

TAOSÍONN ATHRÚ ANSEO

CHANGE STARTS HERE



SINN FÉIN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MANIFESTO 2024





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Introduction: A Europe that works for all its people

The European and local elections are taking place at a time when Ireland is facing many challenges. After 13 years of Fine Gael in government we have a housing crisis where people can't afford to buy or rent, a health service that is at breaking point and a cost-of-living crisis. When people go to the polls to cast their vote, their vote will be a vote on the change they want to see in Ireland and in Europe.

We need a new government that will put the interests of workers and families first, that will work to deliver the biggest house building programme in the history of the State, and tackle the healthcare crisis.

Sinn Féin believes that real change is possible, at home and abroad.

Sinn Féin believes Ireland's place is in the European Union, but we also believe that the Irish people are best placed to make the decisions that affect them; particularly on issues such as foreign affairs, tax and investment in public services.

Sinn Féin is for a European Union that works better for the people of Ireland and for the people of Europe. We are for a European Union that supports its Member States, listens to what those States need, and understands that most decisions are better taken by Member States.

It is time for the EU to focus on what matters to workers and families: the cost-of-living crisis, improving wages and conditions, regional development, and economic development. It's time for the EU to play its part in advocating for and planning for Irish unity.

A vote for Sinn Féin is a vote to elect a strong team of hard-working Sinn Féin MEPs who will work night and day to deliver on the issues that matter to you and your family.

It's a vote for a team of MEPs who will stand up for you and be a strong voice for Ireland. It's a vote to protect Irish neutrality and ensure Ireland's sovereignty is respected.

Change starts here in the European Parliament elections.

A vote for Sinn Féin MEPs in this election is the first step in delivering the change that Ireland needs.

EU reforms – Standing up for Ireland

The EU was wrong to insist on privatisation and deregulation, and Sinn Féin is opposed to the drift towards militarisation within the EU and the transfer of powers on tax or foreign policy to the EU.

EU enlargement cannot be used as an excuse for moving from unanimity to qualified majority voting or



to weaken the position of smaller Member States such as Ireland or to lessen the support which the EU gives to sectors; including CAP support for Irish farmers.

Retaining our voice within the EU and opposing changes which weaken or lessen Ireland's voice in Europe will be a priority for Sinn Féin.

Standing up for Irish Unity

European leaders unanimously approved a commitment guaranteeing that the north could re-join the EU as part of a United Ireland. The next step is for EU institutions to become advocates for Irish reunification, consistent with their position on Cyprus. The EU and its institutions should begin planning and preparing for constitutional change in Ireland to complement the steps that must be taken by the Irish government.

Standing up for neutrality and an Independent Foreign Policy

An independent foreign policy and military neutrality are crucial to allow Ireland to play a constructive role in the wider world. Sinn Féin is committed to protecting Ireland's position of military neutrality, and we want to see the position of neutral States enshrined within the EU Treaties. We oppose any move away from unanimity in Foreign Affairs and Defence Policies.

A new Commission President

The actions of President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, in offering unconditional support to Israel enabled the Israeli genocide in Palestine. As well as the terrible consequences for the Palestinian people, these actions have damaged the EU and its reputation internationally. It has undermined the EU's ability to be a voice for peace and for human rights in the world. Ursula Von der Leyen significantly overstepped her remit. No Irish MEP should support her bid for re-election as Commission President.

A reinvigorated CAP

The Common Agricultural Policy has served different purposes over decades, from incentivising food production to the delivery of environmental benefits. However, as its purpose has developed and expanded, its budget has been eroded in real terms. Agriculture will remain a key priority for Sinn Féin in Europe. We will advocate for a reinvigorated CAP to match our ambitions of ensuring food security and delivering for the environment within a framework that will secure the family farm for generations to come – chief among this is ensuring an adequate financial budget to match our policy ambitions.

Harnessing our collective strength

There are many longer-term challenges including food security, climate change and migration. On all these issues, the European Union can support sovereign Member States or can exacerbate the challenges we are facing. The focus should be on using our collective strength to respond quickly and effectively to these challenges rather than imposing a one size fits all approach on States.

Reforming the Common Fisheries Policy

There must be a push from Ireland to find common ground with other EU states to properly review the Common Fisheries Policy. We need a team of Sinn Féin MEPs elected that will stand up for the Irish fishing industry in Europe and that will look to rebuild it with a new vision. We also need an Irish government that will truly recognise the potential of the Irish seafood sector to become a much more significant part of the Irish and EU economy.

Ensuring Ireland's voice is heard

Now more than ever, Ireland needs strong representation in the European Parliament. A vote for Sinn



Féin in the EU elections is a vote for strong representation that works with others for a better European Union, but that will also stand up for Irish interests.

Change starts with the local and European election. These elections are the first step to delivering change. If you want change – change in housing, change in health, change in relation to the cost of living - you have to vote for it in the local elections, in the European elections and in the General Election when it comes.

Sinn Féin MEPs will work hard for you and your community. We will make sure your voice is heard in Ireland and in Europe.

Reforming the European Union

There are two competing visions for the future of the European Union. One is of an EU that continues to enlarge, becomes more centralised and bureaucratic, more militarised, lacks transparency, is under undue influence from corporate interests and lobbyists, and seeks to take ever more powers from Member States.

Sinn Féin's vision, in contrast, is for a European Union that works better for the people of Europe, that focuses on common challenges which we are best dealing with collectively – the cost-of-living crisis, food security, regional development, and climate change.

We want an EU that reduces unnecessary bureaucracy, that becomes more transparent and that curbs the influence of lobbyists and corporate interests. It would be an EU which only proceeds with further expansion where it does not undermine the position and influence of existing Members States, including small peripheral states such as Ireland, and is not used as an excuse to remove unanimity or representation within the European Commission.

Our protection against domination by the political, economic and military interests of larger countries is the veto that Ireland holds over certain issues in the European Council.





Already Germany has almost seven times more MEPs than Ireland, meaning they often dominate the debate and policymaking. Votes in the Council are based on population, meaning that Germany has almost 20 times more votes than Ireland.

Seeking unanimity may be more time consuming than voting, but the EU system contains sufficient flexibility to ensure that it can continue to function without further diminishing Ireland's voting power.

While the EU has neutral Member States, this is not in itself recognised within the European Treaties. In the context of some within the EU pursuing a militarisation agenda, formal space must be created to recognise those committed to a neutral position.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Getting the EU to focus on getting the basics right, such as regionally balanced economic development, workers and consumers rights, and the issues which are best dealt with collectively.**
- **Resisting attempts that reduce Irish influence in any of the EU institutions.**
- **Resisting attempts to centralise more power in the EU institutions.**
- **Making any further EU expansion conditional on no weakening of Ireland's position, including the retention of unanimity on Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Ireland's position in the EU Commission.**
- **Ensuring the strict application of EU membership criteria, particularly with regard to corruption and human rights, for applicant countries in order to protect the peoples of existing Member States.**
- **Halting the militarisation agenda within the EU, including any moves to increase the EU budget allocation for military spending.**
- **Ensuring that non-profit making organisations and citizens groups are given equal access to decision-making, which is currently dominated by corporate lobbyists.**
- **Stricter transparency rules, including the publication of messages between senior officials and corporate lobbyists; and an end to secret voting in the Council which allows governments to hide positions from the public.**
- **A reduction of unnecessary bureaucracy to simplify application processes for the community and voluntary sector, as well as farmers and business.**
- **Enhanced national sovereignty including reviewing what powers should be returned to Member States, as well as opposing the EU acting beyond its competences as outlined in the Treaties.**
- **Upholding the integrity of neutral States by enshrining their recognition within the EU Treaties.**

Uniting Ireland in the EU

A United Ireland will be a better, fairer, and stronger country. Reunification will allow us to reach our full potential as a country, including bringing significant economic benefits.

Reunification will also allow us to more completely deal with the challenges of Brexit, including managing our borders, and allowing the people of the north to have the full benefits of EU membership; including representation in the EU Parliament.



The departure of Britain from the EU has brought the debate about a United Ireland to the fore - north and south. Many people who would never have considered supporting Irish unity now see it as the most realistic way to rejoin the EU and to strengthen the position of Ireland in the EU.

The EU - in no small part due to the efforts of Sinn Féin MEPs - played an important role in protecting the Good Friday Agreement. Our efforts led to the Irish Protocol (subsequently rebranded as the Windsor Framework) becoming a key part of the Withdrawal Agreement, protecting the all-Ireland economy, as well as human rights. Many in the EU now realise that long-term relations with Britain would be best served by supporting Irish Unity.

Planning for Irish Unity remains the primary responsibility of the Irish government, but a contribution can be made by the EU under areas of exclusive or shared competencies under the Treaties.

Sinn Féin MEPs will ensure that preparation for Irish reunification is given due prominence in the work of the European Parliament.

Importantly during the Brexit negotiations, European leaders unanimously approved a commitment guaranteeing that the north could re-join the EU as part of a United Ireland.

The next step is for EU institutions to become advocates for Irish reunification, consistent with their position on Cyprus. Sinn Féin MEPs will press for this and engage with MEPs from across Europe and across the political spectrum to build support for Irish Unity.

A Sinn Féin led government will seek the adoption by the EU of a common position in support of reunification.

The EU and its institutions should begin planning and preparing for constitutional change in Ireland to complement the steps that must be taken by the Irish government. The provision of financial support for German reunification should serve as a precedent.

Sinn Féin MEPs will work within the EU institutions to ensure support, financial and otherwise, for the transition from partition to unity.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Campaigning for the European Parliament to demonstrate its support for the self-determination provisions of the Good Friday Agreement by committing to support a United Ireland in the EU.**
- **Preparing for the reintegration of the north into the EU; beginning by setting out the financial and legal arrangements necessary, including the level of representation for a reunified Ireland in the EU Parliament and considering the necessity for and scope of transitional arrangements and derogations for Ireland in the immediate aftermath of Irish unity.**
- **The continuation of the PEACE PLUS programme to strengthen peace, reconciliation, and cross-border cooperation beyond 2027 to support economic development and bridge economic disparities to create a stable foundation for Unity.**
- **EU citizens in the north, including Irish citizens and those entitled to Irish citizenship, to be given a voice in the EU parliament through the election of three Observer MEPs.**
- **An intensified cooperation between EU institutions, and the Executive and the Assembly in Belfast to ensure that the interests of all the people of the north are taken into consideration.**



International affairs and neutrality: An EU committed to diplomacy, humanitarianism, peace building and co-operation

The European Union should be a strong advocate for conflict resolution, humanitarianism and tackling global challenges including poverty, hunger, and climate change.

Unfortunately, this is not the role it is currently playing. The EU's international reputation and credibility has been damaged by the actions of Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, whose offer of unconditional and unqualified support for Israel provided political cover for the genocidal onslaught which ensued in Gaza. The EU will be a less trusted partner in diplomacy for many States across the globe in the years ahead because of these actions.

This has real world consequences and undermines both EU efforts to pursue a cessation of hostilities and peace in other parts of the world and to garner international support for a Russian withdrawal from Ukraine.

Sinn Féin is clear that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a grievous breach of international law. It has rightly led to the imposition of sanctions which Sinn Féin has supported. The result of Russian aggression has been the largest land conflict and the greatest displacement of people in Europe for nearly 80 years, which has led to death and destruction in Ukraine, a migration crisis across Europe and economic challenges across the world.

Sinn Féin MEPs will continue to support all measures that are grounded in the principles of upholding international law, conflict resolution, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The 10-point peace plan presented by the Ukrainian government and the forthcoming peace summit in Switzerland stand as important developments in terms of setting the stage for an eventual peace settlement.

Ireland is well placed to play a leading role in supporting initiatives that facilitate such a peace settlement based on the above principles.

An increasing focus on militarisation is bringing the EU ever further from its stated aims and values including contributing to peace and security, the protection of human rights and the strict observance of international law. War and conflict, which the EU should be playing a role in resolving, is leading to increased migration; one of the major challenges faced by the EU.

Sinn Féin's vision is for Ireland to play a constructive role in the wider world; committed to diplomacy, humanitarianism, peace building and co-operation with other States on global challenges; including poverty, world hunger, climate change, conflict resolution and migration.

An independent foreign policy and military neutrality are crucial to allow Ireland to play that important role in the wider world. The proposal of the government to abolish the Triple Lock neutrality protection signals a dangerous shift in Irish foreign and defence policies that could have serious for our ability to play that constructive role.

In advance of the second Nice and Lisbon referendums, the Irish government - through the Seville Declaration and Irish Guarantee - made solemn declarations to the Irish people in relation to the Triple Lock neutrality protection – no mandate has been sought from or given by the people of Ireland to overturn this. Sinn Féin will fervently oppose attempts to do so.

Hard-won reputations may be easily lost. Sinn Féin believe that the historical role of the Defence Forces as a neutral force engaged in UN peace keeping is something that the Irish people are proud of, and rightly so. Therefore, any decisions that could lead to shifts in foreign and defence policies must only be considered following a robust engagement with the Irish people. Any proposal for Ireland to participate in new EU military missions or operations must be assessed on its implications for our status as a neutral state and must have full Oireachtas oversight and approval.



Recent developments, including the Israeli assault on the people of Gaza, reinforce the necessity for Ireland to insist on the retention of unanimity on foreign, security and defence policy. For Ireland to play that positive role in the wider world and in peace building it is crucial that we do not cede the sovereignty on foreign affairs and defence policy that enables us to pursue an independent foreign policy.

Sinn Féin is committed to protecting Ireland's position of military neutrality, and we will seek recognition of the role of neutral Member States in any future proposals for Treaty changes.

Sinn Féin in the EU has also helped give a voice to oppressed people struggling for peace, democracy and self-determination in Europe and around the world and our MEPs will continue to do so.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Getting the EU approach to Foreign Affairs back to its stated aims and values of contributing to peace and security, the protection of human rights and the strict observance of international law.**
- **Upholding the integrity of neutral States by enshrining their recognition within the EU Treaties.**
- **Sinn Féin opposes:**
 - i. **We oppose any move away from unanimity in Foreign Affairs and Defence Policies.**
 - ii. **The militarisation agenda in the EU and the creation of an EU army.**
 - iii. **The appointment of an EU Commissioner for Defence.**
 - iv. **Moves to allow the European Investment Bank to lend money to the defence sector for weapons or military infrastructure.**
- **Defending Ireland's neutrality by opposing any EU initiatives that threaten to undermine this principle.**

Working for a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian state

The approach of the EU towards Palestine and Israel has been unbalanced, unconstructive and inconsistent with our commitments to human rights.

By failing to hold Israel accountable for their actions, the EU has over many years enabled flagrant breaches of international law, including ongoing expansion of illegal settlements amounting to annexation and the continuance of apartheid.

The actions of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in offering unconditional support to Israel enabled the Israeli genocide in Palestine. As well as the terrible consequences for the Palestinian people, these actions have damaged the EU and its reputation internationally. It undermined the EU's ability to be a voice for peace and for human rights internationally. No Irish MEP should support her bid for re-election as Commission President.

Sinn Féin believe that Israel should not enjoy preferential economic relations with the EU while it remains in breach of international law. As with Russia, the EU should deploy every diplomatic, political, and economic lever to pressure Israel to cease such breaches and hold those responsible for human rights abuses accountable.

Palestine, which does not enjoy such a preferential comprehensive trading relationship, has seen NGO funding subject to rapid review and attempted suspension of aid at a time when it is needed more than ever before.

As the most significant contributor of external assistance to Palestine, the EU also has an interest in the development of a viable Palestinian state. Sinn Féin believe the EU should take a leading role in the formulation of an effective road map which provides for a proper negotiations process based upon unconditional adherence to international law and the UN Charter, which leads to the establishment of a free, sovereign, and independent Palestinian state.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Opposing Ursula von der Leyen's re-election as Commission President.**
- **Advocating for the EU to take a proactive role in developing a process which leads to the establishment of a free, sovereign, and independent Palestinian state.**
- **Working for a full EU-Palestine Association Agreement.**
- **Campaigning to build support for the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and Israeli participation in Horizon Europe under human rights clauses while Israel remains in breach of international law.**
- **Ensuring sanctions against Israel for breaches of international law and human rights.**
- **Holding Israel accountable for the destruction of EU funded projects and materials.**
- **Building support among other EU states to join Ireland in formally recognising the state of Palestine.**





Trade policy that protects workers' rights, human rights and the environment

Sinn Féin favours international trade and cooperation that is to the mutual benefit of the citizens of all parties to an agreement. Sinn Féin's approach to trade agreements is based upon three pillars: workers' rights, human rights, and the environment.

Agreements should deliver economic benefits to both sides. They should contribute to enhanced and improved workers' rights and human rights and seek to protect or enhance the environment.

Trade agreements should not place downward pressure on workers' pay and conditions or incentivise increased global emissions and carbon leakage.

The EU must be consistent in its demands of trade partners and its application of human rights clauses. It must ensure a level playing field for farmers and businesses at home and abroad, and that international trade is a mechanism for addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.

Trade agreements must also never undermine the democratic institutions and competencies of member states.

The EU has taken an inconsistent approach to the self-stated ideals and principles of existing trade agreements. Maladministration of Mercosur, circumvention of human rights issues related to Morocco, and a failure to invoke clauses in the Israeli agreement are symptomatic of an approach that prioritises economic profit exclusively.

The past decade has seen the EU invoke human rights clauses in trade agreements only twice, having done so ten times in the previous decade.

In Ireland, the government continues to block the Occupied Territories Bill for fear of a European Commission challenge while simultaneously blaming European regulations for Ireland being bound to trade with Israeli military producers.

The Mercosur Trade Agreement could see the European market flooded with upwards of 100,000 tonnes of South American beef, potentially produced at the cost of deforestation and with a significantly increased carbon footprint, while farmers in Europe fear culls. Irish farmers should not have to endure competition from States who produce food with techniques banned within the EU.

The proposed investor only court contained under provisions of CETA would allow corporations to sue governments for enacting any environmental or social legislation that impact on their profits, undermining democracy, and the freedom to legislate for our elected parliamentarians and governments.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Ensuring that trade agreements do not undermine domestic democratic parliaments using investor courts.**
- **Opposing trade agreements which would facilitate the importation of food produced through methods banned by the EU.**
- **Defending the rights of Members States to implement public policy exemptions and refusing to conduct trade with military producers in States which are in breach of international humanitarian law.**
- **Advocating for human rights clauses to be applied consistently.**

An EU budget that is transparent and fair

Sinn Féin do not support an ever-increasing EU budget to fund ever increasing powers. Like all bodies spending taxpayers' money, the EU and its agencies should be accountable and fully transparent about all expenditure. As the EU seeks to develop further its military and security role, this budget will only inflate further. The core budget areas of CAP, structural funds and international development should be protected from interests trying to erode what remains of the social character of the EU Budget.

Having long benefitted from being a net beneficiary of the EU budget, Ireland became a net contributor in 2013. In the subsequent decade until 2023, that net annual contribution increased to more than €1 billion. By 2027, it is expected that our net annual contribution will be more than €2 billion – we will be receiving in funds just half of what we pay in.

Ireland should not accept continuous increases to EU budgets which do not yield increases to the key programmes that are important to Ireland such as the Common Agriculture Policy, where Irish farmers have been subject to cuts in real terms over the course of successive budgetary programmes.

The percentage of the EU Budget which comprises the CAP must increase if our financial commitment is to match our policy ambition in meeting the challenges posed by the climate and biodiversity crises.

A key aim of many in Brussels is to allow the EU to raise its own taxes and to be less accountable to national governments by making the EU more financially independent.

Post-Covid, the EU borrowed on a massive scale in order to pay for its Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF). As interest rates increased this became a bigger and bigger problem for the EU and therefore for Member States. Rather than learning its lesson, the EU is proposing further moves to make such a borrowing mechanism permanent and to bring in new EU taxes, called “own resources” to fund more borrowing and spending and to repay debts.

The creation of these additional “own resources” - EU taxes - are not necessary, reduce countries' sovereignty and only serve to centralise power in Brussels.

The EU should instead continue to be funded primarily from Members States' direct funding and existing revenue streams. As a net contributor, Irish people expect the maximum level of transparency and value for money from the EU budget.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **No additional EU taxes.**
- **An increased proportion of EU budget to be allocated to those programmes most important to Ireland, primarily the Common Agriculture Policy.**
- **Strict monitoring of all EU spending.**
- **Any proposed increase in the EU budget should be justified only on the need for solidarity and social progress.**
- **Cuts to the bloated salaries of Commissioners, MEPs, and other top EU bureaucrats.**



Tackling the cost-of-living crisis at an EU level

In recent years, the economy has been hit by a pandemic, an inflationary crisis, and a war in Europe. With each of these crises, many of the old unquestionable dogmas of EU economic policy were called into question. Some temporary emergency changes were made - the fiscal rules were “suspended” - and the restrictions on State Aid were effectively lifted in many areas.

However, the underlying logic of the EU’s enforced neo-liberal economic model remains. This fundamentally flawed model puts competition, the free market, and private interests ahead of the best interests and well-being of citizens. Governments were discouraged and even blocked by the EU from acting to defend people from the massive hikes in their bills during the cost-of-living crisis because of this position.

Clearly the role of the State in the economy is hugely important and its power to act must be protected.

Sinn Féin have been proven right in our assessment of the Fiscal Rules. A one-size fits all approach didn’t work and never could work. The brutal austerity inflicted on the basis of these rules remains a very real stain on the EU’s record. Privatisation is still championed by the EU, while state investment is hampered.

Empowering countries to respond in their own way to crises and national needs is an essential change that Irish MEPs must fight for.

We have already seen worrying levels of de-regulation brought in with these crises used as an excuse. Lessons that had been learnt about the need for regulation of the financial sector seem to have been forgotten. Some like Fine Gael are openly pushing for further rules to help vulture funds and banks. Only Sinn Féin can be trusted to stand up to this agenda.

Other damaging EU dogma has gone unchallenged by the government parties. The ECB’s raising of interest rates which hurt mortgage holders and others so much was based on the narrowly focused mandate given to it to keep inflation at 2%. A broader more socially centred mandate could have led to a different outcome.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Seeking reform of the fiscal rules to ensure greater fiscal sovereignty and the ability of national governments to make necessary investments in public services, health, housing, and infrastructure.**
- **Resisting the renewed push to deregulate the economy.**
- **Pushing for a review of the ECB’s inflation-only mandate to include promoting maximum employment.**
- **Opposing any increase to the EU budget that is not justified by the need for solidarity and social progress.**
- **Seeking changes to allow further flexibility on VAT policy for Member States.**

The right to tax sovereignty

Much progress has been made in tackling tax evasion in recent years. The most important initiative is the OECD-led BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting) agreement. This was successful precisely because it was global in scale as Sinn Féin always argued for.

There are calls for further EU action to set minimum tax rates at EU level, together with proposals to establish pseudo-tax “own resources”, which would amount to an unjustified tax grab and encroachment on Ireland’s tax sovereignty. Sinn Féin will oppose any proposals to weaken the sovereignty of Member States in respect of tax policy.

Sinn Féin will:

- Defend the principle of unanimity over tax matters.
- Oppose any proposals that encroach on Ireland’s tax sovereignty.
- Support and champion measures within the EU’s competency that will improve co-operation and transparency and reduce corporate tax avoidance and evasion.

We will continue our work to fight for:

- An EU where social justice and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand.
- The protection of workers and consumers rights over the interests of vultures and banks.
- The right to use and access cash; physical and digital.
- The right of Member States to choose their own economic direction.

We will stand against:

- All attempts to revert to the failed policies of centralisation and privatisation.
- The deregulation agenda in the financial sector.
- Any rules which hamper the necessary investment into our country and regions.





Protecting workers' rights in the EU

The European Union is a rich world region, yet much of this wealth is divided unequally, and an ever-greater share is concentrated in profits and assets and less and less is found in workers' wage packets.

The ongoing digital and ecological transition must not be at the expense of workers. Employment is, and should remain, primarily a national policy but the EU can promote measures to protect workers.

Sinn Féin MEPs will support such actions while remaining aware that the general economic approach of the EU to privatisation, deregulation and market competition is not compatible with empowering workers.

The Irish government has in its power the ability to bring about many improvements in workers' rights but chooses not to do so. The real change will come at home with a progressive Sinn Féin led government. As MEPs, Sinn Féin's team will work with the trade union movement to make progress where it is possible.

Our MEPs have supported and will continue to support at EU level measures like:

- **Putting in place a framework which encourages moves towards collective bargaining; such as the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.**
- **Employment rights for platform workers such as delivery riders.**
- **Making sure Ireland and others allow the European Works Councils to operate independently and in the interest of workers.**

In a changing world, the struggle for workers' rights evolves and legislation must keep pace. Sinn Féin supports measures to:

- **Uphold the right of workers to organise and to bargain collectively to enable workers to secure better wages and conditions.**
- **Create good quality well paid jobs, address the wage gap, and combat those factors pushing down pay and conditions.**
- **Enshrine the right to disconnect, and to ban invasive surveillance at work.**
- **Reform EU public procurement rules to ensure that public money goes to organisations that respect workers' and trade union rights.**
- **Introduce and implement a Social Progress Protocol so that the EU prioritises workers' rights and social progress.**
- **Support a stand-alone new Directive on AI in the Workplace ensuring that AI is not detrimental to workers' rights.**

Health and housing

Health

Investing in the Irish health sector is essential for a healthier and more prosperous population. The EU, as a collaborative entity, can significantly contribute to tackling Ireland's healthcare problems by fostering research and innovation, and promoting cross-border cooperation.

In the past, the European Commission has made numerous demands of Member States to cut spending on healthcare provision and/or privatise or outsource healthcare services to meet the arbitrary debt and deficit targets enshrined in the Stability and Growth Pact.

Although the lack of investment in our housing and health sectors are predominantly a failing of successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael governments, the framework set-out in EU rules is too limiting for progressive governments. This means an overhaul of EU State Aid rules, as well as the changing of the fiscal framework.

It will be a priority of Sinn Féin MEPs to ensure that the EU Fiscal Rules and other policies will not prevent the State from increasing health spending when that is required.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Actively seeking to ensure that Ireland's public expenditure on healthcare will not be hampered by EU Fiscal or State Aid Rules, or be used as a Trojan Horse for privatisation.**
- **Promoting research and policy exchanges in the EU to improve our health system and outcomes for patients where this makes sense.**

Housing

The systemic failure to provide good quality, affordable housing in Ireland goes deeper than failed government policy. Since the 1980s, successive governments have pulled back from delivering public





housing and left it to the market and the private rented sector to fill the gap. We are now living through the consequences of these policies. Social housing waiting lists are climbing, the private rental sector remains dysfunctional and there is a generation of people who cannot afford to buy their own home. Homeless figures in Ireland have been increasing at an alarming rate over the last 10 years.

In order to comprehensively address this crisis, there needs to be a drastic change in policy and direction by the Irish government. EU policies such as championing vulture funds as a solution to the crisis have added fuel to the fire.

Sinn Féin MEPs will work to ensure a Sinn Féin government can deliver the investment necessary to build affordable homes, including through working with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to source additional funds where necessary.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Actively seeking to ensure Ireland’s ability to invest public funds in delivering social and affordable homes will not be hampered by EU Fiscal or State Aid Rules.**
- **Working with the EU institutions to ensure additional investment can be delivered such as funds for retrofitting.**
- **Engaging with the EU institutions and other governments to promote the development of effective measures to end homelessness through co-ordination and exchange of best practices.**
- **Working with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to source additional funds for the provision of affordable housing.**

Climate change, environment, renewable energy and sustainability

There is an urgent need to act in relation to climate change. Sinn Féin wants to tackle the climate crisis in a way that is effective and fair. That means supporting people to make the necessary changes that are needed; taking on those most responsible for emissions including corporations and the super-rich and the State leading in developing our renewable resources and expanding our public transport infrastructure.

We are committed to reaching the EU's climate targets - this must happen, but fairly. There can be no back tracking on commitments made and targets set.

The EU has an important role to play in supporting States in dealing with the challenge of climate change. The EU needs to support a State-led approach to tackling the climate crisis while using its strength and power to take on systemic failures and large corporate polluters that are disproportionately responsible for this crisis. To date, an over-reliance on market mechanisms has limited individual State's abilities to deal with environmental challenges head-on.

The failure of the revised Fiscal Rules to include an exemption for essential climate investment was a huge error and must be revisited. EU Fiscal rules cannot be allowed to hamstring governments making the investment in infrastructure and mitigation necessary to reduce emissions and tackle the climate crisis.





The challenge for the EU is to meet its 2030 and 2050 targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to make our food systems more sustainable, and end our overuse of toxic chemicals and plastics while protecting the livelihoods and wellbeing of the people of Europe.

The EU must place the health of people, nature, and the planet above corporate interests. We need to build on the progress made under the European Green Deal, with a greater focus on social justice and global solidarity, so that we can achieve a truly just transition.

Where those, including our farming communities, are being asked to make significant changes including with regard to nature restoration, the EU must ensure their incomes and livelihoods are protected through adequate compensation.

In addition, the EU budget, including structural funds, must support states in climate mitigation including dealing with issues such as coastal erosion and extreme weather events.

We need to see the opportunities as well as the challenges in dealing with climate change. As we adapt to these challenges, we must do so with the intention of making people's lives better and easier - tackling poverty and inequality, protecting incomes, reducing energy costs, delivering good quality jobs, and investing in public services and infrastructure. Above all fairness must be at the heart of the EU and Members States approach to tackling climate change.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Further reform of the EU's Fiscal Rules to include an exemption for investments in infrastructure and climate mitigation needed to deal with the climate crisis and meeting emission reduction targets.**
- **Strengthen the climate mandate of the European Investment Bank and give it an explicit mandate to deal with climate mitigation investment.**
- **Long-term permanent funding as a source of income for farmers, fishers, foresters, and others for dedicated nature restoration.**
- **Focus to be placed on those large corporate interests that are responsible for the climate crisis rather than undue burdens being imposed on ordinary citizens.**
- **Introducing green finance laws to ensure the investments and financial activities of financial institutions support rather than obstruct sustainable development and combats global warming.**
- **Strong global solidarity for tackling environmental challenges, through international climate finance, protecting human rights along global supply chains, and continued support for the SDG 2030 Agenda.**
- **Requirements for big polluters like aviation, the chemicals industry, and data centres to take on a fair share of emission reductions and contribute to funding climate solutions.**
- **A national plan under the Social Climate Fund that aims to eliminate energy poverty, developed in close consultation with impacted groups.**
- **More decentralised, locally owned renewable energies to enable the participation of all in the energy transition.**
- **An end to greenwashing, with strict sustainability standards for new appliances, fuels and materials that will help consumers make sustainable choices.**

Developing our regions and transport infrastructure

One of the key aims of the EU is to develop its regions and promote economic cohesion. Decades of welcome EU investment through structural funds have undoubtedly aided the island to develop economically.

As Ireland's relationship changes from recipient to being a net contributor to these funds we must remind ourselves that regional imbalances are still a huge issue on our island. In fact, the North-West region has actually regressed from a "developed region" to one "in transition". In such a statistically wealthy country this is a damning indictment of the lack of investment in this region.

Post-Brexit, the country and the North-West are even further from the EU's single market. Positive investment in our regions is more required than ever.

As our population continues to grow, and significant numbers of workers engage in hybrid working, it is imperative that we make the necessary changes to our transport system to support workers and families. This means investment in public transport, rural transport links, roads maintenance and safety, and pulling back from the over-reliance on one form of transport over another. The current government have failed to find the right balance, despite funding being in place at EU level.

The EU provides funding and grants through programs like the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Ireland can leverage these funds to improve its transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, ports, and airports. It is vital to have a strong voice at EU level to ensure Ireland is well provided for when it comes to the division of the different funding models available at an EU level.

There is huge potential for Ireland to expand our all-island rail infrastructure. This would not only assist workers and students getting to places of employment or learning, but it will also assist us in meeting our climate targets. We need more regular and more reliable rail routes. Sinn Féin wholeheartedly supports the objective of modernising and decarbonising our national rail system. Priorities need to include the Western Rail Corridor and Navan rail line. We also need to see a significant improvement in the frequency and capacity of the current Dublin-Belfast rail line.

Placing Ireland's west and North-West into to the TEN-T Core Network would be a logical step towards the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.

The EU encourages cross-border cooperation and infrastructure projects through initiatives like the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Ireland can collaborate with neighbouring countries and regions to develop key transport corridors, facilitating smoother connectivity and trade within the EU.





Ireland's ports must be further developed to allow for more passenger and freight transport between Ireland and Europe. Such developments should include rail connections between all of Ireland's international ports and all major urban centres across the island of Ireland. As we move towards a more decarbonised society, Ireland must ensure the traditionally carbon-heavy industries such as haulage are not left behind.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Harnessing the full potential of EU programmes such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Ireland can leverage these funds to improve its transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, ports, and airports.**
- **Lobbying for Ireland's Western Arc and Western Rail Corridor to be part of the Ten-T Core Network, with a focus on overall improvements in the safety of transport networks.**
- **Lobbying for improvements in frequency and capacity on the rail line between Dublin and Belfast.**
- **Demanding the development of Ireland's ports to allow for more passenger and freight transport between Ireland and Europe.**
- **Promoting rail connections between Ireland's international ports and major urban centres.**

Supporting Irish rural communities and family farmers

Irish agriculture is understandably the cornerstone of many local rural Irish economies which have otherwise suffered a dearth of inward investment under successive governments – Ireland has historically been an agricultural nation. Despite this, many family farmers understandably feel let down. We believe that it is more important now than ever that the voices of our family farmers are heard both in Dublin and in Brussels.

Farmers must be involved in EU processes, which is why Sinn Féin highly values the European Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee as an important strategic committee to represent the interests and welfare of rural Irish communities.

Our starting point should be to recognise the incredible work that many of them have already done in producing among the safest, highest quality, food in the world within the most stringent environmental standards on the planet.

If the concerns of farmers were taken seriously by leaders in Dublin and Brussels, the oftentimes polarising debate on environmental issues could be avoided. Farmers understand and are ready to tackle the challenges posed by the climate and biodiversity crises, but it is the responsibility of those in public life to put in place the frameworks that will allow them to succeed. The government and the EU have failed to do so. The measures that are required at EU and national level need to be fairly implemented. This is key to enabling a just transition.

With proper supports, many farmers can play a positive role in ensuring food security, food affordability and national food sovereignty, but they must be protected. Irish MEPs and the Irish government must ensure that any free trade agreement protects and supports Irish farmers and does not force them into competition with non-EU producers who are not obliged to adhere to the same standards that exist within the EU.



Sinn Féin played an instrumental role in the current CAP reform by working with negotiators to deliver fairer payment rates and increase payments for thousands of vulnerable farmers. In addition to this, Sinn Féin as negotiators on the legislation to reform the crisis reserve ensured funding would come from outside the CAP budget resulting in new aid for farmers.

Unfortunately, the Irish government signed up to an EU Financial Framework that saw the overall CAP budget cut significantly in real terms, meaning that Irish farmers ultimately received less funding at a time when they are being asked to do much more.

Sinn Féin raised the visibility of the importance of farm safety and mental health through various forums. We also sponsored important EU research to combat Irish farmers being undercut by carbon inefficient imports from outside the EU.

Sinn Féin also worked on the new legislation to outlaw producers burning the rainforest to make room to produce beef for sale to the EU. Sinn Féin were also responsible for rural-proofing EU environmental legislation ensuring that there needs to be a socio-economic impact assessment to involve farmers in the tailoring of measures for rural areas.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Seeking an increased CAP budget for our family farmers.**
- **New funding for farmers outside of CAP for biodiversity and nature restoration measures.**
- **Participation of Irish rural stakeholders in decision-making at EU level.**
- **Representing Irish family farmers at EU level and in the European Parliament's agricultural and rural development committee.**
- **Opposing EU free trade agreements such as Mercosur that are detrimental to Irish family farmers.**
- **Rural-proofing EU legislation and policies.**
- **Retention of Ireland's derogation to the Nitrates Directive in conjunction with measures to improve water quality.**

Protecting Irish fisheries and our coastal and island communities

Ireland has some of the richest fishing grounds in Europe. However, the full potential of these grounds to create employment and wealth in our coastal and island communities has never been realised due to the profoundly unjust system of allocating fishing quota to the fleets of EU member states under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

It is estimated that Ireland is only allocated 15-20% of the fish in Irish territorial waters, under the jurisdiction of the CFP. Since Brexit, the Irish fishing industry has faced further devastating losses to their fishing quota and the Irish offshore fishing fleet has been forced into another round of decommissioning, reducing it to a fraction of the size of the fleet 20 years ago.

A commitment to carry out a full evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the Informal Meeting of Fisheries Ministers held in Bruges, Belgium on 24 and 25 March 2024 must only be a starting point.



There must be a push from Ireland to find common ground with other EU states to properly review the Common Fisheries Policy. We need a team of Sinn Féin MEPs elected that will stand up for the Irish fishing industry in Europe and that will look to rebuild it with a new vision.

We also need an Irish government that will truly recognise the potential of the Irish seafood sector to become a much more significant part of the Irish and EU economy.

Successive Irish governments have neglected the Irish fishing industry, instead of fighting for and building an industry that can be vibrant, sustainable, and valuable for the Irish people. That must change.

The Irish fishing industry have united over recent years to plot a new path. They have led the way in opposing any EU deals that would allow unfettered access to ‘third country’ states or non-EU states such as Norway or Iceland to fish in Irish waters without a fair share for our fishing fleets. They have forced the Irish government to finally step up and defend Irish interests.

This approach must continue in the next European Parliament term and Irish MEPs must join the Irish government in fighting for a fair share of fish in Irish waters for the Irish communities closest to those waters.

We in Sinn Féin want to rebuild the Irish fishing industry. This industry can be sustainable and protect stocks, can meet our requirements to face climate change and biodiversity challenges and can bring life



back to our Irish fishing communities. Ireland needs MEPs that will find the right balance and do what is right at last for Irish fishermen and their industry.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- ⓧ **Engaging on a regular and continuous basis with all Irish fishing, aquaculture, and seafood sector stakeholders to ensure there is a coherent approach to represent Ireland as strongly as possible in Europe.**
- ⓧ **Working with our European partners to secure a fair share of the fish and wealth from Irish waters for our Irish fishing industry in our coastal and island communities.**
- ⓧ **Working with our European partners to immediately commence the process of reallocating all the annual unused/uncaught fish quota within the Irish EEZ from the fishing fleets of the relevant EU Member States to the Irish fishing fleet.**
- ⓧ **Ensuring that the maximum allocation of EU funding possible from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund is delivered to fishing and seafood activities to support and rebuild our coastal communities and seafood sector.**
- ⓧ **Opposing the increased control and monopolisation of Europe's fishing quota by a small number of huge corporations.**
- ⓧ **Opposing any unequal and non-reciprocal fishing partnership agreement that gives other third country fishing fleets unfettered access to Irish fishing waters.**
- ⓧ **Campaigning for the banning of mega fish factory ships in European waters under the jurisdiction of the CFP and in the interim, to ensure that these vessels are properly monitored and controlled to protect the sustainability of precious fishing stocks.**
- ⓧ **Seeking a permanent PECH (Fisheries Committee) position for an elected Sinn Féin MEP for the full term of the next European Parliament mandate to stand up for Irish Fishermen.**
- ⓧ **Examining additional opportunities for the Irish seafood sector to maximise economic benefit from fish and seafood products landed on the island of Ireland.**
- ⓧ **Recognising the importance of the Irish Aquaculture industry to Ireland's food security, economy, and seafood sector and to examine ways through Europe that can further support and grow this important industry safely and sustainably.**

Disability Rights

EU laws impact every aspect of our lives, from product safety to online platforms, to funding for transport routes. If these laws do not adequately consider the needs of people with disabilities, then we are adding new barriers where we should be seeking to remove them.

To counter this, the voices and lived experience of people with disabilities must be brought to the fore in EU policymaking.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- ⓧ **Alignment of new EU product and consumer protection laws with the European Accessibility Act.**
- ⓧ **Requirements for EU-funded infrastructure projects to cater to the needs of people with disabilities.**
- ⓧ **Improved accessibility requirements for websites, apps, and other digital services.**



LGBTQI+ Rights

2022 was the most violent year for LGBTQI+ people in Europe in the past decade. The European Parliament and its Member States must do everything in their power to reverse this trend. Everybody has the right to personal safety, to integrity of identity, to be healthy and happy in an inclusive society.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- **Ensuring the safety of LGBTQI+ people living in or visiting Europe.**

Migration

Ireland's international protection system is not fit for purpose. Global conflicts, poverty and the effects of climate change have combined with other factors to drive levels of migration into Europe to record levels. Some countries have managed this new reality better than others.

The Irish government has for years failed to plan, failed to invest and failed to listen. The result has been communities feeling unheard, people fleeing conflict living in tents and in fear and large parts of our hospitality industry being used to plug gaps in what should be state services.

Ireland needs a well-managed migration system – one that is fair, efficient and enforced. The current approach has been characterised by unfairness, inefficiency and a lack of enforcement.

EU Asylum and Migration Pact

Sinn Féin opposed the EU Asylum and Migration Pact. We believe that Ireland should retain sovereignty over its own borders and migration policy. The government have indicated that they wish to opt into the EU Asylum and Migration pact in its entirety but have failed so far to bring the matter before the Dail. This decision is a mistake.

The EU's Asylum and Migration Pact contains seven proposals. Under the EU rules Ireland has the option to opt into all of the pact or opt out of certain provisions. It is our firm view that the government should be using the option which is has to remain outside of all of those provisions that are not in Irelands interests.

We are in a unique place within the EU as we are part of the Common Travel Area with Britain so clearly the one size fits all approach of the EU pact is not appropriate for Ireland. We need to have the flexibility to operate a migration policy which recognises this reality. Likewise countries across the EU have differing pressures on accommodation, access to healthcare and school places so a uniform approach will not work.

However, it is acknowledged that the EU as a whole needs to do better on the issue of migration and parts of the pact can aid this.

In the European Parliament Sinn Féin has, and in the Oireachtas Sinn Féin will support two measures that are in the best interests of Ireland, which would aid us to transform our asylum system into one that is fair, efficient and enforced.

Asylum and Migration Management Regulation because it facilitates the return of people who seek to make an asylum application here to the first country where an international protection applicant has made a claim.

Eurodac Regulation because participation in this fingerprint database is necessary in order to conduct checks and vetting. It may also help to respond to child trafficking at a time when the numbers of unaccompanied minors is rising.



We oppose opting-into the remainder of the measures. They are better dealt with at a national level. This is an important issue of sovereignty. It must be for an Irish government to decide on key aspects of our immigration system.

Frontex

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, commonly known as Frontex has been a symptom of the approach to date of the EU to the migration issue. It should be ensuring that the European Union approach is based humanitarianism and upholding international law while protecting Europe's Border.

However there have been too many instances of human rights abuses and violence against migrants at Europe's border including the drowning of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea.

Sinn Féin has supported the continuation of search and rescue operations and have opposed agreements with third countries such as Libya where there has been clear evidence of human rights abuses by officials. The relationship between the EU and Libya where the EU had effectively been funding regional militias to prevent migration is unacceptable.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- ⦿ **A fair, efficient and enforced migration system for Ireland.**
- ⦿ **Increasing the speed of decisions on asylum application and enforcement in a timely manner to ensure the safe return of failed applicants to their country of origin.**
- ⦿ **Provision of state run accommodation for those seeking asylum returning hotels and other buildings to their original purposes to the greatest extent possible to restore local tourism-based economies and vital services for communities.**
- ⦿ **Ireland maintaining its default position outside of EU migration and asylum laws.**
- ⦿ **Ensuring that EU nationals engaged in serious criminal activity or who pose a risk to public safety here due to their criminal record can be removed to their home country.**
- ⦿ **Ensuring that Ireland's own immigration laws will apply once the special status of**
- ⦿ **Ukrainians under the Temporary Protection Directive expires in March 2025.**
- ⦿ **Continued support for search and rescue missions particularly in the Mediterranean.**
- ⦿ **A review of the operation of Frontex to ensure it is complying with human rights law.**
- ⦿ **Ending agreements with third countries involved in human rights violations.**

Promoting the Irish language, multilingualism and minority languages in the EU

Sinn Féin has a strong track record supporting An Ghaeilge at home and at an EU level. Thanks to years of grassroots activism, supported by a language strike by Sinn Féin's Liadh Ní Riada in the European Parliament, the derogation holding back full official status of Irish in the EU ended in January 2022, although a March 2024 vote means a derogation on interpreting services in the European Parliament will



continue to deny Irish speakers' full equality until 2029. It is vital that Ireland's MEPs use the rights we have won, and fight to achieve full equality.

We also have a duty to stand up for the 55 million speakers of other regional, minority and lesser-used language in Europe, many of whom face discrimination. Since 2018, we have been calling for a dedicated European Language Ombudsman to act as a watchdog for states who engage in discrimination against a person's language rights and to advise on best practice.

Multilingualism at an EU level is under threat as more and more one language, English, has come to dominate business in Brussels and Strasbourg. All citizens must be able to work in their own language in a multinational Parliament.

Priorities of Sinn Féin MEPs will include:

- Endeavouring to use Irish regularly in our contributions as MEPs.
- Campaigning for an end to the derogation of full interpretation services for Irish in the European Parliament.
- Supporting the establishment of a European Language Ombudsman.
- Joining with other regional and minority language communities working to secure official EU status, including the current application by the Spanish State for Basque, Catalan, and Galician.
- Lobbying for initiatives to direct funding and support towards Gaeltacht communities.



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