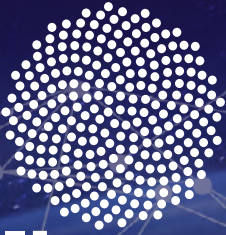


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ibec
For Irish Business

**Business expectations for
Ireland's EU Presidency**

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A Resilient, Competitive EU – “strength with unity”

As we publish the Summer 2026 edition of the Ibec Europe & Global Focus, we concentrate on Ireland’s eighth Presidency of the Council of the EU, which comes at a pivotal time for Ireland and Europe’s competitiveness and resilience. In this leadership role, Ireland will be central to the EU’s efforts to navigate war and security threats, alongside the urgent need to address competitiveness shortcomings, as it drives the work of the Council for the coming six months.

Business welcomes the scale of ambition set out by the Irish Government in its official priorities on 10 June. Centered around competitiveness, security and values under the banner of “Ní neart go cur le chéile”- strength with unity, there is a strong alignment with Ibec’s policy priorities for the Irish Presidency, set out in our [Making a Resilient, Competitive EU a Reality campaign](#).

Irish business’ key priorities of competitiveness and resilience have been secured as central themes with clear commitment to making decisive progress by the end of the Irish Presidency through urgent action as set out in the EU’s One Europe, One Market Roadmap. This is in concert with Ibec’s central priorities of delivering regulatory simplification, developing the Single Market including the Savings and Investment Union, driving an ambitious trade policy, and addressing energy costs. Business supports the high ambition to deliver agreements by the end of 2026 on Omnibus packages to reduce costs and regulatory burdens, the new EU Inc., Industrial Accelerator Act, Market integration and Supervision package, Securitisation framework, among others.

“The Presidency is an opportunity to steer Europe away from insular economic policies and be a leading voice for an EU that champions a rules-based international trading system.”

Ibec has long highlighted the need for a coordinated Government and business response to security risks of ongoing global conflicts, emphasising that increased efforts are required to protect Ireland and the businesses operating here. Robust security is the bedrock of business, it ensures security of supply, the ability to transact, and confidence in the rule of law. Achieving this requires collaborating with European colleagues to future-proof EU resilience against global instability. With that in mind, one of the most vital commitments by the incoming Irish Presidency is to advance measures that strengthen European security and defence, including in digital and cybersecurity areas. Despite the strong alignment with Ibec’s priorities, some outstanding issues remain in the Government’s official priorities. While regulatory simplification is a high priority, there are notable exceptions where the Government commits to advancing new EU legislation in digital, environmental and social policy. This will challenge businesses already facing significant compliance costs.

One area of potential contention is the lack of defined ambition regarding the Industrial Accelerator Act. While the Government correctly identifies it as a priority file to agree upon by the end of 2026, it remains silent on the Commission’s highly contentious “European preference” proposals. For an open, export-led economy like Ireland- which thrives on global supply chains, foreign direct investment, and open markets- domestic subsidy races and protectionist procurement mandates represent a dangerous economic pivot. The Presidency is an opportunity to steer Europe away from insular economic policies and be a leading voice for an EU that champions a rules-based international trading system. This requires maintaining close cooperation with trading partners, including the US and the UK, while pursuing new trading alliances- an approach highly effective during the Danish and Cypriot Presidencies. This approach culminated in the provisional application of the EU-Mercosur interim trade agreement, a landmark free trade agreement (FTA) with India and the conclusions of negotiations for a security partnership and FTA with Australia.

The Presidency is an opportunity to strengthen the EU for business and citizens and ensure that it meets the needs of small and large Member States alike. Ibec looks forward to continuing to work closely with Government to ensure a successful EU Presidency that drives forward an EU that is more competitive and resilient.

Ní neart go cur le chéile Strength with unity



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Government Policy Programme

The Government's priorities for its EU Presidency are set around three central themes:

1. **Competitiveness** – fostering prosperity and wellbeing

[The One Europe, One Market Roadmap](#), agreed by the Council, Commission and Parliament in April will set the Irish Presidency's core priorities: 1) Simplifying rules; 2) A more integrated Single Market; 3) Championing strong trade; 4) Energy transition; and 5) Digital / AI.

2. **Values** – upholding the indispensable foundation of our Union

The Irish Presidency will work to defend and vindicate the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights including supporting peace, multilateralism, and enlargement. On digital, it commits to supporting democratic resilience and the protection of children online.

3. **Security** – protecting our citizens

The Irish Presidency will work to advance measures that contribute to the strengthening of European security and defence including active support for Ukraine, progressing the European Security Strategy, as well as a focus on cybersecurity. Climate action is framed in the context of environmental security.

Alongside these three priorities, principally the Government commits to support for Ukraine; strengthening relationships with international partners emphasising the UK and US; and securing agreement on the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework with a focus on the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy.

Significant alignment with business priorities

There is a strong alignment between Ibec's policy priorities for the Irish Presidency, set out in our [Making a Resilient, Competitive EU a Reality campaign](#), and the Government's official priorities.

- ✓ Key Ibec priorities of **competitiveness and resilience** (security) secured as central themes
- ✓ Clear commitment to make decisive progress to enhance competitiveness and productivity by the end of the Irish Presidency through urgent action as set out in the One Europe, One Market Roadmap in **strong alignment with Ibec's central priorities**:
 - ✓ Regulatory **simplification** through prioritisation of the **omnibus packages** including on **digital and environment**
 - ✓ Strong commitment to **Single Market** development including to drive **digital** development and take a decisive step forward on the **Savings and Investment Union**
 - ✓ Ambitious **trade** policy underpinned by openness and strong relations with the US and the UK while strengthening economic resilience and security
 - ✓ Recognition of exceptional **energy costs** and commitment to work to enhance security of supply, affordability and sustainability

Some outstanding issues remain...

Despite the strong alignment between Ibec's policy priorities for the Irish Presidency and the Government's official priorities, some outstanding issues remain...

- **Meeting the ambition to deliver agreements within the timelines set out in the [One Europe, One Market Roadmap](#) will be challenging** during the condensed second-half of the year including various Omnibus packages, EU Inc., the Industrial Accelerator Act, the Market integration and Supervision package, Securitisation framework, among others.
- Commitments are made to **advancing new legislation in digital, social and environmental policy**, among others. Intentions regarding the upcoming **Quality Jobs Act** are unclear where the Presidency commits to "... seek to highlight the importance of supporting and protecting quality jobs..." but does not explicitly commit to progressing the legislative proposal.
- The Presidency does not set out its ambition for the content of the Industrial Accelerator Act. While noting that it will be a priority file to agree by the end of 2026, with the Irish Government aiming to finalise the Council's position in the Autumn, it does not comment on the **"European preference"** / **"made in Europe"** or stringent Foreign Directive Investment provisions set out in the Commission's initial proposal.

Ireland's EU Presidency: A Simple Guide for Business

During Ireland's EU Presidency, beginning on 1 July, Irish Ministers will be responsible for chairing meetings of the European Council, steering the EU's legislative and policy agenda, and Ireland will host a wide range of high-level EU meetings for the six-month term.

For a clear overview of how the EU Presidency works and what it means for you, Ibec has put together a simple resource, [Ireland's EU Presidency: A Simple Guide for Business](#). It explains what the Presidency is, identifies the opportunities and outlines what Ibec is doing to maximise this milestone year for the Irish business community.



General Affairs Council (GAC)

The Irish Presidency's GAC agenda centres on competitiveness, values, and security. A primary goal is advancing the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), focusing on Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and cohesion policy and progressing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) and Global Europe Instrument. The GAC will be at the centre of efforts to boost competitiveness through achieving the targets set out in the One Europe, One Market Roadmap; the Presidency will champion the regulatory simplification agenda through the omnibus packages and streamlined permitting. Enlargement efforts will target accession progress for Montenegro, Ukraine, Moldova, and Albania. The Presidency commits to defending democratic resilience via the European Democracy Package and foster positive relations with the UK and European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) countries.

Key Dates

- **3-4 September:** Informal GAC - Dublin
- **22 September:** GAC - Brussels
- **13 October:** GAC - Luxembourg
- **19 November:** GAC - Brussels
- **20 November:** GAC (Cohesion) - Brussels
- **15 December:** GAC- Brussels

Key Files

- MFF 2028–2034
- One Europe, One Market Roadmap
- ECF and Global Europe instrument
- European Democracy Package
- Preparedness Union Strategy
- European Ocean Pact and EU Maritime Security Strategy
- Omnibus simplification packages (e.g., digital, environment, automotive)

Highlights

One Europe, One Market Roadmap

- The commitment in the Roadmap to identify priority deliverables for competitiveness with corresponding timelines for agreement by three EU institutions is welcome. That being said, it stopped short of being a “binding political and operational commitment” and did not install a formal governance structure to supervise progress. Overall, the ambition and direction it provides is positive, and in line with the recommendations of the Draghi Report. It sets out objectives under five strategic building blocks: 1) simplifying rules; 2) a more integrated Single Market including by removing the ten most harmful barriers; 3) championing strong trade; 4) reducing energy prices and decarbonising; and 5) driving the digital and AI transformation. It is to be seen under the Irish Presidency how plausible it is to meet the ambitious deadlines laid out.

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034

- Driving the negotiations for the MFF, the EU's long-term budget for 2028 – 2034, has been highlighted as a priority during the Irish Presidency. The MFF includes the redesign of funding streams such as Horizon Europe and the ECF, which will be essential for businesses looking to access European funds to drive research and scale innovation all the way to deployment. The Irish Presidency will push for more coherent and streamlined funding mechanisms to boost European competitiveness. The Irish Presidency will have to manage competing interests in the Council, which has proposed a 2% reduction in the overall budget presented by the Commission in 2025, with the Parliament's call for a 10% increase to “finance both traditional and new priorities”.

Council and
Parliament
developing
positions



Minister responsible:

Thomas Byrne T.D.,
Minister of State for
European Affairs
and Defence

The Irish Presidency's Foreign Affairs agenda champions a globally engaged EU, projecting European values through multilateralism and international law. Support for Ukraine remains paramount, ensuring financial aid and full integration into EU defence, alongside supporting peace in the Middle East. To bolster security, the Presidency will advance the European Security Strategy, the Defence Readiness Roadmap, and joint defence procurement. The Presidency aims to secure economic competitiveness while pursuing an open trade agenda with a level playing field. It will pursue open trade via WTO reform, ratification and implementation of existing agreements such as the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), while guiding negotiations on the Economic Security Strategy. Expanding mutually beneficial partnerships with the US and UK to tackle shared challenges is a core priority alongside deepening strategic ties with Latin America.

Key Dates

- **13 July:** FAC - Brussels
- **31 August –1 September:** Informal FAC (Defence) – Wicklow
- **1-2 September:** Informal FAC (Foreign Affairs) – Wicklow
- **5 October:** FAC (Defence) - Brussels
- **8-9 October:** FAC (Development) - Dublin
- **12 October:** FAC - Luxembourg
- **22-23 October:** Informal FAC (Trade) - Dublin
- **16 November:** FAC - Brussels
- **17 November:** FAC (Defence) - Brussels
- **30 November:** FAC - Brussels
- **14 December:** FAC - Brussels

Key Files

- EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)
- EU-India Free Trade Agreement
- EU-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
- EU-US Joint Statement expansion (supply chains and critical technologies)
- Global Europe instrument
- New European Security Strategy
- Regulation on Military Mobility
- EU Maritime Security Strategy
- EU Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security
- EU Action Plan on Cable Security

Highlights

EU-US relations

- Following the final vote in the European Parliament, the Council has formally adopted two regulations implementing the tariff-related commitments of the EU-US Joint Framework Agreement. It is hoped that the completion of the legislative process will contribute to facilitating a return a stable relationship with the US, reducing tariffs and the cost of transatlantic trade. The deal safeguards European interests, while ensuring the EU respects its commitments under the Turnberry agreement. With the full implementation of the deal, the expectation is also that broader bilateral discussions on critical issues such as steel derivatives, tariff exemptions and resolving ongoing USTR investigations, can now see meaningful progress.



Minister responsible:

Helen McEntee T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence

EU-UK relations

- The upcoming EU-UK Summit, postponed following Prime Minister Keir Starmer's resignation announcement, is expected to provide further momentum to the post-Brexit reset in bilateral relations. A number of the items on the agenda have been under discussion since last year's summit. Chief among these is the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, already partially agreed, which seeks to eliminate physical checks on food and agricultural exports entering the EU. Discussions will also focus on the establishment of an emissions trading system enabling UK alignment with EU carbon pricing mechanisms, including provisions for penalising high-emission goods. Negotiations on a youth mobility scheme may prove contentious and are reportedly a factor in the delay in confirming the summit date. Made in Europe provisions and a steel alliance could also form part of discussions.

Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

The Irish Presidency's COMPET Council agenda focuses on deepening the EU Single Market, simplifying regulations, and creating a unified framework for cross-border businesses driven by the One Europe, One Market Roadmap. To drive industrial growth and decarbonisation, the strategy prioritises developing European industrial capacity and decarbonisation by accelerating investment in emerging strategic technologies through reforming public procurement and supply chain resilience. Economic competitiveness is integrated with sustainability goals, including supporting a circular economy, green and digital training, and modernising construction rules to address the housing crisis. The agenda emphasises long-term productivity through expanded research funding and robust intellectual property protections.

Key Dates

- **9-10 July:** Informal COMPET (Internal Market and Industry) – Dublin
- **20-21 July:** Informal COMPET (Research) – Dublin
- **24 September:** COMPET (Internal Market and Industry) – Brussels
- **25 September:** COMPET (Research) – Brussels
- **14 October:** International AI Summit – Dublin
- **25-26 November:** Informal meeting of Housing Ministers – Dublin
- **3 December:** COMPET (Internal Market and Industry) – Brussels
- **4 December:** COMPET (Research and Space) – Brussels

Key Files

- Industrial Accelerator Act
- EU Inc. (28th Regime)
- EU Product Act
- Chips Act 2.0
- Affordable Housing Act
- European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe
- European Innovation Act
- European Research Area (ERA) Act
- EU Economic Security Strategy

Highlights

Industrial Accelerator Act

- The One Europe, One Market Roadmap called for the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA), a flagship file to boost Europe's industrial competitiveness, to have the legal text finalised by the end of the Irish Presidency. The Cyprus Presidency has advanced specific issues within the file, such as permitting. However, the most contentious issues, including 'European Preference' criteria and further restrictions around Foreign Direct Investment have been left for the Irish Presidency negotiate. This Act would represent the first time a 'European Preference' has been formalised in EU legislation and could set a precedent for how similar provisions are applied in legislation going forward.

European Product Act (EPA)

- Under the EPA, expected to be published in September, the Commission is planning a complete overhaul of the EU's approach to product legislation, affecting standardisation, market surveillance and the full product lifecycle. This horizontal framework will alter the baseline compliance requirements for all CE-marked goods. The Digital Product Passport (DPP), which was introduced by the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), is set to be expanded under the EPA to become the standard interface for all compliance, safety, and sustainability information.

Council and Parliament developing positions

Commission proposal to be published



Minister responsible:

Peter Burke
T.D., Minister for
Enterprise, Tourism
and Employment



Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

The Irish Presidency's ECOFIN Council agenda will be anchored in the overarching goals of competitiveness, resilience, and long-term fiscal sustainability. A key focus is advancing the Savings and Investments Union (SIU) and the Digital Euro to deepen European capital markets alongside the digitalisation of finance, aimed at unlocking own resources essential for future growth. The agenda seeks to advance administrative simplification and tax modernisation through the Tax Simplification Omnibus. The Presidency will lead negotiations on the 2028-2034 MFF while also ensuring long-term economic and financial support for Ukraine. In keeping with the aim of competitiveness, the Presidency will seek to advance work begun by the Danish Presidency to examine the economic consequences of EU legislation.

Key Dates

- **10 July:** ECOFIN - Brussels
- **27 July:** ECOFIN (Budget) - Brussels
- **18-19 September:** Informal ECOFIN - Dublin
- **9 October:** ECOFIN - Luxembourg
- **9 November:** ECOFIN - Brussels
- **19 November:** ECOFIN (Budget) - Brussels
- **11 December:** ECOFIN - Brussels

Key Files

- Savings and Investment Union (SIU)
- Market integration and Supervision Package
- Digital Euro and Securitisation Framework
- Supplementary Pensions Package
- Directive on Administrative Cooperation (DAC)
- Tax Simplification Omnibus
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- Temporary Decarbonisation Fund
- Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation

Highlights

Savings and Investment Union (SIU)

- Integration of capital markets within the SIU is essential in unlocking Europe's €33 trillion in private savings and resolving cross-border funding bottlenecks. Fragmentation across 27 distinct national regimes currently stifles capital mobility and restricts the venture capital funding needed to scale European companies. Establishing a frictionless financial ecosystem requires removing cross-border withholding taxes, creating a single regulatory rulebook, harmonising regulated charges, and introducing a unified settlement system alongside a pan-European SME growth market.

Securitisation Framework

- Reviving securitisation is critical to completing the Banking Union and opening bank balance sheets for greater investment in high-growth areas of the European economy. Post-crisis regulations have caused a 61% collapse in European securitised assets since 2007, trapping capital in overly conservative investments. Unlocking this market requires replacing flat regulatory risk classifications with a tiered system based on asset risk weightings, combined with consolidating fragmented oversight under the ECB to lower cross-border transaction costs.

Trilogues
commenced



Ministers responsible:

Tánaiste Simon Harris T.D., Minister for Finance

Jack Chambers T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)

The Presidency's agenda for TTE focuses on building a connected, resilient, and competitive Europe in line with the One Europe, One Market Roadmap. Transport is an enabler for competitiveness, and the Presidency prioritises funding critical infrastructure, including subsea cables, expanding travel networks, advancing the safe and secure green transition, and strengthening passenger rights. For telecommunications, a unified digital market, enhanced global digital diplomacy, and bolstering cybersecurity are key. Finally, the energy strategy seeks to eliminate reliance on volatile fossil fuels by accelerating domestic renewable power, modernising electricity grids, and ensuring secure, affordable, and strategically independent energy infrastructure.

Key Dates

- **20-21 September:** Informal TTE (Transport) – Dublin
- **28-29 September:** Informal TTE (Energy) – Dublin
- **12-13 October:** Informal TTE (Telecoms) – Limerick
- **29 October:** TTE (Energy) – Luxembourg
- **30 November:** TTE (Transport) – Brussels
- **1 December:** TTE (Telecoms) – Brussels
- **10 December:** TTE (Energy) – Brussels

Key Files

- Digital Networks Act
- Cloud and AI Development Act
- Revision of the Cybersecurity Act
- European Business Wallet
- Digital Omnibus
- Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)
- European Grids Package
- Energy Security Framework
- EU Aviation Strategy
- EU Maritime and Ports Strategy

Highlights

European Grids Package

- The European Grids Package aims to address the structural bottlenecks and slow permit-granting processes currently hampering Europe's clean energy transition. Modernising the grid is essential for unlocking reliable, cost-competitive renewable electricity. This package will directly dictate the pace at which domestic industries can connect new facilities to the grid, electrify their operations, and ultimately reduce their exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets.

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

- CEF investment is critical to completing the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) Network aspects of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The TEN-T Network consists of rail, maritime and inland waterway infrastructure which underpins the free movement of people and goods throughout the Union. A major focus of the CEF will be on simplifying funding access and enhancing transport resilience.

Cybersecurity Act 2 (CSA2)

- The European Commission's initial proposal introduced the concept "high risk supplier" designations based on geopolitical origin rather than technical security flaws, overriding national security competencies. Ibec's analysis shows that this provision could impact 18 critical industries and cost €730 in the Telecoms sector alone.

Council and Parliament developing positions

Council and Parliament developing positions

Council and Parliament developing positions



Ministers responsible:

**Darragh O'Brien T.D.,
Minister for Climate, Energy
and Environment;**

**Patrick O'Donovan T.D.,
Minister for Tourism,
Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht,
Sport and Media**



Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

The EPSCO agenda focuses on balancing labour market protections, social inclusion and socio-economic resilience with competitiveness and fair growth, ensuring that the EU's economic and social model keeps pace for Europe to attract talent and remain competitive. The Presidency will seek to drive quality jobs, workforce mobility, and a skilled and agile workforce, prioritising the advancement of digital integration. Workplace modernisation is closely integrated with healthcare and life sciences innovation, recognising that robust health systems have become essential drivers of long-term prosperity. The agenda emphasises long-term economic resilience through secure AI integration in public health and the cultivation of a highly adaptive, future-ready European workforce.

Key Dates

- **5-6 July:** Informal EPSCO (Empl. and Social Affairs) – Mayo
- **30 September-1 October:** Informal EPSCO (Health) – Dublin
- **19 October:** EPSCO (Empl. and Social Affairs) – Luxembourg
- **19-20 November:** Informal Consumer Ministers – Dublin
- **7 December:** EPSCO (Empl. and Social Affairs) – Brussels
- **8 December:** EPSCO (Health) – Brussels

Key Files

- Quality Jobs Roadmap and Act
- Fair Labour Mobility Package
- European Social Security Pass
- European Labour Authority
- Biotech Act I
- Medical Devices Regulation
- In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation
- European Health Data Space

Highlights

Fair Labour Mobility Package

Commission proposal to be published

- This package covers, amongst other things, legislative proposals on the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS), Strengthening the European Labour Authority (ELA), and A Skills Portability Initiative. Ibec supports streamlining rules for free movement in the EU and enhanced skills portability is essential to address persistent labour and skills shortages across the EU. ESSPASS should integrate with existing national systems and avoid creating parallel processes or new regulatory layers. While it is welcome that Ireland seeks to “highlight the importance” of supporting quality jobs, any progression must focus on skills development, active labour market policies and lifelong learning, rather than additional employer obligations or new employment standards.

Medical Devices Regulation/ In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation simplification

Council and Parliament developing positions

- The Commission proposal is welcome and a strong basis for reform, in particular the focus on simplification and international cooperation. Targeted improvements are needed to ensure the proposal delivers in practice. Effective implementation to make innovation pathways more fit-for-purpose, ensure timely inclusion of AI requirements, and avoid unintended red tape for IVD performance studies is key. Rebalance the proposed approach to the reprocessing of single-use devices, so that reuse is assessed based on risk.



Ministers responsible:

Dara Calleary T.D., Minister for Social Protection;

Jennifer Carroll MacNeill T.D., Minister for Health

Alan Dillon T.D., Minister of State for Employment

The ENV Council's agenda focuses on transitioning Europe to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient economy post-2030 and beyond. Central to this will be advancing the environmental simplification agenda. Key priorities include implementing the 2040 emissions reduction target, strengthening carbon market safeguards, and deeply integrating climate, biodiversity, and water resilience policies to manage risks effectively. There is a focus on a circular economy to reduce waste, alongside a focus on marine health and sustainable chemical management that keeps European industry both green and competitive. Internationally, the Presidency aims to assert strong European leadership at global forums, setting benchmarks for climate integrity and establishing clear standards for environmental and carbon credits to prevent greenwashing.

Key Dates

- **23-24 July:** Informal ENV – Dublin
- **12 October:** ENV – Luxembourg
- **20 October:** Global Bioeconomy Summit – Dublin
- **11 December:** ENV – Brussels

Key Files

- ETS1 and ETS2 review and finalisation of safeguards
- CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism)
- European Climate Resilience and Risk Management Integrated Framework
- Environmental Omnibus
- European Water Resilience Strategy
- Circular Economy Act
- REACH Regulation
- European Chemicals Industry Action Plan

Highlights

Circular Economy Act

Commission proposal to be published

- Expected in Q4, the Circular Economy Act is a key file for the Presidency as it looks to shift Europe to a resource-efficient, low-waste, and climate-neutral economy. The Act aims to create a fully functioning Single Market for secondary raw materials, with the ambitious goal of doubling Europe's circularity rate to 24% by 2030. The act will lead to shifts in extended producer responsibilities, newly harmonized end-of-waste criteria, and mandatory recycled content targets that will directly impact the cost, traceability, and sourcing of their raw materials.

Environmental Omnibus

Council and Parliament developing positions

- The Irish Presidency will look to advance work on the Environmental Omnibus, which aims to simplify rules on the circular economy, waste management, industrial emissions, and environmental assessments. Measures to achieve this simplification include introducing binding deadlines, a coordinating "Single Point of Contact," digitalisation measures, and rules to curb late-stage litigation. Outstanding issues remain around the potential expansion of explicit tacit approval to extend across the entire industrial ecosystem, rather than being limited solely to strategic or priority projects. The Irish Presidency will work to finalise the legislative text by the end of 2026.



Minister responsible:

Darragh O'Brien
T.D., Minister for
Climate, Energy
and Environment

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

During the Irish Presidency, AGRIFISH will centre its agenda on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), prioritising food security, competitiveness, sustainability and generational renewal. A major theme is the reduction of administrative burdens through simplification, offering member states the flexibility to adapt to regional conditions while supporting collaborative, locally led rural initiatives. To protect sensitive sectors, the Presidency will closely monitor market stability, input costs, and balanced trade relations. Discussions will focus on the bioeconomy, innovation and technology to create economic opportunities for rural and coastal communities, alongside prioritising clearer rules for organic production and labelling. Finally, fisheries priorities will focus on sustainable stock management, securing fishing opportunities, and engaging with the European Ocean Pact and EU Rural Action Plan.

Key Dates

- **13 July: AGRIFISH** - Brussels
- **28-29 July: Informal AGRIFISH (Fisheries)** - Ireland
- **6-8 September: Informal AGRIFISH (Agri)** - Dublin
- **28-29 September: AGRIFISH** - Brussels
- **26-27 October: AGRIFISH** - Luxembourg
- **23 November: AGRIFISH** - Brussels
- **14-15 December: AGRIFISH** - Brussels

Key Files

- Common Agricultural Policy
- Food and Feed Safety Simplification Omnibus
- Fertiliser Action Plan
- European Ocean Pact
- Framework for organic production and labelling

Highlights

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Council and Parliament developing positions

- Negotiations on the next MFF, under which the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is being discussed, are at a critical juncture. Both the European Parliament and the Council aim to establish their initial positions by the end of the year, paving the way for trilogue negotiations in 2027. While the European Commission has proposed a significant overhaul of the CAP's two-pillar structure, the Parliament has pushed back, advocating for a substantially larger budget. Meanwhile, Member States remain divided on potential reductions to farm subsidies. The Parliament has warned it may delay negotiations until 2027 unless the Council commits to safeguarding funding levels. Looking ahead, the Irish Presidency intends to prioritise a simpler CAP, with reduced administrative burden, greater flexibility, and a stronger emphasis on locally driven approaches.



Minister responsible:

Martin Heydon
T.D., Minister for
Agriculture, Food,
Fisheries and the
Marine

Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

The Irish Presidency's JHA agenda focuses on a secure, fair, and rules-based Europe. On migration, the priority is implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum, establishing a 2027 Solidarity Pool, and exploring legal pathways like the EU Talent Pool. To bolster European security against evolving threats, the Presidency will advance the ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy, revise mandates for Frontex, Europol, and Eurojust. Upholding fundamental rights is paramount, the Presidency will combat domestic and gender-based violence, advance the EU Anti-Racism Strategy, and prioritise child protection, including the Child Sexual Abuse Directive. The agenda promotes digital justice and data protection while continuing the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Key Dates

- **16-17 July:** Informal JHA – Dublin
- **1-2 October:** JHA - Luxembourg
- **3-4 December:** JHA - Brussels



Minister responsible:

Jim O'Callaghan T.D.,
Minister for Justice, Home
Affairs and Migration

Key Files

- Pact on Migration and Asylum
- Amendments to the Schengen Borders Code, EU Visa Strategy, and EU Digital Travel application
- EU Talent Partnerships and the EU Talent Pool
- EU Preparedness Strategy
- Commission roadmap on Access to Data
- EU Ports Strategy
- EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

The Presidency will emphasise the role of education and training across the life cycle in safeguarding the Union's values and enhancing Europe's competitiveness, including through addressing STEM education, skills and competences for the AI era. Online safety, particularly for children, will be a central priority of the Irish Presidency, including work towards an EU-level decision on the digital age of majority and age-verification mechanisms. The Presidency will seek agreement for measures affecting culture and audiovisual industries. There are no commitments to additional investment under this Council configuration.

Key Dates

- **15-16 October:** Informal EYCS (Education) – Dublin
- **19 November:** EYCS (Education/ Youth) – Brussels

Key Files

- Erasmus+ Regulation
- AgoraEU Regulation
- EU Work Plan for Culture
- Audiovisual and Media Services Directive



Ministers responsible:

James Lawless T.D., Minister for
Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science;

Hildegard Naughton T.D., Minister
for Education and Youth



From left to right: Maureen Walsh, Vice-President of Ibec; Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission; Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy; and other Ibec executives.

Ibec engages with key Commissioners in the run up to the Presidency

Ahead of Ireland's Presidency, Ibec has had impactful engagements with key European Commissioners. Ibec's Vice-President Maureen Walsh communicated Irish business priorities relating to skills rollout and pay transparency to **Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** in June as part of a BusinessEurope delegation. An Ibec delegation met with **Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, Stéphane Séjourné**, discussing the Single Market, the urgent need for regulatory simplification and improving permitting in the Industrial Accelerator Act.

On 4 June, Ibec participated in a roundtable with Commissioner for **International Partnerships, Jozef Síkela**, focusing on the new Global Gateway initiative. Ibec supports the ambition of the Global Gateway Initiative which include cooperation and engagement with business communities. On 12 June, as part of the Commission's engagements on the topic of Enlargement, Pat Ivory, Director of EU and International Affairs, met with **Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos**. Ibec supports an enlargement policy that maintains a merit-based approach, rooted in the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria and with a clear focus on the fundamentals cluster.



From left to right: Maureen Walsh, Vice-President of Ibec; Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission; Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy; and other Ibec executives.



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Engagements with European Associations

Ibec participated in various engagements with high-ranking officials from across Europe in multiple Member States during May and June. In Dublin, Ibec hosted BusinessEurope's Council of Presidents, gathering over 150 senior delegates representing 42 national business organisations from 36 European countries. Hosted by Ibec President Colin Hunt and Ibec CEO Danny McCoy, delegates held key meetings with **Helen McEntee T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Minister for Defence, Thomas Byrne T.D., Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence, and Barry Andrews MEP**, ahead of the Irish Presidency. The [Dublin Declaration](#) sets out the priorities of European business for the Irish Presidency, calling for the accelerated delivery of concrete actions to restore European competitiveness.

BusinessEurope Council of Presidents in 2026



MEP Barry Andrews, Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence Thomas Byrne, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Helen McEntee, Ibec President Colin Hunt and Ibec CEO Danny McCoy



Over 150 senior delegates representing 42 national business organisations from 36 European countries gathered in Dublin for the BusinessEurope Council of Presidents in 2026.



Ibec President Colin Hunt and Ibec CEO Danny McCoy presenting the Dublin Declaration to Barry Andrews MEP.



Ibec President Colin Hunt, Ibec CEO Danny McCoy, and other officials standing together in front of a backdrop for the BusinessEurope Council of Presidents in 2026.



IRC

BusinessEurope's International Relations Committee (IRC) in Stockholm, Sweden discussed the power balance and trade developments between the US, EU and China with **former Swedish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt**, and **Camilla Mellander, the Director General for Trade Policy at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs**. Ibec hosted a meeting of BusinessEurope's Economic and Financial Affairs Committee (ECOFIN) in Dublin met with **Dr. Philip Lane of the European Central Bank, Mícheál O'Keeffe of the Central Bank of Ireland, and the Irish Department of Finance**. BusinessEurope's Internal Market Policy Committee (IMCO) in Madrid, Spain discussed barriers to Single Market integration with **Fernando Sampedro, State Secretary for the European Union, the Director of the European Parliament Office in Spain, Deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in Spain, and engaged with Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute** and author of the report "Much More Than a Market".



ECOFIN D



IMCO M



D9+ L

Ibec's Digital Policy team met with the D9+ Group of Ministers from digitally progressive EU Member States, including **European Commission Executive Vice-President Henna Virkunnen and Niamh Smyth Minister for AI**. The B9+ presented Ministers with a [statement of priorities for Europe's digital agenda](#), calling on them to 'simplify digital regulation by design' and to take more time to deliver the ambition of the 'digital omnibus'.

Latin America and the Caribbean Trade Horizons Forum

On 13 May, Pat Ivory took part in the Trade Horizons Forum organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which featured contributions from Caribbean ministers, Irish ambassadors, business leaders, and Minister Helen McEntee. A delegation from Argentina also visited Ibec in parallel to discuss investment opportunities and potential partnerships with Irish companies.



EU and International Affairs Committee engages with DFAT

On 2 June, Ibec's EU and International Affairs Committee met with Liam Morris, Director for Trade Policy at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. With the Irish Presidency less than a month away, this engagement presented an opportunity to exchange with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on trade priorities and outline some of the key issues Ibec members would like to see addressed during Ireland's Presidency.



Ibec meeting with USTR senior officials



On 9 June, Ibec's Fergal O'Brien and Pat Ivory met with Bryant Trick, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) for Europe and the Middle East and Mike Rogers, Deputy Assistant USTR for Europe to discuss trade relations with the USA. The meeting took place in Ibec Dublin offices the day before the Government announced Ireland's EU Presidency Programme. Topics discussed included Ibec priorities for the Irish EU Presidency, the passage through the EU institutions of implementing regulations for the EU-US trade agreement (Turnberry), the US 301 investigations that will establish a new legal basis for US trade tariffs and the EU-US digital technology dialogue.



Ibec at the International Labour Conference

On 8 June, Ibec CEO Danny McCoy addressed delegates at the International Labour Organisation Conference to discuss artificial intelligence, productivity and the multilateral system. Key themes from the address included the importance of actively managing work displacement and positioning the workforce to capture new markets, the importance of simplification in the digital policy space, to streamline oversight and reduce future regulatory burdens and the importance of investing in digital upskilling.

Ibec meets with Albania's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

On 9 June, Pat Ivory met with a delegation from Albania including Albania's Foreign and European Affairs Minister, Ferit Hoxha, and members of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss Ireland's economic development during our EU membership over the past five decades as well as current trends in the Irish economy and business environment. Ibec sees business as a key stakeholder in Enlargement discussions, as European businesses have historically driven previous post-enlargement transitions, reinforcing growth and competitiveness across the EU.

Webinar: Navigating the Removal of the De Minimis Threshold under the new Union Customs Code



On 10 June, Ibec hosted an insightful webinar with Revenue on the upcoming removal of the de minimis threshold. Effective 1 July 2026, the EU is eliminating the €150 customs duty exemption on all low-value imports coming in from outside the EU. As businesses prepare for these incoming changes, this session offered a highly valuable opportunity to hear directly from Revenue.





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



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