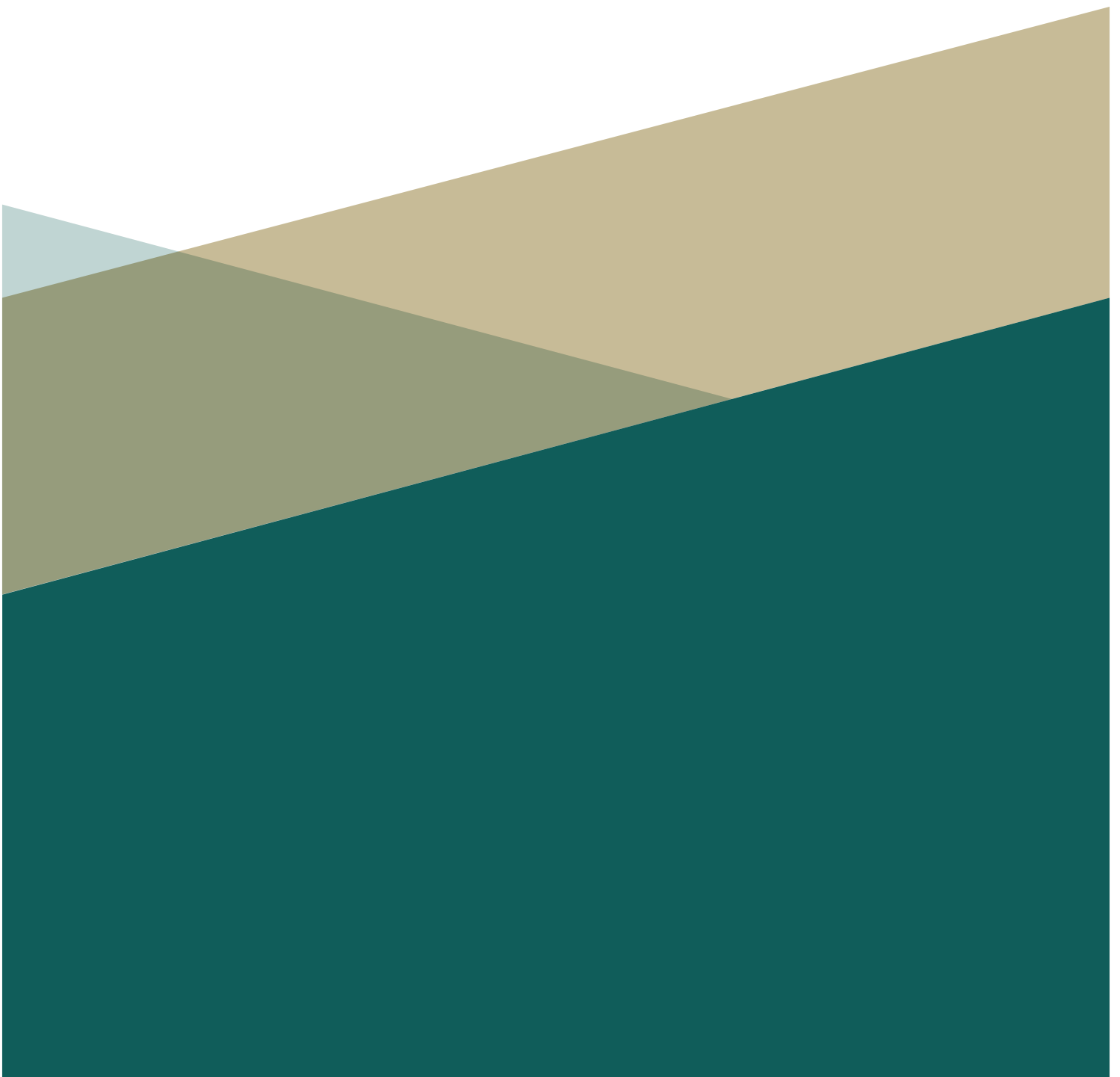




An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

2018 Annual Report



Foreword

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Simon Coveney T.D.

The Department's contribution to the whole-of-Government response to Brexit was a major priority in 2018. Close engagement with key international partners, especially the European Commission Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier and his team, was central to our efforts. Through our diplomatic network, and working with other Government Departments and State agencies, the Department highlighted to international decision makers the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland. At the heart of these has been the protection of the gains of the Good Friday Agreement – in this, its 20th year – and avoiding the re-introduction of a hard border. The impact of this engagement has been evident in the solidarity demonstrated by fellow EU Member States and Partners in the EU institutions throughout the long Brexit-negotiation process.

In the year that marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, along with the UK Government we worked with the political parties in Northern Ireland to try and secure agreement on the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Executive and the resumption of the North-South Ministerial Council.

We continued to make a positive contribution to the work of the United Nations, in particular in the areas of peace and security, disarmament, human rights, and international development. The value we attach to multilateralism was also reflected in the July 2018 launch of Ireland's campaign for membership of the UN Security Council in 2021-22. I am particularly proud of Ireland's chairing of the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women – the first time we have held this role – when, under the leadership of Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland led a consensus outcome on achieving gender equality and supporting the empowerment of rural women and girls.



© Julian Behal / DFAT

The launch of *Global Ireland 2025* set out an ambitious agenda to increase our scope and impact internationally. We expanded our worldwide network of diplomatic offices with the opening of new embassies in Wellington (New Zealand) and Monrovia (Liberia), and a new Consulate in Vancouver (Canada). Further missions will open in the coming years and will allow us to better serve our citizens abroad and strengthen our capacity to deliver our Irish Aid programme. Working together with the State agencies, our new Embassies and Consulates enhance the state's ability to support Irish businesses, attract foreign direct investment, and promote Ireland's agrifood, tourism, education and culture.

Closer to home, the expansion of the Online Passport Renewal Service, to include the online renewal of children's passports by parents and guardians, significantly improved the quality of our service to citizens. The Department also provided consular assistance and services to thousands of Irish citizens during 2018.

The progress we have achieved was a result of the individual and collective efforts, at home and abroad, and at every level, of the Department's team. I wish to thank all staff sincerely for their dedication and commitment to advancing Ireland's national and global interests throughout 2018. Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Simon Coveney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Simon Coveney T.D.
Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade



© Julian Behal / DFAT

Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon T.D.

2018 was a year in which the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade set in motion a number of new initiatives which will influence its work over the coming years.

During 2018, the Department celebrated the unique contributions of Ireland's diaspora around the world, and commenced preparations for a new Diaspora Strategy to succeed *Global Irish – Ireland's Diaspora Policy*. February saw the first St. Brigid's Day programme at our Embassies and Consulates, focussed on the creativity that Irish women infuse into a wide range of arts and industries, while in November, we launched *Blazing a Trail*, which showcased the lives and legacies of 21 pioneering Irish diaspora women.

Last year, we also built on the long legacy of Irish people seeking to improve the lives of others by committing to deliver on our target of reaching 0.7% of Gross National Income for official development assistance by 2030. In support of this, the Department led on the drafting of Ireland's new signature overseas development policy, *A Better World*. Public consultations were held with Irish people and civil society groups from all walks of life. I was delighted to participate personally at workshops in Galway and Dublin and to see the passion that Irish people have for supporting those in need.

I look forward to seeing the positive impact of these initiatives in the years to come.



© Department of Taoiseach

Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee T.D.

Ireland's preparations for Brexit continued apace during 2018.

Intensive outreach to our EU partners has ensured they are well-informed on Ireland's concerns and priorities. We saw these fully reflected in the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration on the EU-UK future relationship, agreed with the British Government and endorsed by the European Council in November 2018, and in subsequent negotiations.

Engagement with our citizens, civic society and business sectors has been a core part of the Government's response to Brexit; including the delivery of the fourth All-Island Civic Dialogue session in April, alongside a series of All-Island Sectoral Dialogues.

From September the Government's "Getting Ireland Brexit Ready" public information campaign, saw a series of events taking place around the country raising awareness of the supports and resources available to citizens and businesses to help prepare for Brexit. The National Contingency Action Plan was published in December, meaning that we had taken major steps in getting prepared for Brexit.

With one of the largest EU member states voting to leave the EU, it was important that the Union took stock of such a seismic decision. To that end, I led the Future of Europe Citizen's Dialogue the length and breadth of the country, with people, businesses and civic society organisations at the heart of that process. These dialogues were conducted across the other 26 EU countries and our report, published in October, fed into the next EU Strategic Agenda, shaping our European Union.

Promoting the EU at home is key to its future as well. That is why I visited primary schools across Ireland as part of the Blue Star Programme, helping to highlight the positive impact of the EU. I also visited many 3rd level institutions across the country, highlighting job opportunities in the different EU Institutions available to the next generation.



© DFAT/ Phil Behan

Foreword

Secretary General

Niall Burgess

2018 was an exciting and challenging year for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. While the opening of new offices in Monrovia, Vancouver and Wellington, were among the Department's highest profile developments, I am proud of the range of innovations that took place at home and abroad, and the manner in which colleagues rose to the myriad challenges presented by the changing world in which we operate.

In anticipation of the UK's departure from the EU, our Department is taking steps to improve the capacity of our missions to respond to the challenges and opportunities that will arise. In 2018 we also launched Ireland's campaign for an elected seat on the UN Security Council for the 2021-22 period, demonstrating our commitment to multilateralism and to projecting our values in this influential body.

Demand for our customer services increased throughout the year. This was particularly notable in respect of the passport service and applications for foreign birth registration. The roll-out of online passport renewal is an example of the Department's commitment to providing quality customer services and has been a notable success. At year end, almost a quarter of all passport applications received were submitted through this system.

Numerous corporate initiatives progressed during the year, which should ensure the Department's policies and infrastructure keep pace with the rapidly changing global political and economic environment. I am particularly pleased that we adopted our Action Plans on Gender, and on Equality and Diversity, and launched the Department's LGBT+ Staff network. We also adopted a new ICT strategy, which will see technology and digital infrastructure enhanced across all offices of the Department and will help ensure all our staff are equipped appropriately.

Finally, a word of thanks to all of my colleagues, both current and former, without whom this Department could not deliver for our citizens. Working within this Department brings many rewards and opportunities. But it is not without its challenges, particularly the impact that rotations between headquarters and postings have on both officers and their families. The professionalism and energy that our colleagues and their partners demonstrate every day are in the best traditions of Ireland's civil service.



Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Forewords | i-iv |
| Strengthening Our Place in Europe | 01 |
| Brexit Negotiations | |
| Visits to the Border | |
| Brexit Preparedness | |
| Getting Ireland Brexit Ready | |
| Contingency Action Plan | |
| All-Island Civic Dialogue Fourth Plenary Session | |
| Future of Europe Citizens' Dialogue | |
| Building Global Ireland | 07 |
| Launch of the Global Ireland 2025 Initiative | |
| Opening of New Diplomatic Missions | |
| Embassy of Ireland, New Zealand | |
| Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver | |
| Global Schools Programme | |
| Advancing Ireland-UK & North-South Relations | 11 |
| Meetings of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference | |
| 20th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement | |
| Engagement by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste with Communities in Northern Ireland | |
| Commemorations | |
| North-South Cooperation | |
| Ireland and the Americas | 15 |
| North America | |
| Visit by the Tánaiste to New York and Washington, D.C. | |
| Profile: MAGGIE COSTELLO | |
| Research Assistant Embassy of Ireland to the US | |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | |
| Profile: FABIOLA BALLESTEROS | |
| Consular Coordinator, Embassy of Ireland, Mexico | |
| New Embassies and Ministerial Visits | |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Ireland at the United Nations | 19 |
| UN Security Council Campaign Launch | |
| UN Commission on the Status of Women | |
| Working for A Better World | 23 |
| Public Consultation on Ireland's New International Development Policy | |
| Profile: MICHELLE WINTHROP Development Specialist | |
| Africa-Ireland Economic Forum 2018 | |
| Peace, Security & Human Rights | 27 |
| Women, Peace & Security | |
| Profile: JOHN BOYLAN International Security Policy | |
| Disarmament: Working Against Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas | |
| Implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights | |
| Ireland's Involvement in EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) | |
| Ratification of the Kampala Amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the Crime of Aggression | |
| Supporting Ireland's People | 33 |
| Online Passport Renewals | |
| Profile: JUANA LEONARD Passport Officer | |
| Our Citizens Abroad | |
| Consular Assistance | |
| Consular Assistance & Services in Numbers | |
| Honorary Consuls | |
| Consular Services | |
| Profile: JESSICA PENDER Consular Services Officer | |
| Working for the Diaspora | |
| Back for Business | |
| Blazing a Trail Exhibition | |
| Presidential Distinguished Services Awards | |

Promoting Ireland's Prosperity 41

St Patrick's Day 2018

Ireland & Asia Pacific

Visit by the Tánaiste to China

Profile: XIAOLIN JIANG

Visa Officer, Embassy of Ireland, China

Promoting Ireland as a Venue for Tourism,
Business and Investment in India

Visit by the Minister for Education
and Skills to Malaysia

Profile: LORNA HENNESSY

Consulate General of Ireland, Sydney

Bloomsday 2018

Cultural Initiatives

St Brigid's Day in London

Ireland Week in Los Angeles

Sustaining Ireland's Influence 45

High-Level Visits

Profile: JUNE CARR

Protocol Officer

Policy Planning

Managing the Department's Human Resources

Gender Equality Action Plan

Equality and Diversity Action Plan

HR in Numbers

2018 Civil Service, Excellence and Innovation Awards

Our Performance in 2018 on Social Media and Online

Iveagh Scholars Programme

Freedom of Information Requests and Transfers of Files
to National Archives

Information, Communications and Technology Strategy

Our Budget

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accounts - Vote 28

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accounts - Vote 27

Evaluation and Audit

Strengthening Our Place in Europe



Strengthening Our Place in Europe

Brexit Negotiations

Ireland stands to be the most impacted by Brexit among EU Member States given our close trading, economic and political ties to the UK. From the outset, the Government has worked hard to ensure that our concerns and priorities were understood by our EU partners and reflected in the EU's negotiating position throughout the Brexit process. This involved more than 120 discussions, at senior official and political level, with Member States and the EU institutions during 2018. The Tánaiste met with Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Brexit Negotiator, on nine separate occasions.

As a result of intensive and sustained engagement at the EU level, Ireland's unique issues and concerns are addressed in the Withdrawal Agreement, endorsed by the European Council and agreed by the British Government in November 2018. The Withdrawal Agreement includes a Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, which fully protects the Good Friday Agreement and the gains of the peace process. It contains a legally operational 'backstop' to ensure that there will be no hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. It contains UK commitments not to diminish the rights set out in the Good Friday Agreement and recognises that people in Northern Ireland will continue to enjoy EU citizenship rights. It also protects North-South cooperation and the all-island economy, including the preservation of the Single Electricity Market on the island of Ireland. The Protocol acknowledges that the Common Travel Area arrangements between Ireland and the UK will be maintained.

This intense and extensive engagement with our EU partners has also helped ensure that Ireland's key priorities have been reflected in the Political Declaration on the EU-UK future relationship. The Political Declaration sets out the ambition for that future negotiation. It reflects Ireland's wish, within the constraints created by the UK's position, to have the closest possible relationship between the EU and the UK and therefore to minimise the impact on our trade and economy.



An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney at the launch of Getting Ireland Brexit Ready © Phil Behan/DFAT

Visits to the Border by EU Political Leaders

A crucial part of fostering the understanding that has informed EU support for Ireland's issues in the EU-UK Brexit negotiations came from seven visits to the border region by Ministers of multiple EU Member States in 2018, as well as further visits at official level. These were facilitated by the Department's Ireland, UK and Americas Division.



Nathalie Loiseau, French Minister for Europe visiting the border with Minister of State Helen McEntee, February 2018 © Maxwells

Brexit Preparedness

Preparation and planning was undertaken across the Government since 2016 to address a range of Brexit scenarios, including a 'no deal' scenario. Working in close collaboration with other Government Departments and State Agencies, the Department led a sustained intensification of Brexit preparedness in 2018.

In July 2018 Government discussed the measures, including infrastructure and recruitment of Customs and other staff, which would be necessary to prepare for Brexit on the basis of a Withdrawal Agreement.

Getting Ireland Brexit Ready

As part of these efforts, from September 2018 onwards, as part of the first phase of a centrally co-ordinated 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' public information campaign, events were held around Ireland to inform and advise about Brexit preparedness and the range of support measures and resources that the Government has put in place to assist citizens and businesses.

'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' events took place in Cork on 5 October, Galway on 12 October, Monaghan on 19 October, Dublin on 25 October, Limerick on 23 November and Letterkenny on 30 November. They brought together over a dozen Agencies and their parent Departments – the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport - and attracted very strong participation by a combined total of approximately 2,500 attendees.

The events also attracted significant international (in particular UK) media coverage which afforded an opportunity to highlight Ireland's overall approach and specific concerns in relation to Brexit.

The positive impact of the 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' events and the Government's ongoing public information activities in relation to Brexit preparedness is reflected in an increase in the uptake of the many Brexit business supports that are offered by State Agencies. For example, over 4,000 companies have availed of the Enterprise Ireland Brexit Scorecard facility as a first step in developing their Brexit plan. Similarly, 4,175 SMEs engaged directly with the InterTradeIreland Brexit Advisory Service in 2018.

Other Brexit preparedness-related public information activities and events continue to be organised by Government Departments and State Agencies across Ireland. Between September and December 2018, over 40 such events took place across 16 counties. Relevant details on these activities and events and on Brexit preparedness more generally can be found via the gov.ie/brexit website.

To coincide with the 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' events, a sustained public information campaign also ran on radio, print media, online and social media channels as another means of informing citizens and businesses of the Brexit preparedness supports that are available to them.



Getting Ireland Brexit Ready Roadshow, Convention Centre in October 2018
© Julien Behal/ DFAT



An Tánaiste Simon Coveney with Michel Barnier and Áine Lawlor at the All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit in April, 2018

Contingency Action Plan

In December 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, working closely with the Department of the Taoiseach, co-ordinated the publication of a National Contingency Action Plan setting out Ireland's approach to dealing with a no deal Brexit. This was the culmination of many months of work across a wide range of Departments and State Agencies.

While the Government and the EU were committed to securing a negotiated Brexit outcome, there was an increased focus on contingency preparations as the risk of a no deal outcome increased, giving rise to unique and unprecedented challenges. The European Commission also published a Communication on Implementing its Brexit Contingency Action Plan in December 2018, setting out measures, including legislative proposals, which it considered necessary to mitigate the most severe consequences of a no deal Brexit at EU level. It was against this backdrop that the Government presented its assessment of the challenges and mitigation measures available to manage that exit as best as possible.

The Government's Contingency Action Plan set out its analysis, including identifying risks associated with a no deal Brexit under a number of important headings:

- » Economic and fiscal impact;
- » Security;
- » Northern Ireland and North-South relations;
- » Relations with Great Britain;
- » Sectoral analyses.

Specific actions identified in the Contingency Action

Plan included:

- » Procurement of additional space and facilities at ports and airports to accommodate the significant increase in checks and procedures that would be required;
- » Acceleration of recruitment and redeployment of customs and agriculture officers to be in place as needed to carry out these checks and procedures;
- » Confirmation of legislative changes required and arrangements for urgent drafting and possible accelerated procedures to ensure timely enactment of necessary legislation;
- » Identification of a range of areas where further engagement with the European Commission and other Member States would be required, as part of the evolving response at EU level;
- » Continued participation in all relevant EU fora and preparatory processes, which had at that point led to the publication of 78 separate stakeholder notices to assist businesses and citizens;
- » Facilitating full continued application of the Common Travel Area in all Brexit scenarios, including the associated freedom of movement and access to public services for citizens;
- » Continuation of the Government's extensive programme of stakeholder engagement;
- » Intensification of the Government's national and regional communications campaign 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' with a greater focus on a no deal Brexit.

The Government's Contingency Action Plan is available via www.gov.ie/brexit



Ireland's overall objectives in relation to Brexit have been consistent: seeking to minimise the impact on trade and the economy, protecting the peace process including avoiding a hard border, maintaining the Common Travel Area and reinforcing commitment to and participation in the EU. These objectives continue to guide Ireland's approach.

All-Island Civic Dialogue Fourth Plenary Session

The fourth plenary session of the All-Island Civic Dialogue took place on Monday 30 April 2018 in Dundalk Institute of Technology. Over 400 representatives from across industry and civic society were provided with an update on the main developments in the Brexit negotiations, including the all-island aspects, and they considered how both communities and businesses could continue preparations for Brexit.

A key focus of this plenary centred on how young people can respond to the challenges posed by the UK exit from the European Union, with new voices on the Brexit debate being given a platform throughout the day. Topical issues such as the economy and civil societal issues were discussed, and Michel Barnier, European Commission Chief Brexit Negotiator, delivered the keynote address.



*Helen McEntee, Minister of State, Maynooth University,
February 2018 © Maxwells*

Future of Europe Citizens' Dialogues

To engage the Irish public directly in the debate on the Future of Europe, Minister of State Helen McEntee hosted a series of Citizens' Dialogue events throughout spring 2018.

Travelling to Galway, Cork, Donegal, Meath and Kildare, the Minister heard directly from Irish people about their vision for the future.

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on the EU and to outline their ideas for making it prosperous and competitive; safe and secure; sustainable; socially responsible; and prepared for the future.

A special dialogue event was also held to hear from representatives of the community, voluntary and charity sectors.

The series culminated in a National Citizens' Dialogue hosted by the Tánaiste and Minister McEntee in Dublin on Europe Day, 9 May 2018.

In October 2018 during the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Minister McEntee and the Austrian Federal Minister for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, Gernot Blümel, launched a narrative report on the Citizens' Dialogues.

These Dialogues were part of wider citizens' consultations taking place across the European Union throughout the year. In December, Ireland presented a summary of the main outcomes of our national-level consultations to EU leaders. These will help inform a new National Statement on the European Union.



Future of Europe Campaign Banner © DFAT

Building Global Ireland



Building Global Ireland

Launch of the Global Ireland 2025 Initiative

In June 2018 the Government launched *Global Ireland, Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025*, an ambitious plan which aims to double the scope and impact of Ireland's international presence by 2025.

The plan is centered around the concept of 'Team Ireland', a whole of Government approach to international relations which aims to present an image of Ireland as a good place in which to live, work, do business, invest and visit. Ireland's participation in Expo 2020 in Dubai, will take such a 'Team Ireland' approach to showcasing Ireland to a global audience. The coordination of Ireland's presence at Expo 2020 will be a significant project for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the coming years.

Since the launch of the plan, the Department has been working with Government partners to deliver on its ambitions. Notable achievements in 2018 included:

- » An expanded diplomatic network, including new Embassies in Wellington and Monrovia, and a new Consulate General in Vancouver. Planning also got underway for the opening of Embassies in Bogotá, Amman, and Santiago de Chile, and new Consulates General in Mumbai, Cardiff, Los Angeles and Frankfurt. The expansion will continue into 2019 and 2020;
- » A strengthening of existing diplomatic missions to address post-Brexit opportunities and challenges;
- » The successful launch of Ireland's campaign for an elected seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2021-2022 period;
- » Obtaining observer status at the Organisation of the Francophonie in October 2018;
- » Greater Team Ireland mobility with an increased deployment of staff from across Government Departments to key international locations.



© DFAT

Opening of New Diplomatic Missions

Over the lifetime of the Global Ireland programme, the Department plans to open 26 new diplomatic missions abroad and strengthen the existing mission network.

This expansion will deepen Ireland's impact across priority regions to support a strategic response to Brexit and to leverage opportunities to increase trade and inward investment; to further strengthen political relationships with Ireland's international partners and promote our values; to play a more active role in supporting and promoting a rules based international environment; and to support Irish citizens and our diaspora abroad.

We are collaborating with IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and other State Agencies on an Ireland House model which will provide co-located facilities for all departments and agencies involved in Team Ireland. The first Ireland House to open under the Global Ireland 2025 expansion will be in Mumbai, India.



Ambassador Peter Ryan receives a 'pōwhiri', or traditional Māori welcome
© Embassy of Ireland, New Zealand/DFAT

Embassy of Ireland, New Zealand

Ambassador Peter Ryan presented credentials to Governor General of New Zealand Patsy Reddy on 29 August 2018. He is Ireland's first resident Ambassador in New Zealand and the mission in Wellington is the first to open as part of Global Ireland.

For the occasion and in recognition of the strong historical ties between Ireland and New Zealand, the Ambassador wore a Maori Korowai or ceremonial cloak, which had been woven by a Maori elder of Irish heritage.

The Embassy supports the work of Ireland's State Agencies and helped launch the Irish Business Network New Zealand in Wellington. It has met with representatives of all of the Irish groups in New Zealand and worked closely with the organisers of the inaugural NZ IrishFest which involved over a hundred cultural events in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington. It has also initiated a six-month long study of 'Perceptions of Ireland in New Zealand' which will inform its work over the coming years.

The Embassy has also participated in the Pacific Islands Forum in Nauru and has promoted greater awareness of Ireland's values, our commitment to multilateralism and campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council.

The Embassy is temporarily co-located in the EU Delegation in Wellington. The Honorary Consulate General in Auckland continues to provide consular services in addition to representational and promotional activities.

Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver

In September 2018, Ireland opened a new Consulate General in Vancouver in the western Canadian province of British Columbia. Our first new mission in Canada since the establishment of the Embassy in Ottawa in 1950, the Consulate is headed by Frank Flood who previously served as Ireland's Ambassador to Estonia.

The opening of a Consulate General in Vancouver is a recognition of the strong historical links between Western Canada and Ireland. This is reflected in the number of Irish people, of all ages and backgrounds living and working in British Columbia. Building on the work of the Irish Embassy in Ottawa and the previous Honorary Consul General in Vancouver, the Consulate will work to promote and protect Ireland's and Irish community interests in Vancouver and the wider Western Canada region.

With four staff in place, the Consulate is already providing consular support to Irish citizens. Events held to date have included an inaugural Consulate Community Forum to identify and promote greater synergies with and between community organisations; and a trade-focused event organised in collaboration with the Vancouver Chapter of the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce.



Photo L-R Ambassador Jim Kelly, Orla Flood, CG Frank Flood, ICC and organiser Lar Quigley © Mark Montgomery, Majomo Photography

To underpin and guide its work into 2019 and beyond, the Consulate has developed and commissioned an innovative Irish community mapping project, which is being carried out by the Irish Women's Network in Vancouver, with support from the University of British Columbia.



An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, in Ringsend College in Dublin to launch the Global Schools Programme, December 2018 © Julian Behal/DFAT

The presence of the Consulate is already translating into increased visibility for Ireland, and in the coming years, will facilitate the development of trade and investment ties with Vancouver and Western Canada. Vancouver is a proven powerhouse for economic growth, gaining a key role as the country's gateway to Asia, and developing clusters in digital media, film, TV production, ICT and finance. The Consulate is working closely with Team Ireland in Canada and in the Western United States to identify opportunities for Ireland in the city and region. The Consulate has also commissioned an online trade directory, mapping all companies interested in promoting trade links, particularly in priority sectors, which will be helpful in this regard.

Global Schools Programme

In December 2018, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D. visited Ringsend College in Dublin to launch the Global Schools programme which will see Irish diplomats and members of the Defence Forces who have served on UN peacekeeping missions visiting secondary schools around the country to talk with students about the Global Ireland programme and their work overseas. An Taoiseach was also accompanied on his visit to Ringsend by Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces.

As part of the Global Schools Programme, schools will be presented with a UN flag and a copy of the Preamble of the UN Charter. The Programme will allow for a greater understanding of how UN membership has been central to our foreign policy and played a significant role in Ireland's history – including through our contributions to peacekeeping, international development, human rights and disarmament – and how we will continue to contribute at UN level in the future.

Advancing Ireland-UK and North-South Relations



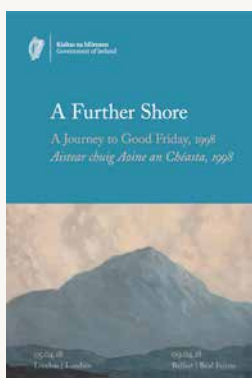
Advancing Ireland-UK and North-South Relations

In January and February 2018, the Irish and UK Governments continued to support and facilitate talks on the formation of a new Executive and resumption of the North-South Ministerial Council. Despite intensive engagement, it did not prove possible to reach agreement between the parties.

The two Governments worked together and consulted with the political parties in Northern Ireland throughout the rest of the year to seek to identify a basis for a new political process which could secure an agreement to get all of the institutions of the Agreement operating again.

Meetings of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

With the continuing absence of the devolved power-sharing institutions and the North-South Ministerial Council, the Irish and UK Governments convened the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference again for the first time since 2007, with meetings held in London in July and in Dublin in November. At the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference on 2 November, the Governments re-affirmed their shared commitment to all of the political institutions established by the Agreement and to securing the effective operation of power-sharing, devolved government in Northern Ireland and the consequent resumption of the North-South Ministerial Council, as well as Northern Ireland's participation in the British Irish Council, at the earliest opportunity.



© DFAT

The Conference also considered the wider East-West relationship and how to maintain and develop that relationship in the changed circumstances following the departure of the UK from the European Union.

20th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement



British Irish Intergovernmental Conference - Iveagh House in November 2018
© Maxwells

10 April 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, while 22 May 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the referendums North and South which endorsed the Agreement.

A number of political, civic and academic events were held in April and May to mark these crucial moments in the Peace Process. On 10 April, Queen's University Belfast hosted the centrepiece event with the participation of many of those who took part in the 1998 negotiations, including former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, former PM Tony Blair and former US President Clinton, as well as Senator George Mitchell and the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties at the time. The Tánaiste delivered a keynote address on behalf of the Irish Government.

As part of its commemorative programme, the Government also curated and staged *A Further Shore*, a cultural event in which some of Ireland's finest poets, musicians, actors and artists told the continuing story of Northern Ireland's journey to Peace and Reconciliation.



Senator George Mitchell with An Taoiseach Simon Coveney
© Julien Behal/ DFAT

A Further Shore was performed at the London Barbican Centre on 5 April and the Lyric Theatre in Belfast on 9 April. A series of events was also held in Iveagh House in Dublin on 22 May to mark the anniversary of the passing in 1998 of the referendums on the Good Friday Agreement.

Engagement by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste with Communities in Northern Ireland

In June, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D. became the first serving Taoiseach to visit the Museum of Orange Heritage in East Belfast. The Taoiseach acknowledged and recognised the work of the Orange Order as a community and a religious organisation, as well as the role which the Museum plays in recording the history and traditions of the Order and as a vehicle to promote greater understanding between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

2018 also saw a number of security incidents which highlighted the need for continued vigilance around the security situation in Northern Ireland. These included several incidents of public disorder in the Bogside and Fountain areas of Derry in July in relation to the annual Twelfth celebrations in July. These incidents were strongly condemned by civic and political leaders from all sides of the community. The Tánaiste visited Derry in July to show solidarity with all political, community and youth leaders who were working to end the violence and rioting and who support cross-community engagement in the city.

Commemorations

2018 marked one hundred years since the armistice which ended the carnage of the First World War. Ceremonies remembering the seminal events of one hundred years ago and the lives that were lost or scarred by that conflict continued to take place, recalling the complex and often interlinked histories of the peoples of Ireland and Britain during that period. Minister Heather Humphreys attended the commemoration of the 102nd anniversary of the Battle of the Somme at Belfast City Hall in July, whilst in September, the Tánaiste attended a ceremony in the Presbyterian Assembly Buildings to commemorate all Irish recipients of the Victoria Cross in the First World War.

The centenary of the sinking of the RMS *Leinster* by a German submarine in 1918 was marked with a programme of events in October, with Minister Josepha Madigan attending the main commemoration ceremony on 10 October in Dún Laoghaire. 564 lives were lost in this disaster, which remains the single biggest loss of life in the Irish Sea.

On Remembrance Sunday in November, the Taoiseach represented the State at France's Armistice Day Centenary ceremony in Paris, which formed a focal point for global centenary commemorations. The Tánaiste participated in the Armistice ceremony at the Belfast Cenotaph, while Minister Heather Humphreys took part in the Enniskillen Armistice ceremony. Minister of State Damien English participated in a ceremony in Belfast's St. Anne's Cathedral. A State Armistice Day Centenary Commemoration was held at Glasnevin Cemetery and attended by President Michael D. Higgins and Minister Josepha Madigan.

The 50th anniversary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights movement was commemorated through a series of events, including a conference at Derry's Guildhall to mark the 50th anniversary of the 5 October 1968 Civil Rights march in the city, at which President Higgins delivered the keynote address.

North-South Cooperation

While the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) could not meet in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, the North-South Implementation Bodies continued to carry out their mandated functions for the mutual benefit of citizens in both jurisdictions. Officials from the NSMC Secretariat in Armagh also



An Taoiseach Simon Coveney, speaking at Queen's University in Belfast
© Julian Behal/ DFAT



Winners of the school competition that marked the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement with An Taoiseach Simon Coveney © Julian Behal/ DFAT

continued to work together in line with the previously agreed work programme of cooperation.

In January, the Joint NSMC Secretariat hosted its annual cross-border schools outreach event. The theme of the 2018 event was Road Safety. More than 70 students, aged 15-17, attended the event. Six schools from the Armagh area and five schools from Monaghan, Louth and Cavan were represented. The event was run in co-operation with the local PSNI, Monaghan-based Gardaí Síochána and members of NI Fire and Rescue Service. The presentation was delivered jointly by members of the Armagh Neighbourhood Policing Team and members of the Monaghan Traffic Corps. Present also were students from the PSNI Training College and student teachers from Stranmillis College.

The implementation of the EU PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes progressed well during 2018 and both were almost 100% committed by the end of the year. In May 2018, the EU Commission published its proposals for the next round of Cohesion policy which include a proposal for a special new PEACE PLUS programme to build on and continue the work of both PEACE and INTERREG. The Senior Officials Group which was established to oversee and report to the NSMC on the North-South Infrastructure commitments in the Fresh Start Agreement continued to meet during 2018.

Ireland and the Americas



Ireland and the Americas

North America

Ireland has a strong and unique bilateral relationship with both the USA and Canada. Taken together, the USA and Canada are Ireland's largest trading partner and over 40 million North Americans claim Irish heritage. In 2018 the Global Ireland strategy set out clear objectives to further strengthen Ireland's presence in North America, including by opening new consulates in Vancouver and Los Angeles. To build on the ambitious aims of 'Global Ireland', a new US and Canada Strategy will be launched in early 2019.

Visit by the Tánaiste to New York and Washington, D.C.

In February, the Tánaiste visited New York and Washington, D.C. for a series of political engagements.

While in New York, the Tánaiste undertook engagements in support of Ireland's campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and met with political leaders and senior officials including representatives of regional organisations from Africa, the Middle East and South America. The Tánaiste spoke about Ireland's work in these regions, through our Irish Aid programmes and also through our diplomatic work and foreign policy priorities, such as protecting human rights and promoting peaceful conflict resolution.

While in the US, the Tánaiste also promoted Ireland's position regarding Brexit, namely the priority of avoiding a hard border and ensuring that political stability, peace and security in Northern Ireland were not compromised.

He delivered a keynote address on the topic at Columbia University, gave an interview to the International Peace Institute and attended a Cooperation Ireland event on the Good Friday Agreement anniversary celebration entitled '20 Years of 'Peace'.

In Washington, the Tánaiste met with senior US officials, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, members of the Congressional Friends of Ireland and other senior officials to discuss issues of mutual concern.



Maggie Costello
© Embassy of Ireland, US/DFAT

Profile: MAGGIE COSTELLO Research Assistant, Embassy of Ireland, Washington D.C.

Growing up in an Irish family in Chicago, we never missed a "greening" of the Chicago River on St. Patrick's Day. My Irish heritage and interest in transatlantic affairs led me to study international relations at American University in Washington, DC. After graduating in 2017, I was delighted to join the Embassy in Washington. However, no one was more excited than my grandmother, who still breaks into songs she learned from her Irish grandfather every time I call.

Alongside my diplomatic colleagues, I work to promote and protect Ireland's economic and foreign policy interests in the United States. This includes tracking U.S. foreign and economic policy, organising events that showcase Ireland's rich history and culture, and coordinating ministerial visits. In 2018 alone, we hosted eight ministers, over seventy cultural events, and attended countless meetings with U.S. officials to engage on Ireland's economic and political priorities.

The busiest time of year in Washington is St. Patrick's Day due to the Taoiseach's annual visit. My responsibilities include liaising between the U.S. government and the Department of the Taoiseach to manage the protocol and logistical components of the visit, giving me a unique opportunity to participate in many elements of the programme. This past year, that meant trading a green Chicago River for the green fountain in the White House.

Events are one of my favourite parts of the job because of the opportunity to meet fellow Irish-Americans, who like my grandmother and I, share a sense of pride for their family history. From cheering on Ireland during the Six Nations with my colleagues to introducing visitors from Ireland to Washington, DC, I am grateful for the warm welcome I received from my Embassy colleagues and the community of Irish-Americans living and working in Washington.



Fabiola Ballesteros
© Embassy of Ireland, Mexico/DFAT

Profile: FABIOLA BALLESTEROS Consular Coordinator, Embassy of Ireland, Mexico

My name is Fabiola Ballesteros and I have proudly worked at the Embassy of Ireland in Mexico since April 2011.

The Embassy's Consular Section was extremely busy during 2018. The spectrum of cases throughout all 12 countries of consular responsibility (Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela) was intense. The Embassy's Consular Section has to be flexible, dealing with a range of issues from routine lost passport queries and Emergency Travel Certificates, to serious consular cases requiring a sensitive approach including death, injury, arrest, assault and sexual assault.

Our Embassy has managed very difficult cases over the years and 2018 was no exception. The differing security and legal environments across such varied countries provides unique challenges for us to overcome on a daily basis. Many cases in this region are not resolved immediately and require constant attention and regular follow-up.

We were also fortunate to work with our vital network of Honorary Consuls in the region (Cancun, San Salvador, Guatemala, Lima, Panama City) providing essential assistance to Irish citizens in need across Latin America.

Visa and passport applications were non-stop throughout the year. As you would imagine, lost/stolen or damaged passports are common. The expansion of online passport renewals has greatly helped the Embassy to support Irish citizens with renewing their most important document. We were happy in 2018 to deal with requests from applicants for Irish citizenship, claiming through the citizenship of their parents or grandparents. "Proud to be Irish" is a constant phrase.

Working for Ireland and helping Irish citizens is a true honour for me!

Latin America and the Caribbean

Protecting human rights, promoting peacebuilding and conflict resolution are key priorities of Ireland's foreign policy and clearly manifested in our longstanding support to the peace process in Colombia. In 2018, Ireland provided over €2.5 million to support the implementation of the peace accords, mainly channelled through the United Nations and Colombian and international NGOs focusing on human rights, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and supporting livelihoods for rural populations.

Ireland was a founding member of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia, which in 2018 supported projects targeted at the marginalised rural areas of Colombia most affected by conflict, and at reconciliation and social and economic reintegration of former combatants.

Ireland also continued to provide funding to the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Colombia, which during the past year focused on stabilisation in areas affected by the conflict, supported the reincorporation of former combatants, and supported victims and systems of transitional justice, including by working to strengthen the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

Additionally, Ireland funded the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia to monitor and oversee the implementation of human rights elements of the peace agreement.

As well as financial support, Ireland also provides ongoing support in the form of lesson-sharing based on our own experience of peacebuilding and reconciliation on the island of Ireland. In 2018 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade supported former Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore in his role as EU Special Envoy to the Colombian peace process and funded the secondment of an expert on the Northern Ireland peace process to the Colombian Ministry of Post-Conflict to assist with the implementation of the accords.

New Embassies and Ministerial Visits

2018 marked an important year in Ireland's relations with the Latin America and Caribbean region. The most significant development was the announcement that Ireland would open new Embassies in Chile and Colombia.

This announcement reflected a substantial upgrade of Ireland's presence in the region, increasing the total number of diplomatic missions from four to six. It also provided an opportunity to review Ireland's network of secondary accreditations in Latin America and the Caribbean, allowing us to strengthen engagement not only in Colombia and Chile, but across the wider region. In 2018, Ireland also welcomed the opening of the Embassies of Peru and Colombia in Dublin, taking the total number of resident missions from the Latin America and Caribbean region in Ireland to seven.

These developments were complemented by an extensive programme of Ministerial travel to the region in 2018. Over the St Patrick's Day period, Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D., visited Argentina; Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for Gaeilge, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Joe McHugh T.D., visited Brazil; and Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin T.D., visited Mexico.

Additionally, Minister of State McHugh attended the inauguration of the President of Chile and Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation and Research, John Halligan T.D., attended the inauguration of the President of Colombia. Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Pat Breen T.D., led a trade mission to Brazil in September.

Ireland's increased presence in the region also enabled a series of bilateral political consultations, the negotiation of several bilateral agreements and a number of high-level bilateral meetings throughout 2018.

Ireland at the United Nations



Ireland at the United Nations

UN Security Council Campaign Launch

On 2 July 2018 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, we officially launched Ireland's candidature for a seat on the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term. While Ireland's candidature was first announced in 2005, the launch marked the official 'kick-off' of the final phase of the campaign, with election day in June 2020.

Surrounded by representatives of the 193 member states of the United Nations, Ireland's candidature was presented by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D. and An Tánaiste Simon Coveney T.D. Former President of Ireland Mary Robinson and philanthropist and musician Bono lent their voices and support to our candidature.

The launch unveiled the central themes of Ireland's candidature: Empathy, Partnership and Independence. The event showcased Ireland's strong support for multilateralism and the international rule of law.

Member State Ambassadors and UN officials circulated in four curated areas, highlighting Ireland's experience, history and voice. The video to accompany Ireland's candidature was introduced by Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason.

Serving members of the Defence Forces and UN veterans interacted with guests and spoke of their service as part of Ireland's 60-year unbroken commitment to UN peacekeeping. An Bord Bia created a colourful installation highlighting the 'Origin Green' programme and Ireland's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. Ireland's experience as a country of migration and the contribution of Irish people globally was presented by the Irish Emigration Museum (EPIC) in an interactive, multi-media experience.

Ireland's culture and perspective were also showcased throughout the launch, including through displays of Irish dance from local New York Irish dance academies and a live 'trad' session with internationally-renowned musicians.



Official launch of Ireland's candidature for an elected seat on the UN Security Council © Catapult

Our membership of the United Nations helped us to take our place among the nations of the world. We support a rules-based order in international affairs...

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D.
UN Headquarters, New York, 2 July 2018

UN Commission on the Status of Women

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meets in New York each year for two weeks to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The CSW is the second biggest event in the UN calendar after the UN General Assembly and is the preeminent global expression of female political participation, gathering together thousands of advocates for gender equality from government and civil society around the world.



Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland's Ambassador to the United Nations, chairing the Commission on the Status of Women © UN Photo

In 2018, the Commission was chaired for the first time by Ireland, with our Permanent Representative to the UN, Geraldine Byrne Nason, presiding over the Commission's 62nd session, which focused on the theme of 'Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls'.

David Stanton T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, led the Irish delegation to the 62nd session. The delegation included officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Justice and Equality. Representatives from civil society, including a youth delegate from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and Ireland's United Nations Youth Delegates also attended.

David Stanton T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, led the Irish delegation to the 62nd session, which included representatives from civil society and youth delegates.

Minister Stanton chaired a side event during the 62nd session, co-hosted by Ireland and an Irish NGO, Ruhama, which discussed sex-trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls. Ireland also held a number of other high profile

side-events including one in collaboration with the Mary Robinson Climate Justice Foundation on the role of indigenous women in climate action.

As Chair of the 62nd session, Ireland successfully facilitated the negotiation up of a set of Agreed Conclusions, achieving consensus across all 193 Member States of the UN on a road map for how countries can improve opportunities for rural women and girls.



Working for A Better World



Working for A Better World

Public Consultations on Ireland's new International Development Policy

A process of public consultations on Ireland's new policy for international development were launched by the Tánaiste and Minister of State Cannon in July 2018. The process provided an opportunity to bring Ireland's citizens and other key stakeholders into policy development, to engage them on the global challenges facing Ireland and the international community and to build a whole of society approach to international development.

After an initial phase of internal review and analysis, the Department developed a public consultation paper which outlined proposed directions for the new policy. Written submissions were invited in response to the paper, on which 185 substantive inputs – amounting to over 1 million words – and over 14,000 other contributions were received from across Ireland and around the world.

The Tánaiste and Minister Cannon continued the engagement and consultation through five public meetings held across the country in Cork, Galway, Sligo, Limerick and Dublin. A wide section of Irish society - from individual citizens, students and educators, to representatives from civil society and the private sector - attended the meetings and made their voices heard.

The insights, expertise and inspiration provided by participants throughout the consultation process have helped ensure that Ireland can most effectively contribute to addressing the range of challenges facing our world in the decade ahead.

The Department is grateful to the thousands of people across Ireland and beyond who inputted and helped craft our vision of *A Better World*.



Michelle Winthrop
© DCAD/DFAT

Profile: MICHELLE WINTHROP Development Specialist

It seems like climate change is never out of the news these days. It's fantastic that it's getting the attention it deserves but it makes my job especially hectic as I lead on climate change issues within the Department. My role is to focus on the impacts of climate change for the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries in the world. I co-lead one of the EU climate negotiation teams, which helps to set the rules by which the poorest countries can access finance and support.

I also have the privilege of working closely alongside representatives of Least Developed Countries in a UN Expert Group. In this context I have visited the tiny atoll nation of Kiribati, where sea level rise as a result of climate change threatens the whole country with extinction. Seeing this beautiful country and hearing their story was a strong motivation for me and reinforces the urgent need for action. I have also been centrally involved in work on Ireland's Strategy for Small Island Developing States, which is a strong statement of our commitment to help our fellow islanders tackle the climate challenge.

In September 2019, Ireland will play a role at the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit on how to engage young people. We're very excited about helping to ensure that young voices from around the world can be heard by global leaders, and hope that it will bring about greater ambition. You don't need to be a scientist to understand climate change and put a human face on the devastation already being caused. Another busy year ahead!



Africa- Ireland Economic Forum 2018 © DFAT

Africa-Ireland Economic Forum 2018

The Africa Ireland Economic Forum (AIEF) is organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in partnership with the resident African Embassies in Ireland. The Forum, which has been running since 2011, is the centrepiece event of Ireland's economic engagement with the countries of Africa.

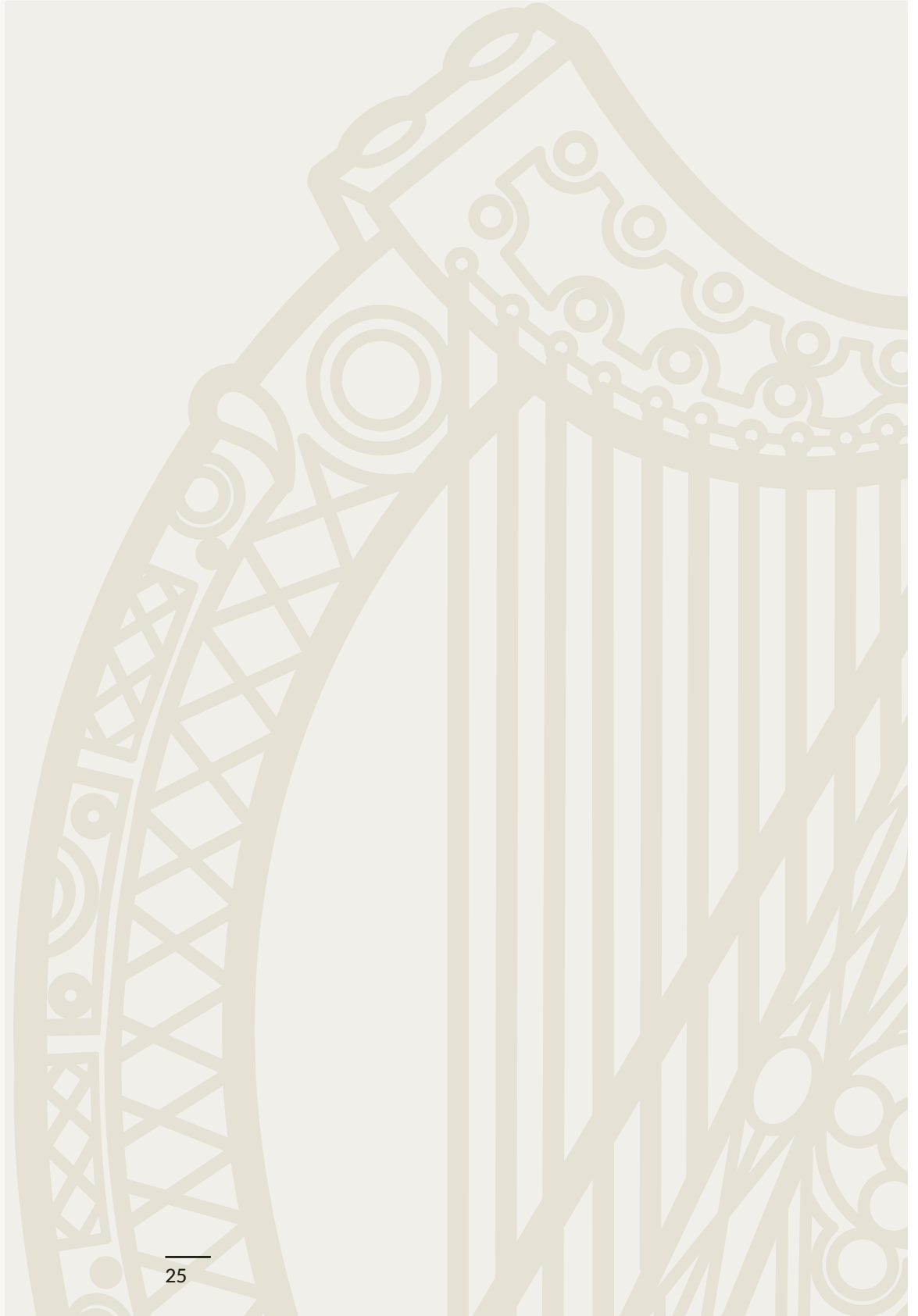
In 2018 the AIEF focused on the complementary themes of agri-food and women in business, bringing together over three hundred business leaders and policy makers from Ireland and Africa to hear about the opportunities for enhanced trade and investment.

The Tánaiste delivered the opening address to the AIEF during which he announced the expansion of the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme, an initiative which is operated jointly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. This Programme develops partnerships between Irish agri-food companies and African partners, with the aim of supporting sustainable inclusive growth. The expanded programme now allows Irish companies the option of partnering with local enterprises in five new countries and women entrepreneurs, who have not used the fund to date, are being encouraged to apply.



An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney with Peter Munya Cabinet Secretary, Kenya at the 2018 AIEF © Phil Behan/ DFAT

Keynote speakers at the 2018 AIEF included Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., and the Cabinet Secretary for Trade, Industry and Cooperatives from Kenya, Peter Munya. Discussion panels included senior business executives with extensive experience of operating in Africa and addressing such topics as challenges and opportunities for business in the African market; agri-business in action: succeeding in new markets; women in business, pathways to success and supports available to Irish businesses operating in Africa.



Peace, Security and Human Rights



Peace, Security and Human Rights

Women, Peace and Security

In June 2018, the Department's Conflict Resolution Unit in conjunction with the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, hosted an event entitled 'Promoting Women in Peace Mediation: The Importance of Networks'. The event included a public panel discussion with Professor Monica McWilliams of the University of Ulster, Dr. Catherine Turner of Durham University and Brendan McAllister, UN Mediator.

A screening of Eimhear O'Neill's documentary film 'Peacemakers: Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs' also took place. The documentary charts the formation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and the role they played during the Good Friday Negotiations. A Question and Answer session followed the screening with former Women's Coalition members Professor McWilliams and Bronagh Hinds. In the afternoon, the Conflict Resolution Unit hosted an expert-level roundtable event at Iveagh House with representatives from Mediation networks across Europe at which the possibility of developing an Irish network of women mediators was discussed.

Also in June 2018, the Conflict Resolution Unit hosted a further workshop in Iveagh House at which experiences and insights were shared on the monitoring and evaluating of objectives in relation to women, peace and security. Attended by representatives of organisations such as the European Union, the OSCE, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Office, NATO, the African Union and UN Women, the workshop focussed on development indicators for evaluating National Action Plans for ongoing implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Bronagh Hinds and Debbie Donnelly of the organisation DemocraShe (who conducted the mid-term and final review of Ireland's second UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan) presented to the workshop on Ireland's experience in this regard as part of a lesson-learning exercise.



Professor Monica McWilliams, Dr Catherine Turner and Dr Walt Kilroy at the Mediation Seminar © DFAT

Disarmament: Working Against Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas

The use of explosive weapons in cities, towns and other populated areas constitutes a serious threat to civilians in the short and long term. The UN Secretary General's Report on the Protection of Civilians states that in 2018, more than 20,000 civilians were reported killed by explosive weapons in populated areas.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas also has long-term humanitarian and development impacts which far outlast the conflicts in which they are used. Destruction of schools, hospitals, water supplies and other civilian infrastructure impedes development and can force people out of their homes. The failure to remove or destroy explosive remnants of war blocks humanitarian relief and transport of medical personnel, and can kill and injure decades after the conflict has ended.

Strengthening the protection of civilians is a priority for Ireland. At the opening of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2018, the Tánaiste expressed serious concern at the "persistent use of explosive weapons in populated areas in armed conflicts across the globe" and called on the international community to redouble efforts to address this challenge.



Implementation Group Meeting of the National Plan on Business and Human Rights © Phil Behan / DFAT



Senior Irish judges visit Ukraine as part of the EU Advisory Mission judicial cooperation initiative © EUAM Ukraine

The United Nations Secretary General has also called on UN Member States to develop measures designed to address the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and identified this issue as a key action in the 2018 UN Disarmament Agenda.

At the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in October 2018, Ireland secured the support of 50 States for a Joint Statement on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, highlighting the humanitarian consequences and calling for efforts to enhance compliance with International Humanitarian Law.

This Joint Statement brought global attention to the need to ensure the protection of civilians in urban warfare and has helped to generate momentum for action on the issue, including through the development of a political declaration.

Implementation of the National Plan on Business and Human Rights

Work continued throughout 2018 on implementation of Ireland's National Plan on Business and Human Rights (2017 -2020) to give effect to the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a global standard for preventing and addressing risks of adverse impacts on human rights due to business activity.

The Plan was developed following an extensive consultation process involving representatives from civil society and the business community. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade invited submissions on the development of the Plan and its Working Outline and received over 30 responses from relevant stakeholders.

The aim of the Plan is to promote responsible business practices at home and overseas by all Irish business enterprises in line with Ireland's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights globally. It is directed at Government and State Agencies, Irish companies operating at home and overseas and multinational enterprises operating in Ireland.

The Plan identifies a number of concrete actions to be completed, including a comprehensive baseline study of the existing legislative and regulatory framework applying to business and human rights in Ireland and the creation of a Business and Human Rights Implementation Group to oversee the execution of the Plan.

The Implementation Group was established in December 2018 and is independently chaired by Ms Breege O'Donoghue, former Director of New Markets and Business Development at Primark.

Ireland's Involvement in EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The EU's Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy commits the European Union to promoting peace, prosperity, democracy and the rule of law. A fundamental part of the Global Strategy is the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which provides the EU with an operational capacity to undertake missions outside the EU for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and international security strengthening purposes, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

EU Member States contribute to CSDP Missions by sending civilian and military experts to work in Missions overseas. The Missions go hand-in-hand with political, economic, diplomatic and development activity.

Ireland actively participates in both civilian and military CSDP Missions and Operations. In 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade deployed civilian experts in Europe and the Caucasus region, in the Middle East and in Africa to work in management, training, advisory and legal roles. Members of An Garda Síochána are also serving in the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo).

A new Civilian CSDP Compact was agreed in 2018 by EU Foreign Ministers. The Compact commits EU Member States to strengthening civilian CSDP. Ireland has been one of the leading supporters of a strengthened civilian CSDP and has engaged closely at EU level and with other Member States as part of the process.

As part of the EU Global Strategy, Ireland also participates in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). In PESCO, countries come together to jointly develop their military crisis management capabilities for use in support of CSDP Operations.

Countries participate in PESCO by working together on a variety of projects. There are currently 34 PESCO projects and Ireland participates in two of these: a training project and a maritime security project.



John Boylan
© DFAT

Profile JOHN BOYLAN International Security Policy

2018 was my first full year working with the Department having started as a First Secretary in August 2017. My career to that point consisted of over 12 years as an Army Officer in the Irish Defence Forces from 2001-2014, followed by three years working with Greenpeace Australia Pacific in Sydney.

My Defence Forces background proved especially relevant as I worked throughout 2018 in the Department's International Security Policy Unit on such issues as countering international terrorism and illicit drugs, to cybersecurity, hybrid threats and disinformation. I was also able to offer inputs on Ireland's UN peacekeeping policy, having previously served overseas with the Defence Forces in Kosovo in 2008 and Western Sahara in 2012.

Moving from the more hands-on experience of the Army to contributing to the formulation of foreign policy on international security and defence issues gave me a particular appreciation of the implications our strategic policy decisions have for our Defence Forces personnel on the ground.

Having good contacts is an essential component of being effective in this job. The Army taught me that fighting for as much information as possible is the first step toward making an effective command decision. The same happens in DFAT, with contacts both at home and abroad being so important in gathering together as much information as possible so as to inform policy decisions.

My experience working with Greenpeace is also noteworthy, given the appreciation it gave me for understanding where civil society organisations are coming from when it comes to discussions on security and defence matters. In developing Ireland's foreign policy, I believe we have a responsibility to see things from a variety of perspectives before making those important policy decisions. Having a diverse background helps in this regard and also complements DFAT's approach to having a network of well-rounded diplomats serving in our Embassies and Consulates worldwide.



Deposit of Instrument of Ratification by Ireland - Amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, September 2018 © DFAT

Ratification of the Kampala Amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the Crime of Aggression

On 27 September 2018, the Tánaiste ratified the *Kampala Amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the Crime of Aggression* with the United Nations.

It was particularly fitting that Ireland took this step in 2018, the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. This was an appropriate moment to acknowledge the important role of the Court in a world which continues to witness appalling conflict which brings terrible suffering to the lives of so many.

The ICC is the only permanent international criminal court with the ability to hold accountable perpetrators of the most egregious crimes at the international level. From the outset it was in a position to exercise its jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes when states are unable or unwilling to prosecute. Since 2018, the Court has had jurisdiction over the crime of aggression.

Ireland is committed to the cause of international criminal justice believing that justice and accountability ultimately always serve the interests of peace. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of grave crimes and the international community must stand with the victims of those crimes. Ireland is a long-term funder of the Trust Fund for Victims established by the Court.



Supporting Ireland's People



Supporting Ireland's People

Online Passport Renewals

The launch of the Online Passport Renewal Service in March 2017 was one of the first fully online passport renewal services in the world. It enables Irish citizens across the globe to renew their passports online via a personal computer, tablet or mobile device. It represents a significant innovation in customer service for the Passport Service drawing on cutting-edge user interface technology and software.

In November 2018, the Passport Service broke new ground to allow parents and guardians to apply for their child's passport online. Ireland was again one of the first countries in the world to undertake this challenge and facilitate the renewal of children's passports via an online channel.

To date over 500,000 citizens have used the online renewal service. Feedback from the customers has been hugely positive as to the usability of the site and the improvements to the turnaround times. In 2018, over 200,000 applications were made online, which was nearly 25% of all applications for the year.

The Online Passport Renewal Service is the flagship project in achieving the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's "Digital First agenda" to deliver digital services to citizens throughout the world. The service builds on previous digital initiatives such as the introduction of the internationally award winning Passport Card in 2015. It has resulted in faster processing of applications and increased customer service through its innovative design. This unique online user experience was recognised in 2017 as the Winner of the World Class Civil Service Award and in 2018 as the winner of the Irish Public Sector Top Ranked Customer Experience Cxi Impact in Digital award.

2017 and 2018 Passport Service figures

| Application type | 2017 | 2018 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Total overall applications | 786,695 | 855,283 |
| Total online applications | 102,529 | 212,549 |
| % of Total applications made online | 13% | 24.8% |
| Total applications from Northern Ireland | 82,274 | 84,855 |
| Total applications from Great Britain | 80,752 | 98,544 |
| Total Passport Card applications | 39,565 | 58,267 |



Online applications have doubled



1 in 4 people applied online in 2018

Our Citizens Abroad

Consular Assistance

The Department's Consular Assistance team provides guidance and support to Irish citizens who find themselves in distress abroad. A Dublin-based team of case officers liaises with Ireland's network of more than 80 Embassies and Consulates around the world to help individuals who find themselves in difficult situations. The team dealt with more than 2,300 new cases in 2018 and this number is set to remain at similar levels as Irish people travel more than ever and further afield in the coming years – resulting in increasingly diverse and complex situations.

TravelWise

Launched in 2016, TravelWise is an award-winning free mobile app that allows users to check our latest travel advice for 200 countries, and to subscribe to receive specific country alerts. TravelWise is available to download for free on both Android and iOS platforms and to date has 50,000 users.



Consular Stand at the 2018 National Ploughing Championships
© DFAT/ Julien Behal

Honorary Consuls

Ireland has an extensive network of nearly 100 Honorary Consuls and Honorary Consuls General throughout the world, who provide an important support to Ireland's global engagement. Although their functions vary from country to country, Honorary Consuls often provide consular assistance and services to Irish citizens in their area, assist with trade promotion, and engage the local Irish community, helping to put into action Ireland's foreign policy priorities on the ground.

Consular Services

The Consular team also provides a range of consular services to Irish citizens and others. The Authentications section authenticates documents executed in Ireland for use in other countries. The busy team in our public office on Mount Street legalised over 60,000 documents in 2018.

The Marriages Abroad section provides civil letters of freedom to Irish citizens planning to get married abroad, confirming they are free to marry. The number of Irish citizens choosing to marry abroad has grown in recent years and over 3,000 applications were received in 2018. On average, successful applications are processed within 23 days, and are issued over 60 days before the date of marriage.

The **Foreign Births Register** allows anyone with a grandparent born in Ireland to apply for Irish citizenship. Demand for Foreign Births Registration has increased dramatically since the Brexit referendum in June 2016 and numbers remained high in 2018 due to increased awareness of the programme among descendants of Irish citizens worldwide. Although many applications come from British residents, significant numbers also apply from the United States, Australia, South Africa, Canada and further afield.



Jessica Pender
© DFAT

Profile JESSICA PENDER

Consular Services

The Marriages Abroad section of the Department's Consular Services team is responsible for issuing Certificats de Coutume, or freedom to marry certificates, to Irish citizens who intend on getting married abroad. I am the supervisor a very busy team of officers, processing over 1,500 applications a year – half of the total number of marriages abroad applications received from Irish citizens. Other applications are processed by our colleagues in Embassies and Consulates around the world, and my role includes guiding them on issues related to applications and advising on complex cases.

Consular Assistance and Services in 2018

Consular Assistance

The Department assisted with

2,343

new instances

of Consular Assistance in 2018



That's enough to fill 1.2 Irish ferries



A network of

92

Honorary Consuls and Honorary Consuls General

around the world works with
our Embassies and Consulates

Consular Services

60,372

documents legalised



Civil Letters of Freedom

3,135

civil letters of freedom

issued to Irish citizens getting married abroad

Top 5 Wedding Destinations

- 1 Italy
- 2 Portugal
- 3 Spain
- 4 France
- 5 Malta

JUNE
30

Most popular day
to get married abroad



NEW CITIZENS

17,414

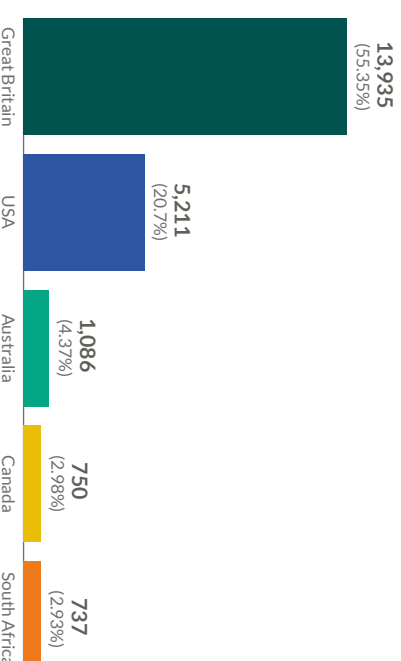
entered in the Foreign
Births Register in 2018

Foreign Births Registration

12%
2018

25,283 applications
for foreign births
registration received
in 2018

Top Five Regions for Applications for Foreign Birth Registration



Working for the Diaspora

Back for Business

Back for Business was launched as a pilot programme to foster and support entrepreneurial activity among emigrants returning or recently returned to live in Ireland.

Funded by the Department's Irish Abroad Unit, the programme is designed to support entrepreneurial activity among those recently returned or planning to return to live and set up a business in Ireland. It addresses the challenges that all early stage entrepreneurs face, with a particular focus on the additional barriers and challenges faced by those who have been out of the country for some time. This can often result in their local knowledge, contact base and professional and personal networks being less developed than those of typical entrepreneurs. Back for Business aims to bridge this gap.

The 38 participants on the pilot programme, which ran from November 2017 to May 2018, reported positive results as follows:

- » Over half of them were trading;
- » Six had become exporters for the first time;
- » 46 people were employed between them;
- » Overall turnover across the 38 businesses almost doubled during the six months of the programme;
- » Some 12 of those who were pre-trade at the start started trading within the cycle;
- » A total of 27 jobs new jobs were created by the participants during Back for Business;
- » Six of the company owners started exporting within the six months;
- » 100% said they would recommend the programme to others.



Launch of the Back for Business initiative in December 2018
© Orla Murray/SON Photographic Ltd / DFAT



Blazing a Trail Exhibition

Blazing a Trail Exhibition

The Blazing a Trail exhibition celebrates the lives and legacies of 21 pioneering Irish diaspora women of the 19th and 20th centuries who blazed a trail in a wide range of fields. The exhibition ran at EPIC, the Irish emigration museum, in November 2018. It will go on to reach a global audience by travelling to Irish Embassies and Consulates abroad over the coming years, affording these pioneering women's life stories the recognition they deserve.

The exhibition marked the centenary of partial women's suffrage, the right of Irish women to vote in elections at a time when Ireland was still under British rule. It recognises the endeavours of individual Irish women across the globe who struggled for their own professional recognition, and for justice and equality for others. The exhibition also tells the stories of Irish women in all corners of the world who blazed a trail in many fields: politics, sport, education, medicine, literature, the arts, the sciences and humanitarian work.



Dr Angela Byrne, DFAT's in-house historian at EPIC © Epic Museum



Recipients of the 2018 Distinguished Presidential Awards © Maxwells

Emigration offered many women access to education, careers and other opportunities that may not have been available in Ireland. These women made their mark across the globe, innovating in every field and paving the way for others to follow, navigating a male-dominated society on their own terms.

The exhibition is part of a collaborative project between EPIC, Herstory and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as part of its diaspora engagement work. Dr. Angela Byrne led in developing the exhibition in her role as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's historian-in-residence.

Presidential Distinguished Service Awards

The Presidential Distinguished Service Awards for the Irish Abroad was initiated by the Government in 2012. The Award provides recognition by the Irish State of persons living abroad who have given sustained and distinguished service to Ireland or to Irish communities abroad.

While the scheme is open to all persons living outside Ireland, it is primarily aimed at Irish citizens, those entitled to Irish citizenship and persons of Irish descent.

Over the seven years since the Awards have been in place, they have been presented to 71 remarkable individuals from diverse locations and backgrounds, who have made their contributions to Ireland in many different ways. These 71 recipients were chosen from amongst a strong range of nominees.

It is important that the Awards continue to attract high quality nominees, drawing on as broad a base as possible in the global Irish community. Many Irish people are doing great things all over the world for Ireland and their local communities, and these Awards offer an opportunity to recognise them.

Recipients of the 2018 Distinguished Presidential Awards

The recipients of the 2018 Awards were as follows:

Arts, Culture and Sport

William Kennedy (US)
Edna O'Brien (Britain)

Business and Education

Munira Hamud Mutran (Brazil)
John Lahey (US)

Charitable Works

Bridget Tighe (Palestine)

Irish Community Support

Breege McDaid (Britain)
Tom Power (deceased) (Australia)
Edward J. Ward (US)

Peace, Reconciliation and Development

Mary Killeen (Kenya)

Science, Technology and Innovation

Margaret Murnane (US)



Presidential Distinguished Service Award © Maxwells

Promoting Ireland's Prosperity



Promoting Ireland's Prosperity

St. Patrick's Day 2018

St. Patrick's Day is one of the best-known national holidays globally. Ireland's network of over 80 Embassies and Consulates avails of the celebrations to share our culture, history, and values with the world. Operating through this network and with the support of State Agencies, the Department develops an annual programme of activities and celebrations to promote trade, investment and tourism and to enhance Ireland's visibility and reputation internationally.

Over the St. Patrick's Day 2018 period, the Embassy and Consulate network co-ordinated and supported visits of the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, 29 Ministers, the Chief Whip, Attorney General, Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach to 92 cities across 38 countries to promote Ireland and Irish business. The Embassy and Consulate network hosted or organised a record

1,302 events for St. Patrick's Day, including 397 community and cultural events, 197 dedicated business events and 131 high-level political meetings. Over six million people around the world attended St. Patrick's Day parades and related events.

In addition, 304 sites in 50 countries around the world turned green for St. Patrick's Day 2018 as part of Tourism Ireland's ninth Global Greening initiative. The Embassy and Consulate network was instrumental in ensuring that greenings took place on every continent. Of particular note in 2018 were the greenings of the Luxor Obelisk at the Place de la Concorde in Paris, the Sydney Opera House, UN Headquarters in New York and 39 greenings which took place across Poland alone. The value of the greenings in terms of media coverage has been conservatively estimated by Tourism Ireland to be worth €10 million.

The Luxor Obelisk, Place de la Concorde, Paris, joined Tourism Ireland's Global Greening for the first time in 2018. © Tourism Ireland





Xiaolin Jiang
© Embassy Ireland, China/ DFAT

Profile: XIAOLIN JIANG Visa Officer, Embassy of Ireland, China

I have been a member of the Embassy of Ireland, Beijing, Visa Office team since 2009. Prior to joining the Visa Office, I studied at university in Canada and then worked in the private sector. I applied to work with the Irish Embassy after meeting many Irish people socially on my return to Beijing.

The Beijing Visa Office manages visa applications for persons residing in mainland China (including Hong Kong and Macau), and also Mongolia. I work alongside a dedicated team of 8 Chinese Visa Assistants and 5 Irish Visa Officers. We also work closely with our colleagues in the Consulates in Shanghai and Hong Kong, as well as Ireland's 16 Visa Application Centres across China. Together, we processed over 17,000 visa applications in 2018, which represented over a 20% increase on the previous year.

I enjoy the fast-paced operational environment of the Visa Office. In addition to my visa processing duties, I am also responsible for liaising with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Chinese officials travelling to Ireland on official business, as well as with our partners on the taking of biometrics under the British-Irish Visa Scheme.

2018 was an exciting year for the Embassy, as the first direct flight links between China and Ireland commenced in early June, after much work. I am proud to say that the Visa Office team has continued to offer a very efficient and high-quality service to our customers. I am also proud of the fact that I participated in a number of projects, led by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, which have modernised Ireland's visa service considerably, including, most recently, the introduction of online payments.

Above all else, I enjoy the Visa Office's weekly badminton game!



An Tánaiste with Wang Chao, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China © Embassy of Ireland, China / DFAT

Ireland and Asia Pacific

Visit by the Tánaiste to China

The Tánaiste visited China from 11–17 March for St. Patrick's Day 2018 and had a range of political, economic, cultural and community engagements in four cities: Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing.

The Tánaiste's visit was focused on delivering positive messages on the Irish economy to high-level contacts and also communicating Ireland's position on Brexit. Among the highlights was the launch of the first direct flight between Dublin and Beijing.

Promoting Ireland as a venue for tourism, business and investment in India

In India, Ireland's Embassy in New Delhi worked in partnership with IDA Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Cricket Ireland on an ambitious promotional campaign to promote Ireland as a venue for tourism, business and investment. The project team together produced a series of short videos featuring Ajay Jadeja, a well-known former Indian international cricket player, as he travelled to locations across Ireland. The videos were broadcast during the two T20 international cricket matches between Ireland and India on 27 and 29 June and reached an estimated 250 million people.

An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eacnamaíochas Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

ST. PATRICK'S DAY 2018

A GLOBAL CELEBRATION
7,000,000
From Alaska to Australia

ATTEND ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADES AROUND THE WORLD

OUR EMBASSY NETWORK ORGANISES OVER 350 EVENTS EACH YEAR TO MARK THE DAY

CONNECTING 70 MILLION PEOPLE OF IRISH

1762
New York City hosted the first official St. Patrick's Day parade in 1762

25,000
The parade in Munich is the largest in mainland Europe with 25,000 participants and spectators

The oldest St. Patrick's Day parade in the world takes place in the Hispanic, Arkansas, on the 99-foot long Bridge St.

The city of San Antonio, Texas is home to the world's only St. Patrick's Day river parade.

The highest altitude St. Patrick's Day is the 19th oldest place in Louisville, Colorado.

The most recently introduced winter game for St. Patrick's Day is the Scots Gaelic game of shinty.

The Great Wall of China and over 100 other major landmarks go green each year for St. Patrick's Day.

Tokyo has the biggest and oldest St. Patrick's Day parade in Asia. There were 12 St. Patrick's Day parades in Japan last year.

There are 14 St. Patrick's Day festivals in Britain. The oldest was first held in Birmingham in 1952.

1,000,000 +
Ireland has had an official St. Patrick's Day parade since 1911. The St. Patrick's Day festival hosts a week and attracts an international audience of 1 Million.

New Zealand is the first and most recently country to celebrate and go green for St. Patrick's Day each year.

1st

www.dfa.ie | @dfatirl

Visit by the Minister for Education and Skills to Malaysia

In September 2018, Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton T.D. travelled to Malaysia to promote Irish education.

During his visit, Minister Bruton met with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Women's Affairs and Community Development, Wan Azizah, and Minister for Education, Dr. Maszlee Malik.

Minister Bruton also presided over the signing of 15 Memoranda of Understanding between Irish and Malaysian higher education institutions.

Bloomsday 2018

The June Bloomsday celebrations give our Embassies and Consulates an opportunity to present Ireland's rich literary heritage to the world. In 2018, our Mission network was involved in and ran 28 events in honour of Bloomsday. The wide variety of creative events held included readings, music, exhibitions and promotion of Irish food with Bloomsday themed meals such as breakfasts in Budapest and Helsinki and brunches in Zagreb and Brussels.

An exhibition on Joyce was displayed in the metro in Bucharest, and also by Consulate General in Edinburgh. Successful events in cultural centres and bookshops were held in Lisbon, Berlin and Warsaw, as were jointly-organised programmes with local groups such as the University of Texas in Austin.

The Consulate in Hong Kong hosted readings of Ulysses in over 20 languages while our Consulate in Shanghai also held a particularly impressive programme of events. This included a very popular Bloomsday lecture on Joyce involving the Shanghai Writers Centre and Chinese and Irish academics. A Bloomsday vintage boat journey through the heart of Shanghai was attended by 150 guests and included music and readings with each deck of the boat representing different scenes from the book, including a 'Sandymount Strand' top deck. The media coverage of the event ensured that its reach extended far beyond those present to hundreds of millions of Chinese viewers, helping to raise Ireland's profile in China.



Lorna Hennessy © Consulate General of Ireland, Sydney/ DFAT

Profile: LORNA HENNESSY Consulate General of Ireland, Sydney

I am originally from Dublin and have been in Sydney for almost 15 years. I arrived in 2005 on a working holiday visa, expecting to be here for the year but a year rolled into another and another and I settled into Sydney life.

I started at the Consulate as Executive Assistant to the Consul General and have since had the opportunity to work in many areas of the Consulate's day-to-day activities. My current position still involves supporting the Consul General but I also now play a central role in the development and management of Consulate events. This ranges from brainstorming and contributing to ideas through to using my local knowledge of Sydney trends to deliver our projects effectively. I am also responsible for the logistics for Ministerial and Parliamentary visits. Over the years I have assembled a valuable range of contacts and knowhow for doing business in Sydney, through constant development and maintenance of good working relationships with the local community.

I love being connected to Ireland through my work and delivering the work of the Department, while having the all the benefits of the Sydney experience. Work at Ireland House Sydney is extremely varied which is why I enjoy it so much. In any one day I can be assisting an Irish citizen in distress, while doing a site visit and organising a business or community event with my Tourism Ireland or IDA Ireland colleagues.

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work with colleagues over the years who have inspired me and in their own unique ways have given a huge amount to the Irish community here in Sydney. Some highlights for me have included welcoming President Higgins on his visit here in 2017 and helping to organise the Sydney Queer Irish Mardi Gras float, which is now an annual event in the Sydney calendar.

Cultural Initiatives

St Brigid's Day in London

St. Brigid is one of Ireland's three patron saints, alongside St. Columba and the world famous St. Patrick. The origins of her Feast Day on 1 February are thought to be a pagan festival called Imbolc, marking the beginning of spring. Lá Fhéile Bríde, celebrates the arrival of longer, warmer days.

To honour St. Brigid's legacy as a trailblazing woman and a pioneer, Ireland's Embassy in London marked Lá Fhéile Bríde 2018 by staging an event on 1 February to celebrate the creativity of women through twelve different performances, talks and panel discussions held over that afternoon and evening.



Women in Political Journalism Panel Discussion © Malcolm McNally/DFAT

With President Michael D. Higgins & Sabina Higgins in attendance, almost 400 guests participated in the event to celebrate the enormous contribution and talent of women in such diverse fields as music, film, comedy, architecture, poetry, literature, fashion, art, theatre, craft, business and entrepreneurship, science and technology.

Other attendees included the award-winning TV actor, writer and producer Sharon Horgan, international fashion designer Orla Kiely, Enterprise Ireland CEO Julie Sinnamon, star of standup and TV comedy Roisin Conaty, musician and recording artist Keeva and the uniquely-talented Camille O'Sullivan.

Ireland Week in Los Angeles

From 26 October- 4 November 2018, Ireland Week delivered a strong programme of cultural and conference events in Los Angeles, one of the creative capitals of the world. 2018 was the second iteration of



Pauline McLynn © Malcolm McNally/DFAT

the event and it lived up to the goals of highlighting the unique creative links and opportunities between Los Angeles and Ireland, showcasing modern Ireland and connecting Irish and American creative professionals.

The combination of cultural and business-focused events is key to the success of Ireland Week in Los Angeles. The 2018 event therefore included a sell-out theatre night, featuring the best of Irish talent working and living in Los Angeles and directed by award-winning Dublin director Philly McMahon. It also included an Irish Screen America Film Festival, a new comedy showcase night at the Hollywood Improv, the debut of Jim Carroll's 'Banter' night and the addition of 'clubhub' meeting place which led to increased networking opportunities over the week. Events such as Music From Ireland Showcase, Pop Up Gaeltacht, Irish Dancing Flash Mob and the art pop-up from MART once again proved extremely popular, as did 'Ireland Con', a networking platform which focused on celebrating and building on tech, entertainment, innovation and cultural ties between Ireland and Los Angeles.



Ambassador Adrian O'Neill, Aisling O'Neill, Sabina Higgins, Camille O'Sullivan, President Higgins & Darina Allen © Malcolm McNally/DFAT



Saint Sister Performing at Music From Ireland on Ireland Week in Los Angeles ©Dean Machin

Ireland Week in Los Angeles was supported across Government, including by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Consulate General in San Francisco, the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, Screen Ireland, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Culture Ireland.



"Beauty, Queens and Playboys" directed by Philip McMahon featuring Georgina McKeivitt and Rory O'Neill aka Panti Bliss at The Barnsdall Theatre, Los Angeles, Ireland Week 2018 ©Dean Machin

Sustaining Ireland's Influence



Sustaining Ireland's Influence

High-Level Visits

High-level visits to and from Ireland are an effective tool for promoting Ireland's interests and values and building our international economic, political and cultural links. They are also an opportunity for interaction with Irish communities abroad.

The Department's Protocol Division plans and delivers visits abroad by the President and visits to Ireland by Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers, heads of international organisations and other international dignitaries. In total, Protocol Division managed 46 inward and outward visits during 2018.

Overseas visits by the President in 2018 included State Visits to Greece and Latvia and an Official Visit to Lithuania. The President also carried out official engagements in New York, which included an address to the United Nations; Florence, where he delivered the European Union Institute's State of the Union address and Geneva, where he made a keynote address to the International Labour Organisation's World of Work Summit.

Protocol managed inward visits by a wide range of dignitaries and delegations from across the globe. These included the first Papal visit to Ireland in almost 40 years and the first visit abroad following their marriage by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

In the planning and delivery of these visits, Protocol Division worked closely with stakeholders from Ireland and the international community, including Áras an Uachtaráin, other Government Departments and State Agencies and a range of foreign Governments.

Protocol is also responsible for providing formal hospitality to official visitors to Ireland and to those visiting Iveagh House, the Department's headquarters on St Stephen's Green. It managed or hosted 210 events in 2018. It also managed the Government's relationship with foreign Embassies in Dublin, as well as those accredited to Ireland from abroad.



June Carr
© DFAT

Profile: JUNE CARR Protocol Officer

The purpose of my job is to ensure the effective implementation of certain privileges and immunities accorded to the Diplomatic Corps in Ireland in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961. There are currently 62 Embassies resident in Ireland. Two of these opened in 2018. I worked closely with the staff at the new Embassies to assist them in setting up and advising on relevant administrative procedures.

Another part of my role is to process the appointment of foreign Honorary Consuls in Ireland. This involves liaising with other Government Departments, submitting the appointments to the Tánaiste for approval and preparing the final formal document – the "Exequatur" – for the appointee. There are 68 Honorary Consuls operating in Ireland. I managed the appointment of 3 new Honorary Consuls in 2018.

I also assist in organising events that involve the Diplomatic Corps. There are a number of annual events – the New Year's Greetings with the President, the National Day of Commemoration, the National Famine Commemoration and the George Garrett Golf Cup – as well as some once-off events. In 2018 we had the visit of Pope Francis in August and on 11 November, the Armistice Centenary Commemoration. The latter took place in the morning ahead of the Inauguration Ceremony for the President later that day – that was a particularly busy day for us!

Policy Planning

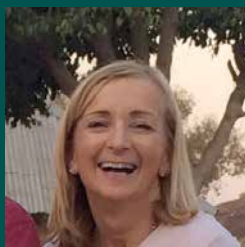
The Policy Planning Unit works closely with other Divisions and Sections across the Department to conduct research and manage other forms of engagement that help inform the policy-making process.

Thirteen seminars were held in 2018 to bring together staff in order to capitalise upon their expertise or knowledge of a given topic. The seminars increase the Department's understanding of specific policy areas, create informal networks of officers with particular policy experience and mitigate loss of institutional memory caused by ongoing staff rotation.

Research findings and seminar reports are presented to the Department's senior management for further consideration or action.

The Policy Planning Unit also increases understanding of foreign policy issues through the 'Global Island Policy Series' of internal talks each with expert speakers, open to all staff of the Department. Topics cover a broad range of issues, and staff are encouraged to participate in question and answer sessions with the speakers, to broaden their knowledge and deepen their understanding of current foreign policy issues. 2018 saw Policy Planning Unit host 15 of these events.

In addition, the Policy Planning Unit builds and maintains connections with counterparts in other foreign services and with academia and think-tanks in Ireland and overseas. These enable the Department to keep abreast of the latest developments in policy making and to track the major topics grabbing the attention of other foreign policy makers and analysts. The Unit completed seven foreign visits in 2018, involving 19 meetings with foreign policy planning units and think-tanks.



Nicole O'Neill
©DFAT

Profile: NICOLE O'NEILL HR Manager

I am a professional HR manager in HR Abroad Unit with extensive public and private sector experience. Prior to joining the Department, I worked in the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform and before that in the private sector where I led on HR Strategic Reform. This work included delivering transformational change; and managing mergers and acquisitions whilst working with different cultures. I have an in-depth knowledge of employment law. Professionalising HR has been an important aspect of my career. I became a Fellow of the CIPD in 2010 and a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership and Management in the same year.

At the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, leading on HR matters for locally-employed staff Ireland's Embassies and Consulates abroad, ensuring budgetary oversight and management of a high performing diverse team, means there is never a dull moment.

I have also designed training programmes to support process improvements within the Department and abroad and I am working with other colleagues in HR Section on a new Human Resources Strategy for the Department. I am contributing to the Department's effort to build the Human Resources function to be a strategic driver of excellence in people management.

Managing the Department's Human Resources

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is committed to a respectful workplace that embraces diversity and promotes equality. The Department strives to be an employer of choice in which a diverse staff can reach their full potential. These values are integral to how we deliver services, manage our people and represent the State.

During 2018, the Department developed a Human Resources Strategy for the 2019-2022 period through an extensive process of consultation and engagement with staff in Ireland and at Ireland's diplomatic missions around the world, and with representatives of trade unions and the Irish Foreign Affairs Family Association. In developing and finalising the Strategy, due consideration was given to our responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by the Department's policies and plans, as defined by the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The 2019-22 Human Resources Strategy reflects the Department's core values of diversity, integrity, leadership, service and excellence. It sets out how we intend to invest in our workforce, to build a more inclusive workplace, to develop and support effective managers and leaders, and to enhance delivery of human resources priorities throughout the organisation in the years ahead. The Strategy also focuses on the Department's ambition to build a more equal, diverse and cohesive work environment and to continue to invest in and extend our programme of work in support of gender.

Gender Equality Action Plan

The Department's Working Group on Gender Equality developed a Gender Equality Action Plan during 2018 to drive initiatives to improve gender balance and to identify and remove obstacles to women reaching decision-making levels in the organisation. A key priority is to provide metrics to map gender disparities across the organisation ahead of anticipated legislation on the Gender Pay Gap in 2020.

To ensure the Department is a family-friendly workplace that recognises the modern realities of the changing family dynamic, particularly in light of postings abroad, the Gender Equality Action Plan recommended a Departmental system to manage maternity leave cover. Under the 2019-22 Human Resources Strategy, the Department is committed to providing greater supports for women going on and returning from maternity leave and to providing cover for maternity leave or other extended leave or family-related purposes, wherever possible.

Equality and Diversity Action Plan

The Department's Working Group on Equality and Diversity developed the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which was approved by the Management Board in May 2018. This Action Plan aims to drive initiatives on inclusion, equality, and diversity in the workplace and in our internal and external communications. As part of this plan, the Tánaiste launched the Department's LGBT+ Staff Network in June 2018, the first such network in a Government Department. The Network aims to be a supportive space for staff, secondees and spouses at home and abroad.

2018 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards

Building on our successes in previous years, the Department excelled once again at the 2018 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards. The Department received two awards in the Excellence through Collaboration category in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for two important achievements. One award was for 'First Direct Air Routes between Ireland, Beijing and Hong Kong' and the second for 'Access to Beef Market in China'. Both projects highlighted key achievements for Ireland in 2018 and demonstrate how effective Team Ireland can be when we work together to deliver for the State.

In June 2018, two airlines began operating direct scheduled flights to China for the first time. This added 100,000 extra passenger seats annually to Ireland, and provided a direct route for the transport of cargo.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, all public bodies in Ireland have a legal obligation and responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. This is called the **Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty**.

In 2018, the Department continued to protect equality and human rights of staff and users of its services in Ireland. In our work abroad, we continued to advocate on behalf of Ireland for equality for LGBTI+ people at United Nations (especially in the Human Rights Council) and European Union levels, as well as in regional organisations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Ireland's diplomatic network actively supported LGBTI+ rights by participating in seminars, conferences and Gay Pride parades and similar events across the world. Irish Embassies and Consulates also cooperated closely with EU Delegations and Embassies of other EU Member States and like-minded countries to advocate for the rights of LGBTI+ persons, including advocating for the decriminalisation of sexual activity between persons of the same gender where it exists and against its criminalisation where this is contemplated.

In addition, Ireland's diaspora policy is aimed at engaging with diverse range of diaspora groups, including the LGBTI+ community, through the Emigrant Support Programme which offers support for welfare and public outreach activities.

In 2018, Ireland became the first Western European beef exporter to secure access with six beef plants now approved to export beef to China. The opening of this market presents an exciting opportunity for the entire Irish beef sector, from farming right through to processors. The advent of the direct routes and access to the beef market were major developments in Sino-Irish relations, and will assist in making a significant economic boost to a range of sectors and delivering on the strategic priorities of the Department.

The work of colleagues across the Department was instrumental in the successful delivery of these projects and particular congratulations are due to staff in the Asia Pacific Unit as well as in Embassies Beijing and Hong Kong.

Our Staff in 2018

DFAT Staff by numbers 2018

1762 total staff

That's enough to fill 3.3 Airbus planes



1 in 10 staff started in 2018



HQ vs Abroad 31 December 2018

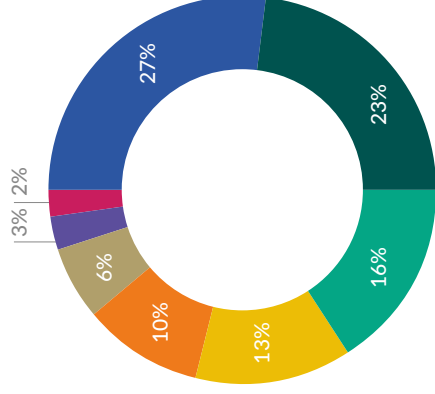


43% Abroad

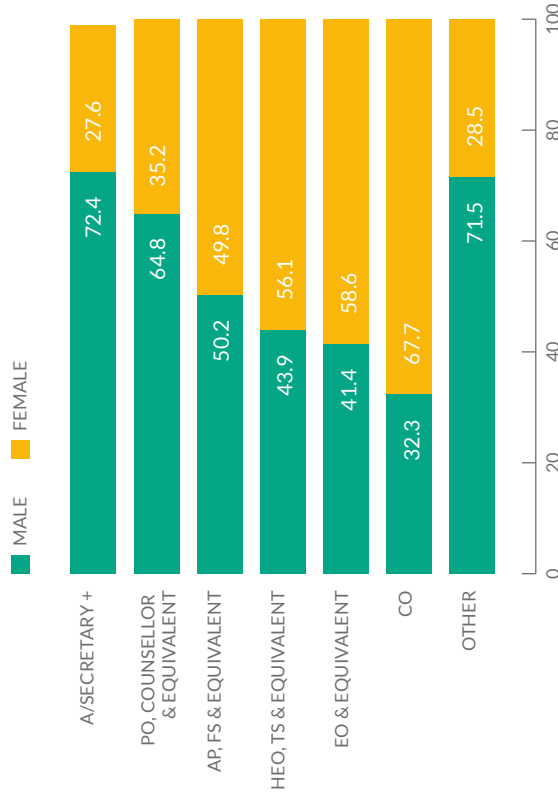


57% HQ

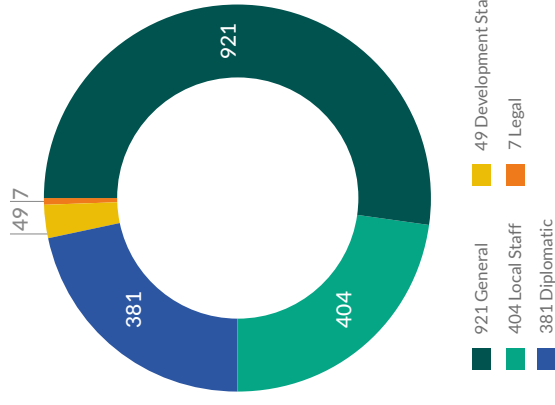
Total staff 31 December 2018



Gender percentage 31 December 2018

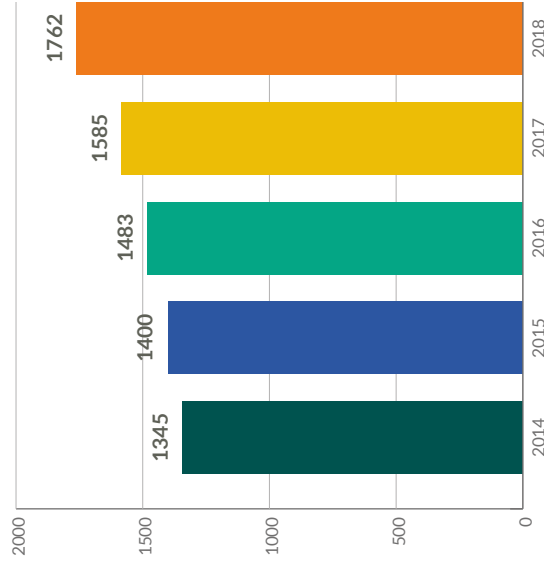


Streams 31 December 2018



Staff numbers 2014-2018

2018: 1762 staff - 11% yoy increase



Our Engagement in 2018 on Social Media

@DFATIRL



official Twitter accounts

8 in Ireland and 74 around the world

FOLLOWERS

437,445

across all accounts

28 % increase



That's double the population of Cork City



The number of followers of the main **Twitter** account (@dfatirl) grew by 7,618 in 2018 to reach **41,869**



Our Twitter audience is 53% female and 47% male

@DFATIRELAND

43

official Facebook pages

3 operated by HQ and 40 operated by Missions.

188,335

Facebook followers

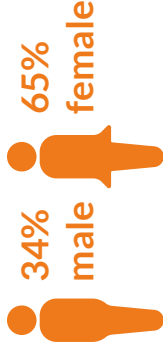
on our Facebook pages



With **48,014 new likes** across all of our Facebook pages in 2018



Facebook users "liked" DFAT HQ Facebook page



Our Facebook page's audience is 65% female, 34% male and 1% other

Top five location of our fans are:



DFAT LINKEDIN

FOLLOWERS

10,000

of our 7 official LinkedIn accounts



That almost fills Three Arena

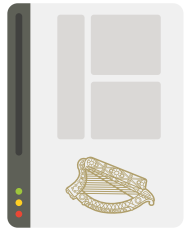


1 in 5 work in government administration



The number of followers of our Dublin-based LinkedIn pages **grew by 1,516 in 2018**

Our Online Presence



89

Embassy and Consulate Websites

Embassy Website Visits



Busiest Day on the site in 2018

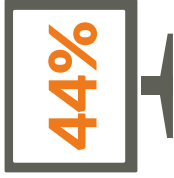


42,126 users
54,802 visits
159,962 page views

Devices

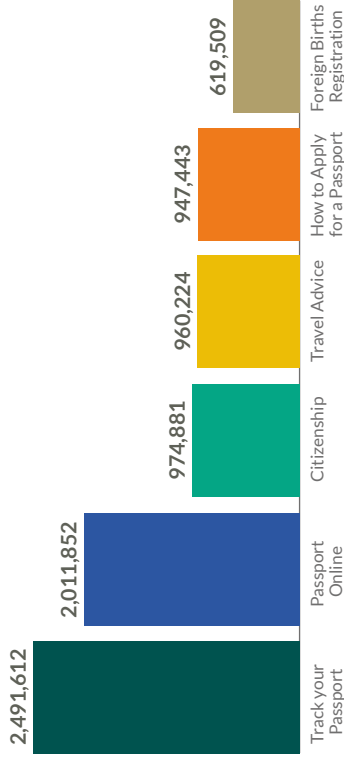


website visitors used mobile devices



visitors used a PC

Top 5 Pages Accessed



Top 10 Irish Embassies abroad that people accessed online

- 1 India
- 2 Great Britain
- 3 Russia
- 4 USA
- 5 United Arab Emirates
- 6 Spain
- 7 Australia
- 8 Canada
- 9 China
- 10 Republic of Korea



On average people look at 3 pages on our website

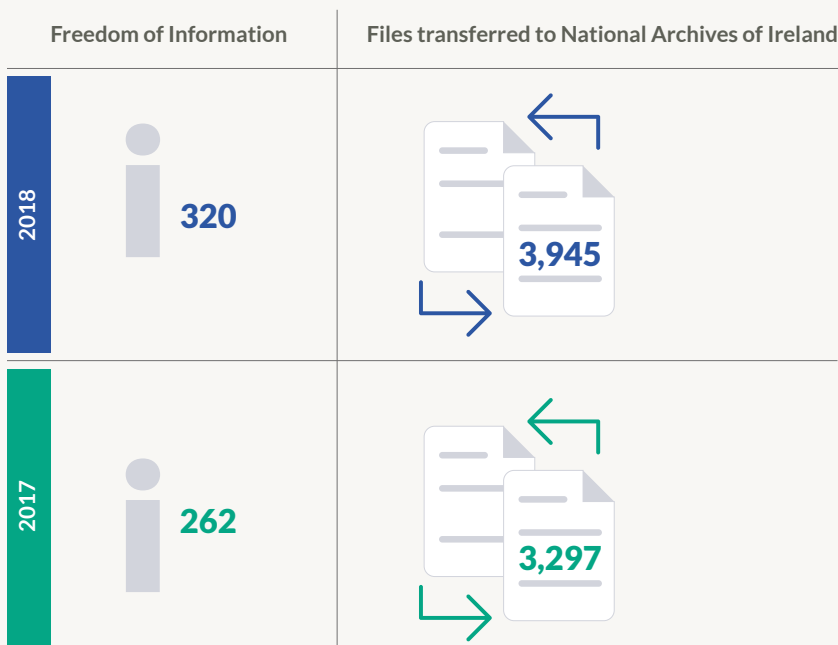
Iveagh Scholars Programme

In May 2018, the Department had the honour of bringing 28 Transition Year students from across Ireland to the Department’s headquarters, Iveagh House, to experience a week in the life of the Irish Foreign Service under the Iveagh Scholars Programme.

Building on the success of this Programme in previous years, the week offered students the opportunity to experience a broad range of the Department’s work, consider Ireland’s role in the world and reflect on how they might contribute to shaping Ireland’s foreign policy in the future. In this context they met and discussed foreign policy issues with the Tánaiste, Minister of State McEntee and Secretary General Niall Burgess, as well as visiting foreign Embassies based in Dublin. A further particular highlight was a visit to Áras an Uachtaráin, where the students were greeted by President Michael D. Higgins.

The Iveagh Scholars Programme also saw the students involved in exercises that simulated planning for high-level visits into Ireland, preparing and presenting opportunities for trade promotion abroad and providing consular assistance in mock emergencies, as well as discussing Ireland’s values and international development activities.

Freedom of Information Requests and Transfers of Files to National Archives



Information, Communications and Technology Strategy

In 2018 the Department produced its first comprehensive ICT Strategy, outlining a vision for how technology will support and enable the work of the Department and Ireland’s diplomatic missions abroad in the period to 2020.

Under the theme ‘Maximising the Impact of our Global Connections’, the Strategy’s accompanying Action Plan seeks to transform the Department’s work in 4 key areas:

- » Delivering Outstanding Public Services;
- » Promoting Seamless Collaboration;
- » Enabling and Empowering our People;
- » Investing in the Development of our ICT Capabilities.

Certain key technology initiatives have already commenced under the Strategy, including the creation of a worldwide portal for contacts and event management, a digital platform for administering grants and funding applications and an upgrade of desktop technology. This will support the mobility and efficiency of staff and Ireland’s diplomatic missions around the globe.

The Strategy commits the Department to enhancing its capacity to deliver solutions in the areas of records management, data analytics, passport processing and collaborative workspaces. It also prioritises innovation in the delivery of services to Irish citizens so that they are ‘digital first’, mobile-friendly and secure. This is reflected in the Passport Service’s continued development of the online passport renewals system.

New technologies and business solutions in 2018



Hybrid Laptop Solution supporting data, voice, video



Online Passport renewals for children



Internal Business Systems



Pilot level development of **Grants and Funding CRM**



Web Chat Customer Engagement Software
Microsoft Dynamics 2016 for Contact and Event Management

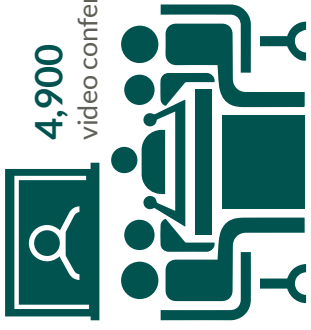
ICT in Numbers in 2018



24/7 Helpdesk
Support in xx locations



16,000
support requests from
users of ICT in the Department



4,900
video conferences



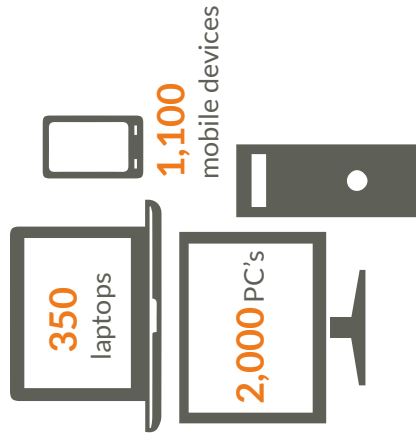
DATA
20TB
downloaded



30 million
emails handled



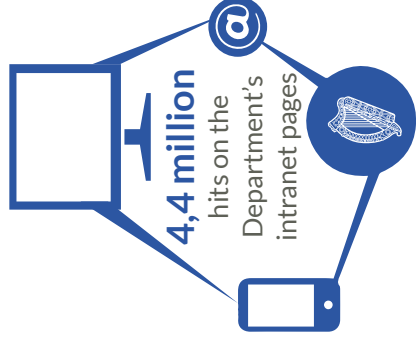
300,000
remote access



350
laptops

2,000
PC's

1,100
mobile devices



4,4 million
hits on the
Department's
intranet pages

Our 2018 Budget

The Department's spending in 2018 was allocated across six Expenditure Programmes which correspond to the High-Level Goals as set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy 2017–2020.

Five of these Programmes were managed through the Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs and Trade) expenditure framework and the remaining one through the Vote 27 (International Co-Operation) framework.

The budget allocations for each Programme included pay and non-pay administration costs incurred by DFAT business units in Ireland and Ireland's diplomatic missions across the world. The Programmes were implemented in support of the Department's main work priorities as outlined throughout this Annual Report.

—

Spending by the Department is guided by an overarching commitment to provide value for money to the Irish taxpayer, to ensuring that we account for what we spend and to transparency in our financial dealings.

—

The total 2018 gross expenditure Allocation for Vote 28 in 2018, including a Capital allocation of €10.5 million, was over €238 million (versus over €228 million in 2017, an increase of +4%).

The overall administrative allocation for Vote 28 in 2018 was almost €176 million which represented an increase of +8% on the 2017 allocation. The balance is represented by Programme expenditure.

The main focus of capital investment in 2018 was the Passport Reform Programme, the continuing investment in ICT to support Ireland's global network of diplomatic missions, as well as investment in State properties and the opening of new diplomatic missions under the Global Ireland programme.

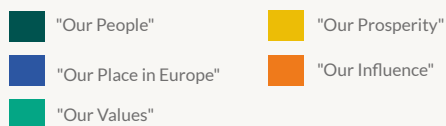
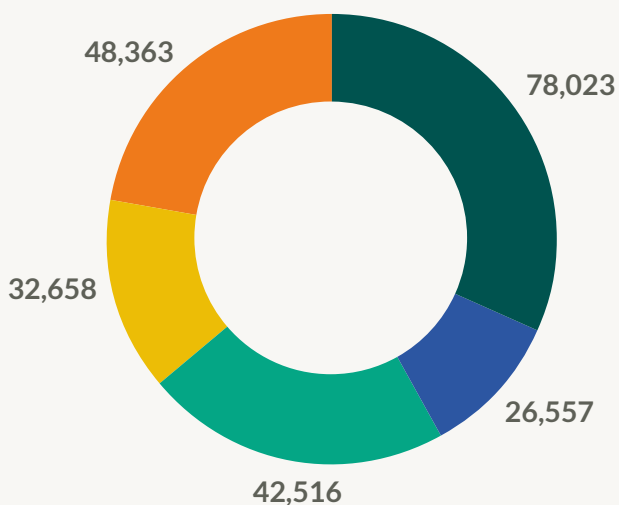
The Government provided a gross allocation to Official Development Assistance (ODA) of c.€707 million in 2018. €500 million of this was administered by the Department's Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) under Vote 27 – International Cooperation. This represented an increase of some €26 million (or approx. 4%, on the 2017 revised level). It also represented the third successive year in which the Government increased the overall allocation to ODA and further evidence of Ireland's commitment to making incremental, sustainable progress towards achieving the UN's ODA target of 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2030.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accounts- Vote 28

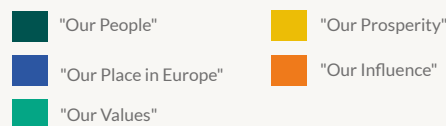
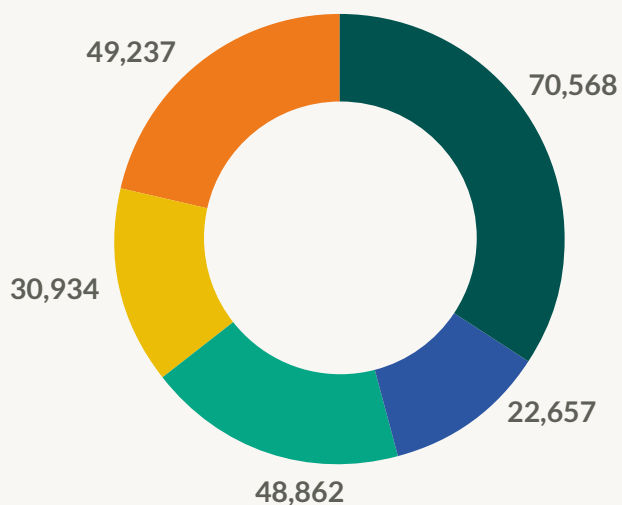
| Programmes | Outturn 2017 | Provisional Outturn 2018 |
|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| A  "Our People" | €70,568m | €78,023m |
| B  "Our Place in Europe" | €22,657m | €26,557m |
| C  "Our Values" | €48,862m | €42,516m |
| D  "Our Prosperity" | €30,934m | €32,658m |
| E  "Our Influence" | €49,237m | €48,363m |
| Total Expenditure | €222,258m | €228,117m |

| | | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| F | Appropriations in Aid | €63,222m | €65,685m |
| | | 159,036 | €162,432m |

Outturn 2017



Provisional Outturn 2018



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accounts

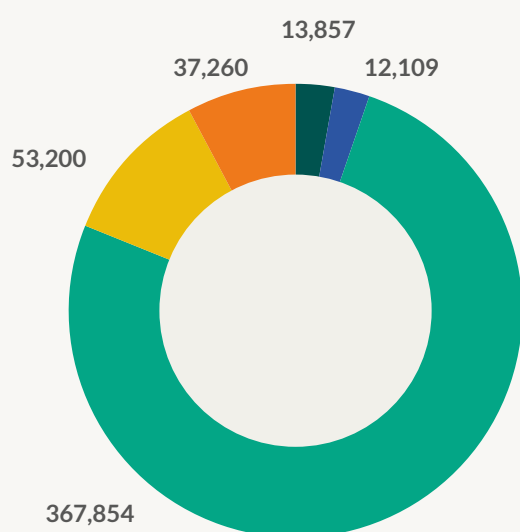
Vote 27: International Cooperation

Programme: Work on poverty and hunger reduction

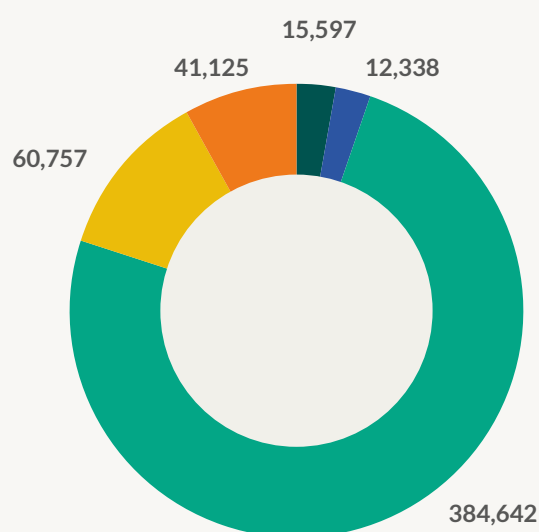
Outturn by Subhead Figures in €000's

| Subhead | Outturn 2017 | Outturn 2018 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| A.1 Administration - pay | 13,857 | 15,597 |
| A.2 Administration - non pay | 12,109 | 12,338 |
| A.3 Bilateral co-operation and humanitarian assistance | 367,854 | 384,642 |
| A.4 Contributions to international funds for the benefit of developing countries | 53,200 | 60,757 |
| A.5 Contributions to United Nations and other development agencies | 37,260 | 41,125 |
| Gross Expenditure | 484,280 | 514,459 |
| B Appropriations-in-Aid | 1,340 | 1,240 |
| Net Expenditure | 482,940 | 513,219 |

Outturn 2017



Outturn 2018



Administration - pay
Administration - non pay

Bilateral co-operation and humanitarian assistance
Contributions to international funds for the benefit of developing countries
Contributions to United Nations and other development agencies

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Accounts Vote 27: International Cooperation

Ireland's Official Development Assistance

| Ireland's Official Development Assistance | € Millions 2018 | € Millions 2017 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Vote 27 | 514.87 | 490.75 |
| Other Government Departments and Contributions to the EU Development Cooperation Budget | 271.60 | 252.67 |
| Total ODA | 786.47 | 743.42 |
| GNP | 251,826 | 233,149 |
| ODA as a % of GNP | 0.31% | 0.32% |
| Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Vote 27 as a % of Total ODA | 65% | 66% |
| Other Government Departments and Contributions to the EU Development Cooperation Budget as a % of Total ODA | 35% | 34% |

Vote 27: International Cooperation

Bilateral / Multilateral Analysis

| | € Millions 2018 | € Millions 2017 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Bilateral ODA | | |
| Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Vote 27 | 390.20 | 389.16 |
| Other Government Departments and Contributions to the EU Development Cooperation Budget | 40.88 | 47.85 |
| Total Bilateral ODA | 431.08 | 437.01 |
| Multilateral ODA | | |
| Department of Foreign Affairs And Trade - Vote 27 | 124.68 | 101.59 |
| Other Government Departments and Contributions to the EU Development Cooperation Budget | 230.72 | 204.81 |
| Total Multilateral ODA | 355.40 | 306.40 |
| Total ODA | 786.47 | 743.41 |
| Bilateral ODA as a % of Total ODA | 55% | 59% |
| Multilateral ODA as a % of Total ODA | 45% | 41% |

* These annexes use the OECD definitions for Bilateral and Multilateral Aid.

Evaluation and Audit

A principal role of the Department's Evaluation and Audit Unit is to contribute to the achievement of the Department's high-level goals through promoting shared learning, providing accountability, informing policy, expenditure and other decisions, and contributing to DFAT's wider performance enhancement and assessment capability.

Key work undertaken by the Unit during 2018 included a rapid review of Ireland's previous 'One World One Future' international development policy. This review captured headline progress and lessons from One World One Future to serve as an input to the new international development policy, *A Better World*. In addition, with the preparation of *A Better World* in mind, the Unit conducted an assessment of existing staffing resources for partner management in the Department's Development Cooperation and Africa Division.

Promoting a culture of evaluation is an integral part of the Unit's work. It also hosted a discussion event during 2018 entitled "Evaluating Long Term Transition", which considered the role of evaluation in informing Government policies in response to climate change.

On the audit side, the Unit ensures the effectiveness of the Department's systems of governance, risk management and internal control.

Key areas of work included an assessment of the Department's readiness for the General Data Protection Regulation which came into force in May 2018; an audit of the Department's risk management system; and audits of a number of Embassies abroad. In addition, jointly with our counterparts in the Department of Justice and Equality, the Unit carried out an audit of the governance arrangements for the provision of the visa service at Ireland's diplomatic missions abroad. The Unit also continued to provide business and counter-fraud advisory services across the Department.



An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

