  - *Make rural locations more readily accessible for tourists on shorter visits through the delivery of the extensive plans outlined in Transport 21.*
- 

## **Progress:**

Construction work on Terminal 2 at Dublin Airport began in October 2007 and it is due to open to the public in April 2010. The Terminal is part of a €2 billion investment programme by the Dublin Airport Authority to improve, expand and modernise Dublin Airport.

In February 2007, the Government approved capital grant aid of €86 million out of the €100 million total provision in Transport 21 for the six regional airports up to 2010, involving both safety/security and developmental projects. At the end of August 2008 grant aid of €5.8 million had been drawn down by the regional airports.

# Health

## *Overall Structural Reform*

*Three years into the structural reforms it is reasonable to review how effectively HSE is operating and, especially, to ensure that team work and communication are working to the fullest extent.*

*We are committed to carrying out such a review and to ensuring that staff have an opportunity to propose ways in which the HSE can work more effectively.*

## **Progress:**

An agreement has been signed between the HSE and the Department of Transport on the use of a specially trained Marine Ambulance Response Team. This new service was launched in March 2008. Members of this unit are available 24/7 to the Irish Coast Guard and Maritime Administration for incidents at sea and to others for land incidents. The Irish Coast Guard SAR (Search and Rescue) helicopters are utilised to transport the team to incidents. Uses include mass rescue type incidents where advanced paramedics on site can assist e.g. triage during emergencies on large passenger vessels.

# Better Supports for Older People

## *National Strategy for Older People*

*The development of quality transport systems in rural and urban areas and the expansion of the Rural Transport Initiative will improve accessibility for older people.*

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### **Progress:**

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP) launched in February 2007 placed the former pilot Rural Transport Initiative (2002 – 2006) on a mainstreamed basis with significantly increased funding. Under this Programme, a number of rural community transport groups are being funded to address social exclusion arising from unmet public transport needs in their rural areas. Older people and people with disabilities form the core customer base of the RTP.

Pobal, which manages the RTP on behalf of the Department of Transport, has commenced a process to extend the Programme on a phased basis with a goal of achieving nation-wide coverage in due course in line with Government policy. It is planned that by end-2008, RTP Groups will be operational in every county and will be working towards maximising coverage in their operational areas.

# Disability

## *Transport*

We will:

- *Implement our strategy for making public transport accessible, with detailed actions for implementation in the areas of air, bus, taxi, rail and sea transport.*
  - *Ensure all public transport is accessible and that cities have 100% wheelchair accessible taxi fleets.*
  - *Address illegal parking in disabled car park spaces through enforcement, increased fines and public awareness.*
  - *Review the eligibility criteria for disabled driver and disabled passenger scheme and other adaptation schemes.*
- 

## **Progress:**

*Transport Access for All*, the Department of Transport's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005 sets out a series of policy objectives and time bound targets for accessible transport across all modes of transport – measures to make trains, buses, taxi and hackney services, as well as air and marine transport, accessible to people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. In general, the timescales for the various elements of the Plan provide for completion by 2015.

Measures to implement *Transport Access for All* are already well advanced. Since the year 2000, all major refurbishment projects at bus and rail stations, together with the construction of new stations and the purchase of trains or buses take account of the needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments. Measures to improve the accessibility of taxis as well as air and marine passenger transport are also being actively pursued. In the implementation of the Plan, transport projects are being monitored for compliance with accessibility principles.

Under the provisions of the new European Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2006, which came into force on 26 July 2008, airports will have to provide services that enable disabled passengers and other passengers with reduced mobility to board, disembark and transit between flights which will greatly help those passengers when flying, either for leisure or business purposes. This Regulation was brought into Irish law under SI 299 of 2008.

Significant resources for accessibility are being provided under *Transport 21* and the National Development Plan 2007-2013, to facilitate further progress. Accessibility is being built into new public transport infrastructure projects and funding is also being provided to continue the phased retrofit of existing infrastructure.

In line with a commitment in *Transport Access for All*, a full review of the Sectoral Plan is being undertaken in 2008. The Review is being informed, among other things, by responses to a public consultation process that concluded on 27 June 2008. It is intended to have the revised Plan ready for publication by end 2008.

**Illegal parking in disabled car park spaces through enforcement, increased fines and public awareness.**

The Roads Act 2007 further strengthened the provisions against illegal use of disabled persons' parking permits

A Garda or a traffic warden has power to inspect a permit and to detain a permit where he or she is of the opinion that the permit is no longer in force; does not apply to the circumstances or vehicle in which it is being used; is altered or forged; or the person using the permit is not entitled to use it. It is an offence to use a permit other than in accordance with its terms or conditions, or refuse to allow or obstruct the inspection of a permit.

In April 2006 illegal parking in a disabled person's parking bay was brought into the fixed charge system, and the fixed charge payable is €80 if paid within 28 days and €120 if paid within the next 28 days.

In 2007 the opportunity was taken in the publication of the revised Rules of the Road (a copy of which was distributed to every household in the country) to heighten public awareness in relation to the use of a disabled persons designated parking bay. The new Rules of the Road publication includes an illustration of the designated bay under the rules on No Parking. Particular attention is also drawn to the wheelchair access needs for the use of these designated bays and to the requirement that only vehicles that display a disabled persons parking permit can use that bay.

**Review the eligibility criteria for disabled driver and disabled passenger scheme and other adaptation schemes.**

A review of the criteria for the granting and use of the disabled person's parking card on public roads is under way.

# Community

## *Transport*

*We will:*

- *Build on the success thus far of the RTI and extend the Rural Transport Programme nationwide.*
  - *Provide park and ride services in all appropriate locations.*
- 

## **Progress:**

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP) launched in February 2007, is putting the former pilot Rural Transport Initiative (2002-2006) on a mainstreamed basis with significantly increased funding and is providing for additional services together with expanded area coverage. The bottom-up approach developed during the pilot Rural Transport Initiative demonstrated the effectiveness of community and voluntary innovation and participation in the provision of rural transport services. The RTP is building on that concept and the main drivers of community rural transport continue to be the local communities themselves.

Pobal, which administers the RTP on behalf of the Department of Transport, is developing the Programme on a phased basis in consultation with individual RTP groups, with a goal of achieving nation-wide coverage in due course in line with Government policy. It is planned that by end-2008, RTP Groups will be operational in every county and will be working towards maximising coverage in their operational areas.

Additional funding is being provided for the Rural Transport Programme in 2008, following the increase in the frequency of a number of existing services, extended area coverage, and additional groups of passengers accessing rural transport achieved during 2007.

It is the policy of the Department of Transport to support the role of park and ride facilities in encouraging people to transfer from private cars to public transport. Under Transport 21, funding is available for the development of park and ride facilities by Iarnród Éireann, by the RPA, and by local authorities in the GDA and the regional cities, either as stand-alone projects or as part of larger rail-based investments.

In 2007, €3.7 million was paid to Iarnród Éireann to upgrade and expand the capacity of rail station carparks. The Park and Ride sites associated with the proposed Luas and Metro lines in Transport 21 will open at the same time that the lines open for passenger services. These sites are determined by the RPA when individual Railway Order applications are submitted for the various lines and the cost of Park and Ride facilities is included in the overall budgets for the relevant lines.

Funding has been made available to local authorities in the GDA for the development of park and ride facilities. No proposals have been received from these authorities to date. A proposal by South Dublin County Council was delayed in the planning process in 2007 and rejected by An Bord Pleanála in early 2008.

Funding is available to the local authorities in the regional cities for bus priority and park and ride measures. It is a matter for the local authorities to prioritise projects and apply to my Department for funding. In the past year, the local authorities in these cities have been focused on developing bus priority, which is an essential prerequisite for the operation of successful bus-based park and ride facilities.

# Balanced Regional Development

## *Atlantic Gateways*

*We believe that a linked metropolitan corridor from Waterford through Cork, Limerick/Shannon to Galway – complemented by direct links between Waterford and Limerick - offers the best option for developing a national counterpoint to Dublin and the Dublin/Belfast economic corridor.*

### **Progress:**

See update under Atlantic Corridor (Roads Sector).

## *Strategic Transport Links*

*The Atlantic Gateways corridor will be complimented by new road and rail transport links joining the country's Gateway towns and cities as set out in Transport 21. We will re-open the Western Rail Corridor from Ennis to Claremorris and examine the feasibility of reopening the line from Claremorris to Sligo. The inter-urban motorway network will link Dublin to our biggest cities, the Atlantic Road Corridor will link Cork to Letterkenny/Derry, and the new Border Corridor road will run from Sligo to Dundalk.*

### **Progress:**

See update under Atlantic Corridor (Roads Sector).

See update under Border Road Corridor Dundalk to Sligo via Enniskillen (Roads Sector).

## *North West Gateway Initiative*

*We will work with the new Northern Executive to ensure that the economic and social benefits of peace are fully felt in Donegal, Derry and surrounding counties. Delivering the centrepiece Dublin – Derry/Letterkenny dual carriageway will be a core priority as we continue to develop the huge potential of the Northwest. We will work to increase cooperation in areas including spatial planning, education and skills, health and improvements in infrastructure. Investment in Derry Airport by Government will continue as recognition that it plays a vital role in Donegal and Ireland's future.*

### **Progress:**

In 2008 the Government began payments to Derry City Council under its €10.87 million grant scheme for a runway safety project at Derry City Airport in a joint funding arrangement agreed with the UK Government. (See Peace and Unity reference to this issue).

See update under High Quality Road Corridor to Border / North West & West (Roads Sector)

# Peace and Unity

## ***Border Communities***

*Partition and the Troubles caused huge damage to our border communities. Apart from the social consequences, towns were cut off from natural hinterlands and economic corridors were cut off altogether. We are committed to implementing an unprecedented programme of investment in border communities.*

*We will:*

- *Press for all-island planning and co-ordination in infrastructural investment across the Island over the next decade, to ensure greater provision of services to border communities.*
  - *Establish a cross-border Innovation Fund to support education, skills, science and innovation, energy research, regional development, tourism development, poverty, social inclusion and community infrastructure.*
  - *Support the development of cross-border projects including:  
The Dublin – Letterkenny/Derry dual carriageway  
The Border Corridor  
The Ulster Canal  
The Bridge at Narrow-Water.*
  - *Further develop the Dublin-Belfast rail line as part of an integrated rail service serving major population centres, North and South.*
  - *Complete the development of Derry Airport, for which we have already committed almost €11 million.*
- 

## **Progress:**

The Government and Northern Ireland Executive continue to coordinate plans for infrastructural investment through the North/South Ministerial Council. Major projects agreed within the NSMC over 2007/08 include the Government's roads investment package in Northern Ireland, and agreement to restore the Ulster Canal from Clones to Upper Lough Erne.

## **Roads**

The North/South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting of July 2007 reached agreement on the Government's €80 million roads investment package for Northern Ireland, which will contribute to the upgrading of the A5 road from Aughnacloy to Derry/Letterkenny to dual-carriageway status. The new road will make a major contribution to the economic and social development of the North-West. Management structures for the project have been agreed and consultants appointed to carry out a route corridor study. The preliminary route corridor assessment is due to be completed by the end of 2008, and further key milestones have been agreed and will be aligned with the timing of payments from the Government.

The Border Corridor route will be assessed for funding upon completion of the major inter-urban routes identified under Transport 21. The Government has, in the interim,

provided funding to Cavan County Council and Leitrim County Council to improve existing routes.

The Government have provided €390,000 to Louth County Council to undertake preliminary technical work on a bridge at Narrow Water, to improve tourist links between Co. Louth and Co. Down. This technical work, which will include the preferred route, preliminary design, and an environmental impact statement, is expected to be available before the end of the year. The Government and the Northern Ireland Executive will then consult, through the North/South Ministerial Council, on options for the funding of the Bridge.

### **Rail**

The Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have discussed, over the last year, options for redeploying additional existing rolling stock on the Dublin to Belfast rail line, which could lead to improved frequency of service. This issue was discussed most recently at the North/South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting in February 2008, at which the Council looked forward to the early assessment of options for the future development of the Dublin/Belfast Enterprise rail service, especially in relation to increased service frequency and reduced travel times. Iarnród Éireann and Translink in Northern Ireland are now finalising proposals in the form of a costed business case, which is expected to be considered by Ministers at a North/South Ministerial Council meeting in the Transport Sector before the end of 2008.

### **Aviation**

The Government decided in 2007 to increase its funding for the runway safety project at Derry City Airport to €10.87 million. The Government's contribution is matched by the Northern Ireland Executive under co-funding arrangements agreed in March 2005. Support for the City of Derry Airport is another example of cross-border cooperation with the potential to stimulate economic growth and reduce the geographic isolation of the North-West.

Support for the project is overseen by the Minister for Transport and Northern Ireland's Minister for Regional Development, through the North/South Ministerial Council. A first payment by the Government of €1.6 million in respect of the project was made in February 2008, following undertakings from Derry City Council in relation to new governance arrangements for the Airport. The Council has established an advisory board, including independent members, committed to completion of reform by December 2009. Payments up to the agreed cap will continue to be made by the Government over this period.

### **Irish Coast Guard and Maritime Administration:**

The Department's Irish Coast Guard works very closely with its nearest neighbours in Northern Ireland, mainland UK and the Isle of Man. Search and rescue assets are shared in border areas between the north and south during search and rescue and other emergency incidents. Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopters based at Dublin and Sligo assist regularly at incidents in Northern Ireland as requested by MRCC Belfast.

This mutual cooperation and assistance extends to joint training and competition. JSAR (Joint Search and Rescue) Games are held annually at rotating different locations north and south. Staff working at the Rescue Coordination Centres in

Bangor and at Malin Head carry out liaison visits and joint exercises take place. Representatives from each authority attend meetings dealing with SAR - Irish Sea Working Group - Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee - UK SAR Operators Consultative Committee and the UK SAR Helicopter Working Group.

Maritime Search and Rescue Assets in Ireland, the UK and Isle of Man form elements of the major contingency emergency plan for mass rescue incidents involving passenger vessels or aircraft on the Irish Sea. A hot-line is maintained between MRCC Dublin and MRCC Swansea for use as a single point of contact (SPOC) to request mutual assistance during such incidents. Joint exercises involving SAR resources from the three authorities take place as elements of preparedness and training.

Irish Coast Guard and MCA provide adjacent maritime communications coverage to each other during times of equipment failure or industrial action.

The Irish Coast Guard and the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency are at an advanced stage in drawing up an operational SLA that will consolidate and enhance existing arrangements for dealing with SAR and other maritime emergencies.

The Interreg IIIA North-South Programme is expected to be completed in 2008. The Programme has provided funding for research into marine communications and safety at sea and contributes towards the improvement of infrastructural facilities of ports around the Border region. The Programme provides for 75% of the total grant awarded to be met out of the European Regional Development Fund with the remaining 25% met by the States concerned. By agreement the 25% matching funding has been apportioned 60-40 as between North (Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development) and South (Dept. of Transport). Five cross-border projects were approved under the Programme promoted by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, Drogheda Port Company, the Irish Central Border Area Network, Londonderry Port and Harbour Authority and Warrenpoint Harbour Authority. Overall funding amounted to more than €10 million.

# Ireland in the World

*We want to ensure that Ireland is a constructive member of the international community, prioritising the active promotion of peace and development through the European Union, the United Nations, international agencies and direct action.*

*We intend adopting an active foreign policy in the next five years, based on progressing initiatives in key areas.*

## ***United Nations – Ireland The Model UN Member State***

*Our goal is to establish Ireland as the model UN State, a world leader in development assistance, humanitarian rapid response and conflict resolution.*

*We will:*

- *Continue Ireland's strong support for the primacy of the UN in international affairs and of UN reform...*
- 

## **Progress:**

Ireland's search, rescue and pollution response organisation and services are benchmarked against the UN's International Maritime Organisation Convention for Safety of Life at Sea, the Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue and the Convention for Oil Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Co-operation. Ireland is signatory to these conventions.

The Irish Coast Guard and Maritime Administration operates to the highest standards of maritime regulation to satisfy International requirements as governed by the IMO, the EU, the International Labour Organisation, the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on port State control and the International Telecommunications Union.

The United States of America mandated its Coast Guard to carry out maritime security assessments of countries ports that trade with it. This is a very important assessment. If deficiencies are noted, the US may place trade restrictions on a country's ports, any ships flying that country's flag or foreign ships coming from that country's ports. The US Coast Guard team visited facilities at three Irish ports during a week-long visit in early 2008. The visit was successful and the team noted several examples of best practice in our ports, which they wish to share with ports in the US.

The European Commission's maritime security inspectors carried out an inspection of an Irish international ferry port in September 2007, in relation to their obligation to monitor the implementation of EC Regulation 724/2004 in the member states. The port concerned was found to be in compliance and no non-conformity notifications were issued by the inspectors. Should a port facility fail such an inspection it may have immediate and severe implications for the continuation of trade through the facility.

The ICGMA's (Irish Coast Guard and Maritime Administration) "e-Government" project - "Safe Seas Ireland" is continuing to be rolled out. This will realise

significant benefits for maritime stakeholders in the delivery of information through the SSI system. The system will also realise gains in terms of maritime safety, security and pollution prevention.

The Department operates to the highest standards of Maritime Regulation to satisfy European and International requirements as governed by the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on port State control. A major exercise in upgrading the performance of the Irish merchant shipping fleet, has contributed to Ireland reaching the White List status of the Paris MoU in May 2008. The Department's Marine Survey Office worked over the past two years to move from the grey list of the Paris MoU (representing average performance on port State control), to the white list, (which represents above average performance for a maritime administration). This entailed improving the administration systems in the office as well as visiting and inspecting all ships which fly the Irish flag worldwide.

# Ireland in Europe

*The EU was a key catalyst in Ireland's economic and social transformation. It has helped us to realise the full potential of national sovereignty through the unique arrangement of a community of nations with strong collective action.*

*We believe passionately in a constructive agenda to use our membership of the European Union to make our country and the wider Union stronger. The EU has been the greatest force for peace and prosperity in the history of Europe and we believe that it must continue to evolve to meet modern challenges and deliver practical improvements in the lives of Europeans.*

We will:

- *Support EU moves to ensure airlines have transparent fares, including all taxes and fees, that they end the practice of charging different prices in different states for the same flight and introduce safer flying regulations.*
  - *Aim to have Ireland consistently within the top group on the EU internal Market Scoreboard which monitors transposition of EU Directives*
- 

## **Progress:**

European aviation was liberalised in 1992 by the “third air package”. Under those regulations any business that has the necessary financial and technical resources were granted an air carrier operating licence and every licensed air carrier were entitled to operate air services throughout the Community. A new updated Regulation is intended to simplify and streamline the regulatory process and provide a variety of additional safeguards for the public. There will be greater transparency in relation to ticket prices in that prices will have to be shown inclusive of all taxes and charges and may not discriminate due to the place of residence of the passenger. It is expected that this Regulation will be approved by the European Parliament in the coming months.

We represent Ireland's position effectively in the international maritime community and implement relevant international conventions and EU measures in a timely manner. The International Safety Management (ISM) Code Regulation was transposed ahead of deadline on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008.

We are progressing the Third Maritime Safety Package, comprising eight separate legislative proposals designed to improve safety at sea and to support and improve the Community's shipping industry, as one of the deliverables in the EU's Blue Paper on an integrated Maritime Policy.

The Irish Coast Guard is a partner in the EU funded pilot EU Flood Command project to examine possibilities for use of declared SAR (Search and Rescue) resource assistance in other countries affected by major coastal inundation. The project was outlined to EU member states represented at an initial conference in May 2007. In a

tabletop exercise, participating member states were introduced to prototype software for tasking/tracking/logging multi assets in a mass rescue incident.

A live exercise involving theoretical Rescue Coordination Centres in Ireland, UK, Sweden and the Netherlands took place in early April 2008 with the international debrief in Dublin. The Irish Coast Guard will benefit from a training/exercise/response software package as a partner in this Project.

The Irish Coast Guard attended the inaugural meeting of the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum in Stockholm and the second meeting in Copenhagen held in March 2008. The programme explored the many issues that the participant nations have identified and the ways in which common international themes could be explored for the benefit of all members.

## Defence

*We will:*

- *Continue the annual programme of major simulated exercises and use these structured exercises to support sustained public awareness and reassurance.*
  - *Promote greater cooperation and knowledge sharing between the Coast Guard, the Navy and Air Corps to ensure that the waters surrounding this island are safe for seafarers and coastal communities.*
- 

### **Progress:**

The annual programme of SAR (Search and Rescue) exercises is ongoing with a regular programme of exercises being held around the coast. The annual Irish Marine Search and Rescue exercise was held in Buncrana in May this year with participants from local Coast Guard Units, the RNLI, beach Lifeguards, Civil Defence and Naval Service taking part.

The Department of Defence and Coast Guard are in the final phase of concluding a Service Level Agreement. This Service Level Agreement outlines the support the Naval Service and Air Corps can deploy at the request of the Coast Guard in support of search and rescue operations. Regular exercises are carried out between the Coast Guard and Naval Service. Earlier this year Coast Guard held a joint training exercise with the Naval Service Diving Unit using the Irish Lights Vessel Granuaile as a diving platform. This exercise focused particular attention to deployment of the N.S. Diving Unit to search and recovery operations and deep dive techniques.

# Civic Life

## *Active Citizenship and Volunteering*

*To ensure this active involvement continues this Government will implement the recommendations of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship.*

*These recommendations include:*

- *Introducing a National Active Citizenship theme culminating in a National Active Citizenship week.*
- *Introducing National Presidential Citizen Awards to recognise outstanding contributions made by individuals to Irish society.*
- *Ensuring that Local Authorities prioritise the provision of community and recreational facilities as part of their Development Plans.*
- *Undertaking an audit of existing community facilities to identify gaps and opportunities for improved use of existing facilities.*
- *Identifying how better use can be made of schools at evening and weekends to act as community hubs.*
- *Introducing a formal Citizenship Ceremony.*

*We will also examine ways of:*

- *Strengthening further the relationship between Government and community and voluntary organisations.*
  - *Developing a system of academic accreditation in recognition of volunteering skills.*
- 

## **Progress:**

The agreed programme for Government recognises the deep tradition of engagement of citizens in community leadership. The Irish Coast Guard has a high level of volunteer participation in Search and Rescue services. This is particularly evident in the work undertaken by Irish Coast Guard volunteers and others in this sector. We actively support and encourage continued and increased participation.