



Mary McAleese addresses a session of the European Youth Parliament in the Dail. Earlier, she was welcomed to Leinster House by Ceann Comhairle John O'Donoghue (below left) and by Andrew Byrne (right), one of the leading organisers of the parliament.

## Tide of history is moving in our favour, says McAleese

**Michael Brennan**  
Political Correspondent

PRESIDENT Mary McAleese told a group of Young Europeans that the future of the continent had never been "so prosperous, so peaceful or so free".

Speaking in the Dail yesterday, she said that whereas once young people had served in army uniforms or boarded emigrant ships, now they were living the EU founders' dream.

"We look forward to a great continent as one and we are very fortunate the tide of history has moved in our favour."

In her address to more than 200 members of the European Youth Parliament (EYP), she also joked about the contrast between them and the normal occupants of the Dail.

"The Ceann Comhairle said this is the first time there have been no grey hairs in this chamber. Well, mine are well covered," she said, to laughter.



Yesterday was the first time the Dail was opened up for EYP debates. The 10 Irish teenagers taking part in the EYP's 56th international session were selected from more than 500 schoolgoers.

President McAleese, whose son Justin is a former EYP delegate, said she hoped to see their names in years to come.

"Good people make for good politics and the best people make for the best politics. The

life of a politician is probably about as difficult and stressful as a life can be. But it is also very rewarding to serve the public." Organiser Andrew Byrne (22) also revealed the EYP is banned in Belarus due to its promotion of democratic values.

"Their national co-ordinator works from London. For the average Irish student to meet someone like that brings across how lucky we are to have our democratic freedoms."

### Call for State honours list

IRELAND should have investitures at Aras an Uachtairain under a new honours system, Dublin TD Finian McGrath said yesterday.

Irish citizens currently have to seek Government approval if they want to receive foreign honours.

Mr McGrath said the list would honour those who make a major contribution to Irish society.

"I would seriously call on the Taoiseach to bring in an honours list. There is no reason why the Taoiseach and the Government should not introduce an honours list, or awards, for citizens who make a significant contribution to Irish society," the independent TD told the Dail.