



The Irish Presidency

The DeHavilland Guide

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/ Key takeaways

- Ireland takes over the Council Presidency at a delivery-heavy moment for the EU. As the mandate reaches its halfway point, the Commission has already tabled much of its competitiveness agenda; the challenge now shifts to the Council and Parliament to turn a crowded pipeline into workable political agreements.
- The Presidency's room for manoeuvre is shaped by the One Europe, One Market Roadmap. Ireland will still be able to set the rhythm of Council work, but many of its priorities are anchored in an existing EU delivery framework, particularly around simplification, competitiveness, Single Market deepening, and legal certainty.
- The MFF will be the Presidency's most consequential political file. While not part of the One Europe, One Market Roadmap, the 2028-2034 EU budget will define the Union's financial capacity to act across competitiveness, cohesion, agriculture, security, enlargement, and external action.
- Competitiveness continues to be a genuine horizontal organising logic of EU policymaking, as outlined in the Presidency's programme. It cuts across industrial policy, transport, energy, digital, trade, finance, research, housing, employment, and the Single Market, reflecting the extent to which economic resilience now frames EU policymaking.
- Climate and environment policies take up an important share of the policy space in the next six months, with several files central to competitiveness and decarbonisation on the agenda, such as the Automotive Package, the European Grids Package, the EU ETS review, the Circular Economy Act, and the Ocean Act.
- Digital policies will also be an important area of focus, with the recent publication of the Cloud and AI Development Act and Chips Act 2.0., as well as other connected proposals such the Digital Networks Act or the Digital Omnibus. This area is important for Ireland, which is home to some of the largest technology companies' European operations.

/ Context and overview

Ireland has officially stepped into the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the eighth time. The last time it was at the helm of the institution was in 2013. The Irish Presidency will also kickstart a new trio of presidencies with Lithuania and Greece coming next.

The priorities outlined by the incoming trio in their programme should serve as a common thread for the next 18 months. As is usual with these programming documents, it does not lay out a detailed plan but rather reiterates ambition and commitment to the mandate's buzzwords. The three presidencies will support the development of the Union's toolbox to support its economic performance and its ability to navigate the geopolitical instability marking the last decade.

The trio of presidencies is opened by Ireland at a pivotal moment: as we pass the halfway mark of the mandate, the Council has a significant pipeline of legislative initiatives to deliver. The different pieces of the competitiveness puzzle have been mostly pulled out of the box by the Commission and now it's MEPs' and Member States' job to put them together and make a cohesive picture.

This was laid out in the One Europe, One Market Roadmap, which contains deadlines to deliver a target list of priority initiatives. Whereas setting the agenda is one of the key perks of the Presidency, this framework has probably limited Ireland's choices in designing its programme. The document is heavily referenced in the priorities and justifies most of the Presidency's choices.

Overall, Ireland is well-aligned with those priorities. The competitiveness agenda is an important axiom of its government coalition, and it is likely to support the broad direction proposed by the Commission. Ireland's attractiveness for the technology sector may also play a role in the launch of negotiations at the technical and political level of key packages such as the Tech Sovereignty Package.

Solving the MFF equation

Although left out of the One Europe, One Market Roadmap, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is probably the most natural and obvious priority for Ireland. The next budget will define the Europe's financial capabilities in the 2028-2034 period and will be defined through careful negotiations between opinionated coalitions in the Council.

In their latest European Council conclusions, EU leaders called on the Irish Presidency to take forward the Negotiating Box presented by its predecessor, with a view that an agreement needed to be reached before the end of 2026. In this six-month timeline and with a budget architecture that has been mostly agreed, the Irish Presidency will have to drive a compromise forward that outlines spending levels, settles own resources, and addresses the NGEU repayments.

Looking at the content of the budget, one sticky issue will be the level of funding earmarked for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Cohesion Fund. Whereas the Commission proposed a larger budget for the next period, the budget allocated to the CAP and cohesion policies is proportionally lower than it is currently. These budgets and attached policies are going to be important red lines for some Member States who rely on this budget flow.

The Own Resources Package will be another important hurdle for negotiations. The Commission proposed five levies consisting of a share of ETS, CBAM, a company profit tax (CORE), a share of tobacco excise duties, and a contribution based on non-collected e-waste – which may be joined by new alternatives such as a sugar tax. Combined, these would provide the EU with an estimated €60 billion annual stream of revenue to balance the budget and offset the NGEU repayments.

None of these new proposed taxes are going to be approved easily by Member States, either because they oppose additional levies in some areas (e.g., corporate taxation), or because they compete with the ability to raise new national levies. Member States will have to balance their reluctance with the need to balance the budget, which may require some cuts in case those own resources are not approved.

The Irish Presidency will have to navigate through these negotiations by reconciling the demands of two main blocs. The 'Friends of Cohesion' who want to keep the overall size of the budget close to the Commission proposal but shift more money back to cohesion and agriculture. And the 'Modernisers' – previously known as the 'Frugals' – who think the overall size is too high and that the budget must come down across the board. The first step in Irish efforts to shape a negotiating mandate will be the General Affairs Council to be held on 14 July during which the Presidency will inform the other delegations on the current state of negotiations.

Delivering on competitiveness and legal certainty

The MFF is far from being the only pressing matter in the new Presidency's in-tray. As mentioned earlier, the Commission has been publishing new legislative initiatives at a heightened pace to serve competitiveness ambitions, with the policy pipeline full of simplification omnibuses, overhauls of major legislation, and new initiatives. Having significant elements of the EU legislative and regulatory frameworks under review by the co-legislators creates legal uncertainty for economic operators.

The multiplication of 'stop-the-clock' measures, shifting application dates, and rescoping exercises are creating uncertainty as to when and how companies need to comply with EU law. The longer these texts remain in the hands of co-legislators, the harder it is for economic operators to implement compliance or reporting standards. Even if the end goal of the mandate is to simplify Europe's regulatory environment, the spectrum and pace of changes is muddying the waters.

In recent proposals, the Commission has increased the inclusion of 'Made in Europe' provisions, including in the Industrial Accelerator Act, the Automotive Package, the Cloud and AI Development Act, and the upcoming Public Procurement Act. It is, however, still difficult for domestic and foreign operators to understand how this key axiom of the Union's industrial policy will apply and whether it will be harmonised across sectors. The question of 'trusted partners' and their definition has also emerged as a major unknown.

The Irish Presidency will have to drive consensus forward, which will shape the landing zone of those key proposals and should help recreate a more predictable policy environment for the private sector. Beyond proposals already under examination, the Presidency will have to kickstart work on proposals that will be issued by the Commission in the second half of 2026, including the Circular Economy Act, the European Product Act, and the ETS review.

Geopolitical tensions continue to drive EU action

Throughout recent mandates, the Union has battled with a 'permacrisis' environment, creating myriad policy challenges. Geopolitical volatility is not quieting down and is providing a strong impetus for co-legislators to swiftly deliver instruments geared to supporting European industry and economy, and to mitigating or addressing adverse conditions.

The conflict in Ukraine continues to weigh on Europe's policy agenda, although the situation has recently become easier to navigate. The latest G7 secured backing from the US on commitments to support Ukraine, reinforcing Europe's ability to back Kyiv. The change of government in Hungary has also improved the EU's ability to adopt new sanction packages and support measures. However, pro-Russian positions are still defended by fringe and opposition parties across Europe, threatening equilibrium in the Council.

Global trade tensions continue too. While Europe struggles to adopt a clear stance on China and to find instruments to address unfair competition concerns, China stands ready to face and reply to any perceived escalation from the bloc. On the transatlantic front, the Turnberry Agreement has bought the EU some time and has delayed new actions from the Trump administration, but this relative stability may soon come to an end. Recent threats of tariffs against countries with a digital levy and signals that the US is increasingly irritated by non-tariff barriers may reignite trade tensions.

The summer ahead may also test the Union's preparedness. Longer and hotter heatwaves are expected in July and a likely return of El Niño could put a strain on Europe's water, food, and health systems. While Europe has strengthened its preparedness toolbox, it may be forced to demonstrate how it can implement it in real situations to support coordination across civil protection mechanisms. Environmental stress on water levels and agricultural output could also impact the ongoing discussions around the next CAP and other instruments.

/ Top-line: the Irish Presidency's priorities

Against this backdrop, the Irish Presidency has devised a programme under the tagline 'Ní héir go cur le chéile' or 'Strength with unity'. They describe a three-pronged approach to their programme that would support progress on competitiveness, values, and security. Throughout the programme, the Presidency reaffirms its commitment to delivering the One Europe, One Market Roadmap which foresees the conclusion of all of 2025's Omnibuses and 11 other initiatives before the end of the year.

Chart 1: Analysis of Irish Presidency priorities



Note: policy space share represents dedicated textual space in the Irish Presidency programme. This is intended to capture narrative prominence, not legal or political importance. Some broad enabling priorities are not included; for example, competitiveness is diffused across areas.

When analysing the text of the programme to assess what has been prioritised in the narrative laid out by the Presidency, the results are consistent with the focus on competitiveness, values, and security. Security and security related topics take up more than 9% of the policy space and rank first. Its objectives span a broad range of policy actions that go well beyond defence policies. It has become an important nexus of Europe's policies addressing hybrid threats, cyber, energy infrastructure, health and food security, or preparedness.

What may be more surprising is seeing the second spot go to issues related to climate and environment considering the mandate's rebalanced priorities. However, while climate and environment policies are not as central as they were in the last mandate, sustainability remains an important element of the policy space although its framing has changed. These issues are framed not only as environmental commitments, but as part of a wider competitiveness, resilience and industrial-transition agenda. This is in line with this mandate's ambition to reconcile the Union's sustainability agenda with its industrial policy objectives. Initiatives such as the Industrial Accelerator Act, the Automotive Package, or the Circular Economy Act are good examples of this approach.

The third place on the podium relates to values which is operationalised as proper policy agenda. Values are not treated only as a rhetorical foundation for the Union; they are translated into concrete priorities on rule of law, democratic resilience, civil society, anti-racism, online safety and child protection. The prominence of social policy is also notable. Employment, equality, housing, disability inclusion, poverty reduction and health are not treated as separate from competitiveness, but as part of the Union's long-term productive capacity and social resilience.

One might also ask where competitiveness sits in that ordering of priorities? The reality is that competitiveness acts as a horizontal priority diffused throughout the policy areas and sectors mentioned in the Presidency Programme. It conceptually shapes the policy approach pursued by the institutions across its range of action rather than being handled as an individual portfolio.

The graph below also outlines how many individual policy instruments (i.e., budgets, funds, programmes, action plans, legislation) are linked to the different priorities. It attests to the levers at the disposal of the Presidency to weigh in and deliver on the different policy priorities.

Ukraine and enlargement are politically central but comparatively less instrument heavy. Their delivery depends less on technical files and more on high-level political agreement, sustained unity among Member States, sanctions, financing, accession negotiations and external diplomatic conditions. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Single Market has a comparatively low standalone textual footprint, that nevertheless spans a wide spectrum of instruments which reflects its role as an enabling priority rather than a marginal one.

/ The Presidency by policy area

Transport



Transport will be a key component of the Irish Presidency's competitiveness agenda, focusing on growth, connectivity, resilience, and decarbonisation.

The **automotive** sector will be addressed through the simplification agenda. The Presidency aims to reach an agreement with Parliament on the files included in the Automotive Package, and to secure general approaches on the Clean Corporate Vehicles proposal during the Transport Council on November 30 and on the CO₂ standards for cars and vans during the Environment Council of December 11. The Presidency also hopes to find an agreement with Parliament on the Roadworthiness Package, covering periodic technical inspections, roadside inspections and vehicle registration.

Maritime policy will be an essential priority: the Presidency will build on the Maritime Industrial Strategy and the Ports Strategy, and plans to advance work on the mid-term review once published to address energy security and skills modernisation. A general approach on the revision of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation is expected to be reached on November 30. On ports, a ministerial meeting of the European Ports Alliance Public-Private Partnership will be held, focused on combating drug trafficking and organised crime. Maritime security will also be discussed in the Foreign Affairs Council in November, reflecting a focus on maritime domain awareness and on countering Russia's shadow fleet. The Council plans to support EU engagement on the implementation of the IMO Net-Zero Framework and is also expected to contribute to work on the European Ocean Pact.

Concerning aviation, the Presidency will commence negotiations on the revision of the Air Services Regulation and provide a progress report, as well as guiding discussions on the Aviation Strategy, expected to be proposed by the Commission in autumn.

Passenger rights will continue to be a priority. The Presidency will present progress reports on the Rail Passenger Rights, Multimodal Passenger Rights, and Rail Ticketing Regulations to ensure a balanced and consistent approach across all transport modes. The rail sector will also be addressed through the revision of the ERA Regulation and the Train Drivers Certification Directive.

Horizontal matters include progress on negotiations on the Connecting Europe Facility, key for completing the TEN-T Network within the framework of the 2028-2034 MFF, and the planned general approach on December 11 on the ETS revision for aviation and maritime. Innovation through digital tools, automated systems, and emerging technologies, including connected and autonomous vehicles, will be promoted to increase road safety standards across the EU; finally, security will be addressed through further progress on the Military Mobility Regulation proposal.

Energy and climate



Energy policy will be one of the clearest areas where the Irish Presidency links competitiveness, security, and the green transition. The Presidency will seek to drive forward the EU's energy agenda by prioritising progress on the **European Grids Package**, the **Energy Taxation and Network Charges proposal**, and the **Energy Security Framework**. These files are presented as part of a broader effort to build a more electrified, resilient and efficient energy system that reduces Europe's exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets while supporting the EU's 2050 climate neutrality objective.

Launching negotiations with the European Parliament on the **TEN-E and Permitting** proposals under the European Grids Package will be a central priority, with the aim of reaching agreements before the end of the year. The Presidency will also prioritise the forthcoming **Network Charges and Taxation** proposal, designed to incentivise more flexible and efficient electricity use while giving Member States greater flexibility to reduce electricity taxes, alongside the revised **Energy Security Framework**. It aims to secure a Council negotiating mandates on both files before the end of its term. The Presidency will also seek to advance discussions on the **post-2030 energy framework**, covering renewable energy, energy efficiency and governance.

On **climate**, the Presidency will seek to make progress on several files that are expected to shape the next phase of the EU's decarbonisation agenda. The Presidency expects the forthcoming EU ETS revision, which is due to be tabled shortly before the summer recess, to become a major priority. It intends to seek a Council general approach on the proposal before the end of the year. Other related priorities include the revision of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the agreement and finalisation of strengthened ETS safeguards. The Presidency also intends to launch discussions on the implementation package for the EU-wide 2040 emissions reduction target, advance work on the proposed European Climate Resilience and Risk Management Integrated Framework and steer preparations for COP31, with environment ministers expected to adopt the EU's negotiating position in October.

Finally, in line with the institution's simplification drive, the Presidency will advance work on the freshly tabled Energy Products **Simplification** Omnibus. It will also continue work on proposals relating to nuclear safety and decommissioning, including the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and Decommissioning and the Ignalina Decommissioning Regulation.

Environment



The environmental agenda under the Irish Presidency will be driven by the need to reconcile climate ambition, competitiveness, resilience and simplification. The Presidency will seek to maintain the **EU's high level of ambition** on environmental protection while supporting a more coherent and streamlined regulatory framework for businesses and public authorities.

The Presidency will continue work on the **Environmental Simplification Omnibus** package, which aims to simplify rules on the circular economy, waste management, industrial emissions and environmental assessments. The Presidency aims to reach an agreement with the Parliament on the Environmental Omnibus files by end of 2026.

Beyond simplification, the Presidency will begin its work on the **Circular Economy Act**, which is expected to be published in September and aims to support the transition towards a more resource-efficient, low-waste, and climate-neutral economy. It will also support work on the bioeconomy, including by **hosting the Global Bioeconomy Summit in October 2026**, and will seek to encourage the development of high-integrity frameworks to support private investment in carbon removals and nature restoration.

Water resilience will be another important priority. The Presidency will support the implementation of the Water Resilience Strategy, focusing on restoring and protecting the natural water cycle, building a water-smart economy, and improving security of supply. The Presidency will work towards enhanced oceans governance and to advance the objectives of the European Ocean Pact, in the lead-up to the publication of the Ocean Act in Q4 2026, including on maritime spatial planning, marine protected areas, and nature restoration in seas and oceans.

The Presidency will continue to support the goals of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the European Chemicals Industry Action Plan, leading the EU's negotiations at the first International Conference of the UN Global Framework on Chemicals. At the international level, the Presidency will provide EU leadership at several major climate and environment forums, including at COP31 in Türkiye, the Convention on Biological Diversity COP17, the UN Water Conference, and will continue the EU's work on the Global Plastics Treaty and prepare the first BBNJ Conference.

Food, agriculture, and animal welfare



Agriculture and fisheries will sit at the intersection of food security, competitiveness, sustainability, and rural resilience under the Irish Presidency. The future **CAP** takes centre stage for Presidency's agriculture agenda, with a clear focus on maintaining a common framework, but emphasising the need for flexibility and allowing Member States to reflect national, regional, and sectoral realities. It will also advance the simplification agenda for agri-food producers, operators, and national authorities.

In other areas, the Presidency wants to emphasise the need to recognise the **diversity of livestock farming** and production systems across the EU, while addressing environmental and climate-related challenges, therefore prioritising issues concerning animal welfare and taking into consideration the need for rules based on scientific and technical knowledge as well as Member State experience. The discussions on the **EU Fertiliser Action Plan** are to be continued, with the same intention applying to the work on organic production and labelling rules, upkeeping a focus on clarity, legal certainty, and workability for operators. As a key condition for the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of agriculture and fisheries, **generational renewal** will be another central theme of the Presidency, with adequate attention paid to new entrants, succession in farming and fishing, and the emphasis of the importance of the role of women in agriculture and fisheries, especially in 2026, the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF).

As for **fisheries**, the Presidency will aim to secure timely agreement on fishing opportunities for 2027, providing predictability for EU fleets while supporting the sustainable management of shared fish stocks. It will also support discussions on the Vision 2040 for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and engage with the European Ocean Pact, linking clean and resilient seas with the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of the seafood sector. Bioeconomy will be encouraged as a way to diversify income, add value to primary production, and support climate and environmental sustainability.

Lastly, the Presidency will promote **rural development** as part of the broader competitiveness and cohesion agenda, supporting work on quality jobs, infrastructure, skills, diversification of economic activity, and stronger rural resilience, reflecting the role of rural communities in the Union's economic and social fabric.

Health



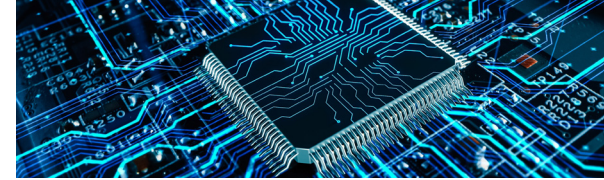
The Irish Presidency has presented health as a central pillar of Europe's competitiveness, security, and resilience, with an emphasis on the importance of population health, resilient health systems, and a strong life sciences sector to the Union's long-term prosperity. Additionally, they will highlight **prevention, health equity, and public health** as drivers of sustainable public finances, workforce participation and long-term economic competitiveness.

The Presidency will seek to advance several major legislative files, but a general approach is only expected to be reached on the **simplification** proposal of the Medical Devices and In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices Regulations (MDR/IVDR). On the Biotech Act I Regulation, only a progress report is expected by the end of the year. The Presidency will also support implementation of the European Health Data Space to strengthen secure health data use, interoperability and digital innovation across the sector.

It will also support the implementation of the **EU Safe Hearts Plan** and promote greater attention to **women's health**, including endometriosis, reflecting a broader focus on reducing health inequalities and improving population health outcomes. The Presidency will also seek to strengthen **clinical research and trial capacity** to ensure that life sciences innovation is translated more effectively into patient benefit and economic growth.

Finally, strengthening the EU's **health security architecture** will form another key priority. In addition to finalising the work on the Critical Medicines Act, the Presidency will reinforce preparedness for cross-border health threats by addressing antimicrobial resistance, cyber risks to health infrastructure, and vulnerabilities in medical supply chains. It will also promote mental health as an integral component of resilience and crisis preparedness, linking preparedness, innovation, and equitable access to care within a broader vision of a more secure and competitive European Health Union.

Digital



Digital policy will be one of the central areas through which the Irish Presidency seeks to advance its objectives on competitiveness and security.

The Presidency will aim to make progress on the **Digital Networks Act**, with the Commission encouraging Ireland to maintain the momentum built by its predecessor on the file. Ireland aims to reach a partial compromise text by the end of the mandate. This would coincide with the first debate in the European Parliament's responsible committee, EP ITRE, currently scheduled for November 2026.

Connectivity will also be a key priority, particularly in relation to security. The Presidency's programme states that Ireland will advocate for increased investment in subsea telecoms connectivity and support the implementation of actions at national and EU level to improve submarine cable security and resilience. Ireland also aims to achieve a general approach on the Mobile Satellite Services Decision by the end of its term.

By the end of 2026, which also marks the end of the Presidency's mandate, agreements on the **European Business Wallet** proposal and the **Cybersecurity Act** are expected to be reached, according to the Commission's One Europe, One Market Roadmap. On the latter, the Presidency recognises the importance of the revision in supporting higher levels of cybersecurity and cyber resilience. Discussions will address issues related to ENISA's mandate, the cybersecurity certification framework, and ICT supply chain security. The Presidency will also support work linked to the Cyber Blueprint and Cyber

Europe exercises, with the aim of strengthening preparedness, resilience and coordinated response capabilities across Member States and EU institutions. With security as one of its main priorities, Ireland will also aim to align the revised Cybersecurity Act with ProtectEU, the European Internal Security Strategy, and other related files.

On **competitiveness**, the Cloud and AI Development Act, proposed as part of the Commission's **Technological Sovereignty Package**, is seen as central to this ambition. The proposal has the potential to strengthen European capacity in cloud computing and AI infrastructure and could, if designed effectively, reduce dependencies. For this reason, the Presidency aims to submit a progress report on the file. The Presidency also intends to make progress on the European Chips 2.0 Regulation, another component of the package. According to the roadmap, agreement on this file should be reached before Q2 2027.

The Presidency will also pursue its competitiveness objective through the Digital **Simplification** Omnibus, on which it aims to reach agreement with the Parliament by the end of 2026. As with other omnibus packages, the Digital Omnibus is intended to reduce regulatory complexity and improve coherence across digital legislation in Europe. Finally, the Presidency will host an **International AI Summit in Dublin on 14 October**, bringing together governments, business leaders, investors, innovators, and academics to discuss how Europe can strengthen its global position on AI innovation and application.

Most of the initiatives mentioned above are expected to be discussed during the Telecommunications Council meeting scheduled for 1 December 2026. The exception is the Chips Act 2.0, which will be discussed during the Competitiveness Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2026.

Competitiveness and internal market



Competitiveness will be one of the three central themes of the Irish Presidency, through which it seeks to advance its economic agenda. The Single Market is presented as the central foundation for Europe's long-term growth, resilience, and economic security.

Building on the One Europe, One Market Roadmap, the Presidency will seek to **strengthen the Single Market** and remove practical barriers that limit cross-border business activity. Particular attention will be given to implementation of the Single Market Strategy, including work on the so-called "terrible ten" barriers. Ireland will also seek to advance the EU Inc. and the 28th Regime proposals, to facilitate companies' operations across Member States.

The Irish Presidency also aims to **support innovation and SMEs** by creating a more favourable environment for innovative companies to scale and for public and private investment to support long-term growth. In this context, the Presidency will seek to make progress on the proposed European Innovation Act, framing it as an important tool for strengthening Europe's innovation ecosystem and helping smaller firms grow across the Single Market.

Affordable housing will also feature within the competitiveness agenda. The Presidency will seek to progress the Affordable Housing Act and the Construction Services Act under the European Affordable Housing Plan. These files will be linked to the need to address housing stress, support labour mobility, and improve productivity in construction services.

Research and innovation will be another priority. The Presidency will advance negotiations on the next EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme, FP10, or Horizon Europe, and initiate discussions on a future European Research Area Act. This work will aim to support a more integrated, attractive, and competitive European research environment.

Industrial competitiveness will be treated as a further pillar of the agenda, while ensuring alignment with the EU's social and climate objectives. Ireland will aim to progress the Industrial Accelerator Act as a flagship file, as well as the forthcoming EU Product Act. This work will be linked to energy-intensive industries, industrial decarbonisation, public procurement reform, and supply-chain diversification.

Finally, the Presidency will seek to boost the European **space** sector, which Ireland views as a strategic area for future growth, security, and technological leadership. It will work to unlock the potential of a Single Market for space and progress the EU Space Services Agency Regulation and the EU Space Act, strengthening Europe's resilience and open strategic autonomy.

Foreign affairs



Foreign Affairs is one of the main priorities of the Irish Presidency. Working closely with the High Representative/Vice President, the Presidency will seek to strengthen the EU's role as a principled global actor in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Its approach will be **anchored in multilateralism**, the United Nations, the international legal order, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It will mutually beneficial global partnerships through sustained and predictable development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, in line with the Team Europe and Global Gateway approach.

The Presidency will focus on **strengthening partnerships with the UK, the US, Canada, and partners in Africa, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific** and it will maintain **unwavering support for Ukraine**. This means also keeping pressure on Russia and ensuring that Ukraine has access to the financial and defence support it needs. The Presidency will also support EU efforts to **promote peace and security in the Middle East**, including implementation of the two-State solution, humanitarian action in Gaza, the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, regional stability in the Gulf and Lebanon, and support for Syria's transition.

It will also support EU engagement on peace and security in **Lebanon** including efforts to uphold international law and freedom of navigation and strengthen relations with Gulf partners.

Progressing on **EU enlargement** will be at the centre of the Presidency. The focus will be on supporting progress with Montenegro, Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine and to support issues in the Eastern neighbourhood and beyond, including with Moldova, Belarus, and the South Caucasus.

On transatlantic relations, they will work on the EU participation in the **G20 Summit** to be held in Florida in December 2026.

The Presidency will also contribute to EU efforts to address **maritime security** challenges, including measures to counter Russia's shadow fleet and strengthen maritime domain awareness. It will support the mid-term review of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and continue work on cyber and hybrid threats, including the implementation of the EU Hybrid Toolbox, the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox and the EU response to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. Strengthening relations with the Southern Neighbourhood will be a key priority, including focus on the effective implementation of the Pact for the Mediterranean.

Preparedness and resilience will also be part of the security agenda. The Presidency will advance implementation of the Preparedness Union Strategy, including work on the EU-wide Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment, Minimum Preparedness Requirements, resilience of vital societal functions and the EU-NATO Integrated Resolve Parallel and Coordinated Exercises.

As the **Arctic** continues to grow in strategic importance, it will ensure a more robust role for the Union in the promotion of growth, and provision of comprehensive security in the High North, including against the challenges posed by Russia and China.

Defence



On Security and Defence, the Presidency will work to ensure **the swift disbursement of the Ukraine Support Loan**, and it will champion the full integration of Ukraine into EU defence initiatives with the same access as EU Member States.

Following on from the EU's White Paper on Defence and Defence Readiness Roadmap, the Irish Presidency will aim to steer progress and **build resilience to hybrid threats**, including through the Annual Defence Readiness Report to be presented at the October meeting of the European Council.

Military mobility will be a key legislative priority, and the proposed new European Security Strategy will be launched during the Presidency term. In the second half of 2026, key actions will be implemented on the resilience of vital societal functions, delivery of an EU wide Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment, the Minimum Preparedness Requirements, and overseeing the EU-NATO Integrated Resolve Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE).

Other areas include work on EU Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security, the EU Action Plan on Cable Security, and the Blueprint for Critical Infrastructure.

Trade and customs



Trade policy features within the Irish Presidency's broader competitiveness agenda, reflecting the EU's recent focus on economic security, resilience, and diversification. The Presidency is expected to support an **ambitious, open, rules- and values-based trade policy** that promotes inclusive economic growth while safeguarding the multilateral trading system.

On **multilateral trade** issues, the Presidency will place particular emphasis on WTO reform following MC14, working with like-minded partners to uphold the multilateral trading system and advance the reform agenda. This will include efforts to broaden support for the plurilateral e-commerce agreement, with a view to anchoring permanent rules on electronic transactions in the WTO rulebook.

Ireland's Presidency will also seek to **deepen trade and investment relationships** with reliable global partners, both through traditional trade agreements and through more modern "mini trade deals" and sectoral arrangements, such as digital partnerships.

The implementation of the **EU-US Trade and Investment agenda**, underpinned by the Joint Statement of 21 August 2025, also known as the Turnberry Agreement, will be a clear focus for the Presidency. Several of the tariff reductions introduced under the agreement will enter into force on 1 July, coinciding with the start of Ireland's mandate. The Presidency will also support **ongoing free trade agreement negotiations** with Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as negotiations on a digital trade agreement with

Canada. In parallel, it will prioritise the formal Council procedures for agreements with India, Indonesia and the ESA4 countries – Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles. It will also place emphasis on the ratification and implementation of recently agreed agreements, with particular attention to trade and sustainable development chapters and provisions on trade and gender.

Trade policy priorities will also be linked to the Union's economic security agenda. The Presidency will take forward work related to the December 2025 Joint Communication on Strengthening Economic Security, also referred to as the Economic Security Doctrine, ensuring that relevant measures support EU competitiveness and resilience while remaining compatible with the free, open, and rules-based international trade that the EU champions. The Presidency's approach will be to address proven cases of unfair trade practices, including concerns over overcapacity from China, while maintaining the EU's openness and level playing field. The EU-China Trade and Investment Consultations are expected to shape much of the discussion on the EU's approach to China.

Customs-related issues are likely to take more of a back seat during the Irish Presidency, mainly due to the imminent publication in the Official Journal of the EU Customs Union reform. The Presidency will nevertheless seek to advance and reach agreement on the Regulation on drug precursors, aimed at reducing the availability of drug precursors for illicit drug production while facilitating legitimate trade.

Finance and taxation



Finance and taxation will be an important area of work for the Irish Presidency, both because of how integral they are to the competitiveness agenda and because of the need to progress several ongoing files, at Council or trilogues level.

On **Financial Services**, the Market Integration and Supervision Package will be the most politically significant piece. The Presidency will aim to reach its position in October and conclude trilogue negotiations before the end of its Presidency, on what is arguably the most ambitious EU attempt to overcome the inertia surrounding the Capital Markets Union.

The Presidency will also aim to conclude trilogues on the Digital Euro framework, a politically important yet sensitive file as the EU looks to strengthen its payments sovereignty and reduce reliance on non-European providers.

Similarly, the Irish are aiming to conclude trilogue negotiations on the Securitisation framework, as well as starting and concluding negotiations on the Supplementary Pensions Package (PEPP and IORPs) and the SFDR review.

In parallel, it will facilitate discussions on the Commission's report on the competitiveness of the banking sector, in anticipation of the publication of the banking framework amendment scheduled for Q1 2027.

It also indicated it stands ready to start negotiations if the Commission brings forward proposals on the review of the European Venture Capital Funds Regulation and on improving exit options for growth companies.

On **taxation**, the agenda will be strongly shaped by simplification. The Presidency aims to conclude negotiations on the recast of the Directive on Administrative Cooperation (DAC).

It will also take forward the Tax Simplification Omnibus in the Council, a politically important file that seeks to modernise several core corporate tax directives. The proposal includes measures to reduce withholding tax obstacles on cross-border dividend, interest, and royalty payments, extend elements of the Parent-Subsidiary Directive to pension institutions, simplify the interaction between CFC rules and Pillar Two, modernise the ATAD interest limitation rule, improve tax dispute resolution, and expand the Tax Merger Directive to facilitate cross-border reorganisations. The file will therefore test Member States' willingness to translate the EU's simplification agenda into concrete changes to direct tax rules, an area that has faced resistance from Member States in the past.

The Presidency will continue the work of the Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation and update the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes in October 2026.

The Presidency will also target an agreement among Member States on the Tobacco Tax Package. It also indicated its readiness to initiate work to amend the EU VAT framework.

EU budget



On budgetary matters, the Irish Presidency has identified advancing the work on the **Multannual Financial Framework** for 2028-2034 as an overarching priority of its term. Its programme includes a pledge to "work intensively and ambitiously" on the file with a view to reaching an agreement on the EU's long-term budget before the end of the year. The Presidency closely links the MFF with the protection of values enshrined in EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, thereby evincing a strong concern with the budget's social dimension. This is in line with a fundamental value underpinning its work, namely the support for a socio-economic model that emphasises societal resilience, inclusion, and cohesion. The aim of its term is to produce a sufficiently advanced negotiating box on the proposal so that Member States can take the necessary decisions about the Union's future financing this year.

Work on the MFF requires work on the sectoral files as well. Thus, the programme foresees making progress on the proposals on the **National and Regional Partnership Plans** (NRPPs) regulation, the **European Competitiveness Fund** (ECF) and the **Global Europe Instrument**, for example. In addition, the Presidency envisages further progress on the regulation establishing a budget expenditure tracking and performance framework.

On an issue equally linked tightly with the MFF 2028-2034 programming period, the Presidency also wishes to continue discussions on a possible **revision of the own resources system** "as appropriate", within the ECOFIN Framework.

On more short-term matters, the Irish Presidency aims as well to work with a view to reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on the EU's Annual Budget for 2027, in order to guarantee that the EU can deliver on its policy priorities in 2027, the final year of the current programming period (2021-2027).

In essence, on budgetary affairs the Irish Presidency's message is clear: work of the Union requires a firm financial footing. Hence, a timely agreement on the 2028-2034 MFF is crucial to allow the Union to tackle the challenges it faces whilst supporting its key flagship traditional policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy.

Employment and social affairs



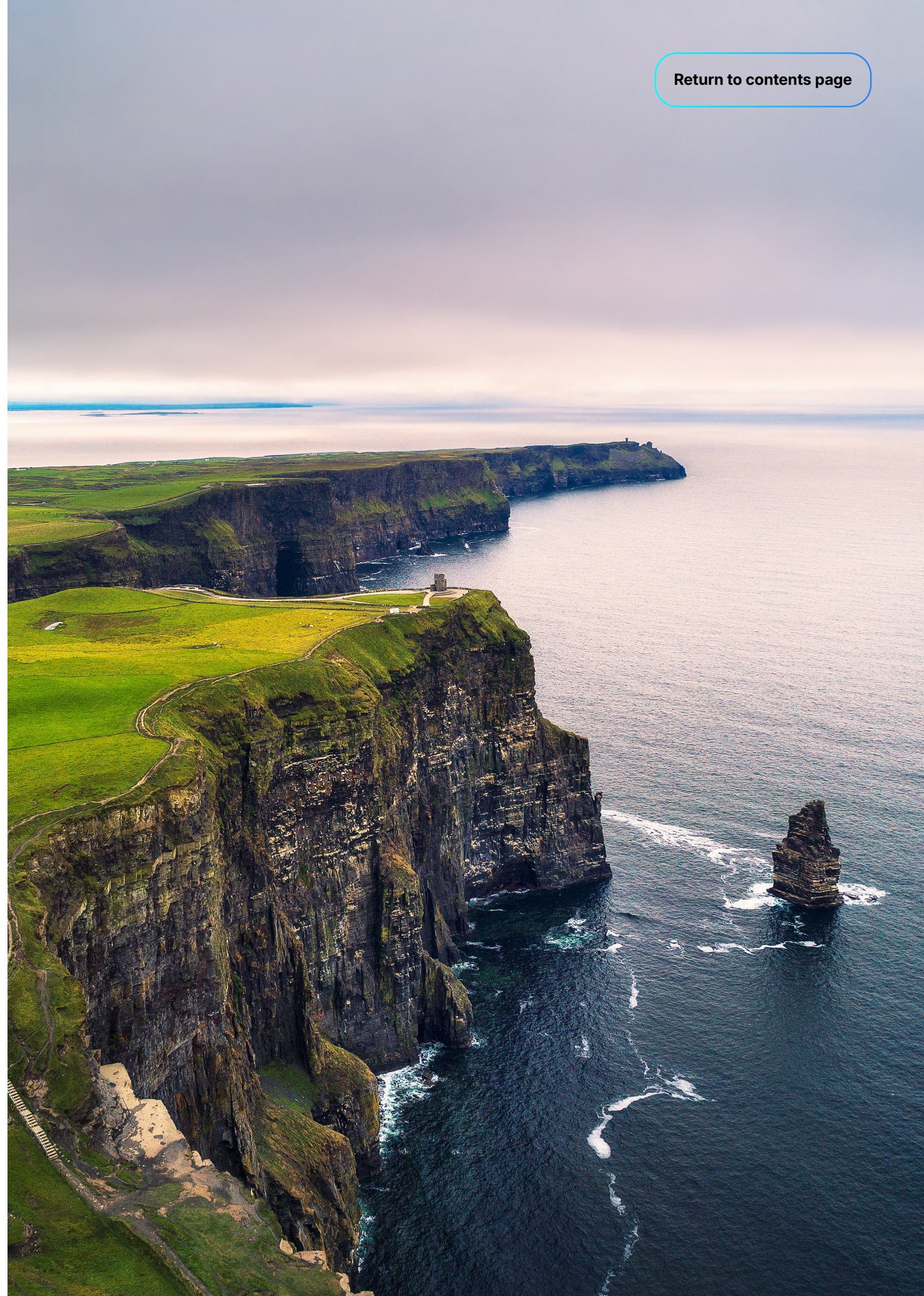
The Irish Presidency will approach employment and social affairs through a strong **focus on quality jobs, fair labour mobility, social inclusion, and equality**. Across these areas, the Presidency will seek to ensure that Europe's competitiveness agenda supports the European social model and keeps decent work, equal treatment, social inclusion, and effective enforcement at the centre of the EU employment agenda.

On **employment**, the Presidency will prioritise the Quality Jobs Roadmap and the forthcoming Quality Jobs Act. These initiatives are intended to adapt EU employment policy to a rapidly changing economy, while ensuring that productivity and competitiveness are accompanied by fair, safe and equal working conditions and stronger protections for workers. The Presidency is expected to highlight issues such as working conditions, access to social protection, skills, equality, social dialogue, collective bargaining, and enforcement. It will also focus on the forthcoming Fair Labour Mobility Package, which is identified as a priority under the One Europe, One Market Roadmap. This package is expected to focus on the digital European Social Security Pass and the mandate of the European Labour Authority, with the aim of making labour mobility more efficient, strengthening workers' rights, and ensuring a level playing field across Member States.

The Presidency will also seek to advance discussions on occupational safety and health, focusing on how workers can be better protected from work-related injury and ill-health. More broadly, it will place emphasis on implementation and enforcement, arguing that simplification and competitiveness should be accompanied by better-applied rules that deliver real protections for citizens and businesses.

Social inclusion will form another central part of the Presidency's agenda. Ireland will support work on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, the strengthening of the European Child Guarantee and the proposed Council recommendation on fighting housing exclusion and homelessness. It will also prioritise the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly in the context of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with a focus on employment, participation, and assistive technologies.

Finally, the Presidency will seek to advance the Union of Equality by pursuing Council agreement on the Equal Treatment Directive. It will support implementation of the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030 and the EU Roma Strategic Framework, while also advancing the new EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030, including through stronger equality data for evidence-based policymaking.



/ People

This section lays out the key players in the Irish Presidency, starting with ministers and attachés, and then MEPs.

Government

The Irish Government is the executive authority of the country. Led by the Taoiseach, the cabinet is composed of Ministers who are elected members of the Irish Parliament. The senior cabinet members usually hold large portfolios, with specific issues being delegated to Ministers of State acting as junior ministers.

The current Government entered office on 23 January 2025, following the 2024 general election. As a result of the election, the centre-right party Fianna Fáil won 48 seats, placing it ahead of the left party Sinn Féin (39 seats), and the right-wing Fine Gael (38 seats). The Government was formed on a centre-to-right platform through a coalition of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. It was voted in with the support of a group of independent MPs. This Government is set to last for five years, and it was agreed between the two parties that Fianna Fáil would lead for the first three. In November 2027, the coalition agreement foresees a reshuffle of the Cabinet, to enable Fine Gael to lead under Simon Harris for the remainder of the mandate.

The 35th Irish Government issued a programme focused on economic and competitiveness priorities, seeking to provide support to the economic sectors that make up the strength of the Irish economy (e.g., technology, pharmaceuticals, and agri-food), with the promise to deliver 300,000 extra jobs by 2030. The Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity provides a blueprint of the Government's economic ambitions.

The Taoiseach



Micheál Martin (Fianna Fáil)

Taoiseach

Contact: taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie

Martin has served as Taoiseach since January 2025, having previously held the office from June 2020 to December 2022. He served as Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Minister for Defence from December 2022 to January 2025, and previously held four major cabinet portfolios: Foreign Affairs; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Health; and Education. A Fianna Fáil TD for Cork South-Central since 1989, and party leader since 2011, he also served as Leader of the Opposition from 2011 to 2020. Before entering national politics, Martin worked as a teacher, served on Cork City Council, and was Lord Mayor of Cork in 1992–1993. His government experience spans diplomacy, defence, enterprise policy, health reform, and education, including major public-health reforms during his time as Minister for Health. He studied at University College Cork, where he qualified with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The Ministers



Simon Harris (Fine Gael)

Tánaiste and Minister for Finance

Contact: simon.harris@oireachtas.ie

Harris was appointed Tánaiste and Minister for Finance in November 2025, after serving as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Defence. He previously served as Taoiseach from April 2024 to January 2025 and has led Fine Gael since 2024. A minister for over a decade, his earlier portfolios included: Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Health; and a Minister of State role across Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and the Department of the Taoiseach, with responsibility for the Office of Public Works, public procurement, and international banking. As minister for further and higher education, he was closely associated with technological universities, apprenticeship reform, and access to third-level education. First elected to Dáil Éireann for Wicklow in 2011, he previously served on the Public Accounts Committee and the Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform. His political career began in local government and disability advocacy.



Jack Chambers (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation

Contact: jack.chambers@oireachtas.ie

Chambers was appointed Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation in January 2025, having previously served as Minister for Finance. A Fianna Fáil TD for Dublin West, he was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 2016 and re-elected in 2020 and 2024. Before entering national politics, he served on Fingal County Council and as Deputy Mayor. He has also held senior government coordination roles, including Government Chief Whip, and has served on Oireachtas committees covering climate action, justice and equality, and Seanad reform. Chambers is a medical doctor by training, having studied Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and also holds an honours degree in Law and Political Science from Trinity College Dublin. His current portfolio places him at the centre of Ireland's fiscal oversight, infrastructure delivery, public service reform, and digitalisation agenda.



Helen McEntee (Fine Gael)

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Defence

Contact: helen.mcentee@oireachtas.ie

McEntee was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Defence in November 2025. She previously served as Minister for Education and Youth and, from 2020, as Minister for Justice, giving her experience across domestic reform, security, education, and institutional policy. Elected to Dáil Éireann in a 2013 by-election, she entered government in 2016 as Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People. In 2017, she was appointed Minister of State for EU Affairs, a role that involved engagement on Brexit and wider EU coordination. She was later elected Vice-President of the European People's Party in 2019. McEntee studied Law, Politics and Economics at Dublin City University and holds a master's degree in Communications and Journalism. Her profile combines EU affairs, justice, defence, and communications experience, supported by previous service on Oireachtas committees covering transport, communications, environment, and culture.



Norma Foley (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality

Contact: minister@dcde.gov.ie

Foley was appointed Minister for Children, Disability and Equality in January 2025, after serving as Minister for Education from June 2020. She was elected to Dáil Éireann for Kerry at the 2020 general election, following a long career in local government. Before entering national politics, Foley served on Kerry County Council for the Tralee area from 1994 until her election to the Dáil, and was also a member of Tralee Urban District Council until its abolition in 2014. She served as Mayor of Tralee on three occasions and as Mayor of Kerry in 2018–2019. Her ministerial background in education, combined with her current responsibilities for children, disability, and equality, gives her a strong profile in social policy, inclusion, and public service delivery. Her career has been shaped by local government experience and by portfolios focused on access to services, youth development, and equality of opportunity.



Darragh O'Brien (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment and Minister for Transport

Contact: darragh.obrien@oireachtas.ie

McEntee was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Defence in November 2025. She previously served as Minister for Education and Youth and, from 2020, as Minister for Justice, giving her experience across domestic reform, security, education, and institutional policy. Elected to Dáil Éireann in a 2013 by-election, she entered government in 2016 as Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People. In 2017, she was appointed Minister of State for EU Affairs, a role that involved engagement on Brexit and wider EU coordination. She was later elected Vice-President of the European People's Party in 2019. McEntee studied Law, Politics and Economics at Dublin City University and holds a master's degree in Communications and Journalism. Her profile combines EU affairs, justice, defence, and communications experience, supported by previous service on Oireachtas committees covering transport, communications, environment, and culture.



Peter Burke (Fine Gael)

Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

Contact: peter.burke@oireachtas.ie

Burke serves as Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, having previously held the Enterprise, Trade and Employment portfolio, as well as Minister of State roles for European Affairs and Defence, and Local Government and Planning. Before entering Government, he sat on the Oireachtas Finance and Public Accounts Committees and was a regular commentator on tax and financial issues. Burke studied Commerce at the National University of Ireland, Galway and is a chartered accountant by profession, with a decade of private-sector experience. He served on Westmeath County Council from 2007 until his election to Dáil Éireann in 2016. His background in accountancy, finance, local government, planning, enterprise policy, and European affairs makes him a key figure for stakeholders following Ireland's competitiveness, labour market, tourism, and business regulation agenda during the Presidency.



Dara Calleary (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

Contact: minister@welfare.ie or minister@drcdg.gov.ie

Calleary was appointed Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht in January 2025. He previously served as Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. A TD for Mayo since 2007, Calleary has held several government and party roles, including Minister of State with responsibility for Labour Affairs, Minister of State for Public Service Transformation, Minister for Agriculture, and Government Chief Whip. He was Deputy Leader of Fianna Fáil from 2018 to 2020 and has served as party spokesperson on justice, jobs, enterprise and innovation, public expenditure and reform, and social protection. Before entering politics, he worked in banking and with Chambers Ireland, linking his profile to business representation, regional development, and enterprise policy.



Patrick O'Donovan (Fine Gael)

Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport

Contact: patrick.odonovan@oireachtas.ie

O'Donovan was appointed Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport in January 2025, after serving as Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. He has held Minister of State roles across public expenditure, tourism, culture, sport, the Gaeltacht, and digital government, including responsibility for the Office of Public Works, public procurement, open government, and eGovernment. First elected to Dáil Éireann for Limerick County in 2011, he previously served on Limerick County Council from 2003 to 2011. Before entering national politics, O'Donovan worked as an industrial chemist and later trained as a primary school teacher. He has also been a member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly. His career has therefore spanned local government, public procurement, digital administration, education, tourism, culture, and interparliamentary engagement.



Dr Jennifer Carroll MacNeill (Fine Gael)

Minister for Health

Contact: ministers_office@health.gov.ie

Carroll MacNeill was appointed Minister for Health in January 2025, after serving as Minister for European Affairs and Defence from April 2024. She previously held a Minister of State role in the Department of Finance, with responsibility for financial services, credit unions, and insurance. Elected to Dáil Éireann for Dún Laoghaire in 2020, she served on the Public Accounts Committee, the Justice Committee, and the Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, and was a member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly. Before entering elected politics, Carroll MacNeill qualified as both a solicitor and a barrister and worked as a lawyer in the public service. She also served as a government special adviser across children and youth affairs, justice, housing, planning, and local government, including work linked to major institutional and planning policy. She holds a PhD in public policy focused on political institutions and the judiciary.



James Browne (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Contact: minister@housing.gov.ie

Browne was appointed Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2025, having previously served as Minister of State at the Department of Justice with responsibility for international law, law reform, and youth justice. A Fianna Fáil TD for Wexford since 2016, he is a qualified barrister, having studied at Waterford Institute of Technology, University College Cork, and the King's Inns. Browne has been particularly active on mental health policy, leading initiatives including the Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2018 and work through the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Mental Healthcare. His legal background and justice portfolio experience are relevant to his current responsibilities for housing, local government and heritage, where legislative delivery, planning frameworks, and public administration are central. His profile combines legal expertise, social policy engagement, and experience in constituency-level public service.



Jim O'Callaghan (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

Contact: jim.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

O'Callaghan serves as Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. He was elected to Dáil Éireann for Dublin Bay South in 2016 and re-elected in 2020 and 2024, having previously served on Dublin City Council. He has been closely associated with justice policy throughout his parliamentary career, serving as a member and Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and as Fianna Fáil spokesperson on Justice from 2016. He has also served on the Oireachtas Finance and Education Committees. O'Callaghan is a law graduate of University College Dublin and holds a Master of Law and a Master in Philosophy in Criminology from the University of Cambridge. A barrister and Senior Counsel since 2008, he also served as legal adviser to Fianna Fáil. His legislative work has included a Parole Bill that reformed Ireland's parole system.



Martin Heydon (Fine Gael)

Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and the Marine

Contact: martin.heydon@oireachtas.ie

Heydon was appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and the Marine in January 2025, having previously served as Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, with responsibility for research and development, farm safety, and new market development. A Fine Gael TD for Kildare South since 2011, he chaired the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party from 2016 to 2020. Heydon has served on the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture and on the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action, which produced the cross-party report "Climate Change: A Cross-Party Consensus for Action". He has also served on committees covering arts, heritage, regional, rural and Gaeltacht affairs, and petitions. A native of South Kildare, he lives on his family farm and attended Kildalton Agricultural College, giving him a direct connection to the agricultural sector.



James Lawless (Fianna Fáil)

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Contact: james.lawless@oireachtas.ie

Lawless was appointed Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in January 2025. He previously served as Minister of State at the Department of Transport, with responsibility for international and road transport and logistics, and at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, with responsibility for postal policy. A TD for Kildare North, he was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 2016 and previously served on Kildare County Council, including as Mayor of Naas. Lawless studied mathematics and computer science at Trinity College Dublin, later specialising in high-performance computing, and worked as a systems analyst before qualifying as a barrister. He practised with a speciality in maritime and freight law. In the Dáil, he has been active on technology and digital policy, including social media regulation and cyber harms, and served as Chair of the Justice Committee from 2020 to 2024.



Hildegard Naughton (Fine Gael)

Minister for Education and Youth

Contact: hildegard.naughton@oireachtas.ie

Naughton was appointed Minister for Education and Youth in November 2025, after serving as Minister of State attending Cabinet at the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, with responsibility for disability. She has also served as Government Chief Whip and as Minister of State with responsibility for special education and inclusion, as well as holding roles across the Departments of Transport, Health, and Justice. A primary school teacher by profession, Naughton entered local politics through Galway City Council in 2009 and served as Mayor of Galway in 2011–2012. She later served in Seanad Éireann before being elected to Dáil Éireann for Galway West in 2016. Her earlier career included work in education, technical support, and the commodities market, and she holds degrees in economics and French. Her background combines education, disability, inclusion, transport, and public administration.

Ministers of State

- Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach with special responsibility as Government Chief Whip; and the Department of Health with responsibility for Mental Health: **Mary Butler**
- Minister of State at the Department of Children, Disability and Equality with responsibility for Disability: **Emer Higgins**
- Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and the Marine with responsibility for Food Promotion, New Markets, Research and Development: **Noel Grealish**
- Minister of State at the Department of Transport with responsibility for International and Road Transport, Logistics, Rail and Ports: **Sean Canney**
- Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for European Affairs; and the Department of Defence: **Thomas Byrne**
- Minister of State at the Department of Education with special responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion: **Michael Moynihan**
- Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media with special responsibility for Sport and Postal Policy: **Charlie McConalogue**
- Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with responsibility for the Office of Public Works: **Kevin Boxer Moran**
- Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with special responsibility for Public Procurement, Digitalisation and eGovernment: **Frank Feighan**
- Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy: **Jennifer Murnane O'Connor**
- Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for International Development and Diaspora: **Neale Richmond**
- Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, with special responsibility for Community Development, Charities, Gaeltacht and the Islands; and the Department of Transport with special responsibility for Rural Transport: **Jerry Buttimer**
- Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with special responsibility for Local Government and Planning: **John Cummins**
- Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with special responsibility for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity: **Christopher O'Sullivan**
- Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Older People; and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with special responsibility for Housing: **Kieran O'Donnell**
- Minister of State at the Department of Finance with special responsibility for Financial Services, Credit Unions and Insurance: **Robert Troy**
- Minister of State at the Department of Justice with special responsibility for International Law, Law Reform and Youth Justice: **Catherine Ardagh**

- Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Forestry, Farm Safety and Horticulture: **Niall Collins**
- Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with special responsibility for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation: **Niamh Smyth**
- Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with special responsibility for Small Businesses and Retail; and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for Circular Economy: **Alan Dillon**
- Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Fisheries; and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for the Marine: **Timmy Dooley**
- Minister of State at the Department of Justice with special responsibility for Migration: **Colm Brophy**
- Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science with special responsibility for Further Education, Apprenticeship, Construction and Climate Skills: **Marian Harkin**

Attachés

Department	Area	Name	Position	Contact information
Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union	COREPER II	Ambassador Aingeal O'Donoghue	Permanent Representative (Head of Mission)	aingeal.odonoghue@dfa.ie
Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union	COREPER I	Ambassador Cáit Moran	Deputy Permanent Representative	cait.moran@dfa.ie
Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union	PSC	Ambassador Luke Feeney	Political and Security Committee (PSC) Representative	luke.feeney@dfa.ie
Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union		Brigadier General Ray Murphy	Military Representative to EU Military Committee	ray.murphy@dfa.ie
Coordination	COREPER II	Michael O'Toole	Antici	michael.otoole@dfa.ie
Coordination	COREPER II	Réachbha FitzGerald	Deputy Antici	reachbha.fitzgerald@dfa.ie
Coordination	COREPER II	Aidan Carolan	Deputy Antici	aidan.carolan@dfa.ie
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Coordination	COREPER I	Méabh Ní Drisceoil	Mertens	meabh.drisceoil@dfa.ie
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Coordination	COREPER I	Rosalind Ware	Deputy Mertens	rosalind.ware@dfa.ie
Coordination	COREPER I	James Matthews	Policy Officer	james.matthews@dfa.ie
Coordination	COREPER I	Lucia Nuñez Roncero	Policy Officer	lucia.roncero@dfa.ie
Coordination	PSC	Chris Green	Deputy PSC Representative & Nicolaidis	chris.green@dfa.ie
Coordination	PSC	Artur Sirbu	Deputy Nicolaidis and alternate COEST delegate	artur.sirbu@dfa.ie
Coordination	PSC	Giulia Gallinella	Policy Officer	giulia.gallinella@dfa.ie
Institutions Section, EU General Affairs		Philip Grant	Counsellor	philip.grant@dfa.ie

Department	Area	Name	Position	Contact information
Institutions Section, EU General Affairs	European Parliament	Sophie Jacobs	First Secretary	sophie.jacobs@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Fisheries	Martin Crowley	Counsellor	martin.crowley@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Fisheries	Cormac Fitzpatrick	First Secretary	cormac.fitzpatrick@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Fisheries	Eamon Aylward	Third Secretary	eamon.aylward@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Fisheries	Simone Enemaku	Third Secretary	simone.enemaku@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Agriculture	Damien Flynn	Counsellor	damien.flynn@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Special Committee on Agriculture	Jane Dempsey	First Secretary	jane.dempsey@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Special Committee on Agriculture	Sally Hare	Third Secretary	sally.hare@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	CAP	Redmond McEvoy	First Secretary	redmond.mcevoy@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	CAP, Special Committee on Agriculture	Niall McGovern	Third Secretary	niall.mcGovern@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Sanitary & Phytosanitary, Forestry	Kevin Foley-Friel	First Secretary	kevin.foley-friel@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Sanitary & Phytosanitary, Forestry	Julia Orr	Third Secretary	julia.orr@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Fisheries	Claudia Bond	Policy Officer	claudia.bond@dfa.ie
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Agriculture	Catherine Hallinan	Policy Officer	catherine.hallinan@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality	Equality	Richard Quilliam	First Secretary	richard.quilliam@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality	Equality	Louise Ward	First Secretary	louise.ward@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality	Fundamental Rights	Nessa McKeivitt	First Secretary	nessa.mckeivitt@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality		Grace Andic	Policy Officer	grace.andic@dfa.ie

Department	Area	Name	Position	Contact information
Children, Disability and Equality		Amy McAuley	Policy Officer	amy.mcauley@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality	Climate	Noel Regan	Counsellor	noel.regan@dfa.ie
Children, Disability and Equality	Environment	Aisling Costello	First Secretary	aisling.costello@dfa.ie
Climate, Environment and Energy	Energy	Paul Gallagher	First Secretary	paul.gallagher@dfa.ie
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Climate, Environment and Energy	Energy	Lisa Underwood	First Secretary	lisa.underwood@dfa.ie
Climate, Environment and Energy	Energy	Emily Kilroy	Third Secretary	emily.kilroy@dfa.ie
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Culture, Communications and Sport		Frank Gallagher	Counsellor	frank.gallagher@dfa.ie
Culture, Communications and Sport	Culture	Aisling de Lacy	First Secretary	aisling.lacy@dfa.ie
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MEPs

There are 14 Irish MEPs sitting in the European Parliament. Seán Kelly stands out as the dean of this cohort having been part of the institution since 2009, followed by Luke ‘Ming’ Flannagan who is sitting on his third consecutive term. The majority of Irish MEPs are part of either Renew (6) or the EPP (4) and issued from political parties composing the Government coalition at home.

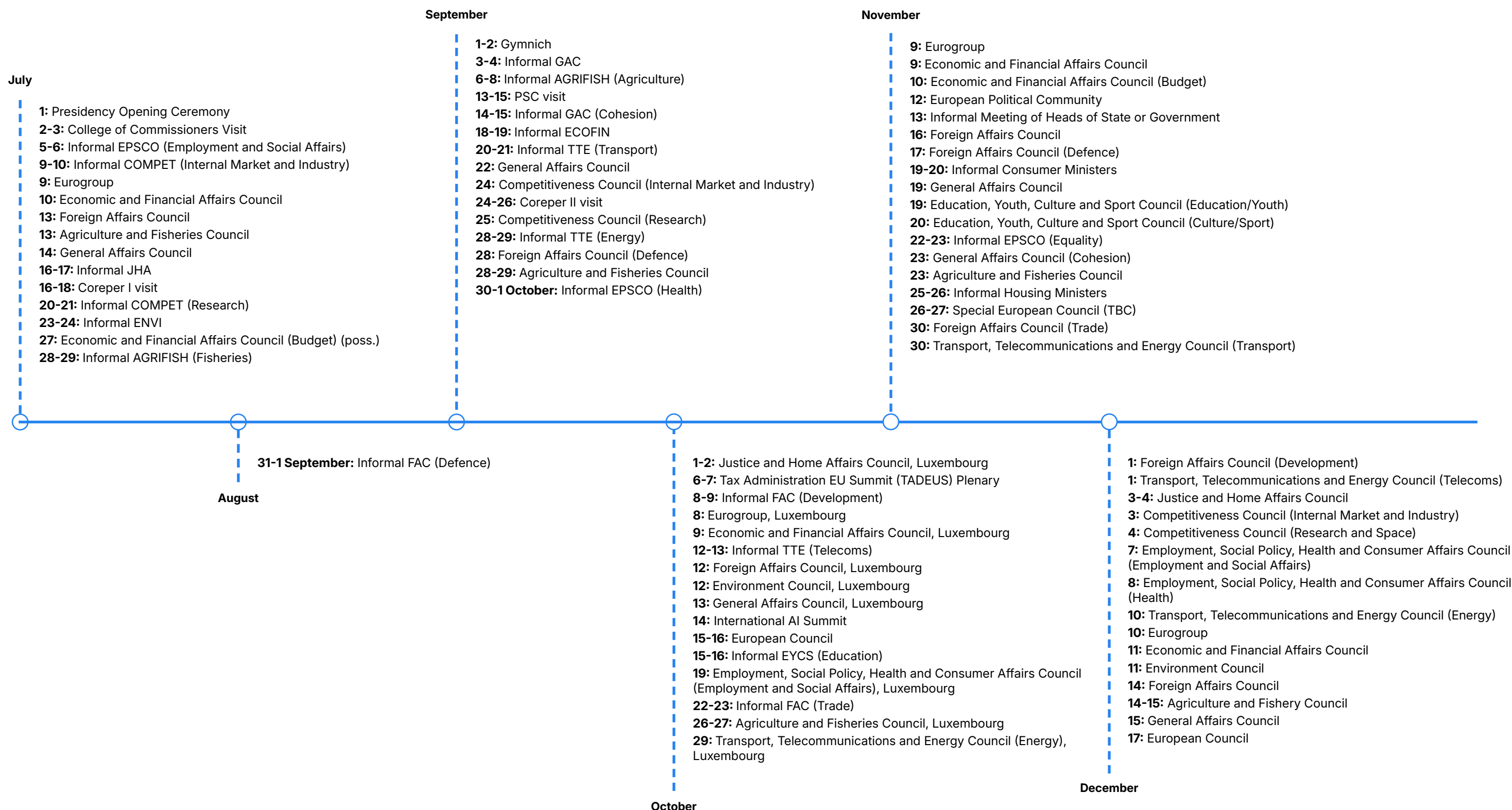
The representation of MEPs in Committees is indicative of political priorities in national politics. With four MEPs in each, the AGRI and HOUS committee are the most subscribed by the Irish cohort, which is consistent with the importance of the agricultural sector in Ireland and the housing issues encountered in the capital.

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