

The Annual UCD Colours Debate

David Beamish – Debates Convener

Apart from the Review, the Committee are also involved in organising intervarsity debates, in particular, the annual Colours Debate between the Economics Departments of UCD and Trinity College. David Beamish, the Debates Convener, now discusses this year's event.

The annual colours debate between Trinity College and UCD took place in Belfield. The motion was 'That this house believes that Charlie McCreevy should not yield to the European Council.' Trinity College proposed the motion and being the visiting team opened the debate.

Seeking to avenge last year's defeat, Trinity College put forward a strong team consisting of Jim McElroy, John Lyndam – both accomplished Phil/Hist speakers and Eoin O'Hógáin – a scholar. The UCD team consisted of two of their previous years team, Declan Murphy and Simon Laraghi and new recruit Kevin Ryan. The five judges were: Prof. Antoin Murphy, Prof. Brendan Walsh, Val Kevney, Dermot Heuston and Trisha Circit.

While the debate took place in UCD, Trinity supporters represented the majority of the crowd and were often vocal in their support of references to 'Belfield Polytechnic' used repeatedly throughout the night!

Eoin opened proceedings and aimed to show that Ireland's reprimand was both unfair and contradictory and had overshot the terms laid down by the Maastricht Treaty. Further, he added that the primary cause of inflation in Ireland was caused by the weakness of the Euro.

Kevin, UCD, responded by saying that Ireland, while small and perhaps insignificant in Europe, could be setting a dangerous precedent which others may follow to the detriment of the Union. Further, he drew on Game Theory suggesting that acting in one's own self-interest will not provide the optimal solution.

John Lynham was keen to point out the political consequences of the Council's actions and the fact that the Irish public would lose confidence in Europe and further integration, if the Council insisted on behaving beyond the conditions of the Treaty. Further, he also drew on the innate fear that small countries have, that of there being 'rules for the big and rules for the small.'

Declan, UCD, tried to argue that McCreevy's budget actions have been procyclical and reckless and only fuelling inflation by encouraging 'too much money to chase the same amount of goods'. However, Jim McElroy was quick to point out that Irish GDP had been rising continually for 10 years and the range of goods available to the consumer had increased.

Jim concluded for Trinity College by summing up and arguing on five main points – that the guidelines as set out in the Maastricht Treaty are weak and contradictory, Ireland's inflation is imported, Ireland is an extremely successful economy, that social welfare agreements have been one of the blocks, upon which the economy's success has been built and thus must be maintained, and finally that the Council cannot act beyond the powers decreed upon it in the Maastricht Treaty if the Council wishes the public to have faith in it.

Simon Laragi concluded for UCD by again emphasising the dangers of procyclical budgets introduced by McCreevy and that Ireland signed up and agreed to follow the 'broad economic guidelines'.

The judges retired outside to consider their verdict and questions were put to the floor. The final verdict was a win for Trinity College, with best speaker going to Simon Laragi. On an editorial note, I would like congratulate the team for a commanding victory and to thank Colin Andrews who prepared the team for the debate.