

CONTENTS

ENVIRONMENT

5

Climate	6
Flora and Fauna	6
Population	9

HISTORY

11

The Gradual Eclipse of Gaelic Ireland	12
Eighteenth Century	13
Towards Independence	15

THE IRISH STATE

19

Language	19
Name of State	19
Flag	19
Emblem	19
Anthem	19
The National Day	20
Government	20
Political Parties	22
Local Government	24
The Courts	25
Police and Defence Forces	26

THE ECONOMY

29

Economic Success Factors	29
Public Finances	29
Renewal of the National Infrastructure	30
Population, Labour Force and Employment	30
EU Membership	30
Ireland and EMU	30
Inward Investment	31
Outward Investment	31
Education and Training	31
Innovation and R&D	31
Taxation	32

THE ECONOMY**29**

E-Commerce and the New Economy	32
Ireland – the Global Economy	32
Monetary Policy	33
State-sponsored Bodies	33
Exports	34
Imports	34
Balance of Payments	34
Industry	34
Industrial Relations	36
Agriculture	36
Fishing	37
Services	38
Tourism	38
Finance	39
Transport	40
Energy	41
Mining/Quarrying	43
Telecommunications	43
Newspapers	44
Radio and Television	45

SERVICES**47**

Education	47
First-level (Primary) Education	47
Second-level (Post Primary) Education	47
Third-level Education	48
Health Services	50
Social Welfare	51

NORTHERN IRELAND**53**

Political Background and Chronology	53
The 1980s and 1990s	55
Multi-Party Talks	57
The Good Friday Agreement 1998 and its Implementation	58

NORTHERN IRELAND**53**

Representation in the Northern Ireland Assembly, British and European Parliaments and Local Government	61
International Fund for Ireland	62
Population	62

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**65**

Foreign Policy	65
United Nations	65
European Union Membership	66
EU Common Foreign and Security Policy	66
Development Cooperation Ireland	69
The Irish Abroad	72

ARTS AND CULTURE**75**

Culture	75
The Irish Language	76
Literature in Irish	77
Literature in English	78
Art.....	81
Architecture	83
Music	86
Film	88
Sport	89

CREDITS**93****INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES****95**

This booklet provides a general overview of Ireland's political, economic and cultural life. While it is not possible to include every aspect of life in Ireland in this short publication we hope that you will discover a little about Ireland and its people.

River Barrow, County Carlow



ENVIRONMENT

The island of Ireland consists of a large central lowland of limestone with a relief of hills and several coastal mountains and is situated in the extreme north-west of Europe between 51.5 and 55.5 degrees north latitude and 5.5 and 10.5 degrees west longitude. The Irish Sea to the east, which separates Ireland from Britain, is from 17.6 to 192 km wide and has a maximum depth of about 200 metres. Around the other coasts the shallow waters of the Continental Shelf are rather narrow and depths increase rapidly into the Atlantic Ocean. The mountain ridges of the south comprise old red sandstone separated by limestone river valleys. Elsewhere granite predominates, except in the north east which is covered by a basalt plateau. The central plain contains glacial deposits of clay and sand. It is interrupted by low hills and has large areas of bog and numerous lakes.

Longitude	5.5° and 10.5° west	
Latitude	51.5° and 55.5° north	
Total area	84,421 km ²	
Republic of Ireland	70,282 km ²	
Northern Ireland	14,139 km ²	
Greatest length (N-S)	486 km	
Greatest width (E-W)	275 km	
Coastline	3,172 km	
Highest mountain	Carrantuohill	1,041m
Longest river	Shannon	340 km
Largest lake	Lough Neagh	396 km ²
Highest waterfall	Powerscourt	122m

At least two general glaciations have affected the island and everywhere ice-smoothed rock, mountain lakes, glacial valleys and deposits of glacial sand, gravel and clay mark the passage of the ice. A spectacular example of the impact of glaciation on the landscape is found in the Burren in County Clare and County Galway.

Climate

Influenced by the Gulf Stream, and with the prevailing southwesterly winds coming from the Atlantic, the climate of Ireland is equable and temperatures are fairly uniform over the whole country.

The coldest months are January and February which have mean daily air temperatures of between 4°C and 7°C while July and August are the warmest, with mean temperatures of between 14°C and 16°C. Extremes of air temperature, below -10°C or above 30°C, are

Sunset, County Donegal



The Burren, County Clare



extremely rare. May and June are the sunniest months, averaging five to seven hours sunshine per day.

In low-lying areas average annual rainfall is mostly between 800mm and 1200mm but in mountainous areas it may exceed 2000mm. Rainfall is normally well distributed throughout the year but about 60% of the total falls between August and January.

Flora and Fauna

Ireland was separated from the European mainland after the last Ice



Age. As a result the island has a smaller range of flora and fauna than is found elsewhere in Europe.

Much of the country was once covered with primeval forest. Although the original forests have been cleared over most of the country, a reforestation programme has favoured sitka spruce, Scots and Conterta pines, larches, Norway spruce and Douglas fir. There are over 400 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) protected under the EU Habitats Directive.

In the Burren there is a region of bare carboniferous limestone containing arctic-alpine plants which survived from the last glaciation. Ireland's bogs host a large variety of bog-moss species together with heathers and sedges. In the south west (County Cork and County Kerry), there are areas rich in plants that thrive in the mild and humid climate of the region.

Ireland is important for its seabird colonies and migratory waterfowl. Of some 380 species of wild birds recorded in Ireland, 135 breed in the country. There is considerable migration of birds to Ireland in spring and autumn, while several species arrive from Greenland and Iceland in winter; 75 per cent of the world's population of the Greenland whitefronted goose winter in Ireland. The significance of this has been marked by the establishment of an internationally important wild bird reserve in County Wexford on the south-east coast.

Inland waters support colonies of swans, geese, waders, duck, tern and gulls. Game shooting is strictly controlled and State-assisted restocking programmes augment stocks of wild game birds. Among the more unusual species of bird are merlin, peregrine falcon, corncrake and chough.

Rivers and lakes contain a wide variety of fish life. Salmon, brown trout, char, pollan and eel all occur naturally and other varieties such as

pike, roach and rainbow trout have been introduced from outside.

Mammals are similar to those found throughout the temperate regions of Europe. There are 31 species of which the Irish stoat and the Irish hare are of particular interest. Other animals include the red deer, fox, badger, rabbit, otter, grey seal, common seal, red squirrel, hedgehog and many bat and cetacean species. The only amphibians are a single species each of frog, toad and newt. There are no snakes in Ireland and the only reptile is the common lizard.

Responsibility for protecting and conserving Ireland's natural and built heritage lies with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of Public Works.

Population

Ireland has been inhabited since the stone age. People moved westwards across the European continent for more than seven thousand years and settled in the country. Each new group of immigrants, Celts, Vikings, Normans, English, has contributed to its present population. The major centres of population are Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. Sixty per cent of the population live in cities and towns of 1,000 people or more. A high proportion of the population is concentrated in the younger age groups. As a consequence of improved economic performance in recent years there has been a significant increase in net migration. The present population is over 3,900,000, the highest on record since 1871.

Online

Ordnance Survey Ireland:	www.osi.ie
Office of Public Works:	www.opw.ie
Met Éireann:	www.met.ie
Heritage Council of Ireland:	www.heritageireland.ie
The Environmental Information Service:	www.enfo.ie
Environmental Protection Agency:	www.epa.ie
Central Statistics Office:	www.cso.ie



Ireland's location as an island to the west of continental Europe and close to Britain has, in large measure, shaped her history.

Ireland, which has been inhabited for about 7,000 years, has experienced many incursions and invasions, resulting in a rich mixture of ancestry and traditions. The first settlers, mostly hunters from Britain, brought with them a Mesolithic culture. They were followed around 3000 B.C. by farmers who raised animals and cultivated the soil. After these neolithic settlers, around 2000 B.C. came prospectors and metalworkers.

By the sixth century B.C. waves of Celtic invaders from Europe began to reach the country. While Ireland was never unified politically by the Celts, they did generate a cultural and linguistic unity.

The introduction of Christianity in the fifth century A.D. is traditionally credited to Saint Patrick, though there is evidence that there were Christians on the island before his arrival. Unlike most of western Europe, Ireland never experienced the barbarian invasions of the early medieval period and, partly as a result, the sixth and seventh centuries saw a flowering of Irish art, learning and culture centering on the monasteries. Irish monks brought Christianity to many parts of Europe in the period before 800 A.D.

During the ninth and tenth centuries, Ireland was regularly raided by the Vikings. They were also traders and did much to develop life in Dublin, Cork and Waterford. Following the defeat of the Vikings by Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland, at Clontarf in 1014, the Viking influence faded.

In the twelfth century, the arrival of the Normans, who had earlier settled in England and Wales, shattered such progress as had been made towards the creation of a centralised State under a single High King. They quickly gained control over large parts of Ireland, which then came under the political authority of the King of England.

For the next 400 years the Normans and their descendants were an influential presence in Ireland. However, many areas of the country remained in Irish hands and, by the early sixteenth century there were widespread fears in England that English influence was in danger of collapse, both as a result of Gaelic incursions and of the progressive Gaelicisation of the Norman settlers.

The Gradual Eclipse of Gaelic Ireland

Religious change in England at this time had a major impact on Ireland. The descendants of the Norman settlers in Ireland, who came to be called the Old English, were, by and large, hostile to the Protestant reformation which had led to the establishment of the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. In addition, the central strategic importance of Ireland, as an island close to both Britain and continental Europe, and hence a possible base for English malcontents or foreign enemies, gave Irish affairs an urgency that they had not had for centuries.

Following a series of revolts in Ireland — which arose in response to religious differences and to the English Crown's policy of introducing new settlers from Britain, Gaelic resistance was worn down and in 1603, the last Gaelic stronghold, Ulster, was brought under Crown control. The Ulster plantation which followed brought many English and Scots settlers to Ulster and had a lasting impact on the religious and political complexion of the province.

Irish political history in the seventeenth century was intimately linked to events in England and Scotland, including the Civil War, the rise of

Viking swords found in Dublin





Detail from "Battle of Fontenoy"



Red Hugh O'Neill

Oliver Cromwell, the restoration of Charles II, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which placed William and Mary on the English throne. A struggle for supremacy between the Catholic Old English and Gaelic Irish on the one hand, and the Protestant New English (who included further new settlers) on the other, was, after numerous ebbs and flows throughout the period, finally settled at the Battles of the Boyne (1690) and Aughrim (1691). The Old English and the Gaelic Irish were crushed and many of their leaders and followers ('The Wild Geese') left Ireland to pursue military, religious or commercial careers abroad. The Protestants of the Established Church monopolised political power and ownership of the land, and penal laws discriminated against Catholics.

Eighteenth Century

In the eighteenth century, there was much economic development. The linen industry flourished, particularly in Ulster; and Irish wool, beef, butter and pork were important exports. The Protestant Ascendancy came to see itself as the Irish nation and developed a vigorous and distinctive parliamentary tradition. Sustained Irish emigration began in the eighteenth century, as many thousands of Ulster Presbyterians and a lesser number of Catholics departed for the New World.

The developing dispute between Britain and her colonies in North America from the 1760s helped create a tradition of radical patriotism that was ultimately, under the impact of the French Revolution, to



O'Connell election meeting in County Clare

produce the Society of United Irishmen. In 1798 the United Irishmen staged an insurrection in Ireland, with the objective of establishing an independent Irish republic in which all religions would be equal though the rebellion was marked by some episodes of sectarian violence. This rebellion was crushed and the Act of Union of 1800 created a full parliamentary Union between Britain and Ireland.

By this time however, Britain and Ireland were moving apart, especially in economic and demographic terms. As Britain industrialised and urbanised, Ireland, outside Ulster, in effect de-industrialised, with the bulk of its rapidly growing population becoming ever more dependent on the potato for sustenance. In the late 1840s, as a result of the wholesale failure of the potato crop in successive years, a terrible famine occurred: one million people died and a further million fled Ireland. Within ten years (1846–56) the population had fallen by a quarter (8 million to 6 million), and would fall further as emigration became a dominant feature of Irish society.

In politics, the nineteenth century was dominated, initially, by the pursuit of Catholic emancipation (the penal laws were gradually loosened from the late eighteenth century on, and in 1829 Catholics,

led by Daniel O'Connell, won the right to sit in parliament). Thereafter, there was a succession of efforts to reform or undo the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. The Great Famine (1845–1848) was not just an immense human tragedy and a socio-economic watershed, but had far reaching political repercussions. The British Government stood indicted in the popular mind and the desire of a majority of Irish voters for some form of self-government was strengthened. Irish landlords, too, came under political and economic pressure in the post-Famine decades. By the early twentieth century, after sustained agrarian unrest, legislation was in place inducing the great landlords to sell land to their tenants. The tenants were offered loans to enable them to purchase their holdings.

The question of self-government, or 'Home Rule' had not, however, been settled: attempts by Daniel O'Connell and Isaac Butt in the 1840s and 1870s came to little, but under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell in the 1880s, the Irish Parliamentary Party placed the Irish question at the centre of British politics. In 1886, the Liberal party under W.E. Gladstone came to support a limited form of self-government for Ireland.

The prospects of Home Rule galvanised the Unionists in Ireland, who were predominantly Protestant, and were a majority in the province of Ulster. Along with their allies in England who feared that Home Rule for Ireland would lead to the break-up of the Empire, Unionists set out to prevent the granting of Home Rule. Nonetheless, a Home Rule Bill was finally enacted in 1914.

Towards Independence

In an increasingly militarised atmosphere, private paramilitary armies (the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Irish Volunteers) marched and drilled, and hostilities between the two were only averted by the outbreak of the First World War and the consequent postponement of Home Rule. The war changed everything: in 1916 a republic was declared in Dublin and an armed insurrection took place. This rising, which initially enjoyed little public support, was suppressed but its supporters, capitalising on public revulsion at the execution of its leaders, and on opposition to the introduction of military conscription



Monument to Charles Stewart Parnell in Dublin's O'Connell Street



In 1916 a republic was declared

to Ireland in the First World War, were successful in the General Election of 1918, when they swept aside the Irish Parliamentary Party who had campaigned for Home Rule.

Sinn Féin ('Ourselves'), the election victors, set up the first *Dáil* (Parliament) and a war of national independence ensued. By the time an Anglo-Irish Treaty was concluded in 1921, six counties in North-East Ulster, with a roughly two-thirds Unionist majority at that time, had already been constituted as Northern Ireland. As a result of the Treaty, the remaining twenty-six counties formed the Irish Free State, which



Members of the first Dáil

had dominion status within the British Empire. The establishment of the Free State was followed by a short civil war between those who accepted the Treaty as offering effective self-government and those who held out for a full republic. Despite its brevity, the Civil War was to colour attitudes and determine political allegiances for decades.

The first government of the new State was headed by W.T. Cosgrave of *Cumann na nGaedheal*, later the *Fine Gael* party. From the 1930s onwards the *Fianna Fáil* party, founded by Eamon de Valera, dominated Irish politics. Ireland was admitted to the United Nations (UN) in 1955, and joined what is now the European Union (EU) in 1973. New economic development policies led to substantial and rapid growth. As elsewhere in Europe coalition governments have become quite common and have normally involved one of the two larger political parties with the Labour Party or the Progressive Democrats.

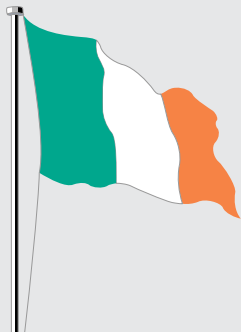
Online

National Archives:

www.nationalarchives.ie



Constitution



National Flag



Official Emblem

In the first two decades after Ireland achieved independence in 1922, the institutions of the State were consolidated and a tradition of political stability was established. The Constitution of 1937 and the Republic of Ireland Act 1948 severed Ireland's last formal links with Britain. Ireland remained neutral during the Second World War and does not belong to any military alliance.

Language

Article 8 of the Constitution makes the following affirmation:

- 1 The Irish language as the national language is the first official language.
- 2 The English language is recognised as a second official language.

Name of State

The Constitution provides that the name of the State is *Éire* or in the English language, Ireland. The Republic of Ireland Act of 1948 provides for the description of the State as the Republic of Ireland but this provision has not changed the use of 'Ireland' as the name of the State in the English language.

Flag

The national flag is a tricolour of green, white and orange. The flag is rectangular in shape, the width being twice the depth. The three colours are of equal size with the green next to the staff.

Emblem

The harp has been regarded as the official symbol or coat of arms of Ireland since medieval times. The heraldic harp is used by the Government, its agencies and its representatives at home and abroad. It is engraved on the seal matrix of the Office of the President as well as on the obverse of all coinage. It features on the Irish euro coins.

Anthem

The text of *Amhrán na bhFiann* (*Soldiers Song*), consisting of three stanzas and a chorus, was written by Peadar Kearney who also composed the music together with Patrick Heaney. The chorus was

formally adopted as the National Anthem in 1926. A section of the National Anthem (consisting of the first four bars followed by the last five) is also the Presidential Salute.

The National Day

Saint Patrick's Day, (17 March) is the National Day.

Tradition holds that it was the use of the shamrock (a green trefoil) by Saint Patrick when preaching in Ireland, that led to its adoption as an Irish symbol.



Watching the Saint Patrick's Day parade

Government

Ireland is a parliamentary democracy. Its law is based on common law and legislation enacted by Parliament under the Constitution. Regulations of the European Communities have the force of law in Ireland.

The Constitution of Ireland sets out the form of government and defines the powers and functions of the President, both Houses of the *Oireachtas* (National Parliament) and the Government. It also defines the structure and powers of the Courts and outlines the fundamental rights of citizens. The definition of rights covers five broad headings: Personal Rights, The Family, Education, Private Property and Religion.

The President is the Head of State. Where there is more than one candidate for the office, the people elect the President by direct vote. A President may only serve for two terms. The current President, Mary McAleese, was elected for a seven year term in November 1997.

There are fifteen Government Departments each headed by a Minister who collectively form the Government. Executive power is

THE IRISH STATE

exercised by or on the authority of the Government, which is responsible to the *Dáil* (House of Representatives). The Head of the Government is the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) while the *Tánaiste* is the Deputy Prime Minister.

There are two Houses of Parliament, known as *Dáil Éireann* (House of Representatives) and *Seanad Éireann* (Senate). The *Dáil* has 166 members. They are elected on a system of proportional representation by universal suffrage.

Elections take place at least once every five years. The most recent General Election was held in 2002. The main political parties in the *Dáil* are *Fianna Fáil*, *Fine Gael*, the *Labour Party*, *Progressive Democrats*, the *Green Party*, *Sinn Féin* and the *Socialist Party*. The present government is made up of a coalition between *Fianna Fáil* and the *Progressive Democrats*.

The *Seanad* has 60 members, eleven of whom are nominated by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) while the rest are elected from a number of vocational panels and by graduates of universities. The *Seanad* may initiate or revise legislation, but the *Dáil* has the power to reject any such amendments or proposed legislation.

The Dáil Chamber



The President of Ireland Mary McAleese



Political Parties

Fianna Fáil, the Republican Party, is well represented in urban and rural Ireland. Since 1932 it has been the largest party in the Dáil. Its aims include securing in peace and agreement the unity and independence of Ireland, and the development of a distinct national life in accordance with the diverse traditions of the Irish people. It is part of the Union for Europe group in the European Parliament.

Fine Gael, the second largest party, is based on the principle of encouraging enterprise and social justice with decision-making devolved to the appropriate level. A core ideal of the party is reconciliation with and between the peoples of the island of Ireland, and the belief that this is not achieved through confrontation. It is part of the European People's Party.

Government Buildings, Dublin



THE IRISH STATE

The *Labour Party* is affiliated to the Socialist International Party and is a member of the Party of European Socialists (PES) in the European Parliament. It seeks to build a society free from deprivation and based on the principles of democracy, equity, participation and co-operation.

The *Progressive Democrats* was established with the aim of providing Ireland with a modern, forward-looking liberal party in the European mould and is working to develop the role of the State in the economic and social life of the country.

The *Green Party* is a political party associated with Green Parties in over 30 other countries. It stands for protection of the environment, community decision-making, freedom of information, open government and peace through disarmament. The Green Party motto is 'Think Globally, Act Locally'. The Party is represented at local, national and European Parliament level.

Sinn Féin is an Irish republican party. Its objectives are the reunification of Ireland, political independence and national sovereignty.

The *Socialist Party* campaigns in the interest of ordinary workers, the unemployed and young people.

Online

Government of Ireland:	www.irlgov.ie
Fianna Fáil:	www.fiannafail.ie
Fine Gael:	www.finegael.ie
Labour:	www.labour.ie
Progressive Democrats:	www.iol.ie/pd
Sinn Féin:	www.sinnfein.ie
Green Party:	www.greenparty.ie
The Socialist Party:	www.socialistparty.net

Note: Websites for Government Departments can be found in relevant sections throughout this booklet as well as in the index list of websites at the back of this booklet

Local Government

The local government system is administered by 114 local authorities and is undergoing a process of renewal and reform.

The services provided by the local authorities can be described under eight main headings: housing and building; road transportation and safety; water supply and sewerage; development incentives and controls; environmental protection; recreation and amenity; education, health and welfare and miscellaneous services. Education, health and welfare services are however primarily delivered at local level by other public agencies. The local government reform programme has seen local government expand its community development role and widen its sphere of influence in locally delivered public services. Local government is funded partly by central government and partly by local sources including motor tax proceeds, rates (on commercial property) and local charges such as refuse, rents and so on.

There are eight regional authorities and two regional assemblies whose members are nominated by local authorities. Their main tasks are to promote public service co-ordination and to monitor and advise on EU structural and cohesion funding programmes.

The regional assemblies in addition are the managing authorities for the Regional Operational Programme under the National Development Plan.



Local authorities provide road transport services

Online

Department of the Environment and Local Government: www.environ.ie

THE IRISH STATE

The Courts

Irish law is based on Common Law as modified by subsequent legislation and by the Constitution of 1937. In accordance with the Constitution, justice is administered in public by courts established by law. The



The Four Courts, Dublin

President appoints judges on the advice of the Government. Judges are usually senior practising lawyers. Summary offences and minor civil cases are dealt with by the District Court presided over by a District Judge. More serious cases are heard by the Circuit Court, presided over by a judge who sits with a jury of twelve citizens in criminal cases. The most serious cases are heard by the High Court, presided over by a judge; when trying criminal cases it sits with a jury and is known as the Central Criminal Court. The court of final appeal is the Supreme Court which is also the final arbiter on the interpretation of the Constitution.

Online

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform:	www.justice.ie
Irish Courts Service:	www.courts.ie
Director of Public Prosecutions:	www.dppireland.ie
Office of the Attorney General:	www.attorneygeneral.ie

Police and Defence Forces

The national police force, *An Garda Síochána*, established in 1922, comprises almost 12,000 men and women. The general direction, management and control of the service is, subject to regulations made by the Minister of Justice, Equality, Law and Reform, vested in a

Commissioner appointed by the Government.

An Garda Síochána is unarmed with the exception of some specialized units. Among developed countries Ireland has one of the lowest levels of serious crimes of violence while the crime detection rate is comparable to that of other European countries. Since 1989, *An Garda Síochána* have served in United Nations (UN) missions in Namibia, Angola, East Timor, El Salvador, Cambodia, Cyprus, Western Sahara, Somalia, Mozambique, the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan and Eastern Slavonia. They have also served under the EU flag in the former Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Eastern Slavonia and have provided monitors for the South African and Palestine elections. *An Garda Síochána* are currently serving in a UN mission in Cyprus and a EU mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Permanent Defence Forces, which include the regular Army, Naval Service and Air Corps, operate under the auspices of the



Garda helicopter

Mounted Gardaí on street patrol



THE IRISH STATE



Naval Vessel

Department of Defence. The Department is also responsible for the general planning organisation and co-ordination of Civil Defence measures. Recruitment is voluntary. The Defence Forces have extensive peacekeeping experience and have served with the UN all over the world since 1958.

The longest-running mission was with UNIFIL in Lebanon where the Army committed in excess of 30,000 tours of duty between the years 1978 and 2001. Defence Forces personnel have served, and continue to serve, in a number of other UN and UN led missions in areas such as Cyprus, the Middle East, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor and Afghanistan.

Online

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform:	www.justice.ie
Garda Síochána (Irish Police):	www.garda.ie
Department of Defence:	www.defence.ie
Irish Defence Forces:	www.military.ie

Irish troops peacekeeping in Kosovo





After almost a decade of record growth, the Irish economy decelerated onto a slower and more stable growth pattern in 2001/2002. For most of the 1990s the Irish economy was expanding at three times the EU average, a pattern of growth that could not be sustained, and that has now been curtailed by the recent slowdown in the international economy.

Economic Success Factors

There is broad agreement that key factors in Ireland's economic achievements in the 1990s were the following:

- A youthful population and rapidly expanding labour supply;
- Substantial inward investment inflows;
- The strategic deployment of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds;
- Pursuit of pragmatic and innovative government policies;
- A Social Partnership approach to economic development;
- An openness to international trade in goods and services, and to new ideas; and,
- An emphasis on education and technological innovation.

These factors remain substantially in place.

Public Finances

After almost a decade of record growth in the 1990s, the Irish economy has shifted to a more sustainable level of growth. From a deficit position of 8.6% of GDP in 1987, the budget balance was gradually moved into the black by 1997, increasing to a surplus high of 4.6% in 2000.

There is general agreement among the main political parties on the broad direction of economic and social policy. Tripartite programmes involving the Government, trade unions, employers, voluntary organisations and farming representatives acting together as 'social partners' have successfully operated in recent years to bring about economic and social improvement. While in 2003 Ireland had a current budget deficit due to the investment in infrastructural development.

- ◀ Main photo: *R&D facility University College Cork*
- Bottom left: *Ireland has a well-qualified labour force*
- Bottom centre: *Dell Computers factory*
- Bottom right: *Training session in progress*

Renewal of the National Infrastructure

The record growth rates of the 1990s placed severe strains on Ireland's infrastructure, the shortcomings of which are widely recognised. The highest priority has been given to tackling these, through the medium of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000–2006, which was launched in 1999.



Online

National Development Plan:

www.ndp.ie

Population, Labour Force, and Employment

Reversing decades of decline, Ireland's population has been steadily increasing since the 1970s, and is now almost four million, its highest level in 130 years. The population grew at an annual rate of 1.3% from 1996 to 2002, the highest rate of growth in the EU.

EU Membership

In 1999 Ireland marked 25 years of full membership of the EU. EEC accession in 1973 was a decisive milestone in opening Ireland to a global economy and reducing its economic dependence on the UK. Since accession, per capita GDP in Ireland has increased from almost 60% of the EU average in 1973 to well over 100% today. Since 1973, the proportion of exports to non-UK destinations has increased from 45% to 74% today.

Ireland and EMU

The ease with which Ireland qualified for EMU membership in 1999 underlined the dramatic improvement in the country's economy and public finances. EMU membership was embraced by Ireland's

internationally oriented business community, which viewed it as a logical step in the further integration of European markets and as a boost to Ireland's credibility as a location for internationally mobile investment.

Inward Investment

Inward investment has been critically important to Ireland's economic development, providing tens of thousands of jobs, disseminating technological know-how and expertise within the wider economy, linking up with indigenous industry, boosting productivity, and underpinning export growth.

Outward Investment

Outward investment by Irish companies has increased noticeably in recent years, albeit from a very low historic base. This emerging trend is consistent with the pattern observed in other economies as they move to higher stages of economic development.

Education and Training

Education and Training is a vital component of Ireland's knowledge-based economy, and is a priority investment under the National Development Plan.

Innovation and R&D

As countries develop economically, and move beyond a narrow cost-based growth model, productivity gains through innovation and research acquire an added importance.

Online

Foras Áiseanna Saothair (National Training Authority):	www.fas.ie
Higher Education and Training Council:	www.hetac.ie
Further Education and Training Awards Council:	www.fetac.ie
National Centre for Partnership and Performance:	www.ncpp.ie
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland:	www.nqai.ie
National Standards Authority of Ireland:	www.nsai.ie

Taxation

The liberalisation of Ireland's tax regime has been a major spur to economic growth. By the end of the 1990s, overall tax revenue as a percentage of GDP was the 7th lowest within the OECD.

E-Commerce and the New Economy

The Irish government has moved decisively to prepare Ireland for the e-commerce age. Initiatives undertaken include the liberalisation of the telecommunications market, a substantial investment programme in broadband infrastructure and introduction of the most e-commerce friendly regulatory environment in Europe.

Ireland — the Global Economy

The extent of Ireland's emergence as a global economy is underlined in a recent report (January 2003) by international consultants A.T. Kearney. In it Ireland is ranked as having the most global economy in the world, as measured by openness to trade and investment, credit worthiness and the importance of tourism. Ireland's small open economy has achieved deep integration with the world economy. The report refers to Ireland's winning combination of stable, competitive wage rates, low tariffs and friendly regulatory environment.



Promoting Ireland as an e-commerce hub

Online

Department of Finance: www.finance.gov.ie

Enterprise Ireland: www.enterprise-ireland.com

Industrial Development Agency: www.idaireland.com

National Economic and Social Council: www.nesc.ie

National Economic and Social Forum: www.nesf.ie

Competition Authority: www.tca.ie

Office of the Revenue Commissioners: www.revenue.ie

Monetary Policy

In May 1998, Ireland, having satisfied entry criteria covering public finances, the exchange rate, the interest rate and inflation, qualified as one of the first round of participants to adopt the new EU currency. Along with 11 other EU Member States, Ireland now participates in Economic and Monetary Union which commenced on 1 January 1999. The Euro was introduced as the unit of currency on 1 Jan 2002.

On 1 June 1998, the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) came into being. The ESCB consists of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the central banks of the EU Member States. From 1 January 1999 the ECB, in conjunction with the central banks of the Member States participating in EMU, have conducted a single monetary policy across the Euro area.



The harp features on the Irish euro coin

Decisions on monetary policy, including interest rates, are made by the Governing Council of the ECB. The Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland is a member of the Council.

The Central Bank of Ireland's other tasks include acting as agent for and banker to the Government. The Bank is statutorily responsible for the supervision of most financial institutions in Ireland including banks, building societies and insurance companies.

Online

Central Bank of Ireland:

www.centralbank.ie

State-Sponsored Bodies

There are about 100 State-sponsored bodies in Ireland employing about 57,000 people. They are engaged in a wide variety of activities including transport, energy and the promotion of tourism, trade and industrial development.

During the 1990s the Government privatised certain sectors of the economy including steel and telecommunications. In addition, the Government has liberalised such sectors as air transportation and electricity generation.

Exports

In 2002 Ireland's exports of goods and services amounted to €121 billion. This was over 90 per cent of GDP, a high proportion by international standards. The main areas of growth in Irish exports are the computers/electrical machinery and chemicals/pharmaceuticals industries.

In 2002 the principal destinations for merchandise exports were: Great Britain 22.1%, United States 17.5%, Belgium 14.4%, Germany 7.2%, France 5% and Japan 2.8%.

Imports

In 2002, Ireland's imports of goods and services were valued at €97 billion, approximately 80% of GDP. The principal sources of imports were Great Britain 34%, United States 15.4%, Germany 6.3%, France 4.7%, Netherlands 4% and Japan 3.6%.

Balance of Payments

The balance of payments on current account was in surplus each year between 1992 and 2000. This was largely due to the merchandise trade surplus with 'visible' exports gaining market share due to their competitiveness. Since then the balance of payments has been in deficit but did not exceed 0.5% of GDP in either 2001 or 2002.

Industry

The Industrial sector has a highly skilled technological labour pool. Within this high technology grouping, the most active sectors currently are life sciences, medical and information technology sectors. Many of the world's leading companies have subsidiaries in Ireland which perform very successfully in comparison to those based in other EU countries.

There is strong growth in the ICT sector





IDA Ireland Advance Office Facility in Sligo

Three agencies deal with industrial development in Ireland. *Forfás* provides overall policy advice and co-ordination for enterprise development and science, technology and innovation in Ireland. Enterprise Ireland helps develop Irish-based enterprise with the potential to trade internationally.

There are over 1,100 overseas-owned companies in Ireland. Nearly half of these are from the United States and companies from Germany and the United Kingdom comprise roughly another quarter. Overseas-owned companies employ about 133,000 people.

IDA Ireland focuses particularly on the information technology, life-sciences, medical technologies, engineering, financial and international services and a range of Internet based activities and digital businesses. It is particularly concerned that new high-value and high-skills-based activity is added to the existing base of overseas industries.

Online

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment: www.entemp.ie

Forfás: www.forfas.ie

IDA: www.idaireland.com

Enterprise Ireland: www.enterprise-ireland.com

Industrial Relations

Over 50 per cent of the employee labour force are organised in trade unions of which there are 50 in the Republic of Ireland. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is the national co-ordinating body for most of these. The Irish Business and Employers Confederation represents the interests of employers at national level.

The Labour Relations Commission and the Labour Court are the principal mediation bodies. Their role is to assist in the settlement of disputes.

Online

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment: www.entemp.ie

Labour Relations Commission: www.lrc.ie

Labour Court: www.labourcourt.ie

Equality Authority: www.equality.ie

Irish Congress of Trade Unions: www.ictu.ie

Irish Business and Employers Confederation: www.ibec.ie

Agriculture

The Agri Food industry is an important sector of the Irish economy. It accounts for over 8 per cent of GDP, 7.5 per cent of total employment and, including food and agricultural products, around 7 per cent of exports.



Of the total land area of approximately 7 million hectares (17 million acres), 5 million hectares (12.32 million acres) are utilised for agricultural purposes (including forestry). Cattle-raising and dairying are by far the most important sectors of the agricultural industry, and livestock (mainly cattle) and livestock products (principally milk), account for 76 per cent of the value of gross agricultural output. The main crops are barley, wheat, sugar beet, potatoes and mushrooms.

Online

Department of Agriculture and Food:	www.irlgov.ie/daff
Bord Bia:	www.bordbia.ie
Teagasc (Agriculture & Food Development Authority):	www.teagasc.ie
Food Safety Authority of Ireland:	www.fsai.ie

Fishing

The Irish Sea fishing industry makes a significant contribution to the economy, in terms of output, employment and exports. The sector



employs 15,000 people and in 2001 exports amounted to €433 million.

The main varieties of sea fish landed are herring, cod, whiting, mackerel, plaice, ray, skate and haddock. The main varieties of shellfish taken are lobsters, periwinkles, crayfish and oysters. There has been a strong growth in aquaculture and the main species produced are salmon, trout, eels, mussels, lobsters, clams and scallops.

Online

Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources:	www.dcmnr.gov.ie
Bord Iascaigh Mhara:	www.bim.ie
Central Fisheries Board:	www.cfb.ie
Marine Institute:	www.marine.ie

Services

The service sector in Ireland accounts for over half of GDP and for 65 per cent of employment. Throughout the last decade output of services has grown strongly, largely as a result of growth in financial services, telecommunications and tourism.

Tourism

In the period 1985–2002 the number of overseas visitors climbed from under two million to well over six million. These increases in visitor numbers, and the associated growth in tourist spending, have provided the foundations on which the tourism industry's enhanced contribution to the national economy has been built. This sector contributes to 4.4% of GNP and supports over 140,000 jobs.

Over half of all overseas visitors come from Britain, roughly one-quarter from mainland Europe and around one-seventh from North America.

Tourism Ireland, the all-Ireland tourism body, is responsible for branding, advertising and



promoting of the island of Ireland as a tourist destination. Fáilte Ireland provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high quality and competitive tourist destination. It works in partnership with the tourism industry.

Online

Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism:	www.gov.ie/arts-sport-tourism
Fáilte Ireland:	www.failteireland.ie
Tourism Ireland:	www.tourismireland.ie
Tourism Information:	www.ireland.travel.ie
Northern Ireland Tourism Board:	www.discovernorthernireland.com
Related Links:	www.visitdublin.ie

Finance

The International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) was established by the Government in 1987. The key focus in establishing the Centre was the desire to create a substantive and active financial centre which would generate quality sustainable employment for a well-educated young work force. An additional goal was to contribute to the renewal and regeneration of the Custom House Docks area.

Financial institutions located in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Dublin provide a broad range of services including banking, asset financing, leasing, fund and treasury management, insurance, reinsurance, international life assurance and brokerage. The special tax and other incentives, which were available to financial institutions based in the Centre, are currently being phased out. However, it is expected that the International Financial Services Centre will continue to make a major contribution to Ireland and the goal of policy is to ensure that we will continue to attract new operations and provide a supportive business environment for this important sector.

- It is estimated that more than 13,000 people were directly employed in the Centre and in associated back office projects at the end of 2003.

- Over half of the world's top 50 banks have IFSC operations and international bank assets are estimated at over €200 billion.
- Net asset value of funds administered at the IFSC is estimated at more than €400 billion

Online

Department of Finance: www.finance.gov.ie

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General: www.irlgov.ie/audgen

National Treasury Management Agency: www.ntma.ie

Transport

Coras Iompair Éireann (CIE) is the national statutory transport service in the Republic of Ireland. The CIE group of companies comprises a holding company and three subsidiary operating companies which provide train, bus, coach and ancillary services throughout the country. *Iarnród Éireann* (Irish Rail) operates the nationwide mainline rail services, the Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART) and other suburban rail services as well as rail freight services. *Bus Éireann* (Irish Bus) operates a comprehensive network of bus services outside Dublin City, including expressway inter-urban coach services; city buses in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford; rural bus services; and international services. *Bus Átha Cliath* (Dublin Bus) operates urban bus services in the Greater Dublin area.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in investment in public transportation aimed at providing an efficient, integrated and

Intercity rail service train



Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART)



safe system, accessible to people throughout the country. Dublin is to receive a new light rail system, called LUAS, and the Government is advancing plans for a metro for the city.

The national airline is *Aer Lingus* Group. It is a State-owned enterprise incorporated in 1936. It operates services in the United Kingdom, Continental Europe and the United States, and is part of the Oneworld Global Alliance. Ryanair is a privately owned Irish airline and Europe's largest low-fares airline. It operates routes between Ireland, the United Kingdom and Continental Europe.

Online

Department of Transport:	www.transport.ie
Irish Aviation Authority:	www.iaa.ie
Commission for Aviation Regulation:	www.aviationreg.ie
Irish Ferries:	www.irishferries.ie
Iarnród Éireann:	www.irishrail.ie
Coras Iompair Éireann:	www.cie.ie
Bus Átha Cliath:	www.dublinbus.ie
Bus Éireann	www.buseireann.ie
Aer Rianta:	www.aer-rianta.com
Aer Lingus:	www.aerlingus.com
Ryanair:	www.ryanair.com

Energy

Ireland has a largely stand-alone electricity grid. An electricity interconnector with Northern Ireland was recommissioned in 1995 and is used to optimise peak demand management. Electricity demand in Ireland has grown in excess of 5 per cent per annum over the period 1998–2000, an extremely high rate by international standards. A major task for the electricity industry is to increase generation resources in line with electricity demand.

The Electricity Supply Board (ESB) is the State-owned generator and distributor of electricity. From 2000, under an EU Directive, the

electricity market is open to competition. The Commission for Electricity Regulation, established in 1999, licences the generation and supply of electricity.

Natural gas from Irish offshore fields is making an important contribution towards energy requirements. *Bord Gáis Éireann* (the Gas Supply Board) is a State-owned company responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas. It operates transmission lines bringing gas from Kinsale Head, off the coast of Cork, and from the North Sea gasfields through a sub-sea interconnector pipeline. Among new pipelines being added is a major east/west gas pipeline to Galway.

Peat development in Ireland is undertaken by a State enterprise, *Bórd na Móna* (Peat Development Board), which has been a world leader in exploitation techniques. Ireland has one of the world's highest levels of peat output.

While Ireland is totally dependent on imports for its oil supply, the proportion of primary energy derived from oil has been reduced significantly in the last decade in line with EU policy.

Online

Department of Communications, Marine and
Natural Resources:

www.dcmnr.ie

Electricity Supply Board:

www.esb.ie

Bord Gáis:

www.bge.ie

Commission for Energy Regulation:

www.cerie

Bord na Móna:

www.bnm.ie

Dublin City by night



Mining/Quarrying

The principal activity is the quarrying of sand, gravel and stone for the construction industry. Ireland is a leading producer of zinc ores and one of the world's largest zinc/lead mines is located near Navan, County Meath.

Online

Department of Communications, Marine and
Natural Resources:

www.dcmnr.ie

Telecommunications

The Irish telecommunications system is one of the most advanced and sophisticated in Europe. Major providers of telecommunications services include Eircom and Esat-Digifone. Eircom, the principal provider of fixed line telecommunication services was formerly a State-owned company, Telecom Éireann. In line with EU policy the telecommunications market in Ireland was fully liberalised in 1998 and Telecom Éireann was privatised in 1999.

The Irish Government, by a combination of imaginative legislation, high-quality infrastructure and favourable tax treatment, is promoting Ireland as an e-commerce hub. The Electronic Commerce Act, which came into force in 2000, signaled a flexible approach to regulation and created equivalence in law between electronic documents, contracts, signatures and seals and their paper-based equivalents.

Ireland has major international fibre-optic connectivity. As part of its policy of regionalisation, the Government is currently spending €63 million providing high speed broadband connectivity to 19 principal towns around the country. The Government is also supportive of the creation of a North/South digital corridor and the provision of satellite-based broadband services aimed at remote areas of the country. Shortly, every primary and secondary school in the country will have broadband connectivity.

Online

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources:	www.dcmnr.gov.ie
Electricity Supply Board:	www.esb.ie
Bord Gáis:	www.bordgais.ie
Bord na Móna:	www.bnm.ie
Sustainable Energy Ireland:	www.irish-energy.ie
Commission for Energy Regulation:	www.cerie
Commission for Communications Regulations:	www.comreg.ie

Newspapers

Newspapers have been published in Ireland for over 300 years. Four morning daily papers are published: *The Irish Independent*, *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Examiner* and *The Star*. There are also two evening newspapers, *The Evening Herald* and *The Evening Echo* and six Sunday newspapers, *The Sunday Tribune*, *The Sunday Independent*, *The Sunday World*, *The Sunday Business Post*, *Ireland on Sunday* and *The Star on Sunday*. There are two Irish language weekly newspapers: *Lá* and *Foinse*.

There are also about 60 local newspapers usually published weekly and a wide variety of magazines dealing with current affairs, economic issues and leisure interests. British newspapers and magazines circulate widely in Ireland and some titles publish separate Irish editions.

Online

The Irish Times:	www.ireland.com
Irish Independent:	www.unison.ie
Irish Examiner:	www.irishexaminer.ie
Sunday Business Post:	www.thepost.ie
The Sunday Times:	www.sunday-times.co.uk
Sunday Independent:	www.unison.ie
The Sunday Tribune:	www.tribune.ie
Evening Echo:	www.eecho.ie
Foinse:	www.foinse.ie

Radio and Television

National radio and television services are operated by *Radio Telefís Éireann* (RTÉ), the public broadcasting company which transmits on two television



Award winning offices for RTÉ

and five radio channels. RTÉ derives its revenue from licence fees and the sale of advertising time. In addition to the wide availability of British radio and television programming, satellite broadcasts are achieving an increasing audience.

Irish speakers are served by RTÉ's dedicated radio channel, *Radio na Gaeltachta* and by TG4, an Irish language television channel.

The Radio and Television Act 1988 established the Independent Radio and Television Commission which has responsibility for licensing and overseeing the operation of independent radio and television broadcasting. In recent years, quite a number of independent regional radio stations and community radio initiatives have emerged all over the country and have gained a substantial audience. There is a national independent radio station, Today FM and a national independent commercial television station, TV3, both of which were launched in 1998.

Online

Raidió Teilifís Éireann:	www.rte.ie
TG4:	www.tg4.ie
TV3:	www.tv3.ie
Today FM:	www.todayfm.com
2 FM:	www.2fm.ie
Radio 1:	www.radio1.ie



Education

Education in Ireland is compulsory from age 6 to 16 or up until students have completed three years of second level education. However, most children enrol in first-level (primary) school before age 6. The average age for starting school is 4 years. Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are centralised in the Department of Education & Science. Public expenditure on education accounts for around 14 per cent of Government current spending and approximately 5 per cent of GDP.

First-level (Primary) Education

The primary education sector serves some 450,000 pupils. There are over 3,200 schools at first-level. The great majority of these receive capital funding from the State, supplemented by local contributions. Primary education emphasises a child-centered approach with a curriculum related to the child's needs and interests.

Second-level (Post Primary) Education

The second-level sector comprises secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools. There are over 360,000 students in this sector attending over 750 schools.

Almost 60 per cent of students at second-level attend secondary schools. These schools are privately owned and managed. Most are managed by religious orders and the rest by boards of governors or by individuals. The State meets over 90 per cent of the cost of the teachers' salaries. The vast majority of secondary schools belong to the free education scheme and receive allowances and capitation grants from the State.

Vocational schools, educating just over a quarter of second-level students, are administered by Vocational Education Committees. The State provides some 90 per cent of their costs. The balance is generated by the Committees themselves. Community and comprehensive schools, educating 14 per cent of second-level students, receive individual budgets from the State.

Second-level education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle followed by a two- or three-year Senior Cycle. In the Senior Cycle



Primary education is child-centred



Trinity College Dublin

there is an optional Transition Year Programme. During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes — the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme or the Leaving Certificate Applied.

Online

Department of Education and Science:

www.irlgov.ie/educ

Third-level Education

The third-level education sector consists of universities, technological colleges and colleges of education. All of these are substantially funded by the State and are autonomous and self-governing. In recent years, several independent private colleges have opened offering mainly business-related courses.

There are more than 100,000 students in third-level education. Over half of Ireland's young people proceed from second to third level and some 50 per cent of these take degree level programmes.

There are four universities, the University of Dublin (Trinity College), the National University of Ireland (NUI), the University of Limerick and Dublin City University.

The NUI has four constituent colleges, NUI Dublin, NUI Cork, NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth. The Royal College of Surgeons, the National College of Art and Design and the Institute of Public Administration are also recognised colleges of the NUI.

Institutes of Technology are located around the country offering education and training, full-time and part-time, for trade and industry in the area of business studies, engineering and technology, and science and paramedicine.

The Dublin Institute of Technology is the country's largest third-level institution with some 15,000 students. It has constituent colleges specialising in technology, catering, marketing and design, commerce and music.

Online

University of Dublin:	www.tcd.ie
National University of Ireland:	www.nui.ie
University College Cork:	www.ucc.ie
University College Dublin:	www.ucd.ie
National University of Ireland-Galway:	www.mis.nuigalway.ie
National University of Ireland-Maynooth:	www.may.ie
University of Limerick:	www.ul.ie
Dublin City University:	www.dcu.ie
The Royal College of Surgeons:	www.rcsi.ie
National College of Art and Design:	www.ncad.ie
Institute of Public Administration:	www.ipa.ie
Dublin Institute of Technology:	www.dit.ie
Queens University Belfast:	www.qub.ac.uk
Higher Education Authority:	www.heai.ie
The Open University in Ireland:	www.open.ac.uk/ireland

Health Services

The health services in Ireland are centrally directed by the Department of Health and Children. At local level, the health services are operated by seven regional health boards and one regional health authority. The participation of voluntary bodies in the provision of services is encouraged and many voluntary organisations receive grants from the State. The health services are financed out of central taxation.

Those with low incomes and persons aged 70 years and over receive medical services free of charge. The rest of the population can avail of the public hospital services at a low charge. They also have to pay certain charges, such as for visits to the family doctor.

Patients in public hospitals may opt to be treated privately. There are a number of private hospitals, some 14 per cent of the total, which essentially serve private patients. There is a system of health insurance to help meet the costs of medical treatment.

In 2000, the birth rate was 14.5 per 1,000 people, based on a total of 54,789 births registered during the year. Over 99 per cent of births take place in hospitals.

The death rate for 2000 was 8.3 per 1,000 people based on a total of 31,389 deaths registered.

Public expenditure on health accounts for around 24 per cent of Government current spending and approximately 7.92% per cent of GNP. The expenditure is allocated to hospitals, community health services, community welfare services, community protection services, psychiatric services and services for the handicapped.

Dialysis Unit, St Vincent's Hospital



Online

Department of Health and Children:	www.doh.ie
An Bord Altranais:	www.nursingboard.ie
BioResearch Ireland:	www.biores-irl.ie
BreastCheck:	www.nbsp.ie
Crisis Pregnancy Agency:	www.crisispregnancy.ie
The Drug Treatment Centre Board:	www.addictionireland.ie
The Health Insurance Authority:	www.hia.ie
Health Research Board:	www.hrb.ie
Irish Blood Transfusion Service:	www.ibts.ie
National Cancer Registry Board:	www.ncri.ie
National Disability Authority:	www.nda.ie
Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland:	www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie
Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland:	www.rpii.ie

Social Welfare

The Social Welfare system covers all of the internationally recognised forms of social protection. Incorporating a mix of both social insurance and social assistance programmes, it provides financial support to people in certain situations such as unemployment, illness, old age or widowhood.

Other features of the system include supports for people seeking employment, in-work benefits and family support for people at work on low pay, free or reduced-cost dental and optical care, and a range of secondary benefits such as free travel for pensioners and financial support towards the cost of fuel, TV licences and telephone rental charges.

Spending on social welfare accounts for approximately one-quarter of current Government expenditure (about 9.87% of GNP) and benefits more than 1.3 million people.

Online

Department of Social and Family Affairs:	www.welfare.ie
Department of Health and Children:	www.doh.ie



Political Background and Chronology

The existing political division of Ireland dates from the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in 1921 and, after centuries of British rule, 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland gained independence. The remaining six counties formed Northern Ireland, which continued to be governed within the United Kingdom. However, while the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster exercised sovereignty, power on a variety of matters was devolved to a local Parliament and Government established at Stormont in Belfast in 1920.

Although Northern Ireland elected members to the Westminster Parliament, from 1921 to 1972 the devolved Government at Stormont operated with virtual autonomy from London on local matters. Power remained exclusively in the hands of the Unionist party which drew its support from the majority community in the area which favoured union with Britain. The nationalist community had in practice no role in government and they suffered discrimination in many areas, including voting rights, housing and employment.

In 1969 non-violent campaigners for civil rights met with a hostile and repressive response from the Stormont authorities, ushering in a period of sustained political crisis. This gave rise to civil unrest and the revival of violent activity by paramilitary organisations representing elements within both communities.

In a deteriorating security situation, the Northern Ireland Parliament and Government were prorogued in 1972 and the British Government assumed direct responsibility for all aspects of the government of Northern Ireland. With the exception of one brief period in 1974 when a local executive was established on a power-sharing basis under the Sunningdale Agreement, Northern Ireland was governed under a system of direct rule under the authority of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (a member of the British Cabinet) until December 1999.

On 2 December 1999, power was devolved from Westminster to an Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland established under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement and included representatives of both nationalist and unionist communities.



Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Brian Cowen TD, (right) with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Paul Murphy

The Assembly and Executive were suspended on 11 February 2000 but the suspension was lifted on 30 May 2000 after discussions at Hillsborough between the two Governments and the Northern Ireland parties were successfully concluded. However, further disagreements led to two further 24-hour suspensions on 10 August and 22 September 2001 respectively.

The Assembly was further suspended from midnight on 14 October 2002 and was dissolved on 28 April 2003. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland duly assumed responsibility for the direction of the Northern Ireland Departments. Following this period, the Irish and British Governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland engaged in intensive discussions in an attempt to restore the political institutions in Northern Ireland. On 21 October 2003, Prime Minister Blair announced that elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly would take place on 26 November 2003.

The number of seats won by each party in the most recent Assembly elections held on 26 November 2003 was as follows
(n = nationalist, u = unionist, o = other):

Democratic Unionist Party (u)	30
Ulster Unionist Party (u)	27
Sinn Féin (n)	24
Social Democratic and Labour Party (u)	18
Alliance Party (o)	6
Progressive Unionist Party (u)	1
United Kingdom Unionist Party (u)	1
Independents (o)	1

The 1980s and 1990s – The Search for a Political Settlement

From the early 1980s onwards, the British and Irish Governments began to cooperate more closely in an effort to achieve a widely acceptable and durable political resolution to the Northern Ireland conflict. This effort involved both the successful establishment of a number of structures and mechanisms for dialogue and negotiation, and a growing convergence on the fundamental constitutional and other principles which underpin a settlement.

In 1981 an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council was established to provide a formal framework within which relations between the two countries could be conducted.

In November 1985, the British and Irish Governments signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement enabling the Irish Government to further put forward views and proposals on many aspects of Northern Ireland affairs.

In 1991/1992, the two Governments convened round-table talks involving the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

On 15 December 1993, the two Governments issued a Joint Declaration which set out basic principles which could underpin a peace process designed to culminate in a political settlement of



Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985



David Trimble (left) and John Hume (right) accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, December 1998

relationships in Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. Central to the Declaration were the principles of self-determination and consent. The Declaration also stated that democratically mandated parties which established a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods were free to participate fully in democratic politics and in dialogue with the Governments and political parties on the way ahead.

On 31 August 1994, the IRA announced a “complete cessation of military operations”. This announcement was followed on 13 October 1994, by a similar statement from the Combined Loyalist Military Command.

Following the ceasefires, the two Governments engaged in direct political dialogue with Sinn Féin and the two loyalist parties, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP). Following the ceasefires and the publication in February 1995 of A New Framework for Agreement (known as the Framework Document), in which the Governments set out their shared understanding of the possible outcome of comprehensive negotiations, intensive efforts were made to secure a way forward into comprehensive and inclusive talks.

The question of the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons acted as a block on progress and, in December 1995, the two Governments established an International Body, under the chairmanship of United

States Senator George Mitchell to provide an independent assessment of the issue. In its report of 24 January 1996 the International Body recommended that all parties participating in negotiations should commit themselves to six principles of democracy and non-violence, including the total and verifiable decommissioning of all paramilitary weapons.

On 9 February 1996, the IRA ceasefire broke down. However, both Governments undertook to continue the search for political agreement and said that a restoration of the ceasefire would allow for the resumption of political dialogue with Sinn Féin.

Multi-Party Talks

Multi-Party Talks involving the two Governments and the main political parties in Northern Ireland (the UUP, DUP, SDLP, Alliance, PUP, UDP, United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) and Labour, but excluding Sinn Féin in the absence of a ceasefire) began on 10 June 1996. The talks were chaired by Senator Mitchell, assisted by the former Finnish Prime Minister, Harri Holkeri, and the former Chief of Staff of the Canadian Army, General John de Chastelain. On 20 July 1997, the IRA announced a resumption of its ceasefire, thereby opening the way for the entry of Sinn Féin to the talks on 9 September.

Substantive negotiations began in Belfast on 24 September 1997. As the talks progressed, the independent chairmen worked with the two Governments and the parties to identify areas of broad agreement and isolate areas of remaining difficulty. In the final intensive

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD, (left) with British Prime Minister Tony Blair MP



negotiations, the Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern TD, and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair MP, led their Governments' delegations.

The Good Friday Agreement 1998 and its Implementation

On Friday, 10 April 1998, a comprehensive political agreement was approved at a plenary session of the Talks. The two Governments signed immediately thereafter a new British-Irish Agreement committing them to give effect to the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement, in particular those relating to constitutional change and the creation of new institutions.

In referendums held on 22 May 1998 the people of Ireland, both North and South, overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday Agreement. In Northern Ireland, 71.1 per cent voted to approve the Agreement. In the South, 94.4 per cent voted to allow the Government to become party to the Agreement. The combined yes vote in both parts of Ireland was 85 per cent of those voting. This was the first occasion since 1918 on which all the people in Ireland had voted together to decide their political future. The electorate in the South approved amendments to the Irish Constitution, which formed part of the Agreement, to take effect when the British-Irish Agreement entered into force.



The Good Friday Agreement

The Agreement addressed all of the key issues relating to the Northern Ireland problem. It outlined an agreed position, based on the principles of self-determination and consent, in regard to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. In addition, the Agreement

provided for the establishment of political institutions reflecting the three strands of relationships involved: the legislative Assembly and Executive within Northern Ireland; the North/South Ministerial Council and the all-island implementation bodies to take forward co-operation between both parts of the island; and the British-Irish Council as a forum for co-operation between the various sovereign and devolved administrations in Britain and Ireland.

In regard to security issues, the Agreement included a commitment by all parties to work with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) to achieve the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons. The IRA has thus far undertaken 3 acts of arms decommissioning, duly verified by the IICD. Apart from a very small quantity of arms decommissioned by the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) in December 1998, there has been no decommissioning of weapons by the loyalist paramilitaries.

For its part, the British Government committed itself to achieving, as early as possible, a return to normal security arrangements in Northern Ireland. The number of troops and level of patrolling have since been reduced and a number of military installations have been closed. Furthermore, the Joint Declaration published by the two Governments in May 2003 included a commitment to the implementation of security normalisation in its entirety over two years in the context of a definitive transition to a peaceful and democratic society.

The Agreement also included the terms of reference for an Independent Commission on Policing to bring forward proposals designed to ensure that policing arrangements enjoyed widespread support across the Northern Ireland community as a whole. This Commission, headed by Chris Patten, reported in September 1999. In order to give effect to these recommendations, the British Government enacted legislation in November 2000 and April 2003.

Part of the new accountability structures in policing included the establishment of the office of the Police Ombudsman (November 2000); the Policing Board (November 2001) and the District Policing Partnerships (March 2003). The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) came into being in November 2001 when the first batch of



Inaugural North/South Ministerial Council meeting, Armagh, 13 December 1999

new recruits (50% Catholic and 50% Protestant, as recommended by Patten) joined the service.

The Agreement also envisaged a wide-ranging review of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. This was completed in October 2000 and its recommendations are being taken forward by the British Government in legislation.

The Agreement provided for an accelerated release programme for prisoners affiliated to organisations maintaining a cease-fire. Approximately 500 prisoners were released under these arrangements and the final releases took place in July 2000.

The Agreement also provided new and enhanced provisions concerning human rights and equality, including the setting up of Human Rights Commissions in both parts of the island and the establishment of the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland.

As mentioned above, the Agreement provided for its own validation by way of referenda in both parts of the island. It also envisaged review mechanisms, including a review conference involving the two Governments and the parties in the Assembly four years after the Agreement came into effect. This review is due in December 2003.

In the period since the signing of the Agreement, considerable



(From left to right) Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Brian Cowen TD, Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Paul Murphy

progress has been made towards its full implementation. Great strides have been made in a number of areas, including policing, human rights and equality. The Governments and parties have had to face and overcome difficulties in certain key areas, for example on the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons and on the stable and inclusive operation of the political institutions. Nevertheless, through intensive dialogue and negotiation, significant progress has been made.

On 1 May 2003, the two Governments published a Joint Declaration, which outlined the work that they had been engaged in since the suspension of the Executive and Assembly in October 2002 and identified areas where progress could be made in the ongoing implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Representation in the Northern Ireland Assembly, British and European Parliaments and Local Government

Under the Good Friday Agreement, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive exercises authority over broad areas of social and economic policy. The Northern Ireland Assembly comprises 108 members across 18 constituencies, elected by proportional representation on the basis of the single transferable vote.

In addition, Northern Ireland returns 18 members to Parliament at Westminster. Following the 2001 Westminster elections, party representation is six UUP, five DUP, four Sinn Féin and three SDLP. Northern Ireland also elects three Members of the European Parliament. At present the MEPs are Dr. Ian Paisley (Democratic Unionist Party), Mr. John Hume (Social Democratic and Labour Party) and Mr. Jim Nicholson (Ulster Unionist Party).

There are twenty-six district councils in Northern Ireland responsible for local services. Local elections were last held in June 2001.

The International Fund for Ireland

The International Fund for Ireland was established by the Irish and British Governments in 1986 with two main aims: 'To promote social and economic advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists on the island of Ireland'. The work of the International Fund is directed by an independent board, consisting of seven members appointed jointly by both Governments.

The monies to enable the Fund to pursue its objectives are provided by the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The IFI is required to spend approximately three-quarters of its resources in Northern Ireland and one quarter in the Southern border counties (Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth). The Fund operates a range of programmes and the bulk of its resources are directed towards projects in disadvantaged areas. Priority is given to cross-community projects and initiatives which foster cross-border co-operation. Reconciliation and the improvement of community relations are central to the Fund's work. Since its inception, the Fund has spent in the region of €603 million on 4,850 projects.

Population

The June 2001 estimate of the population of Northern Ireland was 1,689,000. This estimate is based on the most recent (2001) census¹, when the population of Northern Ireland was recorded at 1,685,267. According to the census findings, the breakdown of religion is:

Catholic	40.26%
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	20.69%
Church of Ireland	15.30%
Methodist Church in Ireland	3.51%
Other Christian (including Christian related)	6.07%
Other religions and philosophies	0.30%
No religion/religion not stated	13.88%

¹ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website: www.nisra.gov.uk

Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HSMO.

Online

Northern Ireland Office:	www.nio.gov.uk
The Northern Ireland Assembly:	www.ni-assembly.gov.uk
The Northern Ireland Executive:	www.nics.gov.uk
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister:	www.northernireland.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission:	www.nihrc.org
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland:	www.equalityni.org
Northern Ireland Statistics:	www.nisra.gov.uk
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland:	www.osni.gov.uk
Police Service of Northern Ireland:	www.psni.police.uk
Northern Ireland Policing Board	www.nipolicingboard.org.uk
Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:	www.policeombudsman.org
Alliance Party:	www.allianceparty.org
Democratic Unionist Party:	www.dup.org.uk
Progressive Unionist Party:	www.pup-ni.org.uk
Sinn Féin:	www.sinnfein.ie
Social Democratic Labour Party:	www.sdlp.ie
Ulster Unionist Party:	www.uup.org



Foreign Policy

The Constitution of Ireland affirms Ireland's devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality. Ireland's foreign policy is based on this conviction.

As a small country in a changing world, Ireland remains firmly committed to collective approaches to international relations and security based on the primacy of the Charter of the United Nations. Key principles underlying this commitment are respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Ireland seeks to pursue these core objectives in cooperation with regional and bilateral partners and through its membership of international organisations, in particular its membership of the United Nations and of the European Union.

United Nations

Ireland joined the United Nations (UN) on 14 December 1955.

Within the UN, Ireland has sought to promote effective international action on global issues such as disarmament, peacekeeping, human rights and development. Ireland's membership of the UN Security Council in 2001–2002 reinforced its commitment to working with the



United Nations building, New York

wider UN membership for international peace and security. This commitment is reflected in the continuous participation in UN peace keeping operations by Irish Defence and Police Forces since 1958. Irish personnel are currently serving in eight UN peace support operations in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe. Ireland is also a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court established by the UN in 2002.

Online

Department of Foreign Affairs:

www.irlgov.ie/iveagh

European Union Membership

Ireland joined the European Economic Community (EEC) on 1 January 1973 and has participated actively in the evolution of what is now the *European Union* (EU). EU membership is pivotal to Government policy. It is a central framework within which the Government pursues its foreign policy objectives. Ireland's membership of the European Union is rooted in an understanding that the Union is the cornerstone of political and economic stability in Europe.

Membership gives Irish exporters full access to the European single market, and this has contributed to Ireland's economic success. EU involvement enables Ireland's views and interests to be reflected in the policies of the Union which exercises considerable influence in world affairs. Ireland's participation in world affairs enhances its capacity to pursue its traditional policy of promoting a stable, peaceful and prosperous international environment with structures based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and representative government.

Ireland has held the six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union on five occasions, in 1975, 1979, 1984, 1990 and 1996. Ireland's sixth EU Presidency runs from 1 January to 30 June 2004. This period will see the accession of ten new Member States to the European Union: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

EU Common Foreign and Security Policy

Ireland's voice in the world and the pursuit of Ireland's foreign policy is greatly enhanced through its participation in the formulation and implementation of the European Union's common foreign and security policy (CFSP). As a community of shared values, the EU is uniquely placed to play a role in support of international peace and stability. In today's globalised and increasingly interdependent world, Ireland and its EU Partners work together to promote international peace and security and co-operative and mutually beneficial relations with neighbouring states and regions. Core principles that have always inspired Ireland's foreign policy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, are also central to the pursuit of the CFSP. As Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2004, Ireland will play a

lead role in shaping the Union's response to international developments and in taking forward the EU's external relations, including the CFSP. An important element of the CFSP is the Union's developing capabilities in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and crisis management under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. Ireland has played an active role in the development of the ESDP and will continue to contribute constructively to this process in accordance with our own foreign policy priorities and traditions. The EU has played a special role in support of peace, reconstruction and reconciliation in the Western Balkans and this is a continuing priority for Ireland and the Union as a whole. As the European Union enlarges, relations with Russia and with the Union's new neighbours – Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova — as well as the countries of the southern Mediterranean and the Caucasus are also areas of increasing importance for Ireland and its EU partners.

Cooperation between Ireland and its EU partners is also very important in key international fora such as the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.

In its bilateral relations, Ireland has sought to build mutually beneficial relationships with a broad range of countries, reflecting the varied and deep connections which have been built up over many years with different parts of the world. These relationships have, in part, contributed to our recent economic progress. However, economic considerations are only one aspect of Ireland's relations with other countries.

A particular focus has been relations with the countries of Africa, reflecting a longstanding tradition and commitment to development cooperation and to the pursuit of peace and stability, good governance and respect for human rights in Africa. We seek to achieve these goals through working with African partners, and through membership of international organisations, particularly the EU and the UN. Ireland has also sought to deepen its relations with the countries of Asia and Latin America through the developing trade, business and cultural links, and through cooperation with regional organisations and at the UN.

Ireland enjoys close links with the United States based on ties of

friendship and cooperation developed through a shared history of emigration and an increasingly strong economic relationship. In the context of the wider transatlantic relationship, Ireland is committed to improving cooperation between the EU and the US and between the EU and Canada with a focus on enhancing international peace and stability.

The search for a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and for stability in the wider Middle East is also a key concern for Ireland, mindful of our experience of our own peace process in Northern Ireland. In this regard we value the role played by the European Union as a member of the Quartet alongside the United States, the UN and Russia. Ireland has also traditionally attached considerable importance to disarmament and non-proliferation, including of Weapons of Mass Destruction. This is a concern which continues to motivate our approach to broader questions of international security including the threat posed by international terrorism and other non-State actors. A more recent concern is to reach agreement on a global approach to environmental protection and sustainable development, a challenge which faces the wider international community.

Online

Department of Foreign Affairs: www.irlgov.ie/iveagh

Development Cooperation Ireland: www.dci.gov.ie

European Commission: www.europa.eu.int
– in Ireland www.euireland.ie

European Parliament: www.europarl.eu.int
– in Ireland www.europarl.ie

Council of the European Union <http://ue.eu.int>

Court of Justice of the European Communities www.curia.eu.int

The European Ombudsman: www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int

European Central Bank: www.ecb.int

EU Common Foreign and Security Policy
www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp/intro/

Development Cooperation Ireland

Development Cooperation Ireland is the Government of Ireland's official programme of assistance to developing countries. Ireland has had an official development assistance programme since 1974. It has grown steadily over the years from modest beginnings to an estimated budget of €450 million for total ODA in 2003.

Ireland's development cooperation policy is an integral part of Ireland's wider foreign policy. Our development cooperation policy and programme reflect our longstanding commitment to human rights and fairness in international relations and are inseparable from Irish foreign policy as a whole.

Responsibility for Irish foreign policy, including assistance to developing countries lies in the first instance with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. However, particular responsibility for policy on Development Cooperation and Human Rights is assigned to a Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Minister of State, Tom Kitt TD addressing the Gombero School in Muhesa district, Tanzania



Poverty Focus

Development Cooperation Ireland has as its absolute priority the reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion in developing countries. All of Development Cooperation Ireland's policies and activities are gauged against their contribution in this respect and against the progress they achieve towards the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals require the international community to:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Develop a global partnership for development.

Geographic Focus

Since its inception in 1974, Ireland's development assistance programme has had a strong geographic focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. Under the bilateral part of its programme, Development Cooperation Ireland operates intensive and wide-ranging country programmes in six countries in Africa, namely; Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda. These are termed "Programme Countries". In March 2003, East Timor became the seventh Programme Country and the first Programme Country outside Sub-Saharan Africa.

Untied Aid

Ireland's development assistance has always been completely untied, that is to say, it is not conditional in any way on the use of Irish goods or services. It is Government policy that funding should remain untied, as it takes the view that tied aid is less effective in its impact, leads to a proliferation of different standards and technologies in developing countries and can be abused to provide hidden export subsidies.

Partnership

Development Cooperation Ireland works in close partnership with recipient countries, with other donors and multilateral organisations and with non-governmental organisations and missionaries. Partnership with the recipient countries is vital if the beneficiaries of Development Cooperation Ireland programmes are to have ownership of their own development.

Coordination with other donors, international organisations and NGO's and missionaries, is an increasingly important part of the international development effort and offers the benefits of shared information, analysis and experience, and the opportunity to maximise the impact of our collective programmes.

Effectiveness

Development Cooperation Ireland is strongly committed to ensuring aid effectiveness, based on the principles of partnership, support for locally owned strategies, better coordination and policy coherence. As an organisation Development Cooperation Ireland makes continuous efforts to improve reporting and monitoring and to promote a results-based culture. The formulation of Programme Country Strategies, the implementation and delivery of programmes, the various grant schemes, the evaluation and audit function and internal organisation are all informed by the need to maximise effectiveness.

Accountability

The management and expenditure of an expanding budget is a significant responsibility for Development Cooperation Ireland. Like most public expenditure, the programme's budget is voted expenditure, authorised by a vote of the Dáil each year, and must be managed in accordance with the public financial procedures governing the use of State resources. In addition to the requirements of public financial procedures, rigorous systems are required to ensure full accountability and value for money for activities under all headings of the programme. An Annual Report on Ireland's Development Cooperation Programme, including detailed accounts of expenditure, has been published since 1978. The Annual Report is laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas on publication.

The Irish Abroad

There are over 1 million Irish-born people living abroad and it is estimated that over 70 million people across the globe can claim Irish descent.

Emigration memorial, Cobh, County Cork



The tradition of travelling to other countries dates back to medieval times when Irish monks and scholars helped to spread Christian learning throughout the world. In the last two centuries, emigration has been driven largely by economic and social factors, notably in the aftermath of the Great Famine in 1845 and during the economic recessions of the 1950s and 1980s.

Irish people have spread to almost every part of the world. The main destinations for Irish emigrants have traditionally been Great Britain and the United States and these continue to have the largest Irish communities outside Ireland. In recent years, as a result of Ireland's growing links with Europe through our membership of the European Union, the number of Irish people to be found in European countries has been growing considerably. There are also significant Irish communities in Australia, New Zealand and Canada as well as in many parts of Africa and South America.

Irish emigrants have contributed to the development of other countries in numerous ways. Many have worked in the construction industry and have helped to build the infrastructure on which the economic prosperity of their adopted countries has been based. Others have become involved in industry, business and the arts and have become very successful. Irish missionaries have brought education and healthcare to local communities in many developing countries.

While the Irish abroad have integrated well into their adopted communities, many of them have retained a strong sense of their Irish heritage and continue to assert it through involvement in Irish community associations and through participation in Irish sporting and cultural activities. Increasingly, too, people born abroad of Irish descent are seeking to express the Irish dimension of their identity and this has contributed to the renaissance in Irish language studies, history, music and dance in recent years.

Even though emigration from Ireland has reduced substantially over the last decade, the Irish abroad continue to be vibrant and active communities. Through the contributions they make to the countries in which they have settled and through their continuing links with Ireland, they act as an important channel for promoting a positive image of Ireland abroad.



JAMES
JOYCE
1882-1941

Culture

The lore preserved by the early Irish poets has left a colourful heritage of mythical and historical stories. Modern writers in turn have drawn on these stories to enrich their own work. Irish folklore also draws on international motifs and forms such as wonder tales and the love songs of the troubadours.

Among the better known stories are those of the legendary heroes such as Fionn Mac Cumhaill who gained wisdom as a boy by tasting the 'salmon of knowledge', Balor, who killed his grandfather and whose horrific eye destroyed all on which it gazed, and Cú Chulainn, hero of the epic poem the *Táin Bó Cúailgne* (The Cattle Raid of Cooley).

Much lore also centres on the patron saints of various localities. These saints appear in legend as miracle workers who used their sacred powers to banish monsters, cure illnesses and provide food for the people in time of need. The most celebrated of these are the national saint, Patrick, Colm Cille and Saint Brigid, who as protectress of farming and livestock, preserves many of the attributes of an earth goddess.

Sculpture depicting the death of Cú Chulainn, hero of the epic poem the Táin Bó Cúailgne



Glendalough, County Wicklow



Ireland is famous for its fairy-lore which is connected to early Celtic beliefs of the dead living on as a dazzling community in their burial chambers. Many stories are told of humans being brought into fairy *raths* (ancient earthwork structures). The wailing of a special female spirit, the *bean sí*, heralds a death.

A wide range of beliefs and practices are associated with death and burial. The 'waking' of the dead was an important social ritual which involved praying, singing, storytelling and games to pay tribute to the one who had died.

The indigenous festivals of the Irish calendar such as *Lá Fhéile Bríde* (Saint Brigid's feast — 1 February), *Lúnasa* (August) and *Oíche Shamhna* (Hallowe'en) all had their own special forms of amusements and preserved vestiges of earlier rituals.

The Irish Language

Irish is the State's first official language. It is one of the Celtic family of languages and is closely related to Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Breton. Most people spoke Irish until the early nineteenth century but by 1891 over 85 per cent spoke English only. The latest figures available show that 43 per cent of adults say they have a knowledge of Irish.

The State actively encourages the use of Irish. Today it is widely spoken in areas known as the *Gaeltacht*, situated mainly along the

Irish road signs



western seaboard. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has responsibility for promoting the cultural, social and economic welfare of the *Gaeltacht* through *Údarás na Gaeltachta* (*Gaeltacht* Authority), a statutory board under its aegis, which serves as a development authority for *Gaeltacht* areas with some of its members being elected by the people of the *Gaeltacht*. The Irish Language Agency (*Foras na Gaeilge*) of the Language Body (*An Foras Teanga*), one of the six all-island bodies established following the Good Friday Agreement, has responsibility for the promotion and encouragement of the use of Irish as a vernacular throughout the island of Ireland. Irish is a core subject in primary and secondary schools and a growing number of schools offer tuition exclusively through Irish (*Gaelscoileanna*). There is a national radio service (*Raidió na Gaeltachta*) and an Irish language television service (*TG4*). In addition, there are two Irish Language weekly newspapers: *Lá* and *Foinse*.

Literature in Irish

Written literature in Old Irish dates from the sixth century. Work surviving from that period includes prose sagas, historical and legal material, commentaries on biblical texts and lyrical and devotional poetry. During the early modern period (1250–1650) secular schools trained poets (*filidh*) to compose elaborate verse often in praise of their patrons. Fenian (Ossianic) literature was popular at this time and continued to influence writers in English through to the nineteenth century. The works centre on the legendary hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill, his son Oisín and their followers, the *Fianna*. When the Gaelic order ended in the seventeenth century these poets lost their patrons and were displaced. At this point, Irish prose writers began to preserve a record of Gaelic civilisation. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, members of the clergy, schoolteachers, artisans and some colourful poets continued to write in Irish. One of the best known poets of this time is Brian Merriman (1747–1805) author of the frequently translated *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* (Midnight Court).

In the twentieth century writers such as Patrick Pearse (1879–1916) and Pádraic Ó Conaire (1883–1928) opened Irish literature to European influences. Distinguished writers and poets of the modern

era include Liam Ó Flaitheartaigh (1896–1984), Máirtín Ó Cadhain (1906–70), Seosamh Mac Ghrianna (1901–90), Máirtín Ó Direáin (1910–1988), Seán Ó Riordáin (1916–77), Máire Mhac an tSaoí (b. 1922), Seán Ó Tuama (b. 1926) and Michael Hartnett (1941–99). Some wrote in English and Irish often translating the work of their peers as well as early texts. Although few wrote for the stage, among those who did were Douglas Hyde (1860–1949), the first president of Ireland, Brendan Behan (1923–64), Mairead Ní Ghráda (1899–1971) and Cristóir Ó Floinn (b. 1927).

Over a hundred new titles in Irish are published every year, including books for children. Foremost among these contemporary writers are Liam Ó Muirthile (b. 1950), Nuala Ní Dhómhnaill (b. 1952), Áine Ní Ghlinn (b. 1955), Cathal Ó Searcaigh (b. 1956), Bidy Jenkinson (b. 1949) and Colm Breathnach (b. 1961).

Literature in English

Writing in English has flourished in Ireland since the eighteenth century. Among the first generation of these writers were the satirist Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), author of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), the political essayist Edmund Burke (1729–97) and the dramatists Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74) and Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816).

Building on that tradition of brilliant wit, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) and George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) wrote major works for the London stage. Shaw won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925. Through the nineteenth century a growing interest in Ireland's ancient Celtic culture influenced Irish writers, most significantly William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) whose work inspired the modern renaissance in Irish writing. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923. With his friends Lady Gregory (1852–1932) and Edward Martyn (1859–1924) he established an Irish National Theatre (the Abbey Theatre) to create an identifiably Irish literature in English. Some of the theatre's early works created a storm of controversy but are now firm favourites in the repertoire, for example John Millington Synge's (1871–1909) work, *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) and Seán O'Casey's (1880–1964) *The Plough and the Stars* (1926).

James Joyce (1882–1941), no admirer of the Yeatsian literary revival,



Sculpture of Patrick Kavanagh, Mespil Road, Dublin

left Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century settling ultimately in Paris. His pioneering modernist novel, *Ulysses* (1922) grafts the street life of his native Dublin onto the plot of Homer's *Odyssey* to chronicle a single day in the lives of its protagonists Leopold and Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus. Joyce's parodic playfulness inspired the work of Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien) (1911–1966), who also wrote in Irish. Another Dublin exile in Paris, Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) wrote in a minimalist vein, often in French. His play, *Waiting for Godot* (1953) has become a twentieth century classic of absurdism. He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1969.

French authors provided a model for short story writers, Frank O'Connor (1903–66) and Seán Ó Faoláin (1900–91) who blended continental realism with the native oral tradition to create the modern

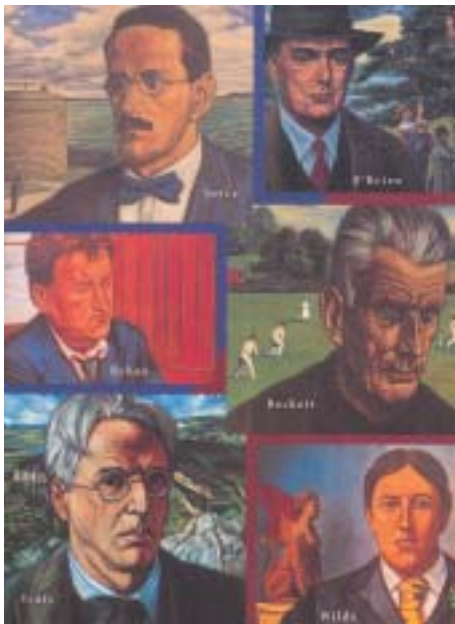


Illustration showing some of Ireland's best known writers: James Joyce, Flann O'Brien, Brendan Behan, Samuel Beckett, W.B. Yeats & Oscar Wilde

Irish short story. The form expanded in the hands of Liam O'Flaherty (1896–1984), Mary Lavin (1912–96), John McGahern (b. 1934), William Trevor (b. 1928) and Bernard MacLaverty (b. 1942).

The generation of poets after Yeats included very different talents in Patrick Kavanagh (1904–67) and Louis MacNeice (1907–1963). Kavanagh's example as a

poet of rural realism inspired Seamus Heaney (b. 1939) whose vision of the redemptive power of poetry earned him a Nobel Prize for literature in 1995. Among his contemporaries, Thomas Kinsella (b. 1928), John Montague (b. 1929), Michael Longley (b. 1939) and Derek Mahon (b. 1941) have explored the complexities of modern Ireland in work covering historical, political and existential themes. Women poets, Eavan Boland (b. 1945), Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (b. 1942), Medbh McGuckian (b. 1950) and Paula Meehan (b. 1955)

challenge the traditional male domination of Irish literature.

Likewise, in fiction, women have been to the fore. Writers such as Somerville (1858–1949) and Ross (1862–1915), Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973) and Molly Keane (1905–1996) were born into and chronicled the fading world of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. This world provides the setting too for many of the novels of Jennifer Johnston (b. 1930) and John Banville (b. 1945).

The establishment of the new state gave writers a new focus on the Catholic bourgeoisie, starting with Kate O'Brien (1897–1974), Julia O'Faolain (b. 1932), Colm Tóibín (b. 1955) and Deirdre Madden (b. 1960). Writing of small-town life Pat McCabe (b. 1955) sustains the familiar note of black comedy in Irish writing.

The relative darkness of these novelists' work is absent from the romances of Maeve Binchy, Deirdre Purcell and Marian Keyes. In a different vein the snappy dialogue of Dubliner Roddy Doyle (b. 1958) earned him a Booker prize in 1993.

For all its experimental beginnings, Irish drama is resolutely realist. Its major exponents today are Brian Friel (b. 1929), author of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Tom Kilroy (b. 1934), Tom Murphy (b. 1935), Frank McGuinness (b. 1953), Sebastian Barry (b. 1955), Marina Carr (b. 1965), Martin McDonagh (b. 1971) and Conor McPherson (b. 1971). In their work, lines of satire and dark comedy cross with a lyrical sensibility to produce a disturbing vision of contemporary Ireland.

Irish theatre companies such as the Abbey, the Druid and the Gate regularly tour their productions to international venues and host the work of visiting theatre companies to Ireland.

Art

The earliest Irish art consists of carvings on megalithic monuments dating from 3500 B.C. Celtic art reached its apogee in the manuscripts of the gospels such as the books of Durrow and Kells. These feature interlaced animal and geometric forms in bright primary colours. After the ninth century Irish art absorbed Viking, Romanesque and Gothic influences producing, for example, richly carved stone High Crosses.

From the mid-seventeenth century decorative arts such as goldsmithery, plasterwork and glass flourished in conjunction with the

large-scale public buildings of the time. After the Act of Union (1801) many artists moved to London but those who remained in Ireland established organisations which today continue to support artists such as The Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) (founded in 1823) which presents an annual exhibition of contemporary Irish painters and sculptors. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Irish painters looked to the French Impressionists for a new idiom. These include William Leech (1881–1968), Walter Osborne (1859–1903), John Lavery (1856–1941) and Roderic O’Conor (1860–1940). Crossing from Impressionism to Expressionism, Jack B. Yeats (1871–1957) towers over his contemporaries much as his brother, the poet W.B. Yeats was pre-eminent among his peers.

Younger artists who trained under modernists in Paris include Evie Hone (1894–1955), Mainie Jellett (1897–1944) and Mary Swanzy (1882–1978). In 1943 a group of younger artists founded the Irish Exhibition of Living Art as a reaction to the conventionality of the RHA. These artists, working in an abstract expressionist mode, include Louis le Brocqy (b. 1916), Norah McGuinness (1901–80) and Patrick Scott (b. 1921). Close to them too are Tony O’Malley (1913–2003), Camille Souter (b. 1929) and Barrie Cooke (b. 1931) who experiment within the tradition of landscape painting and often use tropical and desert settings for their work. A strong new expressionist movement emerged in the late twentieth century including Brian Maguire (b. 1951), Eithne Jordan (b. 1954), Michael Mulcahy (b. 1952), Michael Cullen (b. 1946),

For the Road by Jack B. Yeats



Dorothy Cross (b. 1956) and Alice Maher (b. 1956).

Sculpture in the nineteenth century was heroic and monumental as exemplified by the statues of Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke by John Henry Foley (1819–1974) outside Trinity College, Dublin. This tradition continued into the twentieth century with the works of Oisín Kelly (1915–1981), Seamus Murphy (1907–74) and Hilary Heron (1923–77) pioneering the use of new casting techniques and promoting the concept of an Irish vernacular sculpture. Contemporary sculpture is more abstract and witty as can be seen in the diverse work of John Behan (b. 1932), Michael Warren (b. 1950), Edward Delaney (b. 1930), Eilis O'Connell (b. 1953), and Kathy Prendergast (b. 1958).

Online

Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism: www.gov.ie/arts-sport-tourism

Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs: www.pobail.ie

Údarás na Gaeltachta: www.udaras.ie

The Arts Council: www.artscouncil.ie

Crafts Council of Ireland: www.ccoi.ie

Architecture

The earliest examples of architecture visible in Ireland today are megalithic tombs (3500–2000 B.C.). These include dolmens (three or more standing stones supporting one or two capstones) and passage graves such as Newgrange. Stone Age techniques survived into the twelfth century and are still visible in the beehive structure of early churches and monasteries such as those on Skellig Michael and Gallarus Oratory in County Kerry. During the iron age (after 500 B.C.) large circular stone forts were built, usually on hilltops such as Dun Aengus on the Aran Islands.

The Round Tower is almost exclusive to Ireland and is found in many parts of the country. Built from the tenth to the twelfth centuries on monastic sites, the most notable being at Clonmacnoise in County Offaly, round towers were frequently more than 30 metres high. Their primary purpose seems to have been to serve as bell towers although



Newgrange, County Meath

the raised level of the doorway would suggest they may also have had defensive uses. After this period, Romanesque architecture with its intricate and ornate carved stonework influenced the shape of Irish churches, the finest examples being Cormac's Chapel on the Rock of Cashel in County Tipperary and Clonfert Cathedral in County Galway. The arrival of the Anglo-Normans heralded the introduction of the

early Gothic style of architecture, with the two Dublin cathedrals, Christ Church and Saint Patrick's, being the most notable. The Normans built substantial castles with large rectangular keeps, many of which, like Trim in County Meath and Carrickfergus in County Antrim, still figure on the landscape. The fifteenth century castle at Cahir in County Tipperary is the most impressive of the surviving feudal strongholds.

Classical buildings date from the late seventeenth century. At the turn of the eighteenth century Palladian mansions were emulating Italian palazzos, but by the end of the century, this style had given way to neo-classicism and Dublin became an outstanding example of Georgian architecture. Key buildings from this period include the Custom House and the Four Courts in Dublin, with their distinctive copper domes, designed by James Gandon (1743–1823). By the nineteenth century Gothic revivalism was in vogue influencing the design of churches such as Saint Finn Barre's Cathedral (1867) in Cork and adapted to domestic architecture in the construction of Ashford Castle (c.1870), County Mayo.

Preservation and revival of old buildings became increasingly important towards the end of the last century with major projects such as the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, now the home of the Irish

The Custom House, Dublin



Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), the Custom House, Dublin Castle and the Casino at Marino, Dublin, being fine examples of architectural restoration. Temple Bar, the Historic Area Restoration Project (HARP) around Smithfield and the docklands where the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC) is located, are three notable urban development initiatives in Dublin. Over the twentieth century Irish cities have expanded rapidly and the emphasis today is on innovative high density housing.

Music

Music has always been an important part of Irish culture, from the traditional accompaniment to festivals and funerals in the form of playing and ballad singing, to Irish dancing which is still practised in Irish communities around the world. The harp was the dominant instrument in early historical times. One of the earliest Irish composers whose work survives is Turlough O'Carolan (1670–1738), the blind harpist and one of the last of the ancient bardic tradition.

There is also a classical tradition in the forms pioneered by other European composers. Eighteenth century Dublin was an important musical centre and Handel chose to premiere his *Messiah* there in 1742. John Field (1782–1837), creator of the nocturne, influenced composers such as Chopin and Glinka, and himself taught music in Moscow, where he is buried. Around the turn of the twentieth century two composers, Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) and Hamilton Harty (1879–1941), created Irish symphonies drawing on native songs. In the twentieth century traditional Irish music inspired modern composers such as Seán Ó Riada (1931–71), A.J. Potter (1918–80), Seoirse Bodley



The 'Brian Boru' harp dates from the 14th century

(b. 1933) and the crossover artists Shaun Davey (b. 1948), Ronan Guilfoyle (b. 1958) and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (b. 1950).

In the 1930s and 1940s Brian Boydell (1917–2000), Frederick May (1911–1985) and Aloys Fleischmann (1910–1992) brought a progressive continental European dimension to Irish art music. This continues in the work of Raymond Deane (b. 1953) who studied in Germany, and Gerald Barry (b. 1952) whose operas include *The Intelligence Park*, and John Buckley (b. 1951). Young classical composers include Grainne Mulvey (b. 1966), Ian Wilson (b. 1964), Benjamin Dwyer (b. 1965) and Elaine Agnew (b. 1967).

Traditional Irish music is now popular in many countries through the influence of groups as diverse as Clannad, the Chieftains, Altan,

Dervish, Lunasa and Anuna, all of whom perform in a modern context without compromising the integrity of the original sound. Reflecting this versatility is the phenomenon of *Riverdance*, with music composed by Bill Whelan, combining the best of Irish song, music and dance. *Siamsa*



Siamsa Tíre, folk dance company

Tíre, based in Tralee, County Kerry, is a world-renowned folk dance company while *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* play a prominent part in the development and preservation of Irish traditional music and dance. On the jazz scene guitarist Louis Stewart has played with leading international musicians. Popular bands such as U2, ASH, The Corrs, The Cranberries and Westlife top the charts at home and abroad, as do individual singers, Van Morrison, Sinéad O'Connor and Enya.

There are three full-time professional orchestras and three main opera companies performing in Ireland. There is also a wealth of individual classical musical talent such as the well known pianists John O'Connor, and the up and coming Finghin Collins. Well established on the international concert circuit are Bernadette Greevy, Ann Murray and Suzanne Murphy.

Film

Films have been made in and about Ireland since the Lumière Brothers filmed in Sackville (now O'Connell) Street in 1897. In 1910 the American, Sidney Olcott, filmed *The Lad from Old Ireland* in New York and Kerry, the first film ever made on two continents. Ireland has since played host to many international directors — Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford, Francis Ford Coppola, John Huston and Stephen Spielberg.

Throughout the last century Irish film makers were prolific in their production of amateur films, newsreels, documentaries and informational films. It was not until the 1970s however that a new wave of indigenously produced fiction films began to provide a striking alternative to foreign produced representations of Ireland. Irish film

The Irish Film Centre, Dublin



makers Bob Quinn, Joe Comerford, Cathal Black, Pat Murphy and Thaddeus O'Sullivan produced work that dealt with previously unexplored issues of culture, class, gender and nationality. Their work and that of subsequent producers, directors and screen writers is facilitated by the Irish Film Board who fund production and distribution of feature films, shorts, animated films and Irish language productions.

Irish films have enjoyed international acclaim such as *Michael Collins* (Neil Jordan 1996), *I Went Down* (Paddy Breathnach 1997), *The General* (John Boorman 1998), *Nora* (Pat Murphy 2000), *About Adam* (Gerry Stembridge 2001), *When Brendan met Trudy* (Kieron J. Walsh 2001) and *Disco Pigs* (Kirsten Sheridan 2001).

Annual film festivals in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast showcase Irish and international films while a year-round venue for art house cinema is provided at the Irish Film Centre in Dublin, the Kino in Cork and the Town Hall in Galway.

Online

The National Theatre Society:	www.abbeytheatre.ie
National Concert Hall:	www.nch.ie
National Archives:	www.nationalarchives.ie
Irish Museum of Modern Art:	www.modernart.ie
National Gallery of Ireland:	www.nationalgallery.ie
National Library of Ireland:	www.nli.ie
National Museum of Ireland:	www.museum.ie
Chester Beatty Library:	www.cbl.ie
Irish Research Council for the Humanities & Social Studies:	www.irchss.ie
An Chomhairle Leabharlanna:	www.librarycouncil.ie
Bord Scannán na hÉireann:	www.filmboard.ie

Sport

Ireland's recent world and Olympic medallists include Sonia O'Sullivan and Gillian O'Sullivan in athletics, the Men's trap shooting team,



The traditional games of hurling (left) and Gaelic football (right)

Sam Lynch and Gearoid Towey in rowing, Dermot Lennon in show jumping while Padraig Harrington and Darren Clarke are among the world's top golfers.

Among the most popular sports are the traditional games, Gaelic football, hurling and camogie, which are played almost exclusively in Ireland. Games in the All-Ireland hurling and football championships attract large attendance throughout the summer months culminating in the finals, the highlight of Ireland's sporting year, which are held in Croke Park in Dublin.

Ireland-England rugby match





The Irish bloodstock industry is considered one of the finest in the world



Pádraig Harrington, Volvo Masters Champion 2001

Soccer is popular at all ages from school to senior level in domestic competitions with many players performing with distinction in clubs in Britain. The Irish International team, which plays as the Republic of Ireland, has over the past number of years, enjoyed great success and is well supported by enthusiastic and friendly fans. The team qualified for the 2002 World Cup in Japan and Korea.

Rugby football is popular at club and schools level with the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) fielding teams in the annual six nations championship. Irish rugby players have participated in the British and Irish Lions tours as players, coaches and managers.

Ireland has a strong reputation for field sports such as shooting, fishing and also for equestrian events, showjumping and horse racing. The Irish bloodstock industry is considered one of the finest in the world. As Ireland has over 3,000 kilometres of coastline and numerous inland waterways, sailing and boating are long-established sports. A wide range of marine leisure activities such as fishing, water-skiing, canoeing, wind-surfing, diving and swimming are also pursued.

Over 400 golf courses offer facilities through the country. All-Ireland teams compete in international amateur golfing competitions with the major Irish tournaments on the international professional circuit being



Ireland's first swimming gold medallist Laura Jane Dunne gets a kiss from her coach

the Nissan Irish Open and the Smurfit European Open.

Ireland has a history of successfully hosting prestigious sporting events and hosted the Special Olympics in June 2003. This was the largest sporting event ever to take place in Ireland. Over 7,000 special athletes from 160 countries came to Ireland to participate in this unique sporting achievement. The Ryder Cup is to take place in Ireland in 2006.

Online

Irish Sports Council:	www.irishsportsCouncil.ie
Football Association of Ireland:	www.fai.ie
Irish Rugby Football Union:	www.irfu.ie
Gaelic Association of Ireland:	www.gaa.ie
Horse Racing Ireland:	www.horseracingireland.ie
Golfing Union of Ireland:	www.gui.ie
Special Olympics 2003:	www.2003specialolympics.com
Olympic Council of Ireland:	www.olympic-council.ie

CREDITS

Fáilte Ireland
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
National Museum of Ireland
National Library of Ireland
National Gallery of Ireland
Maxwells
Hulton Getty
Bill Murphy Design
Frank Fennell
Michael Quinn
Richard Beer
Department of Justice
Department of Defence
IDA Ireland
Enterprise Ireland
DELL
FÁS
European Central Bank
Eoin Murray
Bord Glas
Tourism Ireland
Iamród Éireann
The Irish Times
Scott Tallon Walker Architects
Department of Education
Photocall
European Commission
United Nations
Frank Sheridan
Paintings by Brian O'Toole © Bluett and Company Limited
Hugh Lane Gallery of Modern Art
The Board of Trinity College Dublin
Shannon Development
Irish Film Archive of the Film Institute of Ireland
Brendan Moran/Sportsfile
Aoife Rice/Sportsfile

[http://](http://www.computer.com)

www.computer.com



www.computer.com

go

return

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

A

Abbey Theatre:	www.abbeytheatre.ie
Aer Rianta:	www.aer-rianta.com
Aer Lingus:	www.aerlingus.com
Appeal Commissioner:	www.appealcommissioners.ie
APSO:	www.apso.ie
Arramara Teo:	www.aramara.ie
The Arts Council:	www.artscouncil.ie
Ask Ireland:	www.ask-ireland.com
Athletic Association of Ireland:	www.athleticsireland.ie
Office of the Attorney General:	www.attorneygeneral.ie

B

BioResearch Ireland:	www.biores-irl.ie
An Bord Altranais:	www.nursingboard.ie
Bord Bia:	www.bordbia.ie
Bord Gáis:	www.bordgais.ie
Bord Glas:	www.bordglas.ie
Bord Iascaigh Mhara:	www.bim.ie
Bord na Móna:	www.bnm.ie
An Bord Pinsean:	www.pensionsboard.ie
An Bord Pleanála:	www.pleanala.ie
Bord Scannán na hÉireann:	www.filmboard.ie
BreastCheck:	www.nbsp.ie
Bus Átha Cliath:	www.dublinbus.ie
Bus Éireann:	www.buseireann.ie

C

Central Bank Of Ireland:	www.centralbank.ie
Central Fisheries Board:	www.cfb.ie
Central Statistics Office:	www.cso.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

Chester Beatty Library:	www.cbl.ie
An Chomhairle Leabharlanna:	www.librarycouncil.ie
COFORD:	www.coford.ie
Combat Poverty Agency:	www.combatpoverty.ie
Comhairle:	www.comhairle.ie
Commissioner for Irish Lights:	www.cil.ie
Commission for Aviation Regulation:	www.aviationreg.ie
Commission for Communications Regulation:	www.comreg.ie
Commission for Energy Regulation:	www.cer.ie
Competition Authority:	www.tca.ie
Coras Iompair Éireann:	www.cie.ie
Council of the European Union:	http://ue.eu.int
Court of Justice of the European Communities:	www.curia.eu.int
Crafts Council of Ireland:	www.ccoi.ie
Crisis Pregnancy Agency:	www.crisispregnancy.ie

D

Government Departments

Department of Agriculture and Food:	www.irlgov.ie/daff
Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism:	www.gov.ie/arts-sport-tourism
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources:	www.dcmnr.gov.ie
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs:	www.pobail.ie
Department of Defence:	www.defence.ie
Department of Education and Science:	www.irlgov.ie/educ
Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment:	www.entemp.ie
Department of the Environment & Local Government:	www.environ.ie
Department of Finance:	www.finance.gov.ie
Department of Foreign Affairs:	www.irlgov.ie/iveagh
Department of Health and Children:	www.doh.ie
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform:	www.justice.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

Department of Social and Family Affairs:	www.welfare.ie
Department of the Taoiseach:	www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach
Department of Transport:	www.transport.ie
Development Cooperation Ireland:	www.dci.gov.ie
Director of Public Prosecutions:	www.dppireland.ie
Drug Treatment Board:	www.addictionireland.ie
Dublin Dental Hospital Board:	www.tcd.ie/dental_school
Dublin Port Company:	www.dublinport.ie
Dublin Docklands Development Authority:	www.dublindocklands.ie

E

Electricity Supply Board:	www.esb.ie
Embark Initiative:	www.embark.ie
Enterprise Ireland:	www.enterprise-ireland.com
Environmental Information Service:	www.enfo.ie
Equality Authority:	www.equality.ie
European Central Bank:	www.ecb.int
European Commission:	www.europa.eu.int
– in Ireland:	www.euireland.ie
EU Common Foreign and Security Policy:	www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp
European Ombudsman:	www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int
European Parliament:	www.europarl.ie
– in Ireland:	www.euriparl.ie

F

Fáilte Ireland:	www.failteireland.ie
Fianna Fáil:	www.fiannafail.ie
Fine Gael:	www.finegael.ie
Foinse:	www.foinse.ie
Food Safety Authority of Ireland:	www.fsai.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

Football Association of Ireland:	www.fai.ie
Foras Áiseanna Saothair:	www.fas.ie
Forfás:	www.forfas.ie
Further Education and Training Awards Council:	www.fetac.ie

G

Gaelic Athletic Association:	www.gaa.ie
Garda Síochána (Irish Police):	www.garda.ie
Golfing Union of Ireland:	www.gui.ie
Government of Ireland:	www.irlgov.ie
Green Party:	www.greenparty.ie

H

Health & Safety Authority:	www.hsa.ie
Health Insurance Authority:	www.hia.ie
Health Research Board:	www.hrb.ie
Heritage Council of Ireland:	www.heritageireland.ie
Higher Education and Training Council:	www.hetac.ie
Horse Racing Ireland:	www.horseracingireland.ie
Housing Finance Agency:	www.hfa.ie

I

Iarnród Éireann:	www.irishrail.ie
IDA Ireland:	www.idaireland.ie
Ireland Travel:	www.ireland.travel.ie
Irish Aviation Authority:	www.iaa.ie
Irish Blood Transfusion Service:	www.ibts.ie
Irish Business and Employers Confederation:	www.ibec.ie
Irish Congress of Trade Unions:	www.ictu.ie
Irish Courts Service:	www.courts.ie
Irish Defence Forces:	www.military.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

Irish Examiner:	www.irishexaminer.ie
Irish Ferries:	www.irishferries.ie
Irish Greyhound Board:	www.igb.ie
Irish Independent:	www.unison.ie
Irish Museum of Modern Art:	www.modernart.ie
Irish National Stud Company Limited:	www.irish-national-stud.ie
Irish Research Council for the Humanities & Social Studies:	www.irchss.ie
Irish Rugby Football Union:	www.irfu.ie
Irish Sports Council:	www.irishsportsCouncil.ie
Irish Times:	www.ireland.com
Irish Water Safety:	www.iws.ie
ITÉ:	www.ite.ie

J

K

L

Labour:	www.labour.ie
Labour Relations Commission:	www.lrc.ie
Law Reform Commission:	www.lawreform.ie

M

Marine Institute:	www.marine.ie
Met Éireann:	www.met.ie

N

National Archives:	www.nationalarchives.ie
National Building Agency:	www.nationalbuildingagency.com
National Cancer Registry Board:	www.ncri.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

National Centre for Partnership and Performance:	www.ncpp.ie
National Concert Hall:	www.nch.ie
National Council on Ageing and Older People:	www.ncaop.ie
National Crime Council:	www.crimecouncil.ie
National Development Plan:	www.ndp.ie
National Disability Authority:	www.nda.ie
National Economic and Social Council:	www.nesc.ie
National Economic and Social Forum:	www.nesf.ie
National Gallery of Ireland:	www.nationalgallery.ie
National Library of Ireland:	www.nli.ie
National Lottery:	www.lotto.ie
National Microelectronics Applications Centre:	www.mac.ie
National Museum of Ireland:	www.museum.ie
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland:	www.nqai.ie
National Roads Authority:	www.nra.ie
National Social Work Qualifications Board:	www.nswqb.ie
National Standards Authority of Ireland:	www.nsaie.ie
National Treasury Management Agency:	www.ntma.ie

O

Office of Civil Service & Local Appointments Commissioner:	www.publicjobs.ie
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General:	www.irlgov.ie/audgen
Office of the Data Protection Commissioner:	www.dataprivacy.ie
Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement:	www.odce.ie
Office of the Information Commissioner:	www.ombudsman.ie
Office of the Ombudsman:	www.ombudsman.ie
Office of Public Works:	www.opw.ie
Office of the Revenue Commissioners:	www.revenue.ie
Ordnance Survey Ireland:	www.osi.ie
Office of Tobacco Control:	www.otc.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

P

Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland:	www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie
An Post:	www.anpost.ie
The Postgraduate Medical and Dental Board:	www.pgmdb.ie
Progressive Democrats:	www.iol.ie/pd

Q**R**

Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland:	www.rpii.ie
Radio One:	www.radio1.ie
Radio Teilifís Éireann:	www.rte.ie
Railway Procurement Agency:	www.luas.ie
Referendum Commission:	www.refcom.ie
Reach Unit:	www.reach.ie
Ryanair:	www.ryanair.com

S

Science Foundation Ireland:	www.sfi.ie
SDS:	www.sds.ie
Shannon Free Airport Development:	www.shannon-dev.ie
Sinn Féin:	www.sinnfein.ie
The Socialist Party:	www.socialistparty.net
Special Olympics 2003:	www.2003specialolympics.com
Standards in Public Office Commission:	www.sipo.ie
Sunday Business Post:	www.thepost.ie
Sunday Independent:	www.unison.ie
Sunday Times:	www.sunday-times.co.uk
The Sunday Tribune:	www.tribune.ie
Sustainable Energy Ireland:	www.irish-energy.ie

INDEX OF USEFUL WEBSITES

T

Teagasc:	www.teagasc.ie
Temple Bar Properties Limited:	www.templebar.ie
TG4:	www.tg4.ie
The Abbey Theatre:	www.abbeytheatre.ie
Today FM:	www.todayfm.com
Tourism Ireland:	www.tourismireland.com
TV3:	www.tv3.ie
2 FM:	www.2fm.ie

U

Údaras na Gaeltachta:	www.udaras.ie
United Nations:	www.un.org

V

Veterinary Council:	www.vci.ie
Visit Dublin:	www.visitdublin.ie

W

Western Development Commission:	www.wdc.ie
The Worker's Party:	www.workers-party.org

X**Y****Z**



Iveagh House, headquarters of the
Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin