



DR. GARRET FITZGERALD

Garret FitzGerald has had careers in air transport, economic consultancy, university lecturing, journalism, politics and business. After graduating with a degree in history and modern languages and being called to the Irish Bar, the first twelve years of his working life were spent within the Irish national airline, Aer Lingus. At the age of 26 he became responsible for its economic planning, scheduling, and rates and fares.

In 1958 he left Aer Lingus to undertake a career directed initially towards preparing the highly-protected Irish industrial sector for free trade as an eventual member of the European Community, which had been founded a year earlier by six Continental European countries.

Within a couple of years he became Economic Consultant to the Federation of Irish Industries and secured agreement between the Federation, the Government and the Trades Union Congress to the establishment of a Committee on Industrial Organisation, of which he himself was an active member. Between 1961 and 1965 this Committee surveyed the whole Irish industrial sector and initiated a rationalisation of industry in preparation for EC membership.

Between 1963 and 1969 Dr. FitzGerald also participated in the process of Irish economic planning, which became the subject of his Ph.D thesis.

In 1961 Dr. FitzGerald established, in conjunction with the Economist-owned EIU of London, an Irish economic consultancy firm, which served the needs of both the private and public sectors until the early 1970's. In particular, he assisted many firms with advice and assistance in relation to EC membership, based on frequent contact in Brussels with the many Directorates-General of the European Commission. For most of this time Dr. FitzGerald's EIU was the sole company in Ireland offering this service.

Dr. FitzGerald had also become a Lecturer in Economics in the National University of Ireland's Dublin College in 1959, specialising in the Economics of Transport and EC Affairs. In 1961 he lectured to industrialists throughout Ireland on the Treaty of Rome. In 1962 Dr. FitzGerald organised the first visit to Brussels by Economics lecturers from the universities of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

From 1954 onwards, Dr. FitzGerald became a columnist for the Irish Times, writing on a weekly basis on economic and social affairs. At various times during the 1960s and early 1970s, Dr. FitzGerald was also the Irish correspondent for the BBC, Financial Times and The Economist.

To these three careers in consultancy, academic life and journalism he added, in 1965, a fourth, politics, being selected to the Senate and becoming a front bench member of the main Opposition party, Fine Gael.

In March 1973, within weeks of Irish accession to the Community, Dr. FitzGerald abandoned these multiple careers on his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs in a new Coalition Government. In that capacity he formulated for Ireland an integrationist European policy, which contrasted sharply with the much more reticent British approach to membership.

In 1975 Dr. FitzGerald led what was seen as a highly successful first Irish Presidency of the EC Council of Ministers. During this Presidency he led the final negotiations for the first Lome Convention between the EC and 46 African, Asian, Indian Ocean and Pacific countries and signed this Convention on behalf of the EC. He also initiated the first contacts on behalf of the EC Council of Ministers with the revolutionary Portuguese Government. Later, in 1976, he negotiated an agreement with the European Commission that accorded Ireland a unique right to expand its fish catch at a time when other countries were required to cut back on their catches.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. FitzGerald also pursued a policy of conciliation vis-à-vis the Unionists in Northern Ireland, backing the firmly anti-IRA stance of Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave and, in domestic politics; he actively supported social democratic policies.

In 1977, after the defeat of the Coalition Government, he was unanimously elected Leader of the Fine Gael Party and, in opposition for the following four years, pursued liberal policies. In 1981 he formed a Coalition Government whose vigorous attack on a huge fiscal deficit left by the preceding administration led after nine months to a temporary return to Opposition. However, following a third election within eighteen months, he secured a four-and-a-half year term in Government during which his Government halved the fiscal deficit, eliminated a very large external payments deficit, and reduced inflation from over 20% to 3%.

During this period in Government Dr. FitzGerald also negotiated an Anglo-Irish Agreement with Margaret Thatcher, under which the Irish State secured a role in relation to the protection of the interests of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland.

Within the EC, he secured a supplemental quota for milk, Ireland's key agricultural product and, at the Dublin European Council in December 1984, he cleared the way for Spanish and Portuguese membership in the Community by resolving French and Italian differences in relation to wine policy.

On the defeat of his Government in a March 1987 Election, Dr. FitzGerald resigned from the leadership of his party and, five years later, stood down from membership of Parliament.

Since 1987 he has lectured widely in the United States, Japan, China, Hong, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosova,

Macedonia, Croatia, Russia and Kazakhstan, as well as in Britain and Northern Ireland.

In 1989, and again in 1994, Dr. FitzGerald undertook consultancy work in Zimbabwe, relating to the EU Single Market and other EU issues. And, on behalf of the EU/TACIS-financed European Expertise Service, he undertook a mission related to economic policy formulation in Russia in 1993-'94. Moreover, between 1993 and 1995 he undertook three missions to Kazakhstan, related to issues such as a Free Trade Area linking Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Uzbekistan, and preparations by these countries for WTO membership. In 1998, Dr. FitzGerald also undertook consultancy in Zambia on the subject of the organisation of government.

Dr. FitzGerald is a long-serving member (and from 1990-1995 was Deputy European Chairman) of the Trilateral Commission, which was established in 1993 by David Rockefeller to intensify contacts between the United States, Europe and Japan.

In 1991 he published his autobiography "All in a Life", and since then has contributed a weekly column on economic, social and political affairs to "The Irish Times". In 2002 Dr. FitzGerald published his most recent book "Reflections on the Irish State".

Dr. FitzGerald is now a member of the Irish Council of State and is Chancellor of the federal National University of Ireland, which comprises four of the Irish State's seven universities, presiding over its Senate and Committee meetings. Dr. FitzGerald is also Chairman of the Future of Europe Committee of the Institute of European Affairs and is a member of the International Affairs Committee of the Royal Irish Academy.

He is also a director of Age Action Ireland, and is a director DCI, a private company engaged in export marketing consultancy, as well as of the Greater Europe Fund, and is an advisor to a U.S. company, Integrity Interactive, which is extending to Europe its activities in relation to compliance by large companies with legal and ethical requirements.