



# GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

## National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

### Country Profile

#### *Ireland*

<b>Capital:</b>	Dublin
<b>Geographical Size:</b>	69 797 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population:</b>	4 604 029 (2014)
<b>Population as % of total EU population:</b>	0.9% (2014)
<b>GDP:</b>	€ 164.049 billion (2013)
<b>Defense Expenditure:</b>	€ 891 million (2013)
<b>Official EU language(s):</b>	Irish, English
<b>Political System:</b>	Parliamentary republic
<b>EU member country since:</b>	1 January 1973
<b>Seats in European Parliament:</b>	11
<b>Currency:</b>	Eurozone member since 1 January 1999
<b>Schengen area member?</b>	No
<b>Presidency of the Council:</b>	7 times between 1975 and 2013

Source: Europa.eu

## GGI National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy 2015

---

**GGI NBEFP**  
Peace & Security Section

© The Global Governance Institute (GGI)  
December 2015

**The Global Governance Institute**  
Pleinlaan 5, Brussels  
B-1050 Belgium  
Email: [info@globalgovernance.eu](mailto:info@globalgovernance.eu)  
Web: [www.globalgovernance.eu](http://www.globalgovernance.eu)

### a. Political System

The country of Ireland is defined as five-sixths of the Island of Ireland, as the remainder, Northern Ireland, is still under the rule of the United Kingdom. The parliamentary Republic of Ireland has been independent from Britain since 1921. The country is divided into 28 counties and three cities where local government exists on issues such as transport, water management, education, and health in order to increase the democratic representation.

The President (currently Michael D. Higgins since 2011) acts as the Chief of State and is elected by the citizens for a seven-year term, including the possibility of one re-election. The President is able to appoint the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, also serving as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The President is able to consult the Council of State, consisting of several high-level officials from the executive, legislative, as well as judicial part of the state. The Prime Minister, also called *Taoiseach*, is the Head of Government and often represents the country on international visits. Enda Kenny currently holds this post. He was nominated by the House of Representatives and formally appointed by the President. The Cabinet consists of 15 government departments. During all discussions an Attorney General is present to give legal advice.

Legislative acts are passed in a bicameral procedure divided between the Senate (*Seanad Eireann*) and the House of Representatives (*Dail Eireann*), which are the only ones with power to pass laws. The Senate has 60 seats divided into 43 indirectly elected politicians by a panel representing different vocational interests, eleven are chosen by the Prime Minister and three each are elected by graduates of the University of Dublin and the National University of Ireland all for a five-year term. The people directly elect the 166 politicians in the House of Representatives for a five-year term. The House has the power to approve international agreements. This body also usually initiates bills and passes them to the Senate for possible amendments. However, it also works the other way around as long as it is not a money bill. In case both bodies have accepted the bill it is regarded as passed.<sup>1</sup>

Even though Ireland's common law system was built around the English system, a lot has changed through the addition of customary law. Another contrast to Great Britain is the Irish Constitution that has been valid since 1937. The highest judicial organ is the Supreme Court, also called the Court of Final Appeal, consisting of one Chief Justice as well as nine other justices. The court works in different sized panels ranging from three to seven judges depending on the complexity and importance of a case. This court is the highest court one can go to after having passed the Courts of First Instance as well as the Courts of Appeal.<sup>2</sup>

### b. Foreign Policy

In 2015, the new foreign policy paper of Ireland was published outlining all the priorities, values as well as important partners of the country. The main values are based on the United Nations Charter: peace and friendly cooperation based on international justice and morality, as well as the promotion of human rights. Women's rights are also of importance to Ireland as can be noticed with the National Action Plan on the issue. These values are sometimes under pressure when other issues are at stake (e.g. loss of economic value from Saudi Arabia a notorious human rights abuser). Nonetheless, Ireland tries to push these values mainly with the help of various international organizations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Irish Statute Book, *Constitution of Ireland*, July 1, 1937. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html>

<sup>2</sup> "Ireland", *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last update October 28, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ei.html>.

Despite being an island, Ireland is connected to the **global community** and is affected by all the changes that are taking place. The most important ones to Ireland are new technologies such as more people being online, fragile states, as well as climate change. Due to their complexity, a coordinated and often **multilateral approach** is needed. Cooperation with other countries exists on many levels such as bilateral, regional, and international. Hence, domestic and international policies are becoming increasingly blurred. There is a general wish to be more active globally in order to make their national interests known as well as secure their economic standing.

Ireland wishes to achieve a global system ensuring the rule of law and strong global institutions. Ireland believes a fairer world can be achieved by improving food security and humanitarian engagement to prevent crisis, as well as by promoting human rights through further cooperation with civil society. Security is given through the various peacekeeping operations Ireland participates in, and sustainability with the help of the post 2015 UN agenda. These are all very ambitious and altruistic goals that mainly seem to be achieved abroad, while in the country itself, refugees still live under bad conditions and a religious divide between Protestants and Catholics can be noticed.<sup>3</sup>

Attached to these values are several priority areas that Ireland is committed to. Due to their **emphasis on human rights and neutrality** stemming from the decade long conflict with Northern Ireland, the country has a tradition of engagement in peacekeeping missions, development, and disarmament. Work in these areas is supposed to allow the country to share their experience of peace and reconciliation that is often regarded as the prime model of a conflict resolution between two regions. Due to the recent economic crisis, a bigger focus has also been put on trade and economic recovery. In line with their human rights values, the country is actively involved in combatting poverty and hunger. This is established domestically through the Irish Aid Program as well as with the help of various other international stakeholders that give development aid. The domestic program is especially active in several cooperation countries in Africa where help in all areas is offered. Another priority area is striving for a sustainable world as climate change has an effect on all kinds of issues. Thus, it should also be included into development policy as a considering factor. Linked to this is the goal to achieve energy security, which, however, is mainly on the European level.

The Irish have a strong feeling of **national pride** that allowed them to develop a powerful national image worldwide. As can be assumed from their national pride, sharing their culture and working with the Irish diaspora are also priorities of Ireland. Support to the diaspora is given by trying to achieve an immigration reform in the US and continuing the Emigrant Support Program to give the emigrants access to social services.<sup>4</sup>

### *European Union (EU)*

Ireland has been a member of the European Union since 1973 and sees it as an important actor to strengthen the country's influence and promote its interests known worldwide. Thus, Ireland desires a strong and effective European Union. Priority areas in the EU for Ireland can

---

<sup>3</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Statement of Strategy 2015-2017*, April 15, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/aboutus/Department-of-Foreign-Affairs-and-Trade-Statement-of-Strategy-2015-17.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, January 13, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/global-island/the-global-island-irelands-foreign-policy.pdf>

be divided into internal and external elements that the country wants to push further. Important internal policies are the single market, with emphasis on the digital market; economic growth through job creation, mobility, and investment; the energy and banking unions; and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) while keeping in mind food safety. Important external policies include the **enlargement** of the EU (the accession of Turkey and the Western Balkans are supported by Ireland) and enhancing **EU-UN cooperation**. Ireland also promotes at the EU level the negotiation of trade and investment agreements with third countries (including the US and Japan) and the strengthening EU capacity for conflict prevention and resolution.

Ireland's promotion of national interests includes the **agricultural and marine sectors**. The Common Agricultural Policy is one of the most important mechanisms for Ireland. While discussing these issues, Ireland usually has the same partners on the same issues without establishing a link between policy areas. It would like to change this by becoming more cross-sectional and looking out for new partners to achieve a more globally interconnected outlook.

Ireland is also concerned about the instability in **Eastern Europe**: despite the country's increasingly close economic ties to Britain, Ireland is also careful to avoid the more hawkish position of this neighbor. As a non-NATO member of the EU, it continues to stress the importance of keeping open potential channels of communications with Moscow. Dublin's position is that restrictive measures against Russia, coupled with open dialogue and continued political and economic engagement with the various sides in the conflict, offer the best way of creating the conditions for a peacefully negotiated resolution<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, due to the fragility in the area, strengthening the association agreements with Eastern countries such as Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine could increase European stability.<sup>6</sup>

Relations to **Great Britain** have existed for a long time as Ireland belonged to the British Crown until 1921. Conflict was emphasized over stability in the following period up to present times, as the question of **Northern Ireland** was unresolved for a long time. In 1921 only 26 southern counties gained independence while the remaining six still belonged to Great Britain. This separation can often be regarded as a separation between Protestants in the North and Christians in the South. The tensions resulted in years of violence starting in the 1960s. In 1994, a first ceasefire was established but a lasting settlement was not reached until the *Good Friday Agreement* in 1998. This agreement finally brought peace to the two areas and a power-sharing government in the North. It was formally adopted with a referendum in the North and the South<sup>7</sup>. Until today, the Irish constitution still clearly shows that Ireland wants to be an independent country and keep its Irish heritage.

Today, a government relationship exists between the two sides with the help of the Northern Ireland Executive and regular meetings to promote social and economic cooperation. In addition, the Irish government has a Reconciliation Fund that it uses to fund projects for cooperation between the areas. For further positive development it is important that also Ireland and Great Britain are able to keep up their good relations. In fact, Great Britain is one of Ireland's biggest economic partners, and a potential "**Brexit**" is regarded as detrimental to Ireland. Dublin has grown more vocal in expressing its view that the economic and trade

<sup>5</sup> O'Connell B., "View from Dublin: A 'wait and see' approach", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.

[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_view\\_from\\_dublin\\_a\\_wait\\_and\\_see\\_approach311368](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_view_from_dublin_a_wait_and_see_approach311368)

<sup>6</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, January 13, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015.

<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebstimedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/global-island/the-global-island-irelands-foreign-policy.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "Northern Ireland", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015.  
<https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/northern-ireland/>

benefits to Ireland of UK membership are significant and that it wants the UK to remain a full and integral EU member<sup>8</sup>.

Northern Ireland remains a clearly **divided society** with the wall still erected, violence occurring, and students going to segregated schools based on their religious views<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the current debate in Ireland is focused on the impact “Brexit” could have on peace and stability in Northern Ireland. In the event of a British departure from the EU, Ireland’s border with Northern Ireland would become the external border of the European Union, with all the associated border controls and security checks that this entails. The possible return of barriers dismantled over the past generation would be deeply symbolic for Northern Irish nationalists, who could once again feel themselves disconnected from the Irish state<sup>10</sup>.

### c. Peace & Security Policy

Ireland’s security and defense policy is largely marked by its policy of **neutrality** since World War II that is also part of the Constitution. Nonetheless, the country still has the Irish Defense Forces that are needed in case of a direct attack on the country as well as for helping in peacekeeping missions abroad. These defense forces are divided into permanent and reserve. The permanent forces are a standing army and are further divided into army, navy and air. The reserve forces are called upon in the case additional forces are needed; reservists only exist for the army and navy<sup>11</sup>.

According to the *Strategy Statement 2015-2017*, the probability of a conventional military attack on Ireland’s territory from another state is currently low. However, any potential conflicts affecting both member states of the EU and other non-EU states present serious security concerns for Ireland since the international arena is likely to remain unpredictable in the coming years. Ireland is particularly concerned about the consequences of conflicts in Ukraine, West Asia, and Africa.<sup>12</sup> The main priority of the Irish security policy is to promote **global peace and reconciliation** especially through **peacekeeping missions**. In this field, Ireland is able to directly capture and share its own experience of reconciliation. To further deepen this expert area, a conflict resolution unit was set up in 2007 based on UN missions with the cooperation of many international organizations.<sup>13</sup>

### *European Union (EU)*

Ireland believes that the beginning of the European External Action Service (EEAS) brought more coherence to Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Nonetheless, national goals are still followed by the national embassies and the country tries to mostly stay away from the defense policies due to its support of neutrality. Ireland is part of the European Defence

---

<sup>8</sup> O’Connell B., “View from Dublin: A ‘wait and see’ approach”, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.

[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_view\\_from\\_dublin\\_a\\_wait\\_and\\_see\\_approach311368](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_view_from_dublin_a_wait_and_see_approach311368)

<sup>9</sup> Shapiro A., "For Northern Ireland, Wounds From 'The Troubles' Are Still Raw." *NPR*, November 28, 2014.

Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/11/28/367183005/for-northern-ireland-wounds-from-the-troubles-are-still-raw>.

<sup>10</sup> Gilmore A., “Ireland: Brexit is a matter of significant and growing concern in Ireland”, *European Politics and Policy*, London School of Economics and Political Science, October 21, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/10/21/european-views-on-the-uks-renegotiation-ireland-portugal-austria-and-croatia/#One>

<sup>11</sup> Department of Defence and Defence Forces, *Strategy Statement 2015-2017*, March 19, 2015, p. 10-12. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://www.defence.ie/website.nsf/Strategy2015E>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>13</sup> "Peace and Security", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed June 2, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/>.

Agency (EDA) as a big supporter of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and urges the EU to contribute to more of the UN mandated operations. Its **constitutional prohibition on joining a EU collective defense** did not undermine Irish participation in EU missions<sup>14</sup>. Ireland has sent several experts as well as defense personnel to **CSDP missions** and regularly takes part in discussions concerning the policy of it. Missions the country has participated in militarily are EUFOR Chad and the EU Training Mission in Somalia commanded by an Irish general. Moreover, Ireland has participated in the EU battlegroups since 2009. In 2011, it was part of the Nordic one, and in 2012, Ireland joined a battlegroup with Germany and Austria. Irish experts in civilian missions were in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Georgia, with EUPOL COPPS in Palestine as well as EUCAP NESTOR in Somalia.

#### *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*

Ireland is one of the few EU member states that are not members of NATO. Irish cooperation with NATO is based on a longstanding policy of military neutrality, which allows for its armed forces to be used for peacekeeping and crisis management where there is a UN mandate, a government decision and parliamentary approval. From this basis Ireland selects areas of cooperation with NATO that match joint objectives. Notably, the country is part of the **Partnership for Peace (PfP)** program that enables the country to cooperate on humanitarian, rescue, peacekeeping and crisis management. Membership to this program is based on an individual agreement with NATO and is reviewed every two years. In the past the country was active in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, Ireland is part of the mission in Kosovo (since 1999, now with 12 people) as well as Afghanistan (since 2002, now with 7 people).<sup>15</sup>

#### *United Nations (UN)*

Ireland has been a member of the UN since 1955. The country supports a multilateral system of collective security where **disarmament** and the regulation of new weapons are promoted. Another priority area linked to the UN values is **human rights**. As a promoter of those, Ireland was one of the countries pushing for a Human Rights Council and was part of it from 2013 to 2015. During this time the country made national initiatives on the freedom of expression online as well as child mortality below the age of five.

UN peacekeeping missions have been a part of Ireland's relation to the UN since 1956, to the extent that the country hosts a **UN Peacekeeping school**<sup>16</sup>. In September 2015, Ireland had 386 nationals engaged in peacekeeping missions (MINURSO in the Western Sahara, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNDOF in the Golan Heights, UNFICYP in Cyprus, UNIFIL in Lebanon, UNOCI in Cote d'Ivoire and UNTSO in the Middle East)<sup>17</sup>. For the period 2014-2015, Ireland contributed 0.42% of the UN Peacekeeping budget<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Tonra B., "Letter from Dublin", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, January 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=58792>

<sup>15</sup> "NATO's Relations with Ireland", *The North Atlantic Organization*, last update October 26, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. [http://www.nato.int/cps/de/natohq/topics\\_51979.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/de/natohq/topics_51979.htm).

<sup>16</sup> "Ireland's Membership of the UN Human Rights Council 2013-2015", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/human-rights/ireland-and-the-human-rights-council/>

<sup>17</sup> "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, September 31, 2015, p. 20. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15_3.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236", *Report of the Secretary General*, December 27, 2012, p. 2. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1).

### *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*

Ireland has been a member of the OSCE since 1973 and sees it as an important forum for security as it brings together diverse actors. The country shares the same priorities with the EU but pays a special emphasis on the **human dimension** within the OSCE. In 2012 Ireland was the chair of the OSCE and hosted a conference about peace building with Northern Ireland as a case study<sup>19</sup>. In 2014, Ireland contributed 0.8% (€1,102,296) to the Organization's unified budget<sup>20</sup>, and 19 nationals were involved in its staff<sup>21</sup>. As of March 2015, Ireland has so far contributed €300,000 towards the additional costs of the OSCE operation in Ukraine and seven Irish nationals serve in the Organization's Special Monitoring Mission<sup>22</sup>.

### *Council of Europe (CoE)*

Ireland became member of the Council of Europe on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1949 and it is a founder member of the organization. Its activities in the human rights field, as well as the impact it makes in fostering democracy and the rule of law in Europe, are considered consistent with the country's approach to international affairs. Ireland also values the Council's work in helping to protect national minorities, fighting against racism and xenophobia, and combating corruption. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights issued one violation judgment concerning the country. In 2015, Ireland contributed 0.73% (€3,028,849) of the total budget of the organization<sup>23</sup>.

### *Strategic Culture*

Ireland's strategic culture is strongly marked by their emphasis on neutrality that excludes them from NATO. In addition, they are a peace-loving country with the ambition to spread this view with the help of peacekeeping missions after their own personal experience in Northern Ireland. Moreover, disarmament in general as well as nuclear disarmament and the destruction of weapons of mass destruction are pursued in several fields. All of these goals are followed by a **multi-stakeholder** and **international** approach.

The unpredictability of the security environment is one of the main assessments of the Irish strategic thinking. No singular country, can respond alone and adequately to collective threats, so all the countries must co-operate in shaping new security arrangements. As a result, Ireland sees it must remain an active participant in the evolving collective security response to new threats in the defense and security environment. Ireland's commitment to collective security is pursued through global and regional institutions such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP). Moreover, Ireland continues to encourage and promote the ongoing development of EU-UN co-operation in the area of humanitarian action, crisis management, peacekeeping and conflict prevention, with a particular emphasis on EU action in support of UN operations.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> "Ireland at the OSCE", *Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE*. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015.

<http://web.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=90211>.

<sup>20</sup> The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015, p. 105. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109

<sup>22</sup> O'Connell B., "View from Dublin: A 'wait and see' approach", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.

[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_view\\_from\\_dublin\\_a\\_wait\\_and\\_see\\_approach311368](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_view_from_dublin_a_wait_and_see_approach311368)

<sup>23</sup> "Ireland – Member state", *Council of Europe*. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/ireland>

<sup>24</sup> Department of Defence and Defence Forces, *Strategy Statement 2015-2017*, March 19, 2015, p. 14-15. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://www.defence.ie/website.nsf/Strategy2015E>

#### d. Economic Policy

Ireland makes a concentrated effort in attracting **foreign direct investment**, promoting the country for tourism and education, as well as coordinating economic goals for a smarter economy. The country still has a low corporation tax but other loose tax laws that made people avoid paying them do not exist anymore after the strict austerity measures. For Irish businesses a system of double taxation as well as social security agreements exists to make going global easier. To further this goal the Global Irish Economic Forum was founded after the economic crisis and an “Invest in Ireland” roundtable was initiated.<sup>25</sup>

##### *European Union (EU)*

Ireland has been a member of the Eurozone since its beginning and believes that its country’s prosperity is linked to the fact that it is a member of the EU single market. Other benefits Ireland has had from EU economic policies are funds such as the **European Structural and Investment Fund** as well as **EU Trade Association Agreements**. Ireland is happy about the already existing ones with Canada and South Korea and promotes further agreements with Japan and US. Especially a positive outcome in the TTIP would be good for Ireland as the country has extensive trade relations with the US.

Ireland was one of the countries most affected by the **global financial crisis** but managed to reemerge and is regaining momentum. Revival of the economy was possible through an EU and IMF bailout with many austerity measures. Ireland was able to strictly adhere to the entire deficit reducing targets. Recovery was sped up by a increased direct foreign investment. Thus, in the end of 2013 the country met all the targets set and restarted a fiscally neutral budget in 2014<sup>26</sup>. According to the *2015 Council Recommendation*, Ireland is currently in the corrective arm of the **Stability and Growth Pact**. In its *2015 Stability Programme*, the Government plans to correct the excessive deficit by 2015. It also plans to reach the medium-term objective — a balanced budget in structural terms — by 2019. The Government aims to reduce the headline deficit to 2,3 % of GDP in 2015 and to turn it into a surplus of 0,7 % of GDP in 2019. According to the *Stability Programme*, the Government’s debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to be brought down from 109,7 % in 2014 to 105,0 % of GDP in 2015 and gradually to 89,4 % of GDP in 2019. The Council of the EU, however, is of the opinion that there is a risk that Ireland will not comply with the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact. Yet, the situation in the labor market has improved since 2013, with renewed job creation in the private sector and a steady fall in unemployment. Nevertheless, unemployment rate in Ireland is still high and long-term unemployment remains a serious concern to the Council and the Commission<sup>27</sup>.

##### *Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade*

Ireland has been a member of World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1967 (then GATT) as it is interested in a robust international framework to protect its open economy. As the efforts

<sup>25</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, January 13, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015.

<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/global-island/the-global-island-irelands-foreign-policy.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> "The Irish Economy: Stability Achieved, Growth Restored, Focus Now on Job Creation", *Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, 2013. Web. Accessed June 30, 2015. <http://eu2013.ie/ireland-and-the-presidency/about-ireland/irelandeconomy/>

<sup>27</sup> Council of the European Union, “Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Ireland and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Ireland”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C272/43-44 (July 14, 2015). Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015\\_council\\_ireland\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_ireland_en.pdf)

so far have been rather slow Ireland has often relied on bilateral agreements. Despite the openness of the Irish economy there is still tension between protecting agriculture and the need for a knowledge economy.<sup>28</sup>

Ireland has a small but open and globalized economy, which due to low domestic demand largely relies on trade especially in the chemical and food sector. **Trade** is done with the high value markets. These markets are the UK, US, EU, as well as China, Russia Japan, Canada and Australia. Other emerging markets of importance are Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Ireland's main export partners are the US, the UK and Belgium, while its main import partners are the UK, the US and Germany.

Russia is the third-largest non-EU export market for Irish goods after the United States and China. Irish food and drink exports to Russia in 2013 were worth over €230 million, but since then, Irish food exporters – principally meat, dairy, and seafood – have been badly hit by Russia's retaliatory sanctions<sup>29</sup>.

On balancing human rights and economic self-interest, there is also no doubt that the center of Irish policy has shifted since the 2008 financial crisis. Human rights promotion remains a core, self-identified value of Irish foreign policy. Irish policymakers—conscious of their own limited capacity for unilateral advantage—are stalwart supporters of collective EU action vis-à-vis China and other major trading partners. The Irish are also strong defenders of the role and rights of the European Commission in determining and implementing trade policy for the union as a whole<sup>30</sup>. In general, a push for better and **more diversified access to markets** is desired<sup>31</sup>.

---

**Author** Anna-Lena Scherer, Jacobs University Bremen.  
**Content Revision** Luca Nuvoli, Université Catholique de Louvain.  
**Language Revision** Joseph Aumuller, University of Denver.

<sup>28</sup> Hinds A. L., O'Donoghue A., "Ireland and the WTO: Dancing at the Crossroads?" *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 19, 2008, p. 169-82. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25469842>

<sup>29</sup> O'Connell B., "View from Dublin: A 'wait and see' approach", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_view\\_from\\_dublin\\_a\\_wait\\_and\\_see\\_approach311368](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_view_from_dublin_a_wait_and_see_approach311368)

<sup>30</sup> Tonra B., "Letter from Dublin", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, January 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=58792>

<sup>31</sup> "Trade & Promoting Ireland", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/trade-and-promotion/>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Council of the European Union, “Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Ireland and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Ireland”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C272/42-45 (July 14, 2015). Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015\\_council\\_ireland\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_ireland_en.pdf)
- Department of Defence and Defence Forces, *Strategy Statement 2015-2017*, March 19, 2015, p. 1-38. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://www.defence.ie/website.nsf/Strategy2015E>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Statement of Strategy 2015-2017*, April 15, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015.  
<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/aboutus/Department-of-Foreign-Affairs-and-Trade-Statement-of-Strategy-2015-17.pdf>.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*, January 13, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015.  
<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/global-island/the-global-island-irelands-foreign-policy.pdf>.
- Gilmore A., “Ireland: Brexit is a matter of significant and growing concern in Ireland”, *European Politics and Policy*, London School of Economics and Political Science, October 21, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/10/21/european-views-on-the-uks-renegotiation-ireland-portugal-austria-and-croatia/#One>
- Hinds A. L., O'Donoghue A., "Ireland and the WTO: Dancing at the Crossroads?" *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 19, 2008, p. 169-82. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25469842>
- "Ireland", *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last update October 28, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ei.html>.
- "Ireland at the OSCE", *Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE*. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://web.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=90211>.
- "Ireland's Membership of the UN Human Rights Council 2013-2015", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 1, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/human-rights/ireland-and-the-human-rights-council/>.
- “Ireland – Member state”, *Council of Europe*. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/ireland>
- Irish Statute Book, *Constitution of Ireland*, July 1, 1937. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html>

- "NATO's Relations with Ireland", *The North Atlantic Organization*, last update October 26, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/de/natohq/topics\\_51979.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/de/natohq/topics_51979.htm).
- "Northern Ireland", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/northern-ireland/>.
- O'Connell B., "View from Dublin: A 'wait and see' approach", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March 16, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_view\\_from\\_dublin\\_a\\_wait\\_and\\_see\\_approach311368](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_view_from_dublin_a_wait_and_see_approach311368)
- "Peace and Security", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed June 2, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/>.
- Shapiro A., "For Northern Ireland, Wounds From 'The Troubles' Are Still Raw." *NPR*, November 28, 2014. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015.  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/11/28/367183005/for-northern-ireland-wounds-from-the-troubles-are-still-raw>.
- "The Irish Economy: Stability Achieved, Growth Restored, Focus Now on Job Creation", *Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, 2013. Web. Accessed June 30, 2015. <http://eu2013.ie/ireland-and-the-presidency/about-ireland/irelandeconomy/>.
- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015, p. 1-109. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>
- Tonra B., "Letter from Dublin", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, January 23, 2015. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
<http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=58792>
- "Trade & Promoting Ireland", *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2015. Web. Accessed July 2, 2015. <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/trade-and-promotion/>.
- "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, September 31, 2015, p. 1-45. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
[http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15_3.pdf)
- United Nations General Assembly, "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236", *Report of the Secretary General*, December 27, 2012, p. 1-8. Web. Accessed November 17, 2015.  
[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1)