



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

## **Global Ireland**

Ireland's Strategy for France 2019–2025  
'Together in Spirit and Action'



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# Contents

Introduction	02
Strategic Objectives	03
Our People and Our Culture	05
Our Values	07
Our Place in Europe	08
Our Prosperity	09
Our Influence	11

# 1

## Introduction

As we mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President de Gaulle's visit and Ireland strives to double its global impact, it is timely to look again at our relationship with France and to explore what more we can do together in spirit and in action.



EU, Irish and French flags at the Embassy of Ireland, Paris Photo: Yvan Moreau/DFAT

Former French President Charles de Gaulle visited Ireland in 1969. Reflecting on the bonds between our countries, he said it was time for Ireland and France “to be together again in spirit and in action”.

Ireland's relationship with France is one of enduring friendship and affinity going back centuries. It evokes memories of our shared Norman, Huguenot and Celtic heritage, the Wild Geese and the spirit of the French Revolution which so captured the imagination of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen. Even Ireland's national flag was inspired by the French tricolour.

We are also bound by tragedy and sacrifice. The centenary of the First World War was an opportunity for us all to remember the tens of thousands of Irish soldiers who fought and died in France; fulfilling the promise of the legendary French Marshall Ferdinand Foch that “France will never forget her debt to the heroic Irish dead.”

Since those dark days, Ireland and France have worked together for peace – both in the United Nations and in our shared home in the European Union. Our political and economic relations are thriving, our people-to-people links are stronger than ever before while culture remains at the heart of our connections.

As we mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President de Gaulle's visit and Ireland strives to double its global impact, it is timely to look again at our relationship with France and to explore what more we can do together in spirit and in action.



# 2

## Strategic Objectives

### SUMMARY

To deliver on the ambition of *Global Ireland* and our renewed ambitions for our relationship with France, in the following areas Ireland will:



Statue of the renowned Irish architect and designer Eileen Gray by Vera Klute in the garden of the Embassy of Ireland, Paris  
Photo: Yvan Moreau/DFAT

### OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE

- » Engage in a more structured way with the Irish community, including holding an annual summit of cultural and community groups to stimulate exchanges of ideas and best practice;
- » Deepen our engagement with Irish studies programmes in French universities;
- » Aim to continue to improve the quality of our French language learning in Ireland, in particular in the implementation of *Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Language Education 2017–2026*;
- » Partner with the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) to promote the French language in the Irish public service;
- » Appoint a cultural officer to the Embassy in Paris;
- » Double our presence at the annual major film, TV and animation trade fairs in France by 2023;
- » Host an annual Twinned Towns Day to re-energise the town twinning programme;
- » Initiate an emerging leaders in France programme, reaching out to young Irish professionals and developing networking opportunities in close cooperation with *NetworkIreland* and Team Ireland.

## OUR VALUES

- » Initiate a more structured dialogue with France on UN issues to strengthen our cooperation;
- » Second a diplomat, initially in the Embassy in Paris, to deepen our engagement with the OIF and to develop our relations with states in Francophone West Africa;
- » Work with France to support the Middle East Peace Process, including through our joint initiative to support renewable energy in Gaza;
- » Work together to strengthen rules-based multilateralism.

## OUR PLACE IN EUROPE

- » Tell Ireland's story more clearly in France, aided by a new public diplomacy officer;
- » Reinforce contacts at the highest political and parliamentary levels;
- » Hold regular bilateral consultations at senior official level, with a primary focus on our shared priorities;
- » Collaborate with France and the European Commission to deliver the Celtic Interconnector.



Team at the Embassy of Ireland, Paris Photo: DFAT

## OUR PROSPERITY

- » Build on the annual Ireland France business awards and establish a Franco-Irish Business Forum to stimulate links between businesses and further enhance their relationships with Team Ireland;
- » Support our ambitious trade strategy with additional resources at Embassy Paris, reinforcing Team Ireland;
- » Grow our food and drink exports to France to €1 billion by 2025;
- » Work with the French authorities to support ease of access for trade via the landbridge across the UK;
- » Promote more visits to Ireland by French tourists, particularly during off-peak months;
- » Develop synergies between Irish and French researchers by hosting workshops in collaboration with Science Foundation Ireland.

## OUR INFLUENCE

- » Strengthen our hub in the Embassy in Paris including reinforcing our diplomatic and administrative support staff;
- » Expand our Honorary Consul network;
- » Open an Enterprise Ireland office in Lyon;
- » Develop and implement a new Regional Outreach Strategy in France.

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# 3

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## Our People and Our Culture

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Cultural and personal connections have drawn Ireland and France together for centuries. Culture plays an exceptional role in French life and lies at the heart of its relationship with the rest of the world and with Ireland.

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French people have a deep appreciation for Irish culture and an appetite for more. Some of our finest authors have written their best works in France, some even in French. In return, leading French writers have also found inspiration living in Ireland.

French and Irish cultural institutions have strong links, with, for example, the Royal Irish Academy and the *Académie Française* working jointly. Visual arts links are growing, particularly with the National Gallery.

The *Centre Culturel Irlandais* in the historic Irish College is a vibrant centre for promoting Irish culture and artistic exchange.

Every day French and Irish people work together, study together and visit each other's countries for sport, tourism, business and cultural exchanges. In 2018, 500,000 French tourists visited Ireland and over 700,000 Irish tourists visited France. This two-way traffic is likely to increase over the lifetime of this strategy, particularly when France hosts the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and the Olympics in 2024.

Over 20,000 Irish people have made their home in France. They are generally well integrated into French society, but they still appreciate opportunities to come together. As a result, there is a vibrant Irish community network throughout France.

In consultations that preceded this strategy, the community expressed a keen interest in more regular and structured engagement with the Embassy. Younger members in particular wanted to tap into the wealth of experience and connections that exist within the community itself.

Ireland also enjoys a strong affinity diaspora in France. These are French people who have already studied, worked or done business in Ireland and retain an interest in and support for Ireland. Uniquely, for example, the majority of players in France's 23 GAA clubs are French. Irish universities have active alumni groups in France.



To cultivate these people-to-people and cultural links we will:

- » Engage in a more structured way with the Irish community, including holding an annual summit of cultural and community groups to stimulate exchanges of ideas and best practice;
- » Deepen our engagement with Irish studies programmes in French universities;
- » Aim to continue to improve the quality of our French language learning in Ireland, in particular in the implementation of *Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Language Education 2017–2026*;
- » Partner with *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) to promote the French language in the Irish public service and, in particular, strengthen French language learning in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- » Appoint a cultural officer to the Embassy in Paris to promote Irish culture, particularly contemporary culture, throughout France;
- » Double our presence at the annual major film, TV and animation trade fairs in France by 2023;
- » Host an annual Twinned Towns Day to re-energise the town twinning programme;
- » Initiate an emerging leaders in France programme, reaching out to young Irish professionals and developing networking opportunities in close cooperation with *NetworkIreland* and Team Ireland.



St Patrick's Day at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, 2019 Photo: Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris / Julien Mouffron-Gardner



Fête de la musique at the Centre Culturel Irlandais Photo: Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris/Julien Mouffron-Gardner



# 4

## Our Values

As Ireland took its place among the free nations of the world, we found that we shared many of our core values with France.

One hundred years ago, Ireland sent its first diplomatic mission to Paris.

As Ireland took its place among the free nations of the world, we found that we shared many of our core values with France.

We are strong defenders of human rights, equality and the rule of law. We are both committed to international development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris is, of course, synonymous with global action on climate change.

Irish and French troops have worked together in UN peacekeeping and EU CSDP missions in Lebanon, Mali and Chad. We work closely in support of the Middle East Peace Process.

France is a key actor on the world stage and particularly in the United Nations, where it is one of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council.

Through the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), based in Paris, France enjoys strong links with 300 million French speakers around the world. Ireland was honoured to be granted Observer Status at the OIF in 2018.



*Irish Envoys George Gavan Duffy and Sean T. Ó Ceallaigh with Mairéad Gavan Duffy setting out from the Irish delegation at the Grand Hotel Paris, 1919 Photo: BMH CD 95/6/6, Military Archives, Ireland*

French remains a vital language of international diplomacy. As Ireland strives to deepen our engagement with the French-speaking world, we need greater proficiency in the French language.

To help us to promote and preserve the fundamental values that we share with France, we will:

- » Initiate a more structured dialogue with France on UN issues to strengthen our cooperation;
- » Second a diplomat, initially based in the Embassy in Paris, to deepen our engagement with the OIF and to develop our relations with states in Francophone West Africa;
- » Work with France to support the Middle East Peace Process, including through our joint initiative to support renewable energy in Gaza;
- » Work together to strengthen rules-based multilateralism.

# 5

## Our Place in Europe

France and Ireland work together both bilaterally and as partners in the European Union to build a shared and better future for all our citizens.

In 1972, as President Georges Pompidou prepared to welcome Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom into the European Community, he said: “we meet not merely to exchange compliments, but to act; to propose and to decide.”

So it has been ever since, with France and Ireland working together both bilaterally and as partners in the European Union to build a shared and better future for all our citizens.

As we prepare for the first departure of a Member State from our Union, our relationship with France – our nearest EU neighbour after Brexit – becomes ever more important.

As the second largest Member State and a founding member, France continues to play a formative role in the EU's institutions and policies. The views of Paris are of crucial importance to Ireland and our engagement with France on European issues can have a real bearing on the lives and prosperity of our citizens.

France and Ireland are like-minded on many EU policies. At the same time, there are some European issues where we do not share the same perspective, often deriving from the differing nature of our economic models. There is value in strengthening cooperation in areas where we agree and deepening exchanges of views in areas where perspectives diverge.

Ireland has a positive reputation in France, our cultural heritage and our landscape resonate strongly with French people. But there are some challenges too. We need to tell the story of modern Ireland more clearly in France.

To ensure that we can deliver ever greater understanding and cooperation, we will:

- » Tell Ireland's story more clearly, aided by a new public diplomacy officer in Paris;
- » Reinforce contacts at the highest political and parliamentary levels;
- » Hold regular bilateral consultations at senior official level, with a primary focus on our shared priorities such as agriculture, fisheries, climate action, energy, transport, justice, defence, education, finance and foreign affairs;
- » Collaborate with France and the European Commission to deliver the Celtic Interconnector between Brittany and Cork – a 700 megawatt electricity interconnector capable of supplying electricity to 450,000 homes.



*The Taoiseach Leo Varadkar meeting President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, April 2019 Photo: Yvan Moreau/DFAT*

# 6

## Our Prosperity

A two-way trade relationship worth €25 billion.



Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee and her French counterpart, Amélie de Montchalin, visit a family farm in Ireland, July 2019 Photo: Julien Behal/ DFAT

Trade and investment between Ireland and France are flourishing.

With a two-way trade relationship worth €25 billion, the statistics speak for themselves.

France is Ireland's:

- » 4<sup>th</sup> most important economic partner;
- » 5<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner;
- » 5<sup>th</sup> largest market for Irish investment abroad, worth over €4 billion in 2017;
- » 1<sup>st</sup> export market for seafood and lamb;
- » 2<sup>nd</sup> largest market for beef and artisan beers;
- » 4<sup>th</sup> largest market for whiskey;
- » 4<sup>th</sup> largest source of tourists;
- » 4<sup>th</sup> largest source of inward investment, with 63 IDA-assisted French companies employing 8,000 people here.

There are over 400 Irish companies active in the French market and over 23,000 people are engaged in Irish-owned companies in France. The Franco-Irish business network, *NetworkIrlande*, has 90 members and supports links between businesses working closely with the France Ireland Chamber of Commerce.

There are also numerous partnerships between Irish and French researchers. For example, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was involved in 155 academic collaborations established with France in 2018, the fourth highest with any country.

To further our trade and business with France, we will:

- » Build on the annual Ireland-France business awards and establish a Franco-Irish Business Forum to stimulate links between businesses and further enhance their relationships with Team Ireland;
- » Support our ambitious trade strategy with additional resources at Embassy Paris, reinforcing Team Ireland;
- » Grow our food and drink exports to France to €1 billion by 2025;
- » Work with the French authorities to support ease of access for trade via the landbridge across the UK;
- » Promote more visits to Ireland by French tourists, particularly during off-peak months;
- » Develop synergies between Irish and French researchers by hosting workshops in collaboration with SFI.



*The Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe and his French counterpart, Bruno Le Maire, in Dublin, February 2019 Photo: Department of Finance*



*Promoting Ireland's creative industry at the MIPCOM Television Trade Fair, Cannes, 16th October 2018 Photo: DFAT*



# 7

## Our influence

Paris is the undisputed political, administrative, economic and cultural capital of France. It is also where over half of the Irish community in France resides.

If Ireland wants to be influential in France, it needs to have the right footprint in the right place.

In a highly centralised state, Paris is the undisputed political, administrative, economic and cultural capital of France. It is also where over half of the Irish community in France resides.

This concentration is reflected in our strong presence in Paris, which includes the Embassy of Ireland, the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Bord Bia and the Centre Culturel Irlandais.

The Embassy is located in the historic *Hôtel de Breteuil*, beside the *Arc de Triomphe* and within easy reach of government ministries and the commercial and financial districts. The state-owned building offers unrivalled representational facilities and is a prestigious focal point for Team Ireland in France. It is also co-located with Ireland's delegation to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO, which are also based in Paris.

Ireland's representation to the Council of Europe is in Strasbourg.

The Embassy in Paris already has strong and growing links with France's regions and cities as well as a network of Honorary Consuls in Lyon, Cannes and Cherbourg. But recent reforms have given greater powers to the French regions and feedback from the Irish community indicates a strong desire for greater regional engagement.



Blazing A Trail exhibition, Embassy of Ireland, Paris  
7th March 2019 Photo : Yvan Moreau/DFAT



The Embassy of Ireland, Paris Photo: Yvan Moreau/DFAT

In order to maximise Ireland's influence in France, we will:

- » Strengthen our hub in the Embassy in Paris, including reinforcing our diplomatic and administrative support staff to allow a more focused concentration on building Ireland's reputation in France, public outreach and deepening our engagement with the French authorities in emerging priority areas such as climate action, energy and digital cooperation;
- » Expand our Honorary Consul network, starting with the appointment of a new Honorary Consul in Toulouse and, in a second phase, considering appointments in Rennes, Lille and Bordeaux by 2025;
- » Open an Enterprise Ireland office in Lyon by the end of 2019;
- » Develop and implement a new Regional Outreach Strategy to enhance our collaboration with the Irish community, develop new business opportunities, strengthen municipal and regional links and create a framework for regular and structured engagement by Team Ireland in France.



The Tánaiste Simon Coveney speaking on 'Brexit, Ireland and Europe at 27', in Paris on 15 March 2019 Photo: Yvan Moreau/DFAT

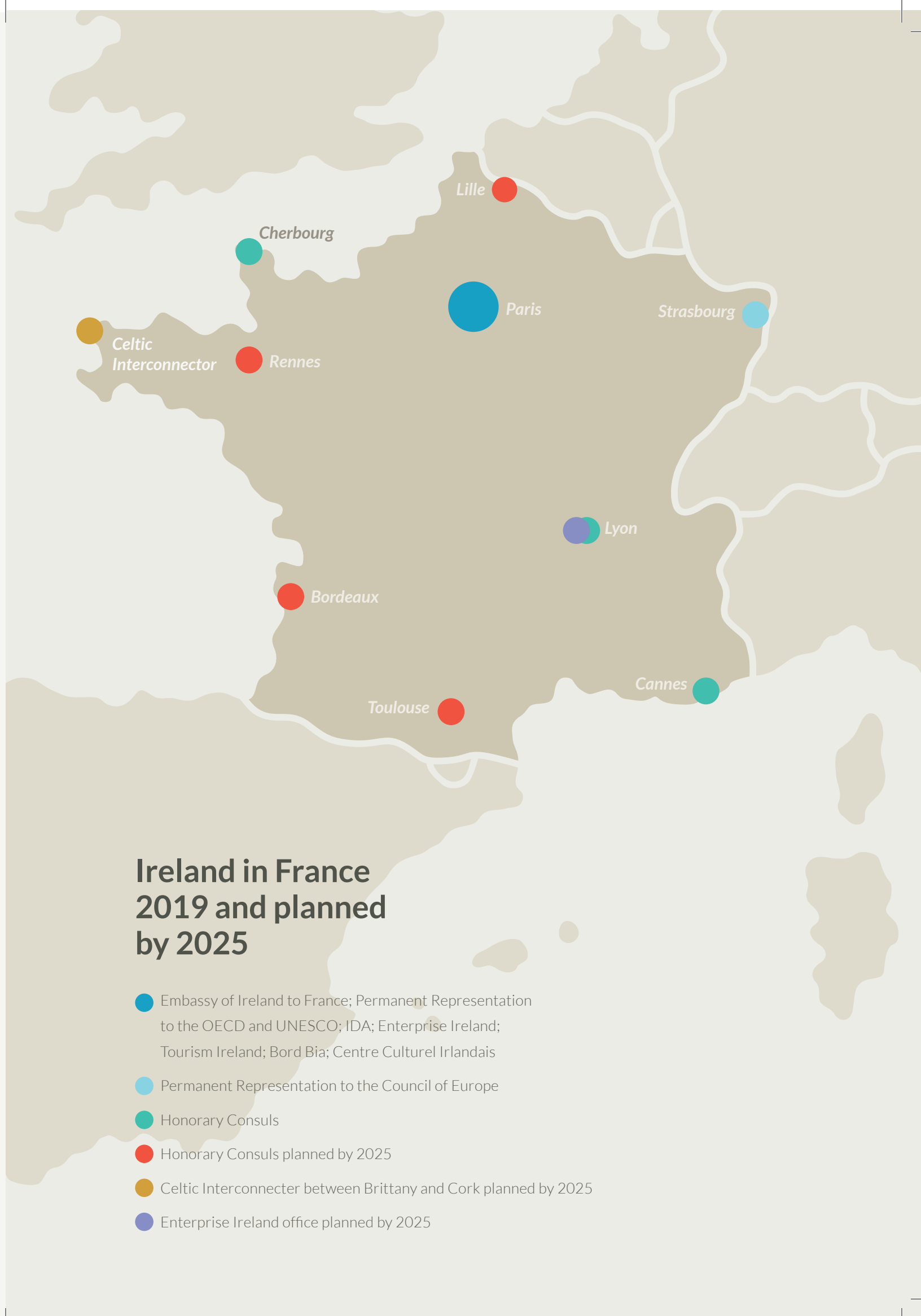


Seachtain na Gaeilge event at the Embassy of Ireland, Paris, 1st March 2018 Photo: DFAT

We will expand  
our Honorary  
Consul network.

## Ireland in France 2019 and planned by 2025

- Embassy of Ireland to France; Permanent Representation to the OECD and UNESCO; IDA; Enterprise Ireland; Tourism Ireland; Bord Bia; Centre Culturel Irlandais
- Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe
- Honorary Consuls
- Honorary Consuls planned by 2025
- Celtic Interconnector between Brittany and Cork planned by 2025
- Enterprise Ireland office planned by 2025





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