

# **ibec** Europe & Global Focus

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**ibec**  
For Irish Business

**The potential of  
the single market**

**How trade policy can  
drive competitiveness**

**Opportunities in the  
EU year of skills**

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Pat Ivory

Director of EU & International Affairs

Phone: +353 1 605 15 71

Email: [pat.ivory@ibec.ie](mailto:pat.ivory@ibec.ie)



# Time to focus on strengths and competitiveness

As we publish the summer 2023 edition of the Ibec Europe and Global Focus, the EU and international business and policy agendas remain firmly fixed on competitiveness. The war continues in Ukraine and broader geopolitical tensions percolate. Energy costs remain challenging for business and society. The legislation underpinning the European Green Deal's ambition for a net-zero Europe by 2050 presents both opportunities and challenges. Inflation persists, albeit at lower levels than expected, interest rates continue to rise, and economic growth is slowing. Additionally, businesses increasingly face a shortage of skills and talent.

Against this complicated backdrop, the EU is considering its response through a range of significant policy proposals under the umbrella of the Green Deal Industrial Plan. Sourcing of critical raw materials, economic governance rules and supporting strategic industries towards the net-zero transition are all under review. This is with a view to responding to the variety of geopolitical challenges including the energy crisis, competition for leadership in green technologies and the overriding concern that the EU is losing its global competitiveness. In this edition, we examine the main elements and impacts for Irish business.

As part of this, the European Commission published a Communication '*Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030*', noting that the EU must bridge the growth and innovation gap with other regions "at a make-or-break moment for the EU's long-term competitiveness". Business supports the emphasis on long-term ambition, while also addressing the immediate, transitory challenges. At the same time, as these challenges persist, a critical point of difference between the EU and other jurisdictions is the rising regulatory obligations and burden on businesses. These continue to build as the EU introduces significant new requirements across green, digital and social policy, among others. These factors, taken together, constitute comparative disadvantages for business in Europe.

The focus on the EU single market during its 30-year anniversary provides one opportunity to respond. By reinforcing it as a key source of the EU's economic strength and prosperity it can support long-term competitiveness, boost productivity and strengthen Europe's global role. In this edition, we set out a vision for further development of the single market through our campaign '[Stronger Europe, Stronger Ireland: The potential of the single market](#)'.

Acknowledging how trade policy has played a key role in supporting the EU's competitiveness for decades, we highlight two new BusinessEurope publications that Ibec has contributed to. Undoubtedly, [action](#) is critical at global level and the EU should work with its trading partners to renew a shared commitment to rules-based trade order to effectively address the challenges we face today. We also preview an upcoming publication on digital trade, outlining how digital technologies and digitised data is strongly influencing international trade in scale, scope and speed.

Irish business is clear on what is needed to enable business and the EU institutions to work together to reach common goals of ensuring economic stability and growth. This will require addressing climate change, advancing the digital transition and developing and sustaining a stable and open international trading environment. In all of these areas the EU, through the right policy choices, can make a real difference to economic and social development within the EU and as a change leader on the global stage. Our future economic fortunes continue to demand an outward-looking, dynamic and successful EU. One that embraces change and is aligned with the needs of business and citizens.

**"The EU must bridge the growth and innovation gap with other regions at a make-or-break moment for the EU's long-term competitiveness."**



# Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation Dara Calleary TD: View on long-term EU Competitiveness



I welcome the Communication by the Commission in March on the long-term competitiveness of the EU and the view it set out, as it looks beyond 2030.

To ensure the competitiveness of the EU over the long-term, the Commission proposes working along nine mutually reinforcing drivers of competitiveness, while also actively working towards a growth enhancing regulatory framework.

Access to private capital; investment in infrastructure, research and development; investment in energy and digitalisation were identified as key drivers of competitiveness, which were similarly recognised as priority areas in the Government's White Paper on Enterprise 2022-2030 published in December 2022. Making progress on infrastructure, the cost of doing business, skills and talent development, are all critical to a competitive economic environment and in enabling success for enterprise in Ireland. That these are also priorities for the EU demonstrates that the principles which are applied at a national level are also critical for success across the EU.

The ultimate outcome set out in the Communication – of sustainable competitiveness – is one which I strongly agree with. This idea reflects the importance that continued productivity growth has for European welfare, but that this growth must be environmentally sustainable and inclusive, leaving no one behind. This also highlights the need to push for progress on the green and digital transitions if the EU's economic growth is to be resilient and sustainable, while delivering increased wellbeing for all.

A functioning Single Market is identified as the first driver of competitiveness for the EU; indeed, it is at the core of EU competitiveness. The Single Market has brought significant benefit to Ireland over the last 30 years through access to goods, services, skills and talent, and also as a destination market for Irish exports to compete in. I believe that robust competition must remain central to the way in which the Single Market operates. Alongside this Ireland continues to push for the completion of the Single Market, particularly in relation to the provision of services, as a key measure in promoting EU competitiveness – and so I welcome the role the Annual Single Market Report and enhanced Single Market scoreboard will play in the first driver in the Communication.

This month saw the announcement of a €630 million investment by Analog Devices Inc. (ADI) in a new Next Generation Semiconductor R&D and Manufacturing Facility in Limerick, which is part of Ireland's commitment to develop Important Projects of Common European Interest. This is an opportunity for Ireland to contribute to the development of European capacity and capability in increasingly vital frontier technologies and is important in contributing to the open strategic autonomy of the EU – which is recognised as a driver of competitiveness. However, we must remain open to world trade, and I was pleased that the EU's share of trade with the rest of the world is established as the Key Performance Indicator for this driver within the Communication.

From an Irish perspective we must also be aware of the broader elements which are impacting our competitiveness. We are currently at full-employment, which presents a challenge in overcoming specific capacity constraints – particularly in infrastructure – that are negatively impacting our competitiveness. As a small, open economy we need to maintain focus on domestic reforms to boost productivity and reduce costs where possible. The ideas and drivers set out in the Communication Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030 – public investment, education and skills, access to private capital and a functioning Single Market are those which will help us overcome these constraints and continue on a path of sustainable growth.

**Minister of State Dara Calleary TD attended the EU Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 22-23 May. See the outcomes of the meeting [here](#) and press release [here](#).**

# Driving competitiveness in a challenging global environment

A series of crises and a period of geopolitical tension has prompted a renewed focus on EU competitiveness. The energy crisis, inflation, precarious supply chains and increasing skills shortages are only some of the issues facing European economies. This comes alongside the push for net-zero technologies across the globe. The EU stepped up its action on climate change and competitiveness following the announcement of the US Inflation Reduction Act. In February 2023, the Commission published its Green Deal Industrial Plan. The Plan aims to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's net-zero industry and accelerate the transition to climate neutrality. A series of further proposals were published in March, either under the remit of, or related to, the Plan. The EU Council and European Parliament must now review the proposals before they can become law. As EU policymakers' term will end in 2024, the legislative process is likely to be accelerated.

## Net-Zero Industry Act

The proposed Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA) aims to create a regulatory environment that will provide a framework for net-zero technologies and is designed to support the scaling up of the EU's net-zero manufacturing capacities and products, helping to meet Europe's climate neutrality goals, create green jobs and maintain the EU's competitiveness. The objective of the NZIA is to approach or reach, in aggregate, at least 40% of the annual deployment needs for strategic net-zero technologies manufactured in the EU by 2030. As part of this, the EU Commission also announced plans to set up a European Sovereignty Fund but there are no concrete proposals as to how this will be financed. See more [here](#).

The proposed Regulation now needs to be agreed by the European Parliament and the EU Council before its official adoption and entry into force. In the Parliament, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) has taken the lead.

### What this means for Irish business:

While the efforts to increase the production of net-zero tech are welcome, the moves also signal the increasing competition between geopolitical powers. The proposal recognises the need to address challenges facing businesses from regulation and permitting, to funding and skills. However, its success depends on the support of member states to provide funding and collaborate on national competencies. At the same time, Ireland and like-minded member states have warned of the potential to cause distortions and an unlevel playing field in the single market.

## Critical Raw Materials Act

The Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) aims to strengthen access to secure, diversified, affordable and sustainable critical raw materials. This includes boosting domestic production, diversifying supply chains and increasing recycling efforts. The proposal covers target-driven internal actions alongside international engagement via trading, strategic partnerships and the 'Global Gateway'. It aims to strengthen the different stages of the European critical raw materials value chain, diversify the EU's imports of critical raw materials to reduce strategic dependencies, improve EU capacity to monitor and mitigate disruptions to the supply of critical raw materials and finally, ensure a high level of environmental protection, by improving their circularity and sustainability. See more [here](#).

In the European Parliament, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) has taken the lead, with a committee vote scheduled for early September. The proposal will need to be agreed between the Parliament and the EU Council before official adoption and entry into force.

### What this means for Irish business:

The proposal has the potential to have a positive impact on the supply of critical raw materials for the twin transition and supply chain resilience. Efforts to support trade diversification and bolster Europe's independent capacities are welcome but must be done in a way that maintains the EU's openness to trade and investment.

### Long-term competitiveness strategy

In March 2023, the Commission published the Communication *'Long-term competitiveness of the EU looking beyond 2030'* setting out nine mutually reinforcing drivers to foster competitiveness along with a commitment to work actively towards a regulatory framework more suited for competitiveness and growth. Tangibly, the Commission proposes:

- A new competitiveness check that ensures the impact assessments of legislative proposals include the expected impacts on cost and price competitiveness, international competitiveness and the capacity to innovate, and also on SME's competitiveness.
- Development of methods to better assess the cumulative impact of different policy measures.
- Simplification of reporting requirements including to reduce "such burdens by 25%" with first proposals for each of the green, digital and economic thematic areas expected before autumn.
- Development of a more innovation-friendly approach to regulation through greater use of regulatory sandboxes/testbeds (e.g., AI, pharmaceutical sector), and an incentivising, rather than prescriptive, regulatory model.
- Assistance to member states in the transposition of EU law.

#### What this means for Irish business:

While the measures demonstrate a welcome focus on the conditions of the regulatory environment within the EU and shows that business concerns are being heard, the question remains as to how the proposed measures will be implemented in practice.

### Economic Governance Review

In April 2023, the Commission presented legislative proposals to reform the EU's economic governance, to strengthen public debt sustainability while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth in all member states through reforms and investment. The proposals consider the need to reduce much-increased public debt levels, build on the lessons learned from the EU policy response to the Covid-19 crisis and prepare the EU for future challenges by supporting progress towards a green, digital, inclusive and resilient economy and making the EU more competitive. See more [here](#).

The proposed reform of the Stability and Growth Pact aims to give EU countries more leeway in determining the pace at which they must reduce debt, allowing member states to strike bespoke deals with the EU on debt reduction. However, various safeguards are included to ensure equal treatment between national governments.

The proposals now go to the EU Council and to the European Parliament for adoption under the co-decision procedure. It is hoped political agreement can be found before the end of 2023 however, reaching agreement between all member states on the proposals is expected to be difficult. The Swedish Presidency of the EU Council is not expected to put it on the agenda of a formal ministerial meeting until June, so it will be up to the upcoming Spanish Presidency to finalise the agreement, with a view for the rules coming into effect by 2025.

#### What this means for Irish business:

The proposal puts a welcome focus on not just sustainable debt and deficits, but a broader perspective on producing sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes. Ireland is unlikely to be constrained from spending under the EU's new fiscal rules because of the strength of the economy's performance, particular in GDP growth.



# Open Strategic Autonomy: how trade policy can best support European competitiveness

As the Irish member of BusinessEurope, Ibec contributed to the drafting of its new paper on [\*'Open Strategic Autonomy - how trade policy can best support European competitiveness'\*](#). The paper highlights how trade policy has, and should continue to, play a key role in supporting the EU's competitiveness and investment decision-making in Europe. It provides insightful policy recommendations aimed at creating an open, competitive and sustainable trade environment.

The paper states that the EU should continue to support the multilateral rules-based system of trade. In this regard, it is important to remember that trade with the EU's two largest trading partners: the USA and China, is governed by rules of the WTO. The EU should also join or promote informal alliances open for developed and developing countries, on issues where global rules development is not possible. The paper highlights that the EU should not exclude a priori non-MFN plurilateral arrangements in key areas such as sustainability and state subsidies. It also recommends that EU trade agreements with New Zealand, Chile, Mexico, and Mercosur should enter into force during this institutional cycle, while ongoing negotiations with Australia, India, and ASEAN countries must accelerate and possibly be concluded.

On export restrictions, the paper recommends that the EU should conduct impact assessments on competitiveness prior to introducing additional restrictions. Such should be adopted on a case-by-case basis in a manner where coordination across member states and key international allies is ensured. Consultation with enterprise is crucial as avoiding fragmentation and ensuring legal certainties is key.

The EU should carry out an assessment of investment screening mechanisms at national and EU level prior to considering the adoption of stricter conditions to screen inbound foreign direct investment. Consultation with enterprise is critical, as any suggested measures must not undermine the EU's global competitiveness. In practice, the EU should ensure that instruments already in place are tested and applied responsibly before new control mechanisms are proposed.

Considering the ever-growing impact of sustainability on trade and enterprise, the EU should promote sustainability objectives through connecting market liberalisation in trade agreements to the fulfilment of certain sustainability criteria, or through the introduction of 'minimum sustainability standards' based on measurable and well-established international conventions. Building on the experience of the WTO, the EU approach should be transparent and avoid relying on a patchwork of overlapping and conflicting standards.



### The EU-US Trade and Technology Council

A meeting of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) took place on 30-31 May in Sweden, where both sides aimed to strengthen cooperation on economic security by tackling economic coercion and considering outbound investment controls. Reports state that both parties are set to announce further collaboration on green public procurement, specifically the publication of a joint catalogue of best practices. Reports also indicate that additional topics on the agenda include ongoing work on a joint Artificial Intelligence Roadmap, 6G and international standards, and semiconductor chips. An extraordinary meeting of BusinessEurope's International Relations Committee, chaired by Ibec's Dr Pat Ivory, was held in April. Strategic discussion on priorities for the overall bilateral relationship and the work under the TTC was discussed. BusinessEurope will also be participating in TTC Stakeholders session on 31 May in Sweden.

### Digital Trade

Representing Ireland at BusinessEurope, Ibec contributed to a revised BusinessEurope paper on Digital Trade. The continued integration of digital technologies and digitised data across the economy and society is strongly influencing international trade in scale, scope and speed.

The conclusion of the negotiations on the WTO Joint Initiative on E-commerce and the extension of the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions should be a priority on the negotiation agenda of the European Commission. The Commission should also ensure that impact assessments of any European legislation on digitalisation analyses the consequences of such initiatives on trade, investment and competitiveness.

Bilateral trade agreements without relevant provisions on trade should be reinforced with an appropriate trade agreement. For example, rules agreed in the digital trade chapter of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement should represent the main reference in the negotiations of any free trade negotiation.

Free cross-border data flow is key for enterprise competitiveness. Considering issues associated with the absence of a multilateral framework on digital trade and proliferation of regulators, a growing regulatory divergence is resulting in fragmentation of the international digital market. Such fragmentation impacts competitiveness, particularly for SMEs.

The paper will outline recommendations aimed at strengthening free cross-border data flows; limiting the prohibition of forced data localisations and of the transfer to source or algorithms, as well as the right protection of personal data. Exceptions must be limited to the utmost minimum.

Digital agreements or chapters have the potential of creating an open digital architecture and a trustworthy digital ecosystem; only if adequate provisions related to the non-discrimination of services or goods provided by electronic means are ensured. Competition clauses must ensure a level playing field and sound competition across the digital economy. Prohibition of forced transfer of technology, trade facilitation (electronic contracts, electronic signatures), consumer protection and open government data must underpin technical interoperability and common standards.

Efforts to reduce the digital gap should be undertaken to pave the way to private investment. Regulatory convergence must be partnered with efforts to improve interoperability. Stakeholder participation, joint initiatives with other countries and utilisation of existing initiatives such as the 'Global Gateway', have the potential of enabling digital infrastructure development. Adopting adequate regulatory frameworks to incentivise the mobilisation of private investment is needed to expand safe and accessible internet coverage for all.





## EU-UK relations

# New hope for EU-UK relations following Windsor Framework

On 27 February, the EU and UK announced a political agreement on the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland (the Protocol). The Windsor Framework represents a new agreement on how to implement the existing Protocol with particular regard for the movement of goods from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI). It essentially commits the UK to meeting the conditions it agreed to in December 2020 with some flexibilities. The agreement brings welcome certainty for business on the island of Ireland and should not impact on the Shared Island economy.

- Addressing practical difficulties in its operation: For goods remaining in NI, a 'green lane' will be introduced. Customs and sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) requirements will be gradually reduced up until October 2024 as the UK meets certain conditions. Other flexibilities exist on medicines, VAT and excise rules, and tariff rate quotas.
- Balancing flexibilities for the movement of goods and safeguards for the EU single market: The UK must provide access to customs IT systems, build customs infrastructure and introduce retail labelling on NI-destined products.
- A distinction between goods at risk and not at risk of entering the EU: For goods destined for the EU, including Ireland, a 'red lane' will be introduced. It is expected to operate under the same conditions as goods moving directly to Ireland.
- NI representation: The 'Stormont Brake' will allow the NI Assembly to raise objections to new EU laws affecting NI. However, the Court of Justice of the EU remains the arbiter of EU law in the single market, including NI with respect for goods.

On 5 April, the UK published a draft of its Border Target Operating Model (BTOM), which sets out the framework for its import controls. Its stated objective is to simplify, digitise and improve the risk-based targeting of SPS import controls without reducing biosecurity and consumer protection.

### 31 October 2023

- Export health certification for medium risk animal products, plants, plant products and high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin.
- Full customs controls for all the same products (pre-notification).

### 31 January 2024

- Documentary and risk-based identity and physical checks on high and medium risk products from the rest of the EU.
- Inspections will move from destination to BCPs.

### 31 October 2024

- Documentary and risk-based identity and physical checks on high and medium risk products from Ireland.
- Safety and Security declarations for EU imports.

The Windsor Framework and the draft BTOM are welcome in terms of moving the process forward, however further details and clarification is needed, particularly in relation to SPS issues. The UK is expected to publish its final BTOM in June/July 2023.

## EU Member States Overview

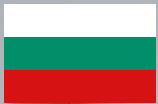


*Prime Minister Kaja Kallas*

### Estonia

#### Estonian parliamentary elections

Estonian *Riigikogu* (parliament) elections were held on 5 March 2023. Alongside socio-economic issues and rising cost of living, national security featured heavily in the election campaign due to Estonia's nearly 300km border with Russia. Incumbent Prime Minister (PM) Kallas kept her position as her centre-right Reform Party were victorious with 37 seats, followed by the far-right populist Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) with 17 seats. PM Kallas formed a centrist coalition government in April with Estonia 200 and SDE. Kallas' government's policies include providing Ukraine with more military aid, strengthening NATO's military presence in the region and supporting increased sanctions on Russia. This coalition government will cement the Baltic state's pro-European direction, has vowed to adopt more green energy and continue to accept Ukrainian refugees.



*Prime Minister Nikolay Denkov*

### Bulgaria

#### Bulgarian parliamentary elections

On 2 April 2023, the fifth *Narodno sabranie* (Bulgarian Parliament) elections in two years were held, called for by President Rumen Radev due to inconclusive election results and prolonged political deadlock. The status quo centre-right Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), of former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, who are in an election coalition with Union of Democratic Forces (SDS), won 69 seats and a pro-Western reformist bloc led by We Continue The Change (PP) with Democratic Bulgaria (DB) joined to form a centre/centre-left election coalition, coming second with 64 seats. The largest parliamentary coalition GERB-SDS nominated European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel as the candidate for prime minister on 10 May, who consequently resigned her EU role. GERB and PP have since entered a coalition government with a rotating prime minister. With Nikolay Denkov of PP starting as prime minister and Mariya Gabriel of GERB as deputy head of government and foreign minister, they will switch positions after nine months. The protracted political crisis has delayed Bulgaria joining the Eurozone by a year to 1 January 2025 and hampered their ability to harness EU post-pandemic recovery funds.



*Petteri Orpo leader of the National Coalition Party (KOK)*

### Finland

#### Finnish parliamentary elections

Elections for the *Eduskunta* (Parliament of Finland) were held on 2 April, with the opposition right-wing National Coalition Party (KOK) narrowly winning with 20.8% of the popular vote and securing 48 seats in parliament. The nationalist, anti-immigration, and anti-EU Finns Party came in close second with 46 seats, and ex-PM Sanna Marin conceded defeat with her left-wing Social Democratic Party (SDP) coming third with 43 seats, prompting her to resign as party leader. Government negotiations began on 2 May between the winning KOK, the Finns party, the Swedish People's Party (RKP), and the Christian Democrats. KOK leader Petteri Orpo has pledged strong solidarity with Ukraine and cited three policy priorities: to remain an active member of the EU, build up the NATO-Finland relation and boost economic growth.



*Caroline van der Plas, leader of the Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB)*

### The Netherlands

#### Dutch provincial elections

Provincial elections in the Netherlands on 15 March 2023 resulted in a landslide victory securing 137 seats for the Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB), formed in 2019 and led by Caroline van der Plas. These elections indirectly determine the composition of the Senate (the upper house of the Dutch legislature) for which BBB is predicted to win 17 seats in May, the most of any party. PM Mark Rutte's centre-right People's Party for Freedom and Democracy came second with 63 seats, and green party GroenLinks third with 51 seats. The four parties of Rutte's centre-right ruling coalition are thus projected to have less than 25 seats in the Senate. Rutte will face a choice of working with a left-leaning bloc seeking more ambitious environmental policies, or with BBB who is likely to block such policies in the Senate.



# HealthBeacon

**Kieran Daly, the Chief Technology Officer of HealthBeacon, shares his insights on how the company's location in Ireland has effectively positioned it to adopt a global perspective.**

HealthBeacon plc develops smart tools for managing medications with a focus on self-administered injectable medication taken by patients in the home. HealthBeacon's Smart Sharps Bin technology is designed to keep patients on time and on track with their injection schedules, helping to drive better medication adherence. There are over 30 million patients on injectable medication across the US and EU, and it is estimated that, on average, half fail to adhere to their medication schedule. HealthBeacon's Injection Care Management System (ICMS) includes a global Patient Care Team, establishing what they describe as a "tech plus touch" approach to patient medication management. As noted by Daly, "Integrating the human element into our product design has been a key design focus since our inception. Managing injectable medications in a home setting can be a daunting and scary experience for many patients, and this anxiety is often a significant contributing factor to non-adherence. By using technology alongside our empathetic Care Team, we're able to achieve impact and reassurance for our patients as they manage their injection journeys". This combined strategy of leveraging technology and human

intervention empowers the HealthBeacon team to effectively identify the appropriate times and methods to intervene with patients, ensuring improved adherence to their medication regimens. This award-winning, patented technology has been embraced by clinicians and individuals alike and has supported patients across 15 global markets. Today, HealthBeacon has offices in Dublin, Boston and Orlando with a multi-disciplinary team of over 70 people.

HealthBeacon is an evidence-based solution, with eight peer-reviewed studies to date. Improvements of up to 26% in patients' adherence to medication across certain therapeutic areas were reported in one such peer-reviewed study for patients using HealthBeacon technology. HealthBeacon has deployed over 13,500 devices, tracking over 800,000 injection events. The ICMS platform integrates an FDA cleared Smart Sharps Bin, which is a digitally connected sharps container that tracks each time a used injection is disposed of, with a comprehensive patient support platform. Through this technology, a patient's act of injection disposal is translated into an important digital health record, ensuring clinicians and patients are armed with accurate data to inform their care.



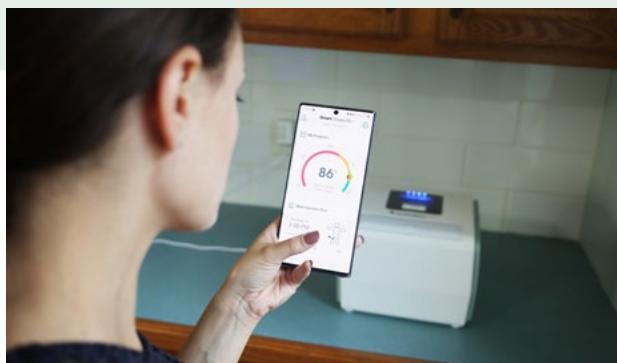
***"Ireland's open economy and access to highly qualified talent grants small companies like us with the unique position of growing quickly and building trust with a global market outlook."***

*“Pharma’s biggest players all have a significant footprint here in Ireland. This is invaluable access for us to test our product concepts early on with key stakeholders, ensuring a fast and efficient feedback loop for product development.”*

### Ireland as a catalyst for global expansion

Since its launch in Ireland in 2014, HealthBeacon has been committed to enhancing global access for patients to its adherence technology, and it views Ireland’s smaller market size as a catalyst for early global ambition. Recognizing the limitations of the local market, the company looked to the EU market early on as a significant opportunity for preliminary expansion. In more recent years, the company has directed its attention to the US. Daly emphasises how having big pharma players on our doorstep immediately positions companies like HealthBeacon to take a global stance when looking at new market entry. “Ireland’s open economy and access to highly qualified talent grants small companies like us with the unique position of growing quickly and building trust with a global market outlook.”

HealthBeacon has consistently utilised Ireland as a test market to foster innovation and develop its products. For Daly, a key advantage of having access to global pharma has been the pace at which feedback on new product concepts can be obtained and iterated with, “Pharma’s biggest players all have a significant footprint here in Ireland. This is invaluable access for us to test our product concepts early on with key stakeholders, ensuring a fast and efficient feedback loop for product development.”



### Designing for sustainability within the pharmaceutical supply chain

One such of these concepts that was launched in partnership with Novartis Ireland in 2022 is HB Green Labs. HB Green Labs is a facility that enables the reuse and recycling of plastic materials resulting from injection waste. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), each year an estimated 16 billion injections are administered worldwide. Most of this injection waste is currently disposed of in either landfill or incineration. The launch of HB Green Labs marks a significant milestone for the company as it turns its focus to creating a circular economy within the at-home injectable medication market. The concept sees full sharps bins sent by patients directly from their home to HB Green Labs through the pre-approved Mailback program. In the facility, the sharps container undergoes a validated sterilization regime and can then be returned to the patient for re-use, ensuring an environmentally-friendly service for patients.

Since its successful launch in Ireland, HealthBeacon has launched another HB Green Labs facility in Orlando, driving its expansion of this offering into the US market. Daly highlights sustainability as a core focus of the company’s business moving forward, stating: “As a company, we’re actively focused on designing for sustainability within our business model. In the case of HB Green Labs, we’ve tackled a genuine business and patient need of providing a sharps waste solution with a sustainable alternative to what’s currently in the market”.





# Driving competitiveness through apprenticeships

**The manufacturing industry in Ireland is an integral part of our economy and a driver of job creation with 30,000 jobs added in the past couple of years. To sustain our success and remain globally competitive, we must continue to develop talent equipped with the practical and technical skills needed to stay ahead of the latest manufacturing trends. Within the industry, a skilled, sustainable talent pool is a critical element in driving competitiveness for Irish companies also seeking to scale up or sustain their individual market share.**

Manufacturing Engineering and Polymer Apprenticeships present an exciting opportunity for companies to “grow their own” talent pool and cultivate it with bespoke training that meets their own specific needs. Companies can hire for potential, recruiting individuals that have the attributes and attitudes they want, and then moulding those recruits through training and mentoring to become the employees they need.

The competitive advantages don't end there. As young, dynamic talent with new ways of thinking join an organisation, it stimulates a growth mindset in the organisation as a whole and helps create a diverse and inclusive culture.

To date, apprentices have earned graduating grades that are on average 10% - 20% higher than those of full-time students entering the workplace. They get to earn while they learn and gain a national, accredited qualification to put them on an excellent career path. Through their study towards professional qualifications and the application of these learnings in the company,

apprentices build technical knowledge which in turn feeds back into the business immediately. Measured head-to-head, their hands-on work experience makes them more productive workers more quickly than conventional graduates.

Importantly, most apprentices also go on to become productive, loyal, long-term employees with higher retention rates and employee satisfaction rates than average. Ireland boasts the highest share of employment in hi-tech manufacturing industries in Europe, with 260,000 people working across 4,000 businesses. In Ireland's highly competitive job-seekers market, recruitment and retention are increasing challenges for all sectors. Nationally, our employee turnover is currently running at 18%+, and the average cost of recruiting a new employee exceeds €7,000. This figure does not include the cost of on-boarding, off-boarding and the business disruption that inevitably takes place during the recruitment process. The impact on a business of losing one or more key employees can be significant and long term, but the odds of this happening amongst past apprentices are lower than overall. A recent study puts the number as high as 92% of apprentices being successfully retained by their companies, post-graduation.

In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, successful companies value tenacious, adaptable and empowered employees. All initiatives that cost time or money are assessed based on the return on that investment. The most compelling statistic on apprenticeships is the number of companies and trainees who continue to actively participate and invest in them.

In Ireland in 2022, there were over 24,000 apprentices completing training on over 60 different programmes including tech, property services, biopharma, engineering, construction, logistics and finance. Some 6,500 growth-oriented companies are now utilising apprenticeship programmes profitably, predictably and sustainably over time to contribute to their bottom line. The feedback from companies engaged to date has been exceptional. For industry partners, apprenticeships have become a vital and well-established element of their talent development strategy, delivering meaningful competitive advantages in an increasingly competitive world.

[Learn more about how the Polymer Apprenticeships and Manufacturing & Engineering Apprenticeships benefits business in Ireland.](#)



All companies have the same goal - to compete and beat their competitors. 6,500 growth-oriented companies are now investing in Apprenticeship programmes profitably, predictably, and sustainably to drive competitiveness and contribute to their bottom line.

### Trish Breen

Manufacturing & Engineering,  
and Polymer Apprenticeships



# Business calls for a stronger role for the Digital 9+ group of member states



As part of our Stronger Europe, Stronger Ireland campaign, Ibec and its European partners met with D9+ ministers in Poznan, Poland on 10 March. The key message of the D9+ business community emphasised support for a stronger role of the informal group of member states and urged policymakers to empower business in order to vitalise Europe in a digital decade.

As previously reported, Ibec is working with key business federations across the D9+ countries in an informal like-minded alliance (the B9+). The core aim of the B9+ is to support the work of the D9+. The D9+ is an informal group of ministers representing digitally advanced and like-minded member states who support Europe's digital transition. They represent 35.9% of nominal EU GDP, for a combined value of €4.8 trillion in GDP. The D9+ countries include Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

A B9+ delegation, with significant Ibec contributions, developed and outlined a joint industry statement at their meeting with D9+ ministers, hosted by the Polish Government. The meeting was chaired by Mr Paweł Lewandowski, Polish Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Digital Affairs and Mrs Jolanta Jaworska, President of the Association of Employers of Digital Technologies (Lewiatan).

The bilateral meeting marked the fourth successive formal involvement of the B9+ in D9+ ministerial meetings and comes in advance of the D9+ meeting in Brussels, Belgium in October 2023. The full B9+ joint statement developed by Ibec and European partners may be accessed [here](#).

1. Secure digital competitiveness. In an era of heightened geopolitical instability and in the face of war in Ukraine, EU members states should explore reliable tools to back up and maintain countries' critical data and service regardless of interruptions (e.g., a large-scale cyberattack).
2. Be ambitious and open to trade with like-minded partners. Create conditions that work with, not against, beneficial digital innovation.
  - Intensify work with like-minded partners to lower global barriers to digital trade, investment and innovation. Enable international data flows and work with like-minded partners.
  - Get the AI Act right to realise the opportunities and benefits of trusted AI.
  - Reflect and rethink on the Data Act.
3. Strengthen the policy responses at EU and national levels to tackle labour and skills shortages which have become key concerns for businesses. They constitute a bottleneck to economic growth potential and a missed opportunity for human potential.
4. Intensify engagement. Be the authoritative platform and voice for an outward-looking, secure, competitive, innovative and pro-enterprise EU. We welcome the valuable engagement and contributions that the D9+ forum has made to date. The D9+ initiative is important. We continue to support the D9+ expressed ambition for Europe's digital decade to 2030 and stand ready to support that ambition further.



# Talent to Thrive – a new paradigm for learning, talent and innovation

Education, skills and talent development are consistently top priorities for the businesses that Ibec represent. Digitalisation, automation and globalisation are transforming the world of work at an unprecedented pace with significant impact for education and learning.

With 2023 designated as the European Year of Skills, now is the time to set the narrative for the future of work and society, giving a fresh impetus to lifelong learning, empowering people and companies to contribute to the green and digital transitions, and supporting innovation and competitiveness.

In Ireland, highly innovative business sectors with a global outlook already exist; from technology, financial services, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, agriculture and food, engineering, and manufacturing. The challenge now for Irish industry is to retain its hard-earned size, scale and reputation by continuing to deliver world-class performance in all aspects of current and future operations. Now is the time for Ireland to really consider what our new economic narrative should be. A new strategy for lifelong learning and workforce development, financed by the National Training Fund (NTF), can provide the answer and put innovation, research, talent and skills at the heart of our economy and society.

## The opportunity for Ireland within the 2023 Year of Skills

Ibec is working with members to emphasise the importance of people, culture and talent to ensure Ireland remains a lighthouse for skills, innovation and opportunity. This can only be achieved by harnessing the collaborative strengths of enterprise, education and government. Lifelong learning is essential to sustain and develop a skilled workforce that can adapt and respond to changing skills needs. This requires appropriate levels of strategic planning and financial resources. The European Commission has set new targets for lifelong learning as part of the European Skills Agenda. While Ireland is above the European average at 13% in terms of participation in lifelong learning, there is a lot more that can be achieved.



Claire McGee, Ibec Head of Education and Innovation Policy

Ibec welcomes the publication of the [OECD Skills Report](#) which highlights the important role of skills policy for sustainable and inclusive economic development and preparing for the digital and green transitions. It is encouraging to see so many of Ibec's recommendations included in the Report which will help to address the current and future skills needs of industry and will be the blueprint for developing a dynamic and enduring skills matrix in Ireland. Putting the necessary resources in place to support this ambition sends a clear message that Ireland backs talent and people.

Listen to our Ibec Responds podcast [here](#) where we explore the importance of lifelong learning to business and how Ibec is driving this important initiative. Nikki Gallagher, Ibec Head of Public Affairs, is joined by Claire McGee, Ibec Head of Education and Innovation Policy, and Meadhbh Costello, Ibec Social and Education Policy Executive.

### Key asks:

**Develop a national strategy for Lifelong Learning:** A step change is needed from government and business to increase investment and action in reskilling and upskilling. It is now time to use the surplus €1.5 billion in the National Training Fund to support industry-led skills development programmes and to incentivise business to invest more in training.

**Unlock the National Training Fund (NTF) surplus to provide direct supports for business to the high level of current and future skills challenges:** The NTF surplus is an opportunity to create a step-change in business supports and enterprise-led upskilling and reskilling initiatives, while driving innovation in the higher and further education system and meaningful industry-education collaboration.

**Establish a National Training Voucher Scheme to incentivise business to engage in skills development:** A National Training Voucher scheme has the potential to boost in-company training and widen participation in upskilling and reskilling to include all businesses and employers by addressing the financial barrier to training. Based on the principle of cost reimbursement, firms should be able to claim back expenses for training.



See [here](#).

# Diversity and inclusion are good for society and for the economy

Fergal O'Brien for the Business Post  
18 February 2023



The Irish economy has been making headlines around the world for over two decades now. In that time, we have successfully navigated a major financial and fiscal crisis, the exit of our nearest neighbour and traditionally most significant economic partner from the EU and, most recently, the worst global pandemic in a century.

The economic growth and resilience shown during these challenges have been driven by a broad range of factors that have been attractive to globalised businesses setting up here, as well as those emerging from within Ireland. Central to this growth has been a highly educated and flexible workforce, drawn from all corners of the globe.

In recent months, however, we have sadly seen an emerging narrative from a loud minority that the costs of receiving migrants are undermining the country's prosperity. This is simply untrue.

Irish business recognises that diversity and inclusion is not only good for Irish society, but also for the economy. We recognise that an open and tolerant society is irrefutably a key driver for social and economic prosperity.

Experience has shown that the multinational workforce that underpins the Irish labour market has helped to strengthen talent pools, boost productivity and increase creativity and innovation. All of this has contributed to Ireland's competitiveness and growth in recent decades.

Welcoming migrant workers into the Irish labour market is not a new phenomenon. In 1998, only 3.2% of Ireland's workforce comprised migrant workers. This wasn't far from the EU average of 4%, but after the 2004 enlargement when 10 new countries joined the EU, the numbers coming to Ireland rose steeply. They fell slightly in 2008, but today over 15% of the workforce is non-Irish national

– twice the EU average. By 2016, almost two thirds (65%) of Ireland's non-EU workers were educated to third level – more than double the EU average of 30%. Among EU workers in Ireland, almost half (45%) have third-level qualifications – 10% above the EU average.

Significantly, the proportion of both EU and non-EU workers in Ireland with third-level qualifications is higher than the proportion for Irish workers, even though at 40%, Ireland has one of the highest educated populations in the EU.

The recent census estimates a net increase in the population due to migration of approximately 190,000 over the past six years; about half of the total population growth over that period. The majority of these people are of working age, with estimated immigration of 144,000 adults between the ages of 25 and 64 from 2016 to 2022. As a result, inward migration is a vital component of what little labour market slack remains after several years of rapid jobs growth. A key factor bringing high-skilled migrants to Ireland is the country's continued high ranking for quality of life. Despite challenges in healthcare and housing, Ireland's GDP per capita at €53,200, adjusted for purchasing power, is second only to Luxembourg in Europe.

Migrant workers make up a key source of skills within several sectors, including healthcare and ICT, with vital roles heavily dependent on sourcing skilled workers through visa programmes. In healthcare and social work, work permit recipients from just the previous year represent 3% of the total workers in the sector. Of just under 40,000 employment permits granted last year, ICT, social work and healthcare employees made up a little over half.

Other significant sponsors of employment permits are the construction and agriculture sectors. In the absence of this much-needed labour supply, staffing shortages in many essential services would be much more acute.

## Comment

It is important to acknowledge that not all of those who are arriving in Ireland are doing so by choice. Many are refugees who have fled the horrors of war, famine and other unimaginably difficult circumstances. Yet they too have much to offer their new communities. As Ireland continues to experience exceptional economic growth, demand for talent and skills amid an ageing indigenous population will only continue to grow. Workers from abroad arriving under all circumstances are increasingly integrating themselves into our multinational and multicultural workforce, and will undoubtedly continue to play a pivotal role as we face into new economic challenges in the years ahead.

We have seen this clearly over the past year following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. From the first arrival of Ukrainians into Ireland, local community groups and Education and Training Boards around the country welcomed individuals and began to deliver English language training.

This is key for those who wish to join the labour market so that their qualifications and skills are fully utilised. In addition, employers have engaged in efforts to integrate refugees into their workforce community, with some offering specific access programmes for refugees which offer mentoring and upskilling leading to full employment. Already more than a third of those of working age who have arrived have joined the Irish labour market, which is hugely encouraging.



There are, of course, challenges when integrating persons from abroad into our labour market. For example, some individuals may be traumatised, having left a war-torn environment. Their language skills and confidence speaking English may be limited, while many of the demographic who joined us from Ukraine are women with children or other dependents who need childcare supports if they are to engage in the labour market. Yet we know that as these workers “find their feet”, so to speak, they can be a real asset in bridging talent gaps and sharing skills and experience in their local community as they rebuild their lives.

Ireland’s world-class economy is globally competitive in terms of human capital and research – core drivers of our journey from economic laggards to one of the most resilient and prosperous economies in the world. Migrant workers have been a cornerstone in this success and will continue to play this vital role into the future. Despite the vocal minority, it is important to recognise and celebrate that an open and tolerant society is irrefutably a key driver for prosperity, and will be central to realising our ambitions in making Ireland a better place to live and work.





# Stronger Europe, Stronger Ireland:

## An EU that is focused on its strengths and competitiveness

On Thursday 25 May, Ibec's EU and International Affairs team held a meeting of the EU Affairs and Trade Policy Committee, followed by an open event, 'Strengthening EU Competitiveness: open strategic autonomy and the single market at 30 years', with Peter Burke TD, Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence. The event was attended by Ibec members, government officials and representatives from EU embassies and permanent representations in Dublin.

At the event to launch Ibec's campaign, '[Stronger Europe, Stronger Ireland: The potential of the single market](#)', Dr Pat Ivory, Director of EU and International Affairs, outlined Ibec's recommendations to enhance competitiveness and achieve the untapped potential of the single market in relation to goods, services, capital and

labour. Minister Burke welcomed the campaign, supporting the proposals which aim to address the remaining barriers and fragmentation. On trade, Dr Pat Ivory outlined how an open and sustainable trade environment can support EU competitiveness, with Minister Burke stressing that Ireland will continue to fight for open trade and a strong multilateral system.

Speakers noted that the EU's long-term competitiveness can be achieved by continuing the approach that has worked for the last 30 years, remaining open and outward-looking, with a stable and sustainable regulatory environment. Participants also discussed migration, enlargement, sustainability and skills.

You can learn more about the campaign [here](#).



# 25-year anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and launch of Ibec's 'For Peace + Prosperity' campaign

As part of the 'For Peace + Prosperity' campaign, Ibec hosted a series of events to mark the 25-year anniversary of the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (BGFA). Following the January launch of the campaign at Ibec's offices, an event took place in Mansion House in Dublin with the architects and advocates of the BGFA. In March, in Washington DC, USA Ibec hosted a briefing on the campaign with the US Chamber of Commerce, hosted by Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason. Later, members of the Ibec delegation also met with Joe Kennedy, US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, Deputy US Trade Representative, Ambassador Jayme White and senior Department of Commerce officials. In April at the Embassy of Ireland in London, representatives from across the British and Irish business community heard expert insights from panellists on the all-island economy. To read more about the campaign, visit the [website](#). Listen to the podcast [here](#).



*L-R Danny McCoy, Ibec CEO, Alastair Campbell, former Director of Communications to British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, former Taoiseach at Mansion House in Dublin.*



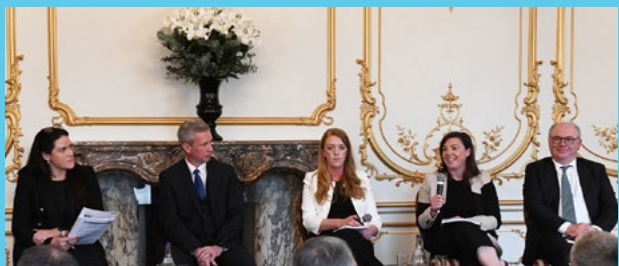
*Ibec delegation at the Irish Embassy in Washington DC with Geraldine Byrne Nason, Irish Ambassador to the USA.*



*L-R Danny McCoy, Ibec CEO, Sarah Murphy, Business Post CEO and Ambassador Martin Fraser at the Irish Embassy in London.*



*Speakers at the Ibec St Patrick's Day event in Brussels highlighted the campaign. L-R Fergal O'Brien Executive Director Ibec, Ambassador Tom Hanney, Seán Kelly MER, Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, Peter Burke TD, Dr Pat Ivory Director Ibec and Jackie King Executive Director Ibec.*



*L-R Panel moderator Sarah Murphy, Business Post CEO, and panellists Ben Fletcher, Make UK COO, Emma Hynes, Head of Government Affairs Europe at Citi, Aisling Kelly, Partner at Arthur Cox LLP, and Michael D'Arcy, Ibec All-island economy consultant at the Embassy of Ireland in London.*



### BusinessEurope meeting with Commissioner Dombrovskis



On 16 February, European Commission Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis organised a roundtable to exchange views with business ahead of the publication of the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) in March. Ibec, represented by Dr. Pat Ivory, Director of EU & International Affairs, participated in the discussion, together with the BusinessEurope leadership and a small group of key business federations. BusinessEurope outlined the priorities of the European business community regarding the CRMA, which can be found [here](#).

### BusinessEurope Internal Market Committee meeting in Prague

In March, the BusinessEurope Internal Market Committee was welcomed by the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic in Prague. Kate Byrne, EU Policy Executive, participated in the event on behalf of Ibec. Participants discussed the dynamics of Single Market policy discussions in the Council and presidency experiences of the Czech Government with Mr Martin Bednář, Director of Department of European Affairs and the Internal Market. This was followed by an exchange of views on the Digital EU legislative landscape with Mr Petr Očko, Deputy Minister for Digitalization and Innovation at Ministry of Industry and Trade.



*Jana Hartman Radová, Chair of the Committee and the Confederation's Permanent Delegate in Brussels who chaired the meeting in Prague and Martin Bednář, Director of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic.*

### Supply Chains Skills week in Rosslare



27 March saw the official launch of the first national Logistics and Supply Chain Skills Week by Minister Jack Chambers at Rosslare Europort. The key aim of the week was to promote careers and educational opportunities in the Irish logistics and supply chain sector. As a key business advocate on the Department of Transport's Logistics and Supply Chain Skills Group, Ibec proudly co-organised and co-sponsored the event. Minister Chambers spoke of the strong collaboration between industry and education providers, and how to deliver sustainable growth for the sector. The panellists highlighted the increased role ESG will play in the supply chain sector. Klaudia Dudzinska, Executive Trade & International Affairs, participated in the event on behalf of Ibec.



### Deputy Director General Trade, European Commission in Dublin



In April, Denis Redonnet, Deputy Director General for Trade and Chief Trade Enforcement Officer at the European Commission, attended a meeting on trade policy and competitiveness with Irish stakeholders in Dublin. Dr Pat Ivory, Director of EU & International Affairs, represented Ibec at the meeting.

### Webinar on the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

On 24 March, Ibec hosted a Webinar titled 'Implementing EU sustainability reporting requirements' on the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive with a specialist contribution from Kate Frisby, Corporate Sustainability Reporting and Sustainable Finance within DG FISMA of the European Commission. The webinar provided practical information and guidance for members to help implement the new EU requirements for businesses to disclose information annually on how sustainability issues affect their business and how their business impacts on sustainability. Access the recording [here](#).



*Our CSRD webinar was moderated by Dr Pat Ivory, Director of EU & International Affairs, and included contributions from Kate Frisby, European Commission, Kara McGann, Head of Social Policy, Neil Willoughby, Senior Executive European Affairs and Klaudia Dudzinska, Executive Trade & International Affairs.*

### Digital event with Swedish Enterprise at Ibec office in Brussels

In March, Ibec and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (SN), hosted a panel discussion in the Ibec Brussels office titled 'Leading competitiveness in the digital decade'. Chaired by Dr. Pat Ivory, participants on the panel included Eadaoin Collins, Counsellor at the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU, Fredrik Erixon, Director of ECIPE, Michaela Sand, SN, and Erik O'Donovan, Head of Digital Economy Policy Ibec.





## European Three Seas Initiative

In May, Ibec hosted an event with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Dublin and the BGK – Polish State Development Bank to highlight the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund. Speakers at the event included Anna Sochańska, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Danny McCoy, CEO of Ibec, Radosław Fogiel, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Sejm – Parliament of the Republic of Poland, Ștefan Laurențiu-Mihai, Ambassador of Romania to Ireland and Michael Clausen, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy. *Photo Credits: Rafał Kostrzewa.*

## Ibec St. Patrick's Day Celebrations in Washington DC

An Ibec delegation travelled to Washington DC for the annual St. Patrick's week programme. This year, in addition to marking St. Patrick's Day, the delegation highlighted the important 'For Peace + Prosperity' campaign to international stakeholders. Ibec hosted a briefing on the campaign with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, hosted by Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason. Ibec also hosted its annual dinner attended by over 120 leaders. The programme also included meetings with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S. Department of Commerce, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Joe Kennedy, Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, National Association of Manufacturers and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Ibec delegation members also attended various events in Washington DC and New York including the St Patrick's Day reception with An Taoiseach at the Embassy of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Bureau St Patrick's Day Breakfast, the Ireland Funds National Gala, Ireland Day at the New York Stock Exchange, and the U.S Council Lunch in New York.





# Ibec St. Patrick's Day Reception in the European Parliament, Brussels

On 21 March, Ibec's annual St. Patrick's Day event was hosted in the European Parliament, the first time returning to this venue since before the pandemic. The celebrations, hosted alongside Seán Kelly MEP, marked both St. Patrick's week and the 50-year anniversary of Ireland's accession to the EU. We welcomed over 250 attendees, including MEPs, Ireland's Ambassador to the EU Tom Hanney and officials from the Irish Permanent Representation,

Ibec sectors, members and stakeholders. Keynote speakers included President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, Minister for European Affairs Peter Burke, Seán Kelly MEP, Dr Pat Ivory, Director of EU & International Affairs and Jackie King, Executive Director Ibec Global. The speakers highlighted two Ibec campaigns: the '[For Peace + Prosperity](#)' and the '[Stronger Europe, Stronger Ireland](#)' campaign.



On 21 March, Financial Services Ireland held their board meeting with Commissioner Mairead McGuinness at the Ibec office in Brussels.



## Embassy of Ireland, Belgium and Perm Rep St. Patrick's Day event

Ibec co-sponsored the Irish Embassy and Permanent Representation St. Patrick's Day event at Bozar. Tom Hanney, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU, Kevin Conmy, Ambassador of Ireland in Belgium, and Ossian Smyth, Minister of State for Public Procurement, eGovernment and Circular Economy gave speeches at the event.



Róisín de Bhaldraithe, Ibec, Erica Lee, Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of Ireland in Belgium, Ossian Smyth, Minister of State, José Amsing, Ibec Global, Ellen O'Connor, Ibec Global, Neil Willoughby, Ibec.





If you want to pick up on any of these items, don't hesitate to contact any member of the team.



**Pat Ivory**

Director of EU &  
International Affairs

+ 353 1 605 15 71

pat.ivory@ibec.ie



**Neil Willoughby**

Senior Executive  
European Affairs

+32 2 740 14 32

neil.willoughby@ibec.ie



**Kate Byrne**

EU Policy Executive

+32 2 740 14 35

kate.byrne@ibec.ie



**Róisín de Bhaldráithe**

EU Policy Officer

+ 3237401433

roisin.debhaldraithe@ibec.ie



**Klaudia Dudzińska**

Executive, Trade &  
International Affairs

+ 3237401433

klaudia.dudzinska@ibec.ie

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**Ibec HQ**

84-86 Lower Baggot Street

Dublin 2

+353 1 605 1500

info@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie

**Cork**

2nd Floor Penrose One

Penrose Dock

Co. Cork, T23 KW81

+353 21 429 5511

cork@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/cork

**Limerick**

Gardner House, Bank Place

Charlotte Quay

Limerick

+353 61 410 411

midwest@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/midwest

**Galway**

Ross House

Victoria Place

Galway

+353 91 561 109

galway@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/west

**Waterford**

Waterford Business Park

Cork Road

Waterford

+353 51 331 260

southeast@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/southeast

**Donegal**

Pier One

Quay Street

Donegal Town

+353 74 972 2474

northwest@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/northwest

**Ibec Brussels**

Avenue de Cortenbergh 100,

1000 Brussels

+32 (0)2 740 14 30

ibec.europe@ibec.ie

www.ibec.ie/europe



@ibec\_irl



www.linkedin.com/company/ibec