



# Overview of the Irish Regions European Office (IREO) and the Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions

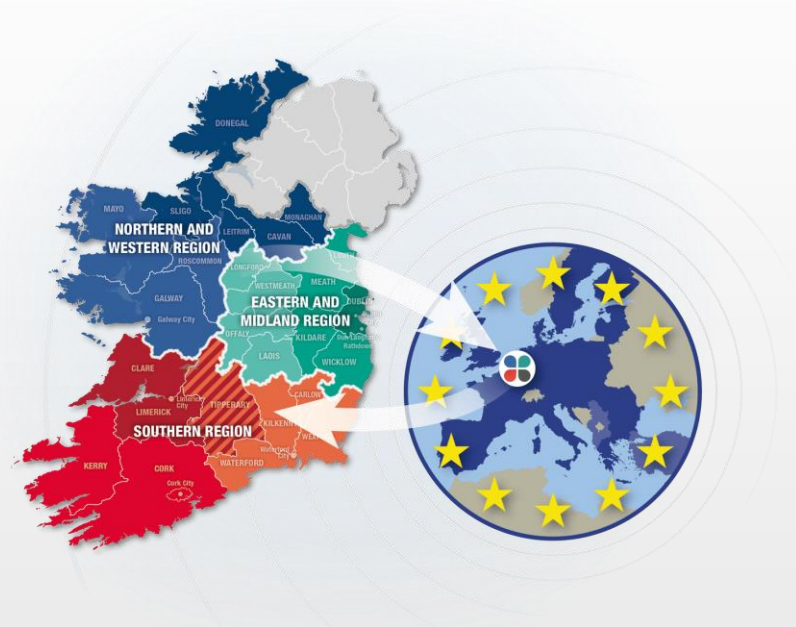
Presentation to Association of Irish Regions Annual Conference, 7th February 2024

Teresa Lennon, Head of Office,  
Irish Regions European Office



# The Irish Regions European Office

- The Irish Regions European Office delivers timely, strategic advice and information on EU policy developments, to the three Regional Assemblies and local authorities in Ireland
- Acts as National Coordinator for the Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions.
- The voice of Irish Local Government in Brussels



## A Shared Service of the three Regional Assemblies

# Objectives of the IREO



- Provide an effective Secretariat for the Irish national delegation to the Committee of the Regions
- Raising awareness and communicating the opportunities for participation in EU funding programmes
- Seeking opportunities for influencing EU policy developments
- Building capacity and partnerships with other regions
- Signpost to the European Territorial Cooperation National Contact Points based in Regional Assemblies, highlighting their role in providing pre and post project development support
- Raising the profile of the strengths of local and regional Government in Ireland to European partners and to the EU institutions.

# European Committee of the Regions

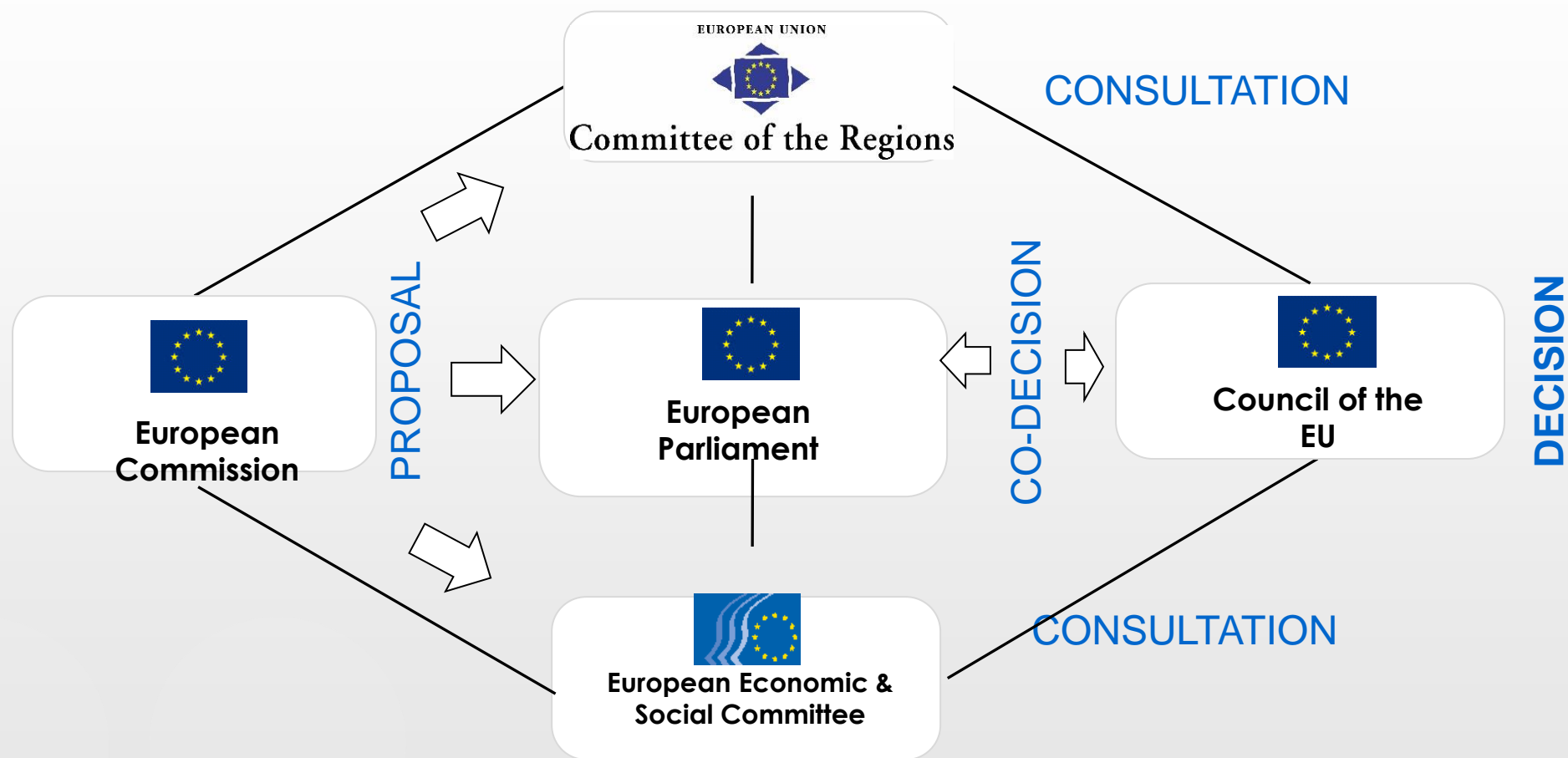


# European Committee of the Regions

- Main function is as an **EU Advisory Body** giving local & regional government an input into formation of EU policy and legislation
- Established in 1994 under Maastricht Treaty (TEU): enhanced role with subsequent Treaties incl. subsidiarity
- Issues detailed, written non-binding **opinions** in response to (mainly) European Commission legislative / policy proposals
- **Mandatory** consultation on Environment, Regional Policy, Transport, Energy, Public Services, Employment, Education, Social Policy etc.
- In practice, **consultation on any issues with impact at LRA level** Agriculture, Fisheries, Economic policy, Banking & Fiscal issues etc.
- Also own-initiative opinions, resolutions, studies, reports
- Brussels HQ ~ **€101,5 m annual budget**; ~600 staff
- 329 members (+ 329 alternates) based in the 27 Member States
- 5 year term - all elected representatives / politically accountable
- CoR membership as per appointment mandate



# Role of the CoR in EU Decision-Making Process



# Impact of EU policies on Local & Reg. Authorities

- **Ireland centralised** – LRA's less policy responsibilities via a vis other countries, legislative regions – nevertheless:
- **Significant % of legislation originates from EU**, e.g. Directives and other legislation affecting: Habitats, Water Quality, Nitrates, Procurement Policy, EIA, Use of Information, Equality Issues, Energy Efficiency, Landfills, Recycling, Health and Safety, Working Hours, Payments, Climate Change, Food Standards & Labelling etc.
- **Significant % of legislation implemented at LRA level** can have major financial / administrative impacts for authorities
- **Also Funding Impacts** (Structural Investment Funds, CAP, Sectoral Funding Programmes / Territorial Cooperation etc.) & Regional Structures

# Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions





# Irish Delegation - European Committee of the Regions



Name	Party	Council	Regional Assembly
<b>Members</b>			
Cllr Michael Murphy	FG	Tipperary Co Co	SRA
Cllr Deirdre Forde	FG	Cork City	SRA
Cllr Kate Feeney	FF	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Eamon Dooley	FF	Offally Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Aoife Breslin	Labour	Kildare Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley	SF	Laois Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Una Power	Green	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Kieran McCarthy	Ind	Cork City	SRA
Cllr Declan McDonnell	Ind	Galway City	NWRA
<b>Alternates</b>			
Cllr Jimmy McClearn	FG	Galway Co Co	NWRA
Cllr Emma Blain	FG	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co	EMRA
Cllr Gillian Coughlan	FF	Cork County Council	SRA
Cllr Michael Crowe	FF	Galway City Council	NWRA
Cllr Allison Gilliland	Labour	Dublin City	EMRA
Cllr Conor McGuinness	SF	Waterford City and Co	SRA
Cllr Dan Boyle	Green	Cork City Council	SRA
Cllr Enda Steenson	Ind	Leitrim Co Co	NWRA
Cllr Pdraig McEvoy	Ind	Kildare Co Co	EMRA

# Irish Rapporteurs - Opinions

## Circular Economy

- Consumers' protection package
- Cllr Dan Boyle

## Climate Change

- The Inclusion of Cities and Regions in the United Nations Framework on Climate Change'
- Cllr Alison Gilliland

## Equality

- A LGBTQ+ Strategy for the EU
- Cllr Kate Feeney

## Green Deal

- New European Bauhaus - Beautiful, Sustainable, Together'
- Cllr Kieran McCarthy

## Urban policy

- 'Small urban areas as key actors to manage the just transition'
- Cllr Kieran McCarthy

## EU/UK Relations

- Strengthening the EU-UK relationship at subnational level and remedying the territorial impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU
- Cllr Michael Murphy

## Air Quality

- Revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Legislation
- Cllr Una Power

## Economy

- SME Relief Package and BEFIT Proposal
- Cllr Kate Feeney

## Citizenship

- LRAs in Permanent Dialogue with Citizens
- Cllr Declan McDonnell

# Irish Members making an Impact



**From an Irish perspective the highlight**  
**Aoife Breslin's contribution to the**  
topic 'Encouraging integration  
in order to ensure inter-  
local elected repre-  
investment"

**The Rural Pact in action – working together for effective and innovative**  
**(EPP) Member of a Local Executive: Dun Laoghaire Rathdown**  
... session was Cllr.  
... Breslin noted that "it is crucial  
... level that there is engagement with  
... communication structures and

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is drafting an opinion on "Research Infrastructures – the First  
European Research Area (ERA) from a Regional and Cross-border Perspective". The rapporteur, Mr F-  
Member of Offaly County Council, together with his expert, Mr Gerry Finn, would be happy to m-  
stakeholder organisations for a consultation on the thematic of the opinion, in order to p-  
and discuss the main issues.

**importance of incorporating local voices within COP27.** The opinion, v-  
'buy-in

**On Monday 28 June, the Greens in the European Committee of the**  
**Regions (CoR) at their group meeting elected Una Power (IE) as new**  
co-president of the political group. She will start her mandate on 1  
August, following the end of mandate of current co-president Satu  
Haapanen (FI).

**The mandate**  
**Feeney being ele**  
**Cllr. Kieran McCarthy**

**Too many Europeans earn a wage they cannot**  
**live on and the number of working poor has**  
**grown during the current pandemic. We need to**  
**work towards a living wage for an acceptable**  
**wage. Key to a minimum wage is a starting**  
**point. That's what a true social Europe is about.**

**CAROLINE DWANE STANLEY**  
Member of Laois County Council, Ireland

# Highlights of the past year

- 🌐 **January:** Hosted a delegation from Dublin City Council
- 🌐 **February:** Hosted meeting with Minister for EU Affairs Peter Burke.
- 🌐 **April:** National EU funding conference in Athlone
- 🌐 **April:** Head of Delegation Cllr Michael Murphy and Head of IREO Teresa Lennon met Commissioner McGuinness.
- 🌐 **May:** Hosted EMRA Senior Management Team.
- 🌐 **June:** Met with Minister Peter Burke in Dublin.
- 🌐 **June:** Hosted a delegation from the SRA.
- 🌐 **July:** Attended the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly meeting in support of Head of Delegation Michael Murphy.
- 🌐 **July:** Hosted a delegation from EMRA
- 🌐 **October:** Head of Office appointed Chair of the Coordinators of the National Delegations to the Committee of the Regions.
- 🌐 **December:** Hosted a delegation from Cork City Council.



# Highlights of the past year

- Launched the new IREO / Regional Assemblies interactive map.  
<https://rdm.geohive.ie/pages/our-regions-economy>



Programme	TOTAL ERDF for all Irish Partners	No of Irish project partners
NPA	10.929.462,70	131
AA	19.552.322,69	100
NW Europe	27.381.779,29	90
INTERREG Europe	8.548.929,75	50
URBACT	962.927,14	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67.375.421,57 €</b>	<b>389</b>

# CoR Initiatives – How to get involved

## 🌐 Young Elected Politicians Network

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/pages/yeps.aspx>

## 🌐 European Network Regional and Local Councillors

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/pages/network-of-regional-and-local-eu-councillors.aspx>

## 🌐 European Summit of Regions and Cities, 18 and 19th March 2024

### Registration Open -

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/European-Summit-of-Regions-and-Cities-2024.aspx>

## 🌐 European Entrepreneurial Region

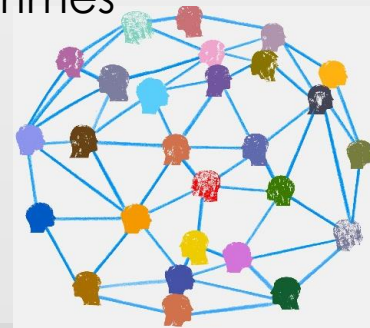
<https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/european-entrepreneurial-region.aspx>

**Celebrating 30 years of the Committee of the Regions in 2024 – Opportunity for local events**



# IREO Strategy Moving Forward...

- A need for expertise in Ireland and Brussels has been identified to ensure that the local government sector is equipped with the skills and expertise to understand and avail of the myriad of EU funding.
- Local authority Members across the country, recognising the importance of engagement of local authorities with the EU have called for resources within local authorities to achieve this goal.
- Seeking approval for an expanded IREO in Brussels
- Seeking to build a network of EU funding officers across local government in Ireland
- Important time to raise the awareness and engagement regionally and locally in EU policy matters and participation in EU funding programmes
  - Local and European Elections
  - Irish Presidency of the EU in 2026



# IREO Contact Details



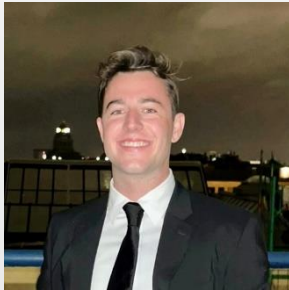
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