

Annual Report 2025

IIEA
Sharing Ideas
Shaping Policy

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CHAIRPERSON STATEMENT



In an era defined by uncertainty, institutions that can convene, inform, and challenge are more important than ever. Throughout 2025, the IIEA continued to provide a unique space in Ireland where policymakers, business leaders, academics, diplomats, and civil society could come together to better discuss and understand the forces shaping our world.

As Chairperson, I am proud of the role the Institute plays in Irish public life. I believe its contribution is increasingly important at a time when thoughtful debate and reliable analysis are more valuable than ever.

2025 was another year of transition and renewal for the IIEA Board. We said farewell to four long-serving directors: Catherine Day, Pat Cox, Peter McLoone, and Brendan Butler, the latter who also served with distinction as Treasurer. On behalf of the Board and the Institute, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for their many years of service, commitment, and wise counsel. Their contribution to the IIEA has been substantial, and on a personal level it was a pleasure and privilege to work alongside each of them.

While they leave big shoes to fill, I am grateful to those who have stepped into new Board and committee roles. We were delighted to welcome Declan Kelleher, Leo Varadkar and Sinéad McSweeney as new Board members, whose experience in public life and business gives them a perspective that further strengthens the Institute's leadership. I thank all Board members for the commitment, expertise, and guidance they continue to bring to the Institute.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of Director General Alex White and thank the entire IIEA team. Their professionalism, expertise, and dedication ensure that the Institute continues to deliver work of the highest quality and relevance. The impact of the IIEA is ultimately a reflection of the talent, commitment, and energy of its staff.

Since the close of the reporting period, Alex White's tenure as Director General came to an end in July 2026. On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank Alex for his exemplary leadership of the Institute. A considered, conscientious, and committed leader, he played a key role in strengthening the IIEA's reputation, advancing its strategic ambitions, and ensuring it continued to deliver real value to its members. It has been a pleasure to work alongside him, and we sincerely appreciate his service and contribution to the Institute.

The Institute was extremely fortunate that Dr Orlaigh Quinn was available at the time able to step into the Director General role on an interim basis, for which the IIEA Board is very grateful. We were delighted to then secure Mark Redmond as the new Director General and his tenure as a Chief Executive in other member-based organisations ensures that he brings significant relevant experience to the role.

We remain also deeply grateful for the continued support of our members, whose engagement is central to the Institute's success. We also acknowledge the operating grant provided by the European Commission and the strong partnership we enjoy with the Department of Foreign Affairs as our principal project funder. Alongside our many project partners and collaborators, their support enables the IIEA to deliver a wide-ranging programme of research, events, and policy engagement throughout the year while maintaining its reputation for independence and excellence.

As we look ahead, the Board remains committed to supporting the Institute's mission and long-term development. The need for thoughtful analysis, constructive dialogue, and international engagement is unlikely to diminish. With the support of our members, partners, Board, and staff, the IIEA will continue to play its unique role in Ireland's political, social, and cultural discourse and to contribute to better understanding of the issues that will shape our shared future.

Feargal O'Rourke

DIRECTOR GENERAL STATEMENT



Reflecting on 2025, clearly the pace of global change remained a defining feature. Geopolitical tensions, evolving trade dynamics, and rapid technological advances continued to reshape the policy landscape, while climate and migration pressures underscored the interconnected challenges facing policymakers. In this context, the IIEA's role - providing clear, evidence-based analysis and a platform for informed debate - remained essential.

Throughout 2025, our work engaged directly with these shifting dynamics. The IIEA hosted 157 events, attracting over 20,000 registrations and 10,885 attendances, reflecting sustained demand for in-depth discussion and accessible expertise. Our publications continued to perform strongly, with downloads increasing to 5,288. Among these, *Strengthening the Single Market: An Overview of the Enrico Letta Report* by IIEA Researcher, Ciarán O'Donohue, emerged as the most widely accessed, underlining continued interest in the future of European economic integration.

Our international reach continued to expand, with growing audiences across Europe, the United States and Asia. This outward reach reflects both the relevance of the issues we address and the importance of Ireland's voice within European and global policy debates.

Our 2025 events programme spanned a wide range of policy areas. Across the year, the IIEA welcomed a distinguished range of international and Irish speakers, including European Commissioner Michael McGrath; UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi; Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan; President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Mary C. Daly; Professor Carlo Masala; and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk; among others. Their contributions ensured that our discussions remained grounded in global expertise and practical policymaking experience.

Several events generated substantial public and media interest, including the launch of the *OECD Economic Survey of Ireland 2025*, featuring then Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe, which became the most visited event on our website. Our collaboration with the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Liaison Office on the State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen, alongside the conference *International Trade – the Challenges Ahead,* further highlighted the IIEA's role as a convening space for high-level European engagement. The latter event, with contributions from An Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, and Tánaiste Simon Harris, drew strong participation and wide discussion.

Our research programme continued to deliver analysis on critical policy questions, maintaining a consistent focus on quality, relevance, and impact. A major output during the year was *Secure Together: Enhancing Ireland's Security and Resilience in a Time of Heightened Geopolitical Risk*, produced in partnership with Deloitte, which generated significant domestic and international attention. *The Pathways: Ireland's Agricultural Future* initiative also gained momentum, with three papers produced in collaboration with Dr Alan Matthews, contributing to informed debate within the agri-food sector.

None of this work would have been possible without the continued support of our partners. We were pleased to collaborate once again with ESB on the *REthink Energy* lecture series. We also deepened our engagement with a wide range of organisations, including the OECD, the Economic Regulators Network, Brown Brothers Harriman, Johnson & Johnson, Deloitte, Amazon, Gas Networks Ireland and Vodafone. Our longstanding partnerships with Irish Aid, through the *Development Matters* series, and with the Department of Foreign Affairs, through *Future-Proofing Europe*, remained central to our work.

My thanks go to the IIEA Board for their continued leadership, to our members for their engagement and trust, and to the IIEA team, whose expertise, commitment, and professionalism underpin all that we do.

The pace of global change shows little sign of slowing. In response, the IIEA will remain focused on providing clarity in complexity, fostering informed dialogue, and contributing to better policymaking in Ireland, Europe, and beyond.

Alex White SC

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH STATEMENT



Geopolitics was in focus throughout 2025 as Donald Trump returned to the White House in January and swiftly moved to dismantle the US Agency for International Development (USAID) before threatening to annex Greenland. Starting his second term, President Trump ushered in sweeping global tariffs, initiated a trade war, and forced European leaders to accelerate discussions around economic de-risking and EU strategic autonomy.

Meanwhile, the cumulative impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine continued, with tens of thousands of casualties and the destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods. In keeping with this, security, including energy security, remained central on the European Union (EU)'s agenda. The Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument, designed to provide up to €150 billion in long-term loans for joint defence procurement activities, was formally adopted in May. Throughout the year, the Irish Government maintained strong political and financial backing for Ukraine, while managing the country's close ties to the US.

Two years into the devastating war in Gaza, regional conflict continued with US and Israeli bombardments of Iranian military and nuclear facilities in June before a US-brokered peace deal led to a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in September.

Within the EU, the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of the year focused on regional defence readiness, internal border security, foreign interference, and energy security. The Danish Presidency which followed emphasised security and crisis preparedness, as well as long-term EU competitiveness, the green transition, and social cohesion. Following the 2024 Draghi report, much focus was placed across the year on closing innovation gaps while cutting administrative burdens – themes that would go on to shape thinking around the forthcoming Irish Presidency in 2026, which will see key legislative files coming to fruition including the final negotiations for the bloc's seven-year multiannual financial framework (MFF).

Throughout 2025, EU unity continued to be put to the test. Amid the weakening of the traditional Franco-German engine, the bloc found itself needing to balance increasing economic interdependence with China, with rising trade deficits and security concerns. Hungary deployed vetoes to thwart collective EU military assistance and sanctions linked to Russia's war against Ukraine. Migration maintained its central place in EU affairs, amid the rollout of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in 2024. The EU's 2025 enlargement package, adopted in November, set out progress and reform assessments for ten enlargement partners, with Montenegro and Albania marked out as frontrunners for the next rounds of EU accession. EU digital policy continued to evolve, and the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) continued with major investments, as well as concerns around the potential for misinformation, copyright infringements, and job losses.

Closer to home, the inaugural UK-Ireland Summit was held in Liverpool in March, bringing together Taoiseach Micheál Martin and then UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer as part of a continuing reset in bilateral relations. In June, the Central Bank cited rising geopolitical tensions, shifts in global trade policy, and higher economic uncertainty to explain the increased risks to the financial system in Ireland.

Destructive weather events caused by climate change continued to impact large parts of the world, underscoring the importance of overseas development aid, while negotiations continued to establish legally binding headline targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Throughout 2025, the IIEA sought to help members to better understand and navigate the tumultuous events, trends, and policies that shape the world, including those listed above. Through its coordinated programme of research and events, the IIEA seeks to give members a chance to engage with topics of importance and to interact with some of the world's foremost thought leaders. Amid the ongoing turbulence in global affairs, there has never been a greater need for the sobering, patient, and informed analysis that the IIEA seeks to provide.

Dr Barry Colfer

RESEARCH OUTPUT 2025



157
events



46
publications



10,885
attendances



16
policy areas

PARTNERS AND PROJECT SUPPORTERS IN 2025

Amazon

Apple

Brown Brothers Harriman

CERV Programme of the European Union

Deloitte

Department of Foreign Affairs

Economic Regulators Network

Electricity Supply Board (ESB)

European Climate Foundation

European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland

European Commission Representative in Ireland

Gas Networks Ireland

Google

Irish Aid

Johnson & Johnson

Vodafone



























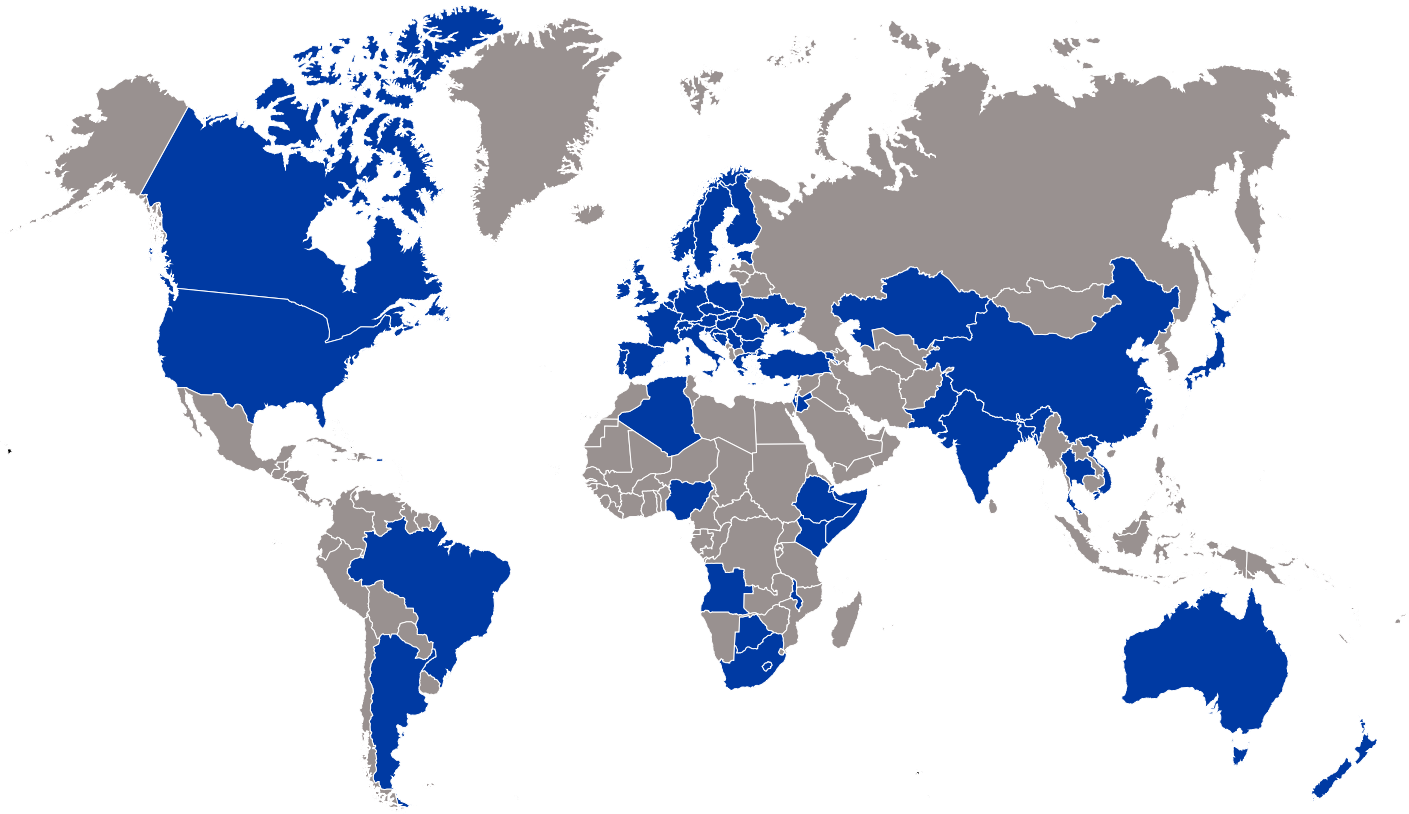








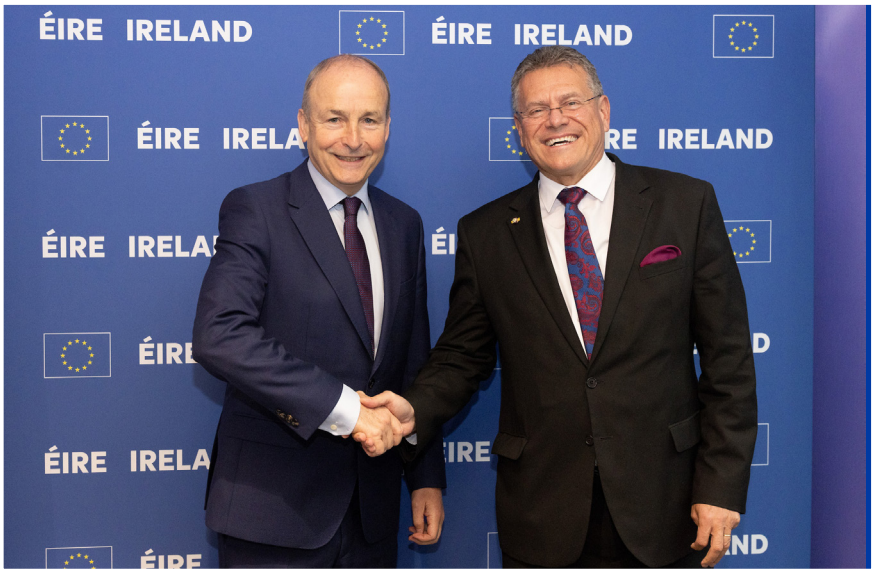
AUDIENCE REACH IN 2025



Albania
Algeria
Angola
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Honduras
Hungary
India
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Lesotho
Luxembourg
Malawi
Malta
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
Portugal
Puerto Rico
Romania
Serbia
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
Somalia
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Vietnam

Based on in-person and online registrations in 2025

HIGHLIGHTS 2025



State of the European Union 2025: Micheál Martin, Taoiseach; and Maroš Šefčovič, European Commissioner for Trade.



State of the European Union 2025: Brigid Laffan, Professor Emeritus at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at EUI; Tom Hanney, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU; Peter Power, European Commission Head of Representation in Ireland; Frances Fitzgerald, former Tánaiste; MEP Paddy Smyth, journalist and former Europe Editor at The Irish Times, and Cian Walsh, Secretary of the UCC Government and Politics Society.



In Conversation with Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Manchester; Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Sarah Carey, moderator and journalist; Steve Rotheram, Mayor of Liverpool; and Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research.



Ensuring Ireland's Security Resilience: Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Marie Cross, Chair of the IIEA Security and Defence Group; Niamh Quinn, Head of Strategy & IT, ESB Generation & Trading; Patricia Callan, Head of Sectors and Director of Financial Services Ireland (FSI) Group at Ibec; and Cian Fitzgerald, IIEA Senior Researcher on Security and Defence.



OECD Economic Survey Ireland 2025 Launch: John McCarthy, Department of Finance Chief Economist; Álvaro S. Pereira, OECD Chief Economist; Paschal Donohoe TD, then Minister for Finance; Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Müge Adalet McGowan, OECD Senior Economist; Frances Ruane, Moderator; and Martina Lawless, Research Professor, ESRI



Ireland's Voice in Europe: In Conversation with Midlands-North-West MEPs: Dr Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research; Dr Orla Flynn, President of ATU; Barry Cowen MEP; Maria Walsh MEP; Brendan Flynn, Lecturer and Head of Politics University of Galway; Emma Richardson, IIEA Researcher; and Ciaran Mullooly MEP.



Future-Proofing EU Democracy: Michael McGrath, European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection.



Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Northern Ireland Minister for the Economy, discussed *Economic Opportunities in the Context of Constitutional Change* with Daithí Ó Ceallaigh, IIEA UK Working Group Chair.



IEA Culture Night 2025: Heather Burke, IIEA Researcher; Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Eileen Dunne, former RTÉ News Presenter; and Mark Henry, author and speaker.

FUTURE PROOFING EUROPE

FUTURE-PROOFING EUROPE

Researcher: Dylan Casey Marshall, Tara Kukec, Heather Burke

Chair: Various

In 2025, the IIEA's *Future-Proofing Europe* programme, which is supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, covered key themes central to the future resilience of the Union, including democratic integrity and the rule of law; the strategic imperative of EU enlargement; and long-term institutional governance and growth models.

In the first major theme, focusing on democratic integrity, the rule of law, and fundamental rights, **Michael McGrath**, EU Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection, addressed the IIEA in the event *Future-Proofing EU Democracy: An Address by Commissioner Michael McGrath*. He outlined the European Commission's initiatives to shield democratic institutions against foreign interference and digital propaganda, specifically highlighting the development of the European Democracy Shield.

In a related discussion, *European Commission Experts in Conversation with Marie Baker on the Rule of Law Report 2025*, **Florian Geyer**, Head of Unit for Rule of Law, and **Nicolaas Bel**, Deputy Head of Unit for Rule of Law in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, joined **Judge Marie Baker**. They assessed institutional recommendations for judicial systems and anti-corruption frameworks, highlighting the link between upholding the rule of law and securing EU funding.

Furthermore, **Volker Türk**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered a keynote address on *Human Rights: Healing Our Fractured World*. Amid escalating conflicts and deep divisions, he underscored that an unwavering commitment to multilateralism and international law is vital to steering the global community towards a just future.

In another significant theme, focusing on EU enlargement and strategic geopolitics, **Gordan Grlić-Radman**, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, spoke on EU Enlargement and the Western Balkans. He discussed the strategic necessity of rethinking the accession process in response to shifts in Europe's security environment, reaffirming Croatia's commitment to supporting its neighbours on their European paths.

Highlighting a specific country's path, **Filip Ivanović**, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Montenegro, presented a keynote speech titled *Progress on the Road to EU Accession: A Montenegrin Perspective*. As Ireland prepares for its 2026 Council Presidency, he framed Montenegro's integration process as a value-driven choice and detailed its achievements as an accession frontrunner.

Additionally, **Marilena Raouna**, Deputy Minister for European Affairs of Cyprus, addressed the Institute on *Enlargement and Strategic Autonomy under Cyprus' EU Presidency*. She asserted that expanding the Union is a geopolitical necessity to reinforce collective security against external aggression and pledged that the incoming Cypriot Presidency would ambitiously drive forward a merit-based enlargement agenda.

In a final theme examining long-term institutional governance and economic growth models, **Joakim Strand**, Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering of Finland, addressed the IIEA on *Finland's Futures Ecosystem in a European Context*. Utilising strategic foresight tools, he illustrated Finland's strategic policy goals of boosting comprehensive European security, strengthening democracy, and enhancing resilience against foreign influence.

Finally, **Kata Tüttő**, President of the European Committee of the Regions, discussed the European Commission's next budget proposal during her address *What Role for Regions in the EU's Growth Model?* She criticised the proposal for attempting to centralise EU policies, arguing that regional and local authorities must maintain a full and inclusive role in sustaining Europe's future growth model.

FUTURE-PROOFING EUROPE







Top: Michael McGrath, EU Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection.

Middle: Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Bottom: Dr Kata Tüttő, President of the European Committee of the Regions in discussion with Marie Cross.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

THE IIEA AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LIAISON OFFICE SERIES

The IIEA and European Parliament Liaison Office Series for 2025 focused on strengthening connections between citizens and the European Parliament, with a particular emphasis on young people and regions outside Dublin.

In the first event, the IIEA, in partnership with the European Parliament Liaison Office, organised *Ireland's Voice in Europe: In Conversation with Midlands-North-West MEPs*. Constituents had the opportunity to discuss issues of interest with Midlands-North-West MEPs, including agricultural policy, land use, climate change, housing, transport, and other topics. The MEPs provided insights into the role of EU policy in addressing these challenges.

The participating MEPs were **Maria Walsh**, **Barry Cowen**, and **Ciaran Mullooly**. **Brendan Flynn**, Lecturer and Head of Politics in the School of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Galway, participated as a discussant, and the session was moderated by **Dr Orla Flynn**, President of the Atlantic Technological University (ATU).



Dr Orla Flynn, President of ATU; Barry Cowen MEP, Maria Walsh MEP; Brendan Flynn, Lecturer and Head of Politics University of Galway; and Ciaran Mullooly MEP.

In the second event, the IIEA, again in partnership with the European Parliament Liaison Office, organised the youth-focused discussion *An Evening with Dublin MEPs*. The event featured **Aodhán Ó Ríordáin** and **Barry Andrews** and offered constituents an opportunity to debate issues including climate change, housing, education, transport, and mental health.

The MEPs provided insights into how policymaking at EU level can help address these challenges and discussed the role of the European Parliament in shaping policies that affect citizens across Ireland.

EU AFFAIRS PROGRAMME

Researcher: Emma Richardson
Chair: Various

The EU Affairs Programme addressed critical challenges facing the European Union, including housing and social policy frameworks; global geopolitical risks; and strategic domestic governance across Member States.

In the first major theme of the programme, **Ruth Owen**, Deputy Director at the European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), addressed the question *Can the EU's Affordable Housing Plan Help Tackle Homelessness?* She explored the potential of the EU's evolving affordable housing agenda, highlighting how initiatives such as the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness can support inclusive national solutions despite the EU lacking direct competence over housing.

A joint address on *Ending Homelessness: What the EU's Affordable Housing Plan Must Deliver* by **Ruth Owen** and **Catherine McGillycuddy**, Acting Director of Policy at the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), further highlighted how leveraging Ireland's 2026 Council Presidency offers a unique opportunity to secure a Council Recommendation and mobilise dedicated funding.

Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, delivered an address titled *Reclaiming Europe's Promise: The Quality Jobs Agenda and the Next Social Contract*. She argued that Europe's competitiveness renewal lies in combining investment and social justice, urging a new European Social Contract that ensures public investment creates quality employment and ends the race to the bottom.



Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation; and Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research.

Constanze Stelzenmüller, Director of the Centre on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution, addressed the IIEA on the topic of *What Now, Europe? Europe's Strategic Outlook in a Changing World*, another central theme of the EU Affairs Programme. Against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine and a new political chapter in the United States, she explored how Europe must confront difficult questions regarding its security, prosperity, and strategic autonomy. Ultimately, she examined Europe's role in shaping the future global order and the direct implications for Ireland and the wider European Union as authoritarian regimes challenge the rules-based international system.



Constanze Stelzenmüller, Director of the Centre on the United States and Europe with Edward Burke, Assistant Professor at University College Dublin (UCD).

Examining strategic governance and domestic political landscapes across Europe, the webinar series *Finland's Futures Ecosystem* was organised in conjunction with the University College Dublin Centre for Innovation, Technology and Organisation; the Embassy of Finland; and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The series included an online panel offering insights into how collaboration, policy, and innovation come together to anticipate change. Speakers included **Elina Kiiski-Kataja**, Senior Lead of Foresight & Insight at Sitra; **Maria Höyssä**, Senior Advisor to the Committee for the Future at the Parliament of Finland and Senior Research Fellow at Finland's Futures Research Centre; **Vera Djakonoff**, Senior Expert, Anticipatory Governance, at Demos Helsinki; and **Dr Kevin Deegan**, Vice President for Innovation & Insight at Valio.

The final panel webinar, *Strategic Foresight Systems: What Policymakers Can Learn from Finland,* took an analytical approach to the ecosystem, giving a critical assessment of the Finnish model and comparing it with other international approaches, particularly Ireland's. The panellists were **Elizabeth Canavan**, Assistant Secretary General at the Department of the Taoiseach; **Marc Ó Cathasaigh**, former TD; **Niamh Garvey**, Senior Policy Analyst, NESC; and **Kevin Daly**, Principal Officer at the Department of Finance.

In other events in the IIEA's EU Affairs Programme, the address *The UK in a Changing World* saw **Anand Menon**, Director of the UK in a Changing Europe think tank, examine how the United Kingdom is confronting a series of interlinked domestic, international, political, and economic challenges.



Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Katy Hayward, Professor of Political Sociology at Queen's University Belfast and Anand Menon; Director of the UK in a Changing Europe.

Finally, **Derek Scally**, Berlin Correspondent for *The Irish Times*, reflected on the shifting political landscape in Germany following the collapse of the Scholz Government during the event *After the Snap: Germany's New Political Reality.* He assessed the implications of the February 2025 German federal election for domestic governance, Germany's role in Europe, and the political challenges ahead.



IIEA Researcher Emma Richardson; Derek Scally, Berlin Correspondent for The Irish Times, Catherine Meenan, Germany Group Chair; and Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research.

The State of the European Union 2025

President of the European Commission **Ursula von der Leyen** delivered her *State of the European Union* in October 2025, addressing issues including strengthening Europe's competitiveness, enhancing the EU's security and defence capacity, building mutually beneficial trade partnerships, the future of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the European Democracy Shield, and the rule of law.

To mark the address, the IIEA, with the support of the European Commission and the European Parliament,

organised the event *The State of the European Union 2025.*

Held at Europe House, President von der Leyen's address was livestreamed and followed by a panel discussion assessing the key themes of the speech and her priorities for 2026.

The panel included **Paddy Smyth**, journalist and former Europe Editor at The Irish Times (moderator); **Frances Fitzgerald**, former Tánaiste and MEP; **Tom Hanney**, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU; **Brigid Laffan**, Professor Emeritus at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute; and **Cian Walsh**, Secretary of the UCC Government and Politics Society and a Quercus Active Citizenship Scholar.



Paddy Smyth, former Europe Editor at The Irish Times and Moderator; Frances Fitzgerald, MEP; Tom Hanney, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU; Brigid Laffan, Professor Emeritus at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at EUI; and Cian Walsh, Secretary of the UCC Government and Politics Society and a Quercus Active Citizenship Scholar.



GEOPOLITICS

Researchers: Cian Fitzgerald and various

Chair: Various

The Geopolitics Programme focused on several major themes, including democracy and authoritarianism, peacebuilding, and political developments along key geopolitical fault lines.

One major area of focus was democracy and authoritarianism. In partnership with the Embassy of Chile in Ireland, the IIEA hosted *Democracy and Political Dissatisfaction in Latin America: How Do We Renew and Concretise the Promises of Democracy?* **Gloria de la Fuente**, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of Chile, discussed challenges facing Latin America, including weakened political parties, disinformation, and migration.

More broadly, *The Authoritarian Resurgence in World Politics* explored the growing global challenge to democracy and examined how authoritarian states are increasingly contesting liberal democratic norms and expanding their influence internationally.



Feargal O'Rourke, IIEA Chair; Martin O'Malley, former Commissioner of the US Social Security Administration; Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research, and Cian Fitzgerald, IIEA Security and Defence Researcher.

The programme also examined democratic governance in practice through *Data and AI: How to Govern for Results in the Information Age*. Organised in partnership with the Irish Management Institute and Business.ie, the event featured **Martin O'Malley**, former Commissioner of the US Social Security Administration and former Governor of Maryland. He discussed his experience shaping public policy at local, state, and national levels in the United States.

Another key strand of the programme focused on peacebuilding. The panel discussion *The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in 2025 and Beyond* examined the deterioration of the global security environment and the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution.

The promotion of peace was also explored by **Gearoid Millar**, Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Aberdeen, during *Peace in Times of War: Ideas for Supportive Peace Policy*. He discussed the structural and financial barriers to sustainable peacebuilding and proposed policy solutions to support peace initiatives.

The IIEA also hosted *Peacemaking and the Future of the United Nations,* featuring **Thant Myint-U**, author, historian, and Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He explored the United Nations' continuing role in advancing global peace.



Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research and Thant Myint-U, author, historian, and Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

The programme also analysed developments in countries and regions located on Europe's geopolitical frontiers. In *Romania at a Crossroads: Assessing the Results and Impact of the 2025 Presidential Elections*, panellists examined Romania's election results and their implications for foreign policy.

In *Türkiye and Europe at a Strategic Crossroads: Towards a Common Future*, **Hakan Fidan**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, discussed Türkiye's role as a strategic partner in promoting resilience and stability.

The programme concluded with an examination of the Middle East in *The Geopolitics of the Middle East: A Region Under Reconfiguration*. **Hisham Hellyer**, Senior Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, discussed major developments across the region and assessed their implications for the broader international community.

DEMOCRACY PROGRAMME

Researcher: Seamus Allen

Chairs: Various

The IIEA Democracy Programme covered a number of themes relating to democracy, human rights, and authoritarianism, including democratic reform and participatory democracy; transnational repression; and internet blackouts.

In the event *Transnational Repression: Persecution Across Borders,* the IIEA welcomed **Yana Gorokhovskaia**, Research Director at Freedom House. Ms Gorokhovskaia outlined Freedom House's research on how oppressive governments are reaching across borders to harass and persecute their citizens and exiles.

In collaboration with the Embassy of Switzerland, the event *Reimagining Democracy: Participatory Democracy and the Future of Democratic Innovation* saw an expert panel discuss alternative approaches to democracy, including direct democracy, deliberative democracy, and other forms of democratic experimentation. The panel particularly examined the practice of direct democracy by referendum in Switzerland and the practice of deliberative democracy through Citizens' Assemblies in Ireland. The panel included **Associate Professor Joseph Lacey**, Founding Director of the Centre for Democracy Research, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin; **Professor Daniel Kübler**, Professor at the Department of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Democracy Studies, University of Zurich; and **Louise Caldwell**, Member of the Board of Directors of People Powered: Global Hub for Participatory Democracy, and former member of the Irish Citizens' Assembly, 2016–2018.



Louise Caldwell, Member of the Board of Directors of People Powered; Professor Daniel Kübler, Professor at the University of Zurich; and Associate Professor Joseph Lacey, Founding Director of the Centre for Democracy Research, University College Dublin.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE











Photos from top: Thomas Byrne T.D., Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence.

Michiel van der Laan, Director General of the EU Military Staff.

Judy Dempsey, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe.

Dr Carlo Masala, Chair for Security and Defence Studies at the University of the Bundeswehr Munich; and Lara Marlowe, journalist and author.

Dr Norah Patten, Aeronautical Engineer, Bioastronautics Researcher; Dr Shawna Pandya, Emergency and Aeromedical Transport Physician and Canada's first commercial female astronaut; and Orlaigh Quinn, former Secretary General of DETE.

In the event *Internet Shutdowns: Endangered Communities, Silenced Stories*, **Felicia Anthonio**, #KeepItOn Campaign Manager at Access Now, and **Zach Rosson**, #KeepItOn Data Analyst and Research Lead at Access Now, discussed the deliberate use of internet shutdowns around the world. They outlined Access Now's reports on how deliberate internet shutdowns have become increasingly common as a tool to suppress dissent during protests, coups, and disputed elections, making them a grave threat to democracy. They also discussed the use of internet shutdowns as a wartime tactic that can accompany human rights abuses.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Researcher: Cian Fitzgerald

Chair: Marie Cross and various

The IIEA's Security and Defence Programme explored a wide range of themes, including EU security policy; infrastructure security and the role of the private sector; the Russia-Ukraine war; nuclear non-proliferation; and the security implications of climate change.

To discuss a critical issue for international peace and security, the IIEA welcomed **Stephen Klement**, Ambassador and EU Special Envoy on Non-Proliferation, to the event *Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Efforts in the Current Geopolitical Context*. Ambassador Klement discussed the need for balanced implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The IIEA also organised a number of events exploring EU security policy in a changing geopolitical environment. In the event *European Security and the EU White Paper on Defence*, organised in partnership with the European Commission Representation in Ireland, an expert panel discussed the *EU Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030* and how it can be implemented effectively to strengthen European defence capabilities.

The effectiveness of current EU military capabilities was examined during *The Effectiveness of EU Military Missions and Operations*, where the IIEA welcomed **Michiel van der Laan**, Director General of the EU Military Staff. He discussed the importance of implementing a coherent and strategic Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

In another event on European security and defence policy, **Judy Dempsey**, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe, addressed the IIEA on *Can Europe Act Strategically in a Changed Geopolitical Reality?* She discussed the growing geopolitical challenges facing Europe, including Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine and the disruption of transatlantic relations.

A particularly important issue for Ireland was addressed in *Achieving Depth: Subsea Telecommunications Cables as Critical Infrastructure,* featuring **Camino Kavanagh**, Senior Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and Visiting Senior Fellow at King's College London. The discussion examined government responses to potential threats against critical infrastructure, including subsea communications cables.

Infrastructure security was further explored in the panel discussion *Protecting Critical Offshore Infrastructure from Hybrid Threats*, organised in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ireland. The panel examined the significance of protecting offshore energy and communications infrastructure, including wind farms and subsea cables, in the context of Ireland's National Maritime Security Strategy.

The programme also addressed infrastructure security in space through the event *Opportunities in Orbit: The Role of Space as a Source of National Resilience and Prosperity*, organised in partnership with the Embassy of Canada and the Irish Space Association. The discussion explored the role of space assets in ensuring the resilience of essential services, including telecommunications.

The role of the private sector in security was examined by **Franklin D. Kramer**, Fellow and Board Director at the Atlantic Council, during *The Role of the Private Sector in Warfare.* He discussed lessons from recent conflicts, focusing on cyber resilience, communications infrastructure, and space capabilities.

The relationship between climate change and conflict was explored in *Hot Wars, Hot Planet: Climate Change and Security in a Competitive World*. **Erin Sikorsky**, Director of the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) and the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS), discussed the implications of extreme weather events for conflict, hybrid warfare, and geopolitical competition.

The Russia-Ukraine war remained a major theme throughout the programme. In partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) UK and Ireland office, the IIEA organised *If Russia Wins*, which examined the implications of a Russian victory in Ukraine following decades of underinvestment in defence capabilities across Europe.

Focusing on Russia's domestic political environment, **Jade McGlynn**, Leverhulme Early Career Postdoctoral Fellow at King's College London, discussed *Russia's Political Discourse: Patriotic Policy Critics or Nationalist Opposition?* She examined the role of nationalist policy critics within Russia and their limited influence on regime stability despite their impact on policy debates.

NATIONAL SECURITY SYMPOSIUM

Enhancing Ireland's National Security and Resilience for a Time of Heightened Geopolitical Risk

Researcher: Cian Fitzgerald

Chair: Alex White SC

The IIEA and Deloitte co-organised a symposium and the launch of the white paper *Enhancing Ireland's National Security and Resilience for a Time of Heightened Geopolitical Risk.*

The symposium featured a keynote address by **Minister Thomas Byrne TD**, Minister of State for European Affairs and Minister of State for Defence. This was followed by presentations on the white paper by **Kieran O'Neill**, Partner, Technology & Transformation and Defence, Security & Justice Leader at Deloitte; and **Barry Colfer**, Director of Research at the IIEA.

A panel discussion then explored how Ireland could strengthen its national security and public safety. The panellists also examined opportunities arising from increased investment in defence. The panel included **Patricia Callan**, Head of Sectors and Director of Financial Services Ireland (FSI) Group at Ibec; **Cian Fitzgerald**, Senior Researcher on Security and Defence at the IIEA; and **Niamh Quinn**, Head of Strategy & IT, ESB Generation & Trading.



Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Marie Cross, Chair of the IIEA Security and Defence Group; Niamh Quinn, Head of Strategy & IT, ESB Generation & Trading; Patricia Callan, Head of Sectors and Director of Financial Services Ireland (FSI) Group at Ibec; and Cian Fitzgerald, IIEA Senior Researcher on Security and Defence.

JUSTICE

Researcher: Lauren Woods

Chairs: Various

In April 2025, **Reem Alsalem**, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, delivered an online address exploring global trends in efforts to eliminate such violence, highlighting both promising practices and persistent gaps.



Reem Alsalem, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls.

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum was the subject of a webinar with **Professor Dr Jur. Cecilia M. Bailliet**, United Nations Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity. Professor Bailliet presented the elements of a human-centred international solidarity mechanism for asylum that ensures non-discrimination, provides access to justice, calls for a reversal of externalisation policies, and places the best interests of the child at its core.

The IIEA also welcomed **Jim O'Callaghan**, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, in July 2025 for a keynote address. He argued for modernised laws, responsible technology use, effective policing, data-access safeguards, and fair but firm asylum and migration systems that protect society while upholding fundamental rights.



JIm O'Callaghan, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

UK PROGRAMME

Researcher: Emma Richardson

Chair: Dáithí O'Ceallaigh

The UK Programme brought together senior policymakers, regional leaders, and analysts to examine governance and politics across the United Kingdom. The programme explored devolution and regional leadership, policy developments in Northern Ireland, constitutional change on the island of Ireland, and the future of the UK-EU relationship. It highlighted practical policy implications for citizens and businesses while offering analysis of the strategic choices facing both the UK and Ireland.



Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester; Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Sarah Carey, Moderator; and Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.

Devolution and regional leadership formed a central theme of the programme. **Andy Burnham**, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and **Steve Rotheram**, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, visited the IIEA in February to discuss their vision for a more balanced and inclusive United Kingdom. They critiqued centralisation and drew lessons from English devolution and the "levelling up" agenda, including a ten-point plan to rebalance power.



Andrew Muir, Northern Ireland Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Policy developments in Northern Ireland formed another major theme. **Andrew Muir**, Northern Ireland Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, spoke on *Delivering Environmental Improvement in Northern Ireland*, outlining efforts to protect and restore the environment and emphasising the need for an all-island approach to agriculture and climate objectives.



Mike Nesbitt, Northern Ireland Minister for Health.

Mike Nesbitt, Northen Ireland Minister of Health, delivered a keynote address on how tackling health inequalities through a broader Prosperity Agenda requires a whole-of-Executive approach.

A significant portion of the programme examined constitutional futures on the island of Ireland from multiple perspectives. **Conor Murphy**, Senator and Sinn Féin Leader in the Seanad, in *Future Constitutional Change: The Need to Prepare*, made the case for structured planning by the Irish Government to prepare for potential constitutional change.



Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Northern Ireland Minister for the Economy

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Northern Ireland Minister for the Economy, discussed *Economic Opportunities in the Context of Constitutional Change*.

Philip Stephens, author and contributing editor at the Financial Times, examined history and strategy in the address *Full Circle: From Partition to a Re-Imagined Ireland?*

Meanwhile, **Professor Pete Shirlow** and **Lee Reynolds** considered the future of unionism, arguing for a positive and forward-looking vision that engages younger generations and reflects changing identities in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Doughty, UK Minister of State for Europe, addressed *The Future of the UK-EU Relationship, assessing priorities for the* EU-UK Strategic Partnership and identifying further opportunities for cooperation.

Throughout 2025, the UK Programme also published two reports: *The Moving Puzzle: Trump, Trade Tariffs and the Windsor Framework* by **Dr Sylvia de Mars** and **Professor Colin Murray**; and *The Evolution of Devolution in the United Kingdom* by **Emma Richardson**. These publications examined, respectively, how differentiated tariff regimes interact with the Windsor Framework and how the development of UK devolution offers lessons for democratic renewal.



Stephen Doughty, UK Minister of State for Europe.

DIGITAL POLICY PROGRAMME

Chair: Joyce O'Connor and various

Researcher: Seamus Allen

The IIEA Digital Policy Programme covered some of the key themes at the forefront of Irish and EU digital policy in 2025, including new and emerging technologies; social and security risks; and the safety and protection of internet users.

The first event saw **Lucilla Sioli**, Director of the AI Office in the European Commission, speak on the topic of *Enforcing the Artificial Intelligence Act* and the key challenges involved in delivering this regulation.

Another emerging technology was discussed in the event *Quantum Europe: The EU's Quantum Technologies Agenda*, featuring **Gustav Kalbe**, Head of Unit for Emerging and Enabling Technologies in DG CONNECT at the European Commission. Mr Kalbe discussed the EU's new Quantum Strategy and the EU's ambitions to be a global leader in the area of quantum technology.

An important theme for the programme was digital social



Nina Jankowicz, CEO of the American Sunlight Project.

and security threats. In the event *Disinformation and Democracy in a New Era: Can Reality be Rescued?*, **Nina Jankowicz**, CEO of the American Sunlight Project and author of *How to Lose the Information War*, discussed the threat that disinformation poses to democracy. The event examined the role of disinformation in several countries, as well as the best ways to respond to this threat.

On the topic of cybersecurity, the IIEA was addressed by **Richard Browne**, Director of Ireland's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), on *Ireland's Cybersecurity Challenges.* Mr Browne discussed key developments in cybersecurity relevant to Ireland and the role of the NCSC in ensuring Ireland is protected from cybersecurity threats.

Another key theme of the Digital Policy Programme for 2025 was the protection of rights and well-being online. In the event *Protecting Consumers in the Digital Age*, the IIEA welcomed Professor **Marie Jull Sørensen**, Associate Professor and Vice Dean of Research at the Department of Law at Aalborg University. This event assessed the forthcoming proposal for a European Digital Fairness Act and the gaps in the online consumer protection framework that such an act could seek to address.



Marie Jull Sørensen, Associate Professor and Vice Dean of Research at the Department of Law at Aalborg University.

Finally, in the event *Addressing the Mental Health Implications of Digital Life,* the IIEA welcomed **Dr Ravi Iyer**, Managing Director of the Psychology of Technology Institute, University of Southern California. Dr Iyer outlined the evidence on the implications of digital technology for mental health and assessed various ways of protecting mental health on social media, especially for young people.



Dr Ravi Iyer, Managing Director of the Psychology of Technology Institute, University of Southern California.

The Digital Services Act: An Initial Review

In the event *The Digital Services Act: An Initial Review*, the IIEA collaborated with the Economic Regulators Network (ERN), a cross-sectoral group of economic regulators in Ireland.

A panel of experts discussed the implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA) to date and assessed the ongoing debates relating to various features of the DSA. The panel also examined the opportunities and challenges that may lie ahead for the future of DSA enforcement.



Seamus Allen, IIEA Senior Researcher; Digital Policy; John Evans, Digital Services Commissioner Coimisiún na Meán; Irene Roche Laguna,Head of Unit, Coordination and Regulatory Compliance, DG CONNECT; and Dr Eileen Culloty, Deputy Director of the DCU Institute for Future Media, Democracy, and Society.

The panel included **John Evans,** Digital Services Commissioner, Coimisiún na Meán; **Dr Eileen Culloty,** Deputy Director of the DCU Institute for Future Media, Democracy, and Society (FUJO) and Coordinator of the Ireland Hub of the European Digital Media Observatory; **Professor Natali Helberger**, Distinguished University Professor of Law and Digital Technology, University of Amsterdam, and Member of the project team at the Digital Services Act Observatory; and **Irene Roche Laguna**, Head of Unit, Coordination and Regulatory Compliance, DG CONNECT, European Commission.

The ERN is composed of Coimisiún na Meán, the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), the Central Bank of Ireland, the National Transport Authority (NTA), and the Commission for Aviation Regulation.

Getting Ireland AI-Ready

The IIEA collaborated again with the Economic Regulators Network (ERN) in *Getting Ireland AI-Ready* to explore both the opportunities and risks of AI for people and firms in Ireland. This expert panel discussed how Ireland can ensure that AI is harnessed in a safe manner and is aligned with fundamental rights and European values.

A keynote speech by **Minister Niamh Smyth**, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with special responsibility for Trade Promotion, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, opened the event. The panellists were **Jean Carberry,** Assistant Secretary, Digital, EU and Climate Programmes, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE); **Dr Harshvardhan Pandit**, Assistant Professor, Dublin City University; **Trevor Fitzpatrick**, Head of Risk Analysis, Data Analytics & Reporting (RADAR) Division, Central Bank of Ireland; and **Noelle Doody**, Managing Director for Data and AI, Accenture.



Minister Niamh Smyth, Minister of State at DETE; Joyce O'Connor, Chair of the IIEA's Digital Group; Jean Carberry, Assistant Secretary, Digital, EU and Climate Programmes at DETE; Dr Harshvardhan Pandit, Assistant Professor, DCU; Noelle Doody, Managing Director for Data and AI, Accenture; and Trevor Fitzpatrick, RADAR Division, Central Bank of Ireland.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE – THE CHALLENGES AHEAD CONFERENCE



International trade – the challenges ahead

Chairs: David O'Sullivan, Dan O'Brien, and Pat Ivory

Researcher: Ciarán O'Donohoe

On 3 October 2025, the IIEA and the European Commission organised a conference on trade and economic security.

The conference opened with a keynote address by **Taoiseach Micheál Martin**. This was followed by a fireside chat with **Tánaiste Simon Harris** and the European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, **Maroš Šefčovič.**

The first panel examined the relationship between trade, competitiveness, and economic security. It assessed the European Commission's progress in these areas and explored how EU leaders and Member States might strengthen trade's contribution to Europe's competitiveness and economic resilience.

Panellists included **Frances Ruane**, Chair of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council; **Peter Sandler**, Director for Economic Security, DG TRADE, European Commission; **Úna Fitzpatrick**, Director of Technology Ireland, Ibec; and **Andy Bounds**, EU Correspondent at the Financial Times.

The second panel focused on Europe's global partners and the nature of Europe's trade and investment relationships with economies around the world, including China, the Mercosur countries, and the United States.

The discussion featured **Loretta O'Sullivan**, Chief Economist at EY Ireland; **Kozo Saiki**, Special Adviser to the Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry for European Affairs; **Suzanne Lynch**, Brussels Bureau Chief at Bloomberg; and **Rupert Schlegelmilch**, Visiting Professor at the College of Europe and former Director in DG TRADE at the European Commission.

The conference concluded with an address by **David O'Sullivan**, former EU Ambassador to the United States and former Director-General of DG TRADE.


European Commission
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
REPRESENTATION IN IRELAND


International trade –
the challenges ahead
3 October 2025, Dublin


ÉIRE IRELAND
ÉIRE IRELAND
ÉIRE IRELAND





Digital Fairness and the Digital Economy: Can Europe strike the right balance?

In the event Digital Fairness and the Digital Economy: Can Europe strike the right balance?, organised by the IIEA with the support of Google, an expert panel assessed the EU's efforts to balance online consumer protection with digital competitiveness. The panel particularly discussed the possible role of the forthcoming Digital Fairness Act and how this might interact with the simplification agenda. The panel included **Vanessa Hartley**, Head of Google Ireland and Vice President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa for Large Customer Sales; **Síona Ryan**, Director of Digital and Data Regulation, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC); **Marco Pierani**, Director of Public Affairs and Media Relations, Euroconsumers; and **Regina Doherty MEP**.



Vanessa Hartley, Head of Google Ireland and Vice President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa for Large Customer Sales; Síona Ryan, Director of Digital and Data Regulation at CCPC; Marco Pierani, Director of Public Affairs and Media Relations, Euroconsumers and Regina Doherty MEP.

Securing Ireland's Competitiveness Through Digital Infrastructure

In collaboration with Vodafone Ireland, the event *Securing Ireland's Competitiveness Through Digital Infrastructure* brought together an expert panel representing government, industry, regulatory authorities, and academia to discuss how digital infrastructure and high-speed connectivity are fundamental to innovation, economic competitiveness, and the wellbeing of Ireland's population. The panel discussed how investment and government policy can promote Ireland's digital infrastructure and connectivity to secure the country's competitiveness.

The event began with a keynote address by **Minister Patrick O'Donovan**, Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport, followed by a panel discussion with **Joakim Reiter**, Chief External and Corporate Affairs Officer at Vodafone Group; **Garrett Blaney**, Chair and Commissioner at the Commission for Communications Regulation; and **Dr Frances Ruane**, Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council.



Joakim Reiter, Chief External and Corporate Affairs Officer at Vodafone Group; Dr Orlaigh Quinn, former Secretary General of DETE and IIEA Board Member; Sabrina Casalta, CEO, Vodafone Ireland; Patrick O'Donovan TD, Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport; Garrett Blaney, Chair and Commissioner at the Commission for Communications Regulation; Dr Frances Ruane, Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council; and Alex White SC, IIEA Director General.

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

Researcher: Ciarán O'Donohoe

Chairs: Various

The 2025 Economics and Finance Programme at the IIEA covered three main themes: regional economic outlooks, central banking, and the global economic system.

Regional Economic Outlooks

In February 2025, the IIEA hosted a panel discussion to mark the launch of the *OECD Economic Survey of Ireland 2025*. The survey provides a detailed analysis of economic developments and key structural challenges, as well as policy recommendations in these areas, including housing. At the end of March 2025, **Professor Stephen Millard**, Interim Director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR), gave a presentation on the outlook for the UK economy. This took place in light of the Chancellor's Spring Statement and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast.



Professor Stephen Millard, Interim Director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

The IIEA also welcomed the Minister of Finance of Greece, **Kyriakos Pierrakakis**, in December 2025 for a fireside chat, where he discussed how the EU could unlock new sources of economic growth and what the digitalisation of the EU economy means for the future.



Mary C. Daly, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

Central Banking

Towards the end of February 2025, Gabriel Makhlouf, Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, delivered a keynote address in which he offered perspectives on monetary policy, fiscal stability, and future economic priorities for Ireland and the euro area.

Central bank independence was the topic of a webinar with **Dr Leah Rose Ely Downey**, Junior Research Fellow at St John's College, Cambridge University, who argued that, in a healthy democracy, the balance of power over money creation matters.

Later in the year, **Mary C. Daly**, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, visited the IIEA, where she discussed the costs and benefits of conducting policy under different regimes.

Global Economic System

In June 2025, the IIEA hosted a webinar with **Kenneth Rogoff**, Maurits C. Boas Professor of Economics at Harvard University, who discussed the challenges facing the US dollar from competitors such as cryptocurrencies and the Chinese yuan. He also examined how the current US Administration's policies are affecting its role in the world economy.

In an online address, **Cecilia Malmström**, former European Commissioner for Trade, discussed the impact of US trade policy on Europe and the wider world, along with the effect US tariffs may have on how other countries conduct trade in the future.



Cecilia Malmström, former European Commissioner for Trade.

CLIMATE AND ENERGY

Chair: Various
Researcher: Dr Matthew O'Neill

The IIEA's Climate and Energy programme for 2025 provided insights into a broad spectrum of climate- and energy-related policy issues, including sustainable agriculture and food security; the transition to renewable energy; and international cooperation to combat climate change.



David Luke, Professor in Practice and Strategic Director at the London School of Economics Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa.

On the theme of sustainable agriculture and food security, the programme commenced with the event *How Africa Eats: Trade, Food Security and Climate Risks,* featuring **David Luke**, Professor in Practice and Strategic Director at the London School of Economics Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa. Professor Luke discussed his publication on the long-term challenges of climate change and trade barriers for food security in Africa, which persist despite Africa being home to a vast amount of arable land.

At the event *Land Use Change in New Zealand and its Intersection with Climate Change Policy*, **Simon Upton**, New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, discussed New Zealand's climate policies and how the distortions that have resulted pose significant challenges for the future of both land use and emissions reductions.

The IIEA also welcomed **Andrew Muir**, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland, to speak on *Delivering Environmental Improvement in Northern Ireland*. Minister Muir discussed policies and programmes to protect the environment, with a particular focus on agriculture.

Another significant theme of the programme was renewable energy. **Fintan Slye**, Chief Executive Officer of the National Energy System Operator (NESO), spoke at the event *Preparing for a Cleaner Future: UK–Ireland Cooperation on Energy Challenges*, where he outlined the UK Government's plan to integrate clean power by 2030 and the potential for energy cooperation between the UK and Ireland.

At the event *The Role of Sustainable Hydropower within the Energy Transition*, **Eddie Rich**, Chief Executive Officer of the International Hydropower Association (IHA), discussed the lack of prioritisation of hydropower as a renewable energy source despite the low-carbon electricity and flexible storage it provides.

The programme also assessed developments in international cooperation to combat climate change.In *Key Outcomes from COP30*, **Dr Simon Evans**, Deputy Editor and Senior Policy Editor at Carbon Brief, discussed the UN climate summit, COP30, which took place in Belém, Brazil, and its outcomes.



Dr Simon Evans, Deputy Editor and Senior Policy Editor at Carbon Brief.

PATHWAYS
Ireland's Agricultural Future

Pathways: Ireland's Agricultural Future

The IIEA project *Pathways: Ireland's Agricultural Future* commenced in late 2024 and was supported by the European Climate Foundation to explore the future of sustainable agriculture in Ireland.

In 2025, the paper *Farm to Finance: The Processor-Farmer Nexus in Ireland's Agricultural Climate Transition* was launched with an expert panel that included the author, **Dr Matt O'Neill**, IIEA Climate Project Lead; **Ailbhe Gerrard**, Founder of Brookfield Farm; **Dale Crammond**, Director ofMeat Industry Ireland, Ibec; **Alan Matthews** (Moderator), Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin; **Tadhg Buckley**, Director of Policy and Chief Economist at the Irish Farmers' Association; and **Frances McDonnell**, Deputy News Editor with Agriland.



Matt O'Neill, IIEA Climate Project Lead and Alan Matthews, Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin.

A second paper, *Designing Agricultural Climate Policy in Ireland: From 2030 to Net Zero*, by **Professor Alan Matthews**, Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin, and panellists **Niamh Garvey**, Senior Policy Analyst at the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), and **Kevin Hanrahan**, Head of the Rural Economy and Development Programme at Teagasc. The paper examined the strategic and institutional challenges involved in defining appropriate long-term targets for agricultural emissions in Ireland and explored the ambiguities and trade-offs in setting 2040 and 2050 targets. It particularly examined how to introduce an agricultural emissions trading scheme effectively.

The *Pathways* programme also examined lessons Ireland

could learn from its European peers in the event *Denmark's Green Tripartite Agreement: A New Model for Ireland's Agriculture and Climate Policy?* The panel discussed the processes of designing, implementing, and adapting agricultural climate policies that ensure both rural prosperity and the advancement of environmental objectives.

The panel included **Johannes Flatz**, Climate Analyst in CONCITO's programme on food and consumption; **Erik Jørgensen**, Chief Consultant, Climate & Energy, Danish Agriculture & Food Council; **Maria Snell**, Senior Policy Executive at Macra na Feirme; and **Ailbhe Gerrard**, Founder of Brookfield Farm.



Professor Alan Matthews, Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin; Niamh Garvey, Senior Policy Analyst at the National Economic and Social Council (NESC); and Kevin Hanrahan, Head of the Rural Economy and Development Programme at Teagasc.

Transforming Ireland's Gas Networks for Net-Zero

Researcher: Cian Fitzgerald and Ciarán O'Donoghue

Chair: Kathriona Devereux

In partnership with Gas Networks Ireland, the IIEA organised the panel discussion *Transforming Ireland's Gas Networks for Net-Zero.*



Kathriona Devereux, Moderator; Edwina Nyhan, Director of Strategy and Regulation at Gas Networks Ireland; Tom O'Brien, Group Chief Executive of Nephin Energy; Katy McNeil, Head of Scottish Government Office Ireland; and Charlie Brophy, Principal Officer, Electricity Storage and Hydrogen Policy, Department of Climate of Energy and the Environment.

At this event, an expert panel discussed how Ireland's ambition of achieving net zero by 2050 will require a fundamental transformation of its energy systems, including its gas network. The panel particularly examined the role that the greater use of renewable gases could play in facilitating this transformation. It also discussed the long-term potential benefits for Irish society and the wider economy that this transformation might yield.

The panellists were **Edwina Nyhan**, Director of Strategy and Regulation at Gas Networks Ireland; **Tom O'Brien**, Group Chief Executive of Nephin Energy; **Katy McNeil**, Head of Scottish Government Office, Ireland; **Charlie Brophy**, Principal Officer, Electricity Storage and Hydrogen Policy, Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment; and **Barbara Jinks**, Director of READY4H2.

REthink Energy

ESB SERIES

Researcher: Emma Richardson

Chair: Various

The 2025 *REthink Energy* series, organised in partnership with ESB, provided a platform for discussion on the policy, economic, and social dimensions of the energy transition. Across 2025, the series connected global and European climate and energy strategy with the practical delivery challenges of decarbonisation. The series also focused on building public trust, securing community consent for infrastructure, strengthening energy security, and accelerating electrification in transport.



Brian Motherway, Head of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Inclusive Transitions at the International Energy Agency; with Alex White SC, IIEA Director General.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

In the first event of 2025, **Brian Motherway**, Head of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Inclusive Transitions at the International Energy Agency, delivered an address, *A Decade After the Paris Agreement: Global Progress and Challenges in Clean Energy Transitions*. He reflected on progress since COP21, while emphasising that investment remains uneven and that accelerating change will depend on policies that are inclusive, equitable, and supported by citizens.

Later, in April, **Kurt Vandenberghe**, Director-General of DG CLIMA at the European Commission, spoke on *Europe's Climate Goals: An Agenda for Prosperity and Security,* arguing that delivering on the European Green Deal is not only an environmental imperative but also a strategic agenda for modernising Europe.



Professor Emily Shuckburgh CBE, Professor of Environmental Data Science at the University of Cambridge.

For the third event of the year, **Professor Emily Shuckburgh CBE**, Director of Cambridge Zero and Professor of Environmental Data Science at the University of Cambridge, delivered a keynote address as part of *Challenging Climate Myths: Science, Media, and Public Trust*, followed by a fireside chat with **Dr Eileen Culloty**, Assistant Professor at DCU and Deputy Director of the DCU Institute for Future Media, Democracy, and Society.

Following this, *Power to the People: Engaging Communities in Energy Projects* brought together a panel chaired by **Dr Paul Deane**, Senior Lecturer in Clean Energy Futures at University College Cork, with contributions from **Dr Merethe Dotterud Leiren**, Research Director at CICERO; **Dr Cian Desmond**, Floating Wind Project Director at ESB; **Seán Sherlock**, Strategic Policy Advisor for Public Affairs and former Minister of State and TD; and **Dr Amy Fahy**, Assistant Professor at Maynooth University. The discussion highlighted practical strategies for consultation, transparency, and communicating benefits, and examined how trust and long-term relationships can help secure consent for infrastructure projects, from offshore wind to onshore grid development.



Dr Cian Desmond, Floating Wind Project Director at ESB; Dr Merethe Dotterud Leiren, Research Director at CICERO and Dr Paul Deane, Senior Lecturer in Clean Energy Futures at University College Cork.

Energy security and the delivery challenge returned as core themes for the 2025 series. In his keynote address, **Chris Stark**, Head of the UK Government's Mission for Clean Power in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, discussed *Clean Power by 2030: The UK's Path to Energy Security and Net Zero.*

The series concluded with *The Future of Transport: Powering Ireland's e-Mobility Transition*. **Dr Euan McTurk**, Consultant Battery Electrochemist at Plug Life Consulting Ltd, alongside **Professor Brian Caulfield**, Professor in Transportation at Trinity College Dublin, and **Aoife O'Grady**, Head of Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland at the Department of Transport, discussed developments in battery technology, the scaling of charging and grid infrastructure, and the role of policy, innovation, and consumer behaviour in accelerating Ireland's transition towards a cleaner and more resilient transport network.

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS LECTURE SERIES

Chairs: David Donoghue, Alex White, Tom Arnold, and Susan Murphy

IIEA Researcher: Tara Kukec

IIEA Senior Adviser and Project Lead: Jill Donoghue

The *Development Matters* lecture series is a high-level speaker programme supported by Irish Aid in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The series brings together global thought leaders, heads of international organisations, and representatives of agencies from the UN system, international financial institutions, the EU, and the OECD to share their insights on critical development issues and bring them to the attention of a wider audience. Each speaker is introduced by **Michael Gaffey**, Director General of Irish Aid, whose remarks deepen understanding of contemporary development challenges and the role of Irish Aid in building a more sustainable world.

The 2025 *Development Matters* series celebrated 50 years of Irish Aid. The programme featured nine distinguished speakers addressing themes such as human rights; climate and development; climate mobility; refugees; trade partnerships; technological innovation and development; and poverty reduction.

Ireland's International Development Assistance Priorities

The annual speech by the Minister of State for International Development and the Diaspora is a highlight of the IIEA's *Development Matters* lecture series. In 2025, **Neale Richmond**, Minister of State for International Development and the Diaspora, presented Ireland's development priorities for 2026 in the challenging context of dramatic cuts in overseas development assistance by major donor countries; humanitarian catastrophes in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine, and elsewhere; and the impacts of conflict and climate change on migration. He assured the audience that the Irish Government remained firmly committed to maintaining and, where possible, increasing its official development assistance (ODA).

Human Rights and Refugees

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, delivered a keynote address entitled *Diplomacy by Other Means: Humanitarianism in a Time of Crisis*. A complementary speech by **Volker Türk**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the topic *Human Rights: Healing Our Fractured World*, was organised for this programme but delivered within the context of another IIEA programme. Both events reflected on the importance of human rights and respect for international humanitarian law in the context of ongoing conflicts worldwide.

Technological Innovation and Development

Dr Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), addressed the IIEA via webinar on *From Early Warnings to Lasting Resilience: Strengthening Global Preparedness Through Science and Innovation.* Dr Saulo, a former humanitarian aid and disaster risk management practitioner, emphasised the positive impact that data-driven early warning weather systems can have in mitigating climate-driven disasters in farming communities in Africa and helping to build sustainable resilience.

AI and Development

The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), **Doreen Bogdan-Martin**, delivered a keynote speech on *Connecting the Unconnected and Leaving No One Behind: How Digital Technologies and AI Advance Development*. She argued that collaboration in technological innovation is essential to achieving universal connectivity.

Global Partnerships

Johan Borgstam, EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, provided insights into the European Union's approach to development in the region in a speech entitled *Engagement and Partnership with Africa's Great Lakes Region: A Strategic Priority for the EU?*

Palestine and the Role of the International Community in Protecting International Humanitarian Law

Dr Ammar Al-Dwaik, Director General of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine, and **Dina Buttu**, Commissioner of the Palestinian Commission for Human Rights, participated in a panel discussion on *Palestine and the Protection of Human Rights: The Role of the International Community Now.*

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS









Photos from Top: Neale Richmond TD, Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora.

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Dina Buttu, Commissioner of the Palestinian Commission for Human Rights.

Aid and Trade

A contribution by **Dan O'Brien**, Chief Economist at the IIEA, to a Department of Foreign Affairs partnership conference on the French-Irish Mission Programme (FIMiP), attended by 18 trade officials from developing countries working at the World Trade Organization, focused on how better to integrate developing economies into the global trading system, drawing on Ireland's experience within the Single Market.

Combating Poverty and Leaving No One Behind

Luis Felipe López-Calva, Global Director for Poverty and Equity at the World Bank, delivered a lecture entitled *Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024: Pathways Out of the Polycrisis*. He argued that, since the pandemic, extreme poverty has become increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and praised Ireland for prioritising fragile countries that are furthest behind.

SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAMME

Researcher: Various

Chair: Various

In 2025, the IIEA Social Policy Programme covered some of the key themes of social policy in the EU: living and working conditions; the relationship between fiscal policy and social policy; and the EU's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research; Tadas Leončikas, Head of the Employment Unit, Eurofound; Barbara Gerstenberger, Head of the Working Life Unit, Eurofound; Massimiliano Mascherini, Head of the Social Policies Unit; and Mary McCaughey, Head of Information and Communication, Eurofound.

In the event *Living and Working in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe's Social Agenda,* the IIEA collaborated with Eurofound to organise an event that assessed recent developments in the world of work. The expert panel, comprising Eurofound's **Barbara Gerstenberger**, Head of the Working Life Unit; **Tadas Leončikas**, Head of the Employment Unit; and **Massimiliano Mascherini**, Head of the Social Policies Unit, assessed the challenges for EU social policy in relation to working conditions and job quality. The panellists also examined recent developments such as teleworking, AI, and the rising cost of living and housing. The event marked the 50th anniversary of Eurofound, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. In the event *Constitutional Change and the Rise of Fiscal Discipline in Europe: Ripple Effects on Fundamental Social Rights*, the IIEA welcomed **Dr Maria Kotson**, a Postdoctoral Researcher at Princeton University. Dr Kotson examined how the rise of fiscal policy constraints in Europe has had implications for European social policy and social rights.



Dr Maria Kotson, Postdoctoral Researcher at Princeton University.

Finally, in the event *Shaping Inclusive Futures: The EU's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Global Implications*, **Inmaculada Placencia Porrero**, Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, outlined the *EU's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030* and discussed the achievements of the strategy and the challenges it faces.

GLOBAL GATEWAYS PROGRAMME

Researcher: Heather Burke

Chair: Various

In 2025, the IIEA launched a series of events exploring the EU's Global Gateway policy. This landmark EU initiative promotes EU relations with other regions of the world, with a particular focus on projects relating to trade, technology, infrastructure, and communications.

The IIEA welcomed **Eduards Stiprais**, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, to discuss *The Meaning of the EU's Strategic Partnership with Central Asia*. The event

followed the first-ever EU-Central Asia Summit, which took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and examined the importance of the EU's relationship with Central Asia.



Dr Sonali Chowdhry, a trade economist based at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin).

In another event focusing on Asia, the EU's relationship with one of its most important partners was explored in *EU-India Relations: Cooperation, Connectivity, and a Free Trade Future?* The event featured **Dr Sonali Chowdhry**, a trade economist based at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) and the Kiel Institute for the World Economy; and **Dr Amitendu Palit**, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead at the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. The discussion examined the challenges and opportunities associated with a potential EU-India free trade agreement.

With a thematic rather than geographical focus, the event *Beyond Borders: The European Green Deal and Implications for the Global South* saw **Dr Joana Portugal Pereira**, Assistant Professor at Instituto Superior Técnico, ULisboa, and Research Fellow at the Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research (IN+), address the IIEA. Dr Pereira explored the implications of the EU's Green Deal beyond the Union's borders, particularly for the Global South, and examined ways in which the EU could adopt a more equitable approach.



Dr Joana Portugal Pereira, Assistant Professor at Instituto Superior Técnico.

HEALTH POLICY PROGRAMME AND IIEA PARTNERSHIP WITH JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Chairs: Various

Researcher: Emma Richardson

The IIEA organised a three-part event series, in partnership with Johnson & Johnson, exploring how Ireland can develop a national life sciences strategy that supports economic development and public health. The series explored how to embed the life sciences sector within Ireland's wider economic strategy, how health-system priorities can shape innovation, and how Ireland's ambitions can align with emerging EU initiatives.

The first event, *Developing a Life Sciences Vision for Ireland: Lessons from Europe on Economic Strategy,* considered how Ireland can position itself as a global hub for the sector and what can be learned from European peers regarding competitiveness, investment, and preparing for future waves of innovation. The discussion featured **Michael Lohan**, CEO, IDA Ireland; **Diana Arsovic Nielsen**, CEO, Danish Life Sciences Cluster; **Professor Mark Ferguson**, former Director General of SFI and Rapporteur and Lead Author for the European Commission High-Level Group evaluating Horizon Europe; and **Jenni Nordborg**, Director of International Affairs at Lif and former National Coordinator for Life Sciences in Sweden. The event was moderated by **Bryan Dobson**.



Bryan Dobson, Moderator; Michael Lohan, CEO, IDA Ireland; Diana Arsovic Nielsen, CEO Danish Life Sciences Cluster; Professor Mark Ferguson, former Director General of SFI and Jenni Nordborg, Director of International Affairs at Lif.

The second event, *Developing a Life Sciences Vision for Ireland: Insights from Europe on Health Innovation*, approached strategy through a healthcare lens, focusing on the case for coordinated government action and how aligning health policy with cross-sectoral strategy can deliver benefits for patients and the economy. Panellists included **Professor Mary Horgan**, Chief Medical

Officer, Department of Health; **Ann Van Gysel**, CEO, Biovia, Belgium; **Dr Niklas Blomberg**, Executive Director, Innovative Health Initiative; **Gwynne Morley**, General Manager, IQVIA Ireland; and **Ronan Glynn**, EY Ireland Health Sector Leader and former Deputy Chief Medical Officer, with former Minister and TD **Richard Bruton** moderating.



Richard Bruton, Moderator; Gwynne Morley, General Manager, IQVIA Ireland; Dr Ronan Glynn, EY Ireland Health Sector Leader and former Deputy Chief Medical Officer; Ann Van Gysel, CEO, Biovia, Belgium; Alex White SC, IIEA Director General; Professor Mary Horgan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health; and Brita O'Reilly, Market Access and Government Affairs Director, Johnson & Johnson.

The third event, *Developing a Life Sciences Vision for Ireland: The EU Agenda*, examined how Ireland can position its national strategy in the context of the European Commission's 2025 Strategy for European Life Sciences and other new EU initiatives, including efforts to strengthen competitiveness, research capacity, and the innovation ecosystem. The panel brought together **Pilar Aguar Fernandez**, Director for People: Health and Society, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission; **Anouk de Vroey**, Head of Government Affairs & Policy, Johnson & Johnson EMEA; **Muiris O'Connor**, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health; and **Darrin Morrissey**, CEO, NIBRT, moderated by Frances Fitzgerald.

VIEWS FROM THE CAPITAL

Chairs: Various

Researchers: Grace O'Sullivan and Emma Richardson

The *Views from the Capital* programme brought first-hand analysis from across Europe, highlighting how national debates shape the European Union.

The programme began with an address by **Dr Pascal Boniface**, Founding Director of the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS). In his address, Dr Boniface examined how France is positioning itself within a changing global landscape.

In May 2025, **Johannes Lindner**, Co-Director of the Jacques Delors Centre at the Hertie School, Berlin, offered a unique perspective on the evolving policy landscape in Berlin and Brussels.

Later that month, **Dr Nicolai von Ondarza**, Head of the EU/Europe Research Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and Associate Fellow at Chatham House, explored Berlin's objectives regarding EU policy, defence, and transatlantic relations, as well as its coalition-building strategies with France, Poland, the United Kingdom, and smaller Member States such as Ireland.

At the end of May, the IIEA hosted an online event with **Professor Cristian Preda**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Bucharest, and **Dr Claudia Bădulescu**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. The discussion examined the implications of Romania's election results for its domestic political landscape, foreign policy, and role within the European Union.

Later in the year, the IIEA welcomed **Derek Scally**, Berlin Correspondent for The Irish Times, for an address reflecting on the German federal election of February 2025 and what it revealed about Germany's changing political landscape.



Derek Scally, Berlin Correspondent for The Irish Times.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

IIEA INSIGHTS SERIES

Chair: Dan O'Brien

The 2025 *IIEA Insights* series, an IIEA members-only programme hosted by IIEA Chief Economist **Dan O'Brien,** featured conversations with global experts discussing pressing political and economic issues, from defence to European competitiveness. As a fortnightly webinar series, *IIEA Insights* provided audiences with access to timely and expert analysis from leading academic and policy thinkers. Edited podcasts of the events were subsequently made publicly available on Spotify, YouTube, and other IIEA streaming channels.

Across the year, the *IIEA Insights* series reflected the increasingly complex and interconnected nature of global affairs. Discussions addressed major geopolitical developments, including the evolving international security environment, transatlantic relations, EU policy priorities, and global economic shifts. The series also provided a forum for informed debate on domestic and European economic performance, competitiveness, and regulatory challenges.



David O'Sullivan, EU Sanctions Envoy.

The year began with a discussion featuring **Jakub Janda**, Director of Czech think tank, the European Values Center for Security Policy; **Mark Mellett**, former Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces; and **Niels Pultz**, retired Danish Diplomat and former Ambassador to Dublin, who explored aspects of current and future defence policy in Ireland, other European countries, and the EU. This focus on security and defence continued throughout the year, notably with contributions from **David O'Sullivan**, EU Sanctions Envoy; and **Shashank Joshi**, Defence Editor at The Economist, who examined sanctions policy, the war in Ukraine, and broader geopolitical risks.

Economic policy analysis was a central theme of the 2025 Insights series. Contributions from **Tom McDonnell**, Co-Director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute; **Allie Renison**, Associate Director at SEC Newgate UK; and **Fabian Zuleeg**, Chief Executive and Chief Economist at European Policy Centre, explored *Trump, Tariffs, and the Future of Transatlantic Trade*. **Brad Setser**, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and former Senior US Treasury Official, provided expert insights into *The Global Impact of US Economic Policies*. In *The Economic Outlook at Mid-Year*, **Dan O'Brien,** IIEA Chief Economist presented his own analysis of key macroeconomic developments affecting Ireland and the wider European economy as it moved into the second half of 2025.



Dan O'Brien, IIEA Chief Economist.

The *IIEA Insights* series also convened prominent voices from business, diplomacy, and academia to discuss globalisation, investment, and transatlantic relations. Events featuring speakers such as **Mike Beary**, Chair of the Governing Authority of University College Dublin; Courtney Fingar, Founder of Fingar Direct Investment; **Joseph Quinlan**, Senior Fellow with the Transatlantic Leadership Network; and **Anna Scally**, Sector Leader on the Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT) Industries and a member of KPMG's Global TMT Strategic Steering Group, examined how corporate America is responding to a changing US political and economic policymaking environment.

Political developments and democratic trends were another key theme. Discussions involving **Larry Donnelly**, Founder and Director of the Clinical Legal Education programme at the University of Galway's School of Law; **Brian Jensen**, former Head of the Office of Political and Economic Affairs at the American Embassy in Dublin; **Niamh King**, Director of the Aspen Strategy Group and the Aspen Security Forum; and **Fergal O'Brien**, Executive Director at Ibec, explored political dynamics in the United States and Europe. Another webinar featuring **Finn McRedmond**, Commissioning Editor and Staff Writer at the New Statesman; **Thomas Prosser**, Professor of Political Economy at Cardiff University; and **David Goodhart**, Head of the Demography, Immigration, and Integration Unit at Policy Exchange, discussed *Is Britain Broken?* exploring the reasons for Britain's decline and what is needed to reverse it.

Later in the year, the series continued to address pressing geopolitical and policy questions. A discussion featuring **Laurence Norman**, Reporter at *The Wall Street Journal*; **Rory Montgomery**, former ambassador and Political Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs; **Michael O'Sullivan**, former Chief Investment Officer at Credit Suisse Wealth, and Senior Adviser at WestExec; and **Paola Rivetti**, Associate Professor in Politics and International Relations at the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, focused on the latest conflict in the Middle East and its consequences for the region, Europe, Ireland, and the global economy. A session with **Barbara Nolan**, former Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland, offered reflections on her decades-long career in the EU civil service.

Further expert perspectives were provided by **Ilan Goldenberg**, Senior Vice President and Chief Policy Officer at J Street and **Eugene Kontorovich**, Senior Research Fellow in The Heritage Foundation and Professor at the George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School, on the Occupied Territories Bill. **Juan Mejino-López**, Economist at Bruegel and **Barry Lunn**, founder and CEO of Proviso, spoke with Dan O'Brien on *European Defence: Economic and Business Perspectives*. **Thomas Wright**, Senior Fellow, Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy and Technology at the Brookings Institution and former Special Assistant to President Joe Biden, discussed *Ireland-US Relations in Crisis?*

The series concluded with a webinar on *New Year Economic Outlook*, featuring **Alan Barrett**, Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI); **Daniel Kral**, Lead Economist within the macroeconomics forecasting division of Oxford Economics; and **Michelle Norris**, Professor at School of Applied Social Science and Director of the Geary Institute for Public Policy at University College Dublin.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

Chair: Cian Fitzgerald

The *Young Professionals Network* (YPN) held numerous events in 2025, discussing a wide range of policy issues.

In the event *An Evening with Lieutenant General Seán Clancy, Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces*, Lieutenant General Seán Clancy discussed the role of the Irish Defence Forces in peacekeeping and the future challenges of the security environment.

In another event, **Feargal O'Rourke**, Chair of IDA Ireland and Chair of the IIEA, discussed concerns regarding Europe's competitiveness and the impact of global economic volatility on Ireland.

In the event *YPN with Tony Connelly*, the IIEA welcomed **Tony Connelly**, Europe Editor at RTÉ, to discuss his work as a journalist and wider developments in European affairs.

In the final YPN event of 2025, the IIEA hosted the Christmas special, *Young Professionals Network: The IIEA Looks to 2026*. The discussion focused on the priorities of Ireland's forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK









Photos from Top:

Feargal O'Rourke, IDA Ireland and Chair of the IIEA.

Barry Colfer, IIEA Director of Research; Emma Richardson, IIEA Researcher and panellist; and Cian Fitzgerald, IIEA Researcher and YPN Chair.

Tony Connelly, Europe Editor at RTÉ with Moderator and IIEA Researcher, Emma Richardson.

CULTURE NIGHT 2025

For the first time, the IIEA participated in Culture Night, Ireland's annual celebration of culture, opening its doors to the public on 19 September 2025. The event reflected the shared values of Culture Night and the IIEA: openness, discovery, participation, and the free exchange of ideas.

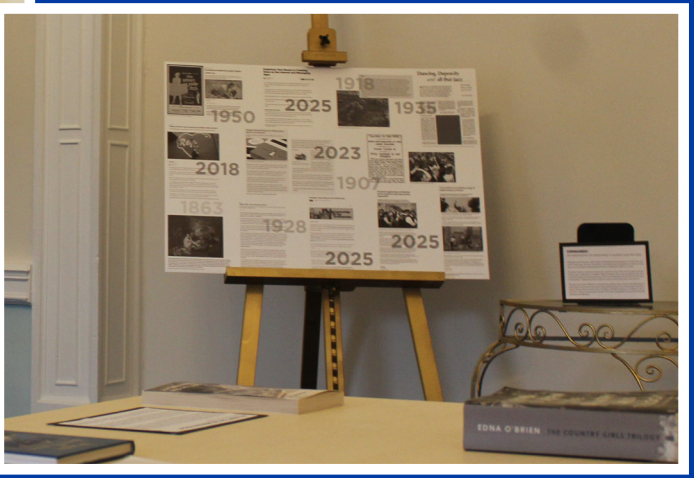
Under the theme *Think About It: Sharing Ideas for a Better World*, visitors were welcomed into the Institute's historic headquarters to explore the importance of sharing ideas, the state of censorship around the world, and how the ability to share positive ideas cannot be taken for granted.

The evening culminated in a lively public discussion chaired by Alex White SC, IIEA Director General, and featuring Eileen Dunne, Former RTÉ News Presenter and Chair of the European Federation of Journalists; Mark Henry, Author of *In Fact: An Optimist's Guide to Ireland at 100*; and IIEA researcher, Heather Burke. The conversation explored the value of open dialogue, the challenges facing freedom of expression globally, and Ireland's journey towards a more open and inclusive culture of debate.









2025 PUBLICATIONS

Poland: A Lodestar for the EU?
Heather Burke
20 January 2025

From Policy to Pasture: Bridging the Gap Between Climate Targets and Irish Agricultural Realities
Alan Matthews & Matthew G. O'Neill
13 February 2025

German-Irish relations under the third Joint Plan of Action for Enhanced Bilateral and EU Cooperation
Dr. Barry Colfer
26 February 2025

Labour's first 200+ days
Dr. Barry Colfer
27 February 2025

Rule of Law in Europe: Perspectives from the CJEU with Judge Eugene Regan
Heather Burke
27 February 2025

What's on Europe's Horizon?: Technologies, Trends, and Policies shaping Ireland's Future
Ciarán O'Donohoe
7 March 2025

European Democracy Shield Explored
Heather Burke
1 April 2025

Future-Proofing Cohesion Policy - the Glue that Binds the EU
Heather Burke
3 April 2025

An Overview of Sub-Regional Groupings in the EU
Dylan Casey Marshall
17 April 2025

New Syria and the Kurdish Dilemma: A New Chapter or the Same Old Story?
Loqman Radpey
6 May 2025

Assessing the Regulatory Process in a Rapidly Changing World
Tom Ferris
7 May 2025

Farm to Finance: The Processor-Farmer Nexus in Ireland's Agricultural Climate Transition
Matthew G. O'Neill
30 May 2025

Ireland, the Triple Lock and Military Neutrality
Ciaran Murphy
11 June 2025

European Democracy and the Free Press Imperative
Heather Burke
18 June 2025

The Moving Puzzle: Trump, Trade Tariffs and the Windsor Framework
Dr Sylvia de Mars & Prof. Colin Murray
19 June 2025

The Atlantic Four and the EU's Atlantic Area
Dylan Casey Marshall
24 June 2025

Designing Agricultural Climate Policy in Ireland from 2030 to Net Zero
Alan Matthews & Matthew G. O'Neill
30 June 2025

Unpacking the US Tariffs
Ciarán O'Donohoe
8 July 2025

A Decade After the Paris Agreement: Global Progress and Challenges in Clean Energy Transitions
Lillian Durden
21 July 2025

Europe's Climate Goals: An Agenda for Prosperity and Security
Lillian Durden
23 July 2025

Rule of Law in Europe: Perspectives from Civil Society - Liberties EU
Heather Burke
25 July 2025

Safeguarding Elections in Ireland and Across Europe in conversation with Judge Marie Baker, Chair of the Electoral Commission of Ireland
Dylan Casey Marshall
25 July 2025

30 Years of EU Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland: Insights from the Special EU Programmes Body
Gina McIntyre
5 August 2025

Developing a Life Sciences Vision for Ireland: Lessons from Europe on Economic Strategy
Emma Richardson
12 August 2025

2025 PUBLICATIONS

Charting the Course: Ireland's Ocean Diplomacy
Heather Burke
9 September 2025

A 28th Regime for 27 Member States - A New Corporate Legal Framework for Innovative Companies
Heather Burke
24 October 2025

Spain's Migration Model: Lessons for the EU?
Ana Martínez
29 October 2025

Ireland's EU Presidency: Perspectives from Minister Thomas Byrne
Dr. Barry Colfer
28 November 2025

Romania's 2024-2025 Presidential Election Crisis and Its Aftermath
Dr Claudia Bădulescu & Dr Barry Colfer
9 December 2025

The Evolution of Devolution in the United Kingdom
Emma Richardson
10 December 2025

From Nature to Nutrition: Building a Sustainable Food System for Ireland
Cian FitzGerald & Barry Colfer
10 December 2025

Secure Together - Enhancing Ireland's Security and Resilience in a Time of Heightened Geopolitical Risk
Cian FitzGerald & Barry Colfer
11 December 2025

The Misaligned Compass: How Europe's Quest for Digital Competitiveness and Sovereignty is Going Off Track
Seamus Allen
12 December 2025

'Turning Back the Clock': A Personal Reflection on the First European Council in Dublin
Noel Fahey
12 December 2025

The Transition to a New Digital Policy Agenda: EU Digital Policy 2025-2026
Seamus Allen
15 December 2025

Ending Homelessness: What the EU's Affordable Housing Plan Must Deliver
Ruth Owen & Catherine McGillycuddy
15 December 2025

The Price of American Retreat: USAID's Aid Freeze and Democratic Fragility in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans
Dr Claudia Bădulescu & Dr Barry Colfer
17 December 2025

Mosaic Neutrality: Irish Neutrality and the Return of Power Politics
Cian FitzGerald
17 December 2025

Data Centres in Ireland: The State of Play
Dr Matthew G. O'Neill
18 December 2025

The EU Review
Heather Burke; Dylan Casey Marshall; Tara Kukec; Ciarán O'Donohoe

Weekly EU news and policy update, published throughout 2025

COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

In 2025, the communications footprint of the IIEA continued to expand across digital platforms, social media, and mainstream media, reflecting a growing interest in the organisation's work. The year marked another step forward in strengthening our position as a leading voice in European and global policy debate, with consistently rising engagement and broadening reach.

Digital Presence

The IIEA website remained a central hub for audiences seeking event information and registration, publications, and event content. Pageviews continued their recent upward climb, reaching 341,000 in 2025, up from 295,000 the previous year and 225,000 in 2023. This continual growth demonstrates the IIEA's expanding visibility and the sustained appetite for its research and commentary.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Pageviews	341,000	295,000	225,000	250,000	263,000
Time Spent on site	20 seconds	19 seconds	32 seconds	45 seconds	50 seconds
Sessions	231,000	207,000	510,000	747,000	636,000
Users	188,000	144,000	186,000	191,000	204,000

User numbers rose again in 2025 after a temporary dip in 2024. This suggests that while audience behaviour has evolved toward more purposeful, focused visits, the overall interest in the IIEA's work remains strong and continues to grow.

Average time spent on the site declined to around 20 seconds, a trend mirrored across many organisations as mobile and search-driven browsing becomes more prominent. Rather than signalling disengagement, this shorter dwell time may reflect more decisive, task-oriented use of the website. Importantly, it comes alongside higher pageviews and increased user numbers, indicating that audiences are still finding what they need and accessing content with clear intent.

Content Engagement

The pattern of engagement across the website tells a story of broad and deep interest. Users explored a wide range of material, from major events to publications and topical research, showing a healthy diversity in what attracted attention.

Publication downloads rose slightly to **5,288**, building on the steady performance of recent years. The year's most visited and downloaded publication was *Strengthening the Single Market: An Overview of the Enrico Letta Report* by IIEA Researcher Ciarán O'Donohue.

In 2025, the most visited event on the IIEA website was *OECD Economic Survey of Ireland 2025 Launch*, featuring former Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohue in January 2025.

International interest also continued to grow. While Ireland remained the largest source of web traffic, China once again appeared among the top visiting countries for the third-year running, alongside the United States, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Germany, and Turkey.

Social Media

The IIEA continued to build strong and engaged communities across social media channels. LinkedIn experienced particularly notable growth, reaching **18,700** followers in 2025, an increase of **2,800** followers in a twelve-month period.

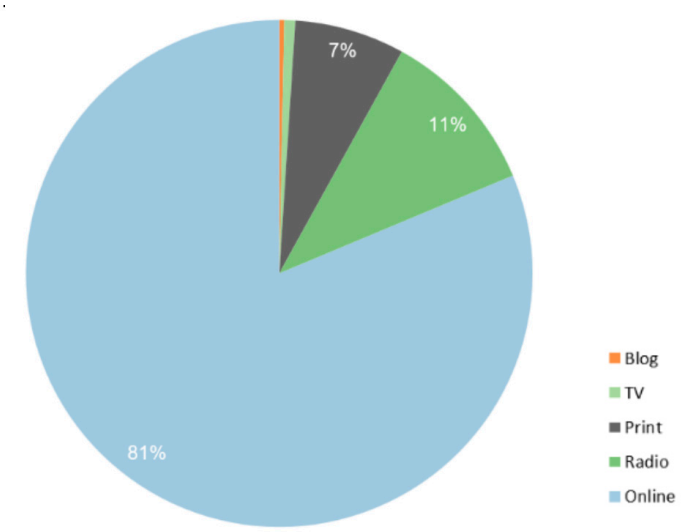
Social Media	Followers/ subscribers 2025	Followers/ subscribers 2024	Followers/ subscribers 2023	Followers/ subscribers 2022	Followers/ subscribers 2021
LinkedIn	18.7k	15.9k	14k	12k	10k
Twitter/X	16.8k	17.2	17.2k	16.7k	15.5k
Instagram	1.6k	1.4k	1.2k	1k	.8k
YouTube	17.7k	17.2k	16.3k	15.3k	5.5k

YouTube subscribers also continued to grow, reflecting the growing role of video in public communication. Instagram too continued its upward trend, helping to broaden the IIEA's reach to younger and more visually-driven audiences. Meanwhile, X (formerly Twitter) maintained a consistent follower base, continuing to serve as a platform for real-time dissemination of research and event content.

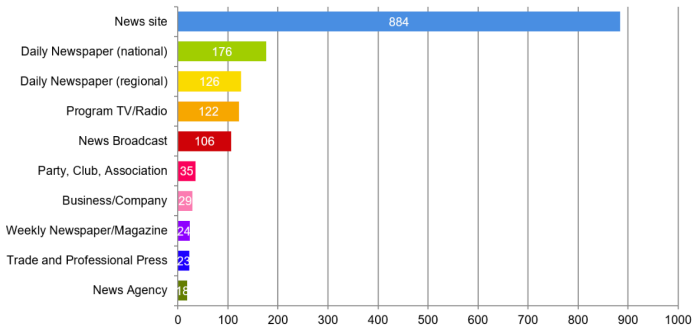
Together, these platforms contributed to a cohesive and growing digital ecosystem that supported the IIEA's outreach throughout the year.

Media Coverage

Media interest in the IIEA's work remained strong in 2025, demonstrating the strong policy impact and relevance of the IIEA's work. The IIEA featured in **1,578 news articles** across print, online, TV, and radio, and appeared in **1,068 media publications and broadcasts**, with a combined potential **reach of 353.7 million**.



Online outlets dominated coverage, accounting for 81% of all mentions, reflecting the broader shift in news consumption. Radio played a significant supporting role, with substantial engagement across national and regional stations, while print and television continued to provide high-value visibility.



The IIEA's analysis and events were carried across major Irish and international outlets, including The Irish Times, Independent.ie, RTÉ, BBC, Politico, Reuters, AFP, and MSN USA.

Coverage ranged from economic commentary and trade policy to climate, migration, and European governance with several events and publications generating extensive media attention.

The *OECD Economic Survey of Ireland 2025 Launch* in January 2025 with former Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohue participating generated significant broadcast coverage on RTÉ News Six One and Nine O'Clock News, Virgin Media's The Tonight Show and the online publication, The Currency.

The conference, *International Trade – the challenges ahead*, was organised in partnership with the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Liaison Office attracted wide coverage in the days leading up to, during, and after the event, with reporting across The Irish Times, Newstalk, RTÉ, The Guardian, Business Post, The Irish Examiner, and Irish Independent.

High-profile speakers throughout the year also helped drive consistent media interest. These included: Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Mary C. Daly, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco; Dr Carlo Masala, Chair for Security and Defence Studies at the University of the Bundeswehr Munich; Volker Türk, UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights; Michael McGrath, Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, Rule of Law and Consumer Protection; and Jim O'Callaghan, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

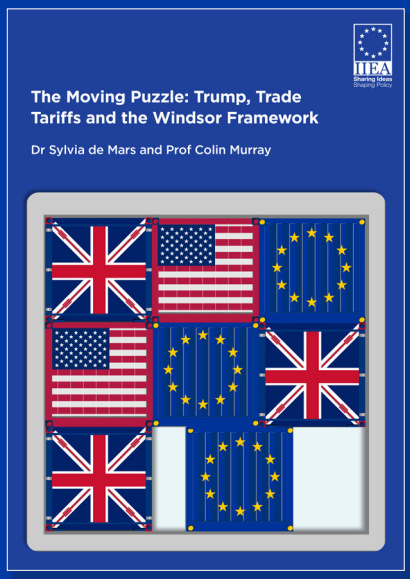
A major research output during the year was the *Secure Together - Enhancing Ireland's Security and Resilience in a Time of Heightened Geopolitical Risk* White Paper, in partnership with Deloitte, which secured significant domestic and international commentary. The Pathways Project's three published papers on Ireland's agricultural future featured in The Irish Farmer's Journal and Agriland.ie while the 2024 paper on the cost of unification *Northern Ireland Subvention: Possible Unification Effects* by Professors John Fitzgerald and Edgar Morgenroth continued to be referenced by the media throughout 2025.

Conclusion

The communications performance of 2025 reflects a year of expanding reach and growing engagement in the IIEA's analysis and events. With rising website traffic, a strong social media presence, and sustained media coverage across multiple platforms and geographies, the IIEA entered 2026 with considerable momentum.

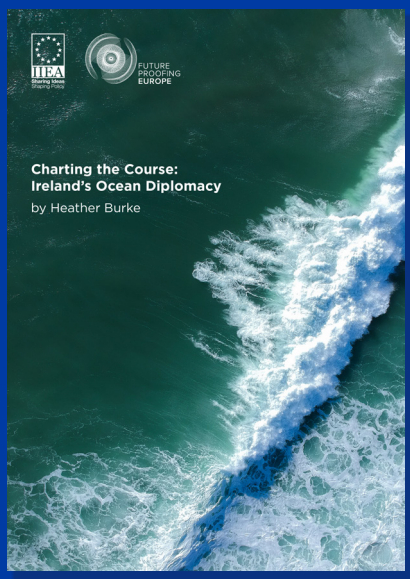
The diversity of topics that captured public and media attention - from economics and climate to trade, governance, and geopolitics - speaks to the breadth and relevance of the IIEA's work. As the policy environment grows more complex and interconnected, the IIEA's role as a platform for informed, evidence-based dialogue continues to gain importance.

CREATIVE OUTPUT 2025

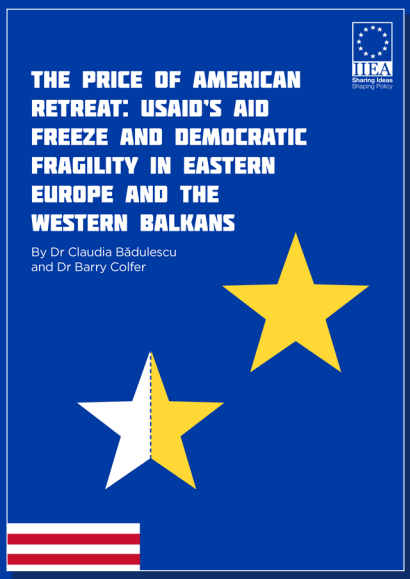














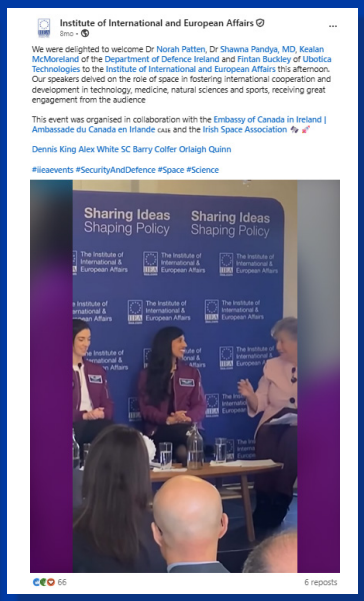




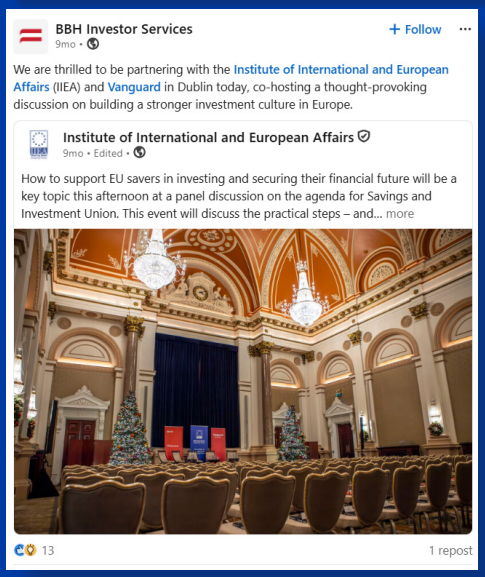


SOCIAL MEDIA 2025





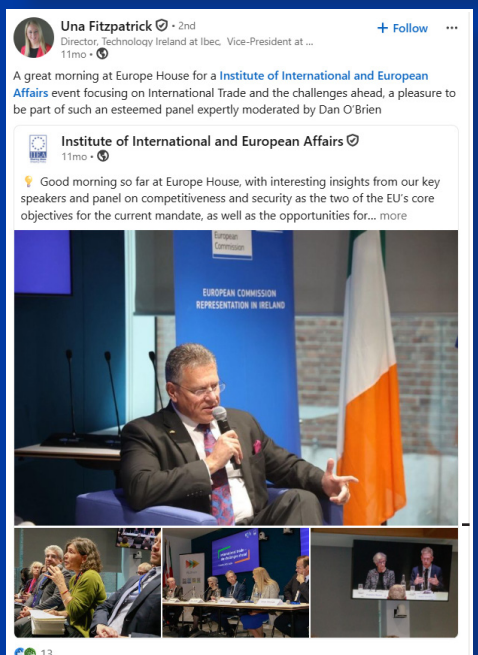


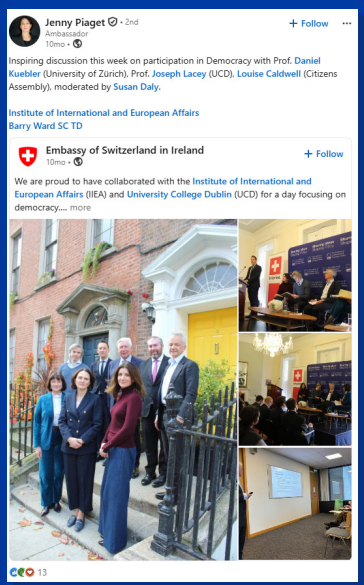














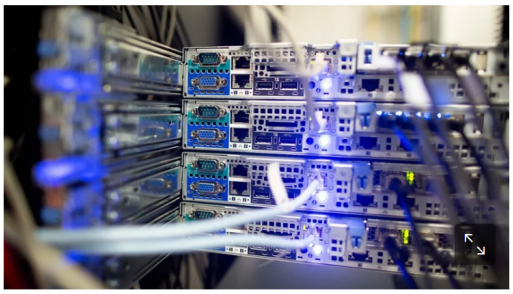


IN THE NEWS 2025

RTÉ 100 News Sport Entertainment Business Lifestyle Culture Gaeilge Playe

Security gaps putting Irish economy at risk - research

Updated / Thursday, 11 Dec 2025 11:23



A new tudy said Ireland's global economic profile makes the country 'a high-value intelligence target'

By Fergal O'Brien and Eleanor Burnhill

Security gaps are putting Ireland's national and economic success at risk, according to new research from the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) and Deloitte Ireland.

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News ▸ Business ▸ Agribusiness Focus On Inflation Business Of Climate Work Brexit Wa

Markets Economy Analysis

Ireland at crossroads of geopolitical headwinds, Central Bank chief says

Updated / Thursday, 20 Feb 2025 14:37



Central Bank Governor Gabriel Makhlouf addressed the IIEA in Dublin today

Geoeconomic fragmentation has moved from being a risk to becoming a reality, and as a small, open economy, Ireland finds itself at the cross roads of these geopolitical headwinds, Central Bank Governor Gabriel Makhlouf said today.

The Governor made his comments in an address to the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) in Dublin today.

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EXPLAINER

Features | Elections

Irish presidential election: Who is running and what's at stake?

A hotly contested race is anticipated following the withdrawal of one of the three candidates vying to succeed popular President Michael D Higgins.

Save Share Add Al Jazeera on Google



Left to right, Fine Gael presidential candidate Heather Humphreys, presenters Cormac O hEadhra and Sarah McInerney and independent presidential candidate Catherine Connolly, ahead of the RTÉ Drivetime presidential candidates debate at RTÉ studio in Dublin, October 9, 2025 [Brian Lawless/PA Images via Getty Images]

By Marianne Everett

23 Oct 2025

Voters in Ireland will head to the polls on Friday to elect a new president for a seven-year term.

While the Irish presidency is a mostly ceremonial role, this election takes place amid a historic shift towards a more polarised political system, Barry Colfer, director of research at Dublin's Institute of International and European Affairs, told Al Jazeera.

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Tariffs impacting on Ireland's economy

TUE 15 JUL 25 • 16 MINS • TODAY WITH CLAIRE BYRNE

Dan O'Brien, Chief Economist at the Institute of International and European Affairs and Pat Leahy Irish Times Political Editor



00:00 16:10

-15 +30

Share

The Journal Irish News FactCheck Voices Investigates Gaeilge



IMAGE: Alamy Stock Photo

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Role of influencers to be considered under EU's 'democracy shield' plans

European Commissioner Michael McGrath says a network of European fact-checkers is being established.

6.16pm, 19 May 2025 8.8k 37 Comments Share

THE ROLE OF influencers will be considered under the EU's plan to develop a 'democracy shield' which aims to tackle the spread of online misinformation and protect European democracy, according to Michael McGrath, European Commissioner for Justice.

Speaking at an event at the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA), a think tank based in Dublin today, on "Future-Proofing EU Democracy", McGrath was questioned on the role of influencers online and in particular the information they are disseminating to younger people.

The Currency. + THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



Stories

AI is on its way to detect bid-rigging in public tenders

The OECD wants Ireland to screen public procurement for collusion between bidders. Bring on artificial intelligence, says Paschal Donohoe.

12th Feb, 2025 - 3 min read



Thomas Hubert
Editor

REUTERS

El BCE debe seguir siendo cauteloso dados los acontecimientos «excepcionales», dice Makhlouf



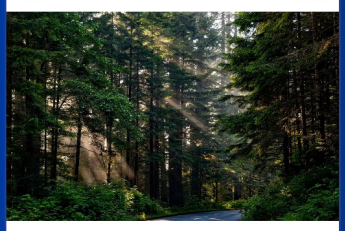
FOTO DE ARCHIVO. El gobernador del Banco Central de Irlanda, Gabriel Makhlouf, habla con Reuters durante una entrevista en la sede del Instituto de Asuntos Internacionales y Europeos (IIEA), en Dublín, Irlanda · Reuters

Reuters
24 de marzo de 2025 • 1 min de lectura

DUBLÍN, 24 mar (Reuters) - El Banco Central Europeo debe seguir siendo cauteloso con su próximo movimiento de tipos de interés dados los acontecimientos mundiales «excepcionales», aunque la inflación va en la dirección correcta, dijo el lunes Gabriel Makhlouf, gobernador del Banco Central de Irlanda y dirigente monetario del BCE.

New Zealand needs to examine its current approach to forestry – commissioner

By Kayley Simpson
July 24, 2025 2:30 PM



New Zealand needs to examine whether it is establishing the forests it wants for the long run according to the country's Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

Simon Upton believes the current approach is driving a wave of land use change with "significant environmental, economic and social risks".

Nearly 40% of land in New Zealand is covered by forestry according to the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries.

During a recent visit the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) in Dublin the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment highlighted why he thinks New Zealand may regret its current approach to land use.

Vijesti Forbes

Irish Minister: Montenegro can count on Dublin's consistent support

Deputy Prime Minister Filip Ivanović held meetings with representatives of Irish institutions, focusing on Montenegro's European perspective and strengthening bilateral cooperation.



Disclaimer: The translations are mostly done through AI translator and might not be 100% accurate.

Montenegro is taking a leading position in the European integration process, it was assessed at a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Filip Ivanović and the Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs of the Irish Parliament, Barry Ward, and members of that body.

On that occasion, "strong support for the enlargement policy" was expressed, announced the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, who, during his visit to Dublin, held several meetings with representatives of Irish institutions, focusing on Montenegro's European perspective and strengthening bilateral cooperation.

HOMEPAGE / NEWS

Food could vanish from shelves within three days if Dublin Port is hit, report warns



'It was noted in particular that Dublin Port represents a significant single point of failure in the national supply chain, and that food would start to disappear from shop shelves within three days if there was a material adverse event there,' the report said.

Thu, 11 Dec, 2025 - 06:00

Cormac O'Keeffe, Security Correspondent

Food and other essential goods could start disappearing from the shelves within three days if there were a serious attack or disruption at Dublin Port, according to Irish company bosses.

A new report said the Irish tech sector cited attempts by intelligence services from Russia, China, and India "to place operatives in their organisations".

Based on consultations with senior representatives of industry and business, a report compiled by the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) and Deloitte said:

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Patron: Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Comité d'Honneur: Enda Kenny, Mary McAleese, Mary Robinson, Pat Cox, Brian Cowen, Bertie Ahern, Máire Geoghegan Quinn, Charles McCreevy, David Byrne, Ray MacSharry,

Honorary Life Members: Adrian Burke, Prof. Patrick Keatinge, Geraldine Byrne Nason, Dr. Con Power, Dr. David Williamson

Vice Presidents: Adrian Burke, Una O'Dwyer, Nora Owen, Katherine Meenan, Jill Donoghue

IIEA Board of Directors 2025:

Chairperson: Feargal O'Rourke

Company Secretary: Marie Sinnott

Treasurer: Brendan Butler (Resigned Nov 25)
Maeve Carton (Appointed Nov 25)

Pat Cox (Resigned Nov 25)

Brian Daly

Catherine Day (Resigned Nov 25)

Declan Kelleher (Appointed Jan 25)

Peter McLoone (Resigned Nov 25)

Sinéad McSweeney (Appointed Jul 25)

Sheila Nunan

Nora Owen

Michael Patten

Orlaigh Quinn

Leo Varadkar (Appointed Sep 25)

Senior Fellows: Tony Brown, Pat Cox, Marie Cross, Paul Gallagher, Eamon Gilmore, Katherine Meenan, Pádraig Murphy

IIEA Management Team

Director General: Alex White

Director of Research: Barry Colfer

Senior Research Advisor: Jill Donoghue

Director of Administration: Tom Breen

Director of Finance: Janice Epstein

Communications Director: Adrienne Ferguson

Creative Director: Sarah Burke

Membership Relations Director: Paul O'Neill

Chief Economist: Dan O'Brien

Director of Operations: Andrew Gilmore

IIEA Committees

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Brendan Butler (Chair) (Resigned Nov 25)

Maeve Carton (Chair) (Appointed Nov 25)

Declan Kelleher

Sheila Nunan

Feargal O'Rourke

Marie Sinnott

Membership Committee

Brian Daly (Chair)

Sinéad McSweeney

Sheila Nunan

Nora Owen (Resigned Nov 25)

Michael Patten

Orlaigh Quinn

Remuneration, Employment and Nominations Committee

Peter McLoone (Chair) (Resigned Nov 25)

Michael Patten (Chair) (Appointed Nov 25)

Brendan Butler (Resigned Nov 25)

Maeve Carton

Brian Daly

Feargal O'Rourke

Marie Sinnott

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2025

SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT			
	Year ended 31-Dec-25 €	Year ended 31-Dec-24 €	Year ended 31-Dec-23 €
Income			
Membership Subscriptions	951,051	946,413	962,251
Grants and Projects	917,614	777,833	780,710
Other	93,991	109,915	87,481
Total	**1,962,656**	**1,834,161**	**1,830,442**
Expenditure			
Salaries and Contractors	1,594,365	1,468,114	1,416,803
Grants and Projects Expenses	105,573	98,043	80,783
Administration Expenses	304,238	314,587	300,838
Depreciation	22,894	28,368	33,914
Total	**2,027,070**	**1,909,112**	**1,832,338**
Deficit for the year	**(64,414)**	**(74,951)**	**(1,896)**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
	As at 31-Dec-25 €	As at 31-Dec-24 €	As at 31-Dec-23 €
Fixed Assets	324,687	346,515	363,583
Net Current Assets	367,757	410,342	468,225
Net Assets	**692,444**	**756,857**	**831,808**
Revaluation Reserve	160,099	160,099	160,099
Income and Expenditure Account	82,345	146,758	71,709
Operating Reserve Fund	450,000	450,000	600,000
Capital & Reserves	**692,444**	**756,857**	**831,808**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT SUMMARY



The Institute's accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 were audited by Keveny Monahan, appointed as the Institute's statutory auditor during the year, following the conclusion of EY's six-year tenure in that capacity. The summarised financial statements presented above have been extracted from the audited accounts, which have been filed with the Charities Regulator.

During 2025, the Institute continued to deliver a strong high-quality schedule of events, research programmes, lecture series and talks in a variety of forms - virtually, hybrid or in-person - tailored to suit our partners, stakeholders and members. Membership income remained unchanged year-on-year. The increase in total income was primarily attributable to higher levels of project activity and sponsored events, including funding under the EU CERV grant, the DFA and Irish Aid programme. Employment costs (salaries & contractors) for the year represented 79% of total expenditure (2024: 77%), reflecting an increase in average staff numbers from 24 to 27, including the direct employment of a former Community Employment Scheme participant.

While the Institute seeks to generate income in excess of its planned operating costs, it operates within relatively modest financial margins. With the continued support of our members, the Institute maintained its operational capacity in 2025; in spite of good cost control the financial year concluded with a deficit, albeit at a reduced level compared with 2024.

In accordance with recommended best practice, the Board maintains an Operating Reserve Fund. The Board sets the desired level of the Fund annually, at all times cognisant of the resources and funds required for smooth operations and the budgeted operating expenditure for the coming year. As a deficit was recorded for 2025, no transfer was made to the Operating Reserve Fund this year. Any further adjustment to the value of the Fund will be considered during the forthcoming financial year.

Management remains committed to strengthening membership acquisition, retention and engagement, while increasing the contribution from profitable, revenue-generating projects and events. Recognising the importance of aligning income and expenditure, management continues to closely monitor inflationary pressures on staff costs, the operating expenditure associated with delivering high-quality events, and the cost of any necessary remedial works to the property, implementing cost efficiencies where appropriate.

Janice Epstein
Director of Finance

29 September 2026

TREASURER REPORT



Principal activities

The principal activities of the Institute include extensive research and events programmes which provide policy insight, analysis and context to help shape vital decisions about Ireland's strategic direction and future. The aim is to provide a forum for all those interested in EU and International affairs to engage in debate and discussion and to evaluate and share policy options. The Institute seeks to identify key European and international trends and priorities, in order to inform the work of Ireland's decision - makers and business leaders and enrich the public debate on Ireland's role in the EU and on the global stage.

Results for the year

The summarised financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 are set out on page 47. Total income for the year increased by €0.13m to €1.96m (2024: €1.83m). The continued stability of income demonstrates the Institute's ongoing success in maintaining its relevance to members, stakeholders and supporters as Ireland's leading international affairs think tank.

Membership subscriptions remained a significant source of income, generating €951k during the year (2024: €946k). The Institute also continued to benefit from support received under the European Union Operating Grant (CERV), with €245k recognised as income in 2025 (2024: €245k). In addition, project funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFA) contributed €250k (2024: €250k), reflecting the continued strength of the Institute's partnership with the Department. The Institute also benefited from both recurring and new project funding aligned with its established research strengths and strategic objectives.

Employment costs represented 79% of total expenditure (2024: 77%), reflecting the increase in average staff numbers from 24 employees in 2024 to 27 employees in 2025. Administrative expenses remained broadly consistent with the prior year at €432k (2024: €440k).

The Institute recorded a deficit of €64,414 for the year (2024: deficit of €74,951). While the Institute seeks to generate income in excess of its planned operating costs, it operates within relatively modest financial margins. Consequently, the loss of a project or the need to incur unplanned expenditure to maintain operational capacity can result in annual deficits. The 2025 deficit was absorbed through accumulated reserves. At the year end, the Institute maintained operating reserves of €450k, providing a sound basis from which to continue delivering a vibrant and relevant programme of activities while seeking to generate operating surpluses in future years.

The Institute's financial position remained strong, with net assets of €692k as at 31 December 2025 (2024: €756k).

The directors wish to acknowledge and thank the Institute's members, the European Commission, the Department of Foreign Affairs and its many project partners for their continued support. This support provides confidence that the Institute can continue to deliver a high-quality programme of research, events, publications and public engagement activities for the benefit of members and the wider public.

During 2025, the Institute continued to deliver a comprehensive programme of research, policy analysis and public engagement activities:

- A strong programme of events was delivered for members and, on many occasions, the wider public. The Institute continued to utilise its successful online delivery platform while further expanding its hybrid event model. Participation levels remained strong throughout the year, with hybrid events attracting audiences both in person and through the Institute's online channels.
- Project funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs contributed €250k to income during 2025 (2024: €250k). This funding is subject to agreed work plans and the submission of satisfactory periodic reports. Progress against project objectives is monitored through oversight by the relevant project committee and through regular engagement with Department officials.
- The Institute was awarded a European Commission Operating Grant of up to €245k per annum. This funding is specifically designated to support core operational activities. During 2025, the Institute recognised €245k of operating grant income (2024: €245k), reflecting the ongoing costs associated with delivering its programme of activities and strategic objectives.

TREASURER REPORT

Looking Ahead

Supported by a strong balance sheet, established funding relationships and the continued support of its members, the directors remain confident in the Institute's ability to continue delivering high-quality research, analysis, publications and events. The Institute will continue to focus on maintaining its relevance, expanding its public engagement activities and securing sustainable funding to support its mission and long-term objectives.

Going Concern

The directors have prepared the financial statements on a going concern basis, which assumes that the Institute will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and for a period of at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. The Institute's policy is to operate on a broadly break-even basis over the medium term while maintaining sufficient reserves to safeguard its activities during periods of economic uncertainty.

The directors expect the Institute to continue to benefit from the support of its members, funding partners and organisations that commission projects and research activities. The Institute's plans for 2027 are based on the continuation of these income streams, together with the potential for additional project-related income arising from ongoing discussions with prospective partners and funders. While the European Commission Operating Grant has not been renewed for 2026 and this has been reflected in the Institute's forecasts, the directors believe that alternative sources of funding and project income will mitigate the impact of this change.

In assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis, the directors have considered the Institute's operating reserves of €450k as at 1 January 2026, the budgeted financial performance for 2026, which is currently expected to result in a modest deficit, and the Institute's ability to adjust its programme of activities to align expenditure with available income should circumstances require. Although economic uncertainty and other external developments may adversely affect certain income sources over the next twelve months, the directors are satisfied that adequate resources are available to enable the Institute to continue operating and meeting its obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future.

The directors continue to assess the impact of the ongoing digitalisation of the organisation's services and operations. While digital developments may influence the methods through which services are delivered to members and wider stakeholders, the directors do not anticipate any material changes to the nature, objectives or activities of the organisation.

Maeve Carton

Treasurer
Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
29 September 2026

2025 PLATINUM MEMBERS









2025 FOUNDATION MEMBERS



























































2025 CORPORATE MEMBERS

AbbVie
American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland
An Garda Siochana
Arthur Cox LLP
Atlantic TU
Avolon Aviation Leasing
Bar Council of Ireland
CCPC
Central Statistics Office
Centre for Religion Human Values and International Relations
Chambers Ireland
Chartered Accountants Ireland
CODEMA
Coimisiún na Meán
Commission for Regulation of Utilities
ComReg
Concern Worldwide
Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine
Department of Children Disability and Equality
Department of Climate Energy and Environment
Department of Culture Communications and Sport
Department of Defence
Department of Education and Youth
Department of Enterprise Tourism & Employment
Department of Finance
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science
Department of Health
Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage
Department of Justice Home Affairs and Migration
Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform
Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
Department of Social Protection
Department of the Taoiseach
Department of Transport
Dóchas
Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
EirGrid plc
Energia Group
Environmental Protection Agency
Eurofound
Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Fórsa
Home and Community Care Ireland
ICHEC
INTO
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
Irish Funds
Irish Tax Institute
Law Society
Maynooth University
McCann Fitzgerald LLP
Merck
National Economic & Social Council
NUI Galway
Office of the Attorney General
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
Office of the Revenue Commissioners
OpenAI
Oxfam Ireland
Policing and Community Safety Authority
RWE Renewables Ireland Limited
SEAI
Sogeti Ireland Ltd
SRI Executive Search
The Institute of Banking
The Oireachtas Commission
The Wheel
Trinity College Dublin
Trócaire
TU Dublin
UCD
UNHCR Representation in Ireland
Vodafone Ireland Ltd
William Fry Solicitors

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Alan Matthews
Alan T. Ryan
Andrew Clarke
Andy O'Rourke
Barry Desmond
Beatrice Hughes
Billy Attley
Brendan Butler
Brendan Kearney
Brendan Lynch
Brendan P. Ryan
Brian Cawley
Brian Cowen
Brian Hurley
C.J. Walsh
Catherine Day
Ciaran Toland
Colin Wrafter
Colm Larkin
Con Power
Cormac Neill
Daithi O'Ceallaigh
David Croughan
David Griffin
David Gunning
Declan O'Donovan
Denis Corboy
Dermot McAleese
Dermot Scott
Don Thornhill
Donal de Buitleir
Donal Donovan
Dorcha Lee
Eamonn Thomas Walsh
Emer Haughey
Etain Doyle
Eugene Downes
Fachtna Murphy
Faye Ioannou
Finola Flanagan
Frances Ruane
Francis Jacobs
Francis M O'Donnell
Frank Kenny
Frank Masterson
Frank Wall
Gerald Fitzgerald
Gerard Cashin
Gerard O'Neill
Horst Siedschlag
Hugh Governey
Hugh Logue
J. Owen Lewis
Jim Fitzpatrick
Jim McCaffrey
Joe Brosnan
John Handoll
John Kennedy
John McKeon
Johnny Ryan
Joseph Hickey
Katherine Meenan
Kevin P. O'Kelly
Liam Kelleher
Lochlann Quinn
Lorcan Blake
Margaret Hennessy
Marie Cross
Mark Lochrin
Mary Browne
Mary Finan
Michael McLoughlin
Michael Tutty
Miriam Hederman O'Brien
Neville Keery
Niall Greene
Niamh Haughey
Nicki O'Connor
Noel Dorr
Nora Owen
Odran Reid

2025 LIFE MEMBERS

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Padraig Murphy
Pat Cox
Pat Farrell
Pat McArdle
Pat McCann
Patrick Honohan
Patrick Keatinge
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Paul Gillespie
Paul Sreenan
Paul Tighe
Paul Turpin
Peter Brennan
Peter Doyle
Peter McLoone
Phil Ryan
Philip Lee
Ray MacSharry
Ray McGahern
Roderick Ryan
Ron Hill
Ronan Tynan
Ruairí Quinn
Ruth Barrington
Sean McCrum
Stephen Vernon
Sue Scott
Terence O'Rourke
Thelma Doran
Thomas Stehling
Tom Ferris
Tony Brown
Tony Smith
Una McGurk
Una O'Dwyer
William Scally

2025 EMBASSY MEMBERS

Embassy of Belgium
Embassy of Brazil
Embassy of the United Kingdom
Embassy of Canada
Embassy of Chile
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
Embassy of the Republic of Croatia
Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus
Embassy of Colombia
Royal Danish Embassy
Embassy of the Republic of Estonia
Embassy of France
Embassy of Germany
Embassy of Greece
Embassy of Hungary
Embassy of Italy
Embassy of Japan
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Embassy of Kuwait
Embassy of Mexico
Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Embassy of New Zealand
Royal Norwegian Embassy
Embassy of Poland
Embassy of Portugal
Embassy of Romania
Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia
Embassy of the Republic of South Africa
Embassy of Spain
Embassy of Sweden
Embassy of Switzerland
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
Embassy of Ukraine
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
Embassy of the United States

The Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) is Ireland's international affairs think tank. Founded in 1991, its mission is to foster and shape political, policy and public discourse, in order to broaden awareness of international and European issues in Ireland and contribute to more informed strategic decisions by political, business and civil society leaders.

The IIEA acts as a forum for informed debate, analysis and discussion. Views expressed in the Institute's publications, and in presentations at its events, are those of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the Institute, which is fully independent. The IIEA is a not-for profit organisation with charitable status.

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The IIEA acknowledges the support of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme of the European Union

IIEA
Sharing Ideas
Shaping Policy

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