

**Introduction by Professor John Hume,
Tip O'Neill Chair of Peace Studies,
University of Ulster at Magee**

Lecture by Pat Cox MEP

President of the European Parliament

Europe as a force for creative reconciliation

26 April 2004

I am delighted to welcome the President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox MEP, to Magee tonight.

As many of you know, Magee has been privileged to welcome the heads of the other major institutions of the European Union, the Council of Ministers and the Commission, to Derry over the last few weeks. Tonight we complete the triple with the address that President Pat Cox is about to deliver on the theme.

It is particularly appropriate that the President of the European Parliament should take part in this Tip O'Neil series of lectures, named after one of the great Parliamentary leaders of the 20th century.

The European Parliament is the only directly-elected body in the European Union. The elected representatives of the peoples of Europe come together to deliberate on the whole range of issues affecting the citizens of Europe.

As President of the Parliament, Pat Cox presides over an Assembly where political groups, involving some 50 separate political parties across the Union, conduct a permanent dialogue resulting in hundreds of decisions every year.

As President, Pat Cox faces the challenge that of making sure that every MEP is treated fairly and equally, that all the varying shades of opinion are heard, the conflicting positions reconciled, and decisions ultimately taken.

He is also responsible for ensuring that the collective views of the European Parliament are represented to the other EU institutions, to the governments of the member states and for communicating the European Parliament's position to the citizens of Europe.

This is a demanding job where Pat Cox's skills as a communicator and negotiator, acquired in his work at the University of Limerick, at RTE and in his subsequent political career in the Republic and in Europe where he has

represented Munster in the European Parliament since 1989, have ensured that he has been a great success.

I am particularly proud to welcome President Cox to Derry at such an historic moment in the history of our continent and in the evolution of the European Union. We are living through the last days of a divided Europe.

On Saturday we welcome fifteen new member states, most of which were victims of decades of oppression under the Soviets. That they should freely, voluntarily and enthusiastically decide to join the European Union once they obtained their freedom should be a lesson to us all - The EU threatens no one's freedom or independence, it is the way in which we collectively advance the cause of freedom, prosperity and peace.

President Cox has played an important role in bringing about this historic realignment. Under his Presidency the crucial breakthroughs have taken place and the peoples of the new member states have given their approval EU to membership. As a representative of a smaller state, Pat Cox has been able to assure that the new member states that advancing their interests within the EU depends on the quality not the volume of their arguments

We should all be proud that this expansion of the EU is taking place at a time when two Irishmen are leading two of the three principal institutions of the European Union - the Council and the Parliament.

President Cox has taken time out of a very heavy schedule to visit Derry in the run-up to enlargement and to the new European Constitution for which I thank you.

And now, President, as you usually say to us MEPs,

The floor is yours.