

FOREWORD

We are delighted to join in publishing the third edition of the North-South Statistical Profile which draws together official social and economic statistics for both parts of Ireland and tracks significant change over time. The first edition was published in January 2001, followed by an online update in January 2003.

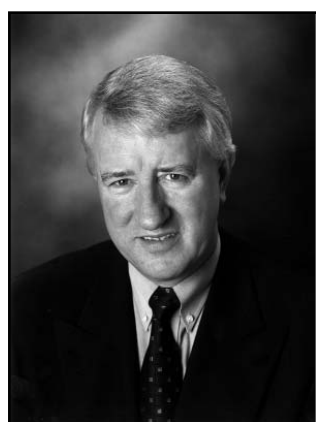
The publication inevitably focuses on the areas where comparable data are readily available. Differences between the two jurisdictions and issues such as data availability and definition mean that it has not been possible to produce comparative data for all policy areas. Nonetheless, we have been able to provide closely comparable data on many important sectors including demography, agriculture, transport and the labour market.

The first edition committed to re-issue this Statistical Profile periodically in order to draw on new sources of data which may become available and to broaden the areas of comparison. We have fulfilled this commitment by introducing new information on the environment and expanding many areas including health, education, economy and tourism. In addition, the results of the Censuses of Population in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have been compared in a descriptive article at the beginning of the publication.

We trust that this statistical overview will continue to be of value to government departments and agencies and to the cross-border bodies established under the Belfast Agreement. It should also be of interest to those who wish to study the dynamics of social and economic change in the two parts of Ireland.

We are grateful to the staff of our respective organisations who undertook the painstaking work of identifying data sources, checking them for comparability, compiling the tables and footnotes and drafting the commentary at the beginning of each chapter. We also want to record our appreciation to the Regional Reporting and EU Programmes Branch in NISRA which was responsible for designing and typesetting the report.

This report is being published on the CSO and NISRA websites and is also available in hard copy from both organisations.



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