



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Ireland France Joint Plan of Action 2021-2025

Executive Summary

Ireland and France are committed to further strengthening and deepening our bilateral relations, especially as France is now Ireland's closest EU neighbour. To achieve this goal, we wish to adopt a Joint Plan of Action for the period 2021-2025 paving the way for a reinforced dialogue and strong and ambitious political partnership with new concrete initiatives that will have a positive and measurable impact on our relations.

Based on enduring and deep friendship and affinity going back centuries, Ireland and France are strong partners in the EU, the UN and globally, as well as being close bilateral partners and neighbours. This Joint Plan of Action is grounded on our shared principles and values and builds on the Joint Declaration of Ministers Coveney and Le Drian adopted in May 2021.

This Plan contains a range of new initiatives that reflect Ireland and France's shared priorities: supporting sustainability; increasing trade connectivity; fostering the digital economy; strengthening education and research links; promoting the French language; and fostering cultural heritage.

People-to-people links are at the heart of our vibrant relationship and through this Plan the two States are committed to promoting further opportunities for contact, exchange and cooperation between people in both countries. We will also strengthen links between Irish and French civil servants, including launching a network to promote the French language across the Irish civil service.

We will reinforce policy dialogue and cooperation, launching new structured dialogues in the areas of foreign policy, enterprise, trade, finance, climate, energy and ecological transition, and defence.

To support the ambitions of this Plan, Ireland will expand its footprint in France: opening a new Consulate General in Lyon, extending its Honorary Consul network, and reinforcing its presence in Paris. We will work together to maximise the trade and business opportunities presented by the rapid expansion of direct maritime links between our two countries.

Priority Projects

To **support sustainability**, the two States are focusing initiatives on renewable energy, sustainable cities and sustainable agriculture and fisheries. Projects include the goal of signing a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Agence de l'Environnement et de

la Maîtrise de l'Énergie (ADEME) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The two Governments reiterate their strong support for the flagship Celtic Interconnector project which will provide the first direct electricity link between Ireland and the continent.

France is a key gateway between Ireland and the European single market. We are committed to supporting **trade connectivity** and will take specific steps to promote trade and business partnerships.

On the **international and European stage**, we will cooperate further through greater structured dialogue and exchanges of diplomats.

With the **digital economy** at the core of both the post-pandemic economic recovery and of the EU agenda, we will expand our collaboration in this area, working together in particular on the Scale-Up Europe initiative.

Through this Plan, we will place a particular focus on further strengthening links between our students, faculty and researchers. We are adopting new initiatives to strengthen cooperation in **higher education, further education, training and research**. These include two new Ministerial Joint Statements on developing the mobility of future teachers and strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of teacher and vocational training; a target of developing 60 dual degree programmes by 2025; the development of Irish-Franco Teachers' academies; deeper engagement by French and Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Erasmus+ programme; the participation of Irish and French HEIs in the European Universities initiative; the creation of new consortia and partnerships between French rectorates and Irish education and training boards; and an expansion of the successful Franco-Irish network on culinary arts, hospitality and tourism (FICAHT).

Ireland and France will boost **research** collaborations, working jointly to help our researchers successfully access the Horizon Europe programme. We will expand the Ulysses research programme, which fosters new collaborations between Ireland and France-based researchers.

We will promote the learning of the **French language** at secondary level in Ireland, in particular through the language assistants scheme, and we agree to support the development of the French language for the potential introduction of foreign languages at primary level.

We will build on the strong and historic **cultural relationship** between both countries. This will involve: launching new strategic partnerships between leading cultural and educational institutions; intensified cooperation in the film sector; collaborative platforms and programme initiatives, including a joint celebration of the centenary of the publication of *Ulysses* in Paris in 1922; a new programme of Eileen Gray Fellowships recognising the inspiration of the legendary architect and designer; and a new Tomi Ungerer Fellowship to promote multi-disciplinary artistic exchanges in the name of the Franco-Irish writer and artist.

The Irish and French Foreign Ministries and respective Embassies will coordinate the implementation of this Joint Action Plan to ensure delivery of the ambitious projects agreed.

In sum, through this Joint Action Plan, we look forward to our bilateral relations continuing to flourish in the future.

PLAN OF ACTION

Introduction

With their joint declaration of 20 May 2021, the Foreign Ministers of Ireland and France have paved the way for a reinforced dialogue and strong and ambitious political partnership between our two countries.

The objective of this Action Plan is to lay out Ireland and France's shared ambition and the initiatives to be taken to achieve our common goals as neighbours, sharing the same destiny in the European Union and as actors, supporting multilateralism on the global stage. This Plan will be supported by projects and initiatives which will span over 4 years.

Ireland will further support the ambitions of this Plan through expanding its footprint in France, opening a new Consulate General in Lyon as well as further extending its Honorary Consul network, building on its already strong presence in Paris.

Partners in the EU

Our common goal is to continue to build a strong and sovereign Europe based on sustainable and secure growth, which guarantees the security of its citizens and the integrity of its internal market and maintains a fair and environmentally sustainable international economic order. Ireland and France wish to enhance cooperation within the European Union, notably during France's EU Presidency, across the broad spectrum of issues, including climate, biodiversity and environmental issues and promoting those fundamental values at the heart of the EU. Our two countries also want to work together on completing the digital single market, which will boost Europe's economic potential. We also share a strong belief in the importance of the EU's engagement globally, with specific attention to Africa particularly in the context of sustainable development goals. We are encouraging our citizens to participate in the Conference on the Future of Europe, through both the multilingual digital platform and the national and European citizens' panels that will take place until March 2022, in order to express their views and expectations on Europe and its future direction.

Partners in the UN and globally

Ireland and France are both committed to actively supporting and promoting a strong and fair rules-based international order and a functioning multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core. We will uphold the primacy of the United Nations and act to protect and promote human rights, the rule of law and conflict resolution, as well as furthering the fight against climate change and the protection of the environment, ensuring that the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement on Climate are implemented. For the biennium 2021-2022, during which Ireland sits on the United Nations Security Council, our two countries are working together in depth on Security Council issues, and we will maintain our close cooperation at the United Nations more broadly in the years that follow.

Partners and Neighbours

The bonds between Ireland and France are strong and immutable, dating back centuries. There is a natural affinity between our peoples and each country has drawn inspiration from the other. Our modern links, represented by trade, commerce, culture and tourism, are vibrant and capable of further expansion.

Ireland and France will endeavour to strengthen these ties and identify new areas for fruitful cooperation, such as in research and innovation and helping to promote the French language in Ireland.

Trade between both countries has been continually growing. Through this Joint Plan of Action, we will build on our already strong trading relationship and engagement already underway between both Irish and French companies. The examples of large common projects and bilateral investments currently underway are numerous and can be further extended, in particular in the sustainable growth, agrifood, pharmaceutical or digital sectors.

As the first direct electricity link between Ireland and France, the Celtic Interconnector will further EU energy market integration, facilitate the development of renewable electricity, enable solidarity and enhance security of supply.

The investment of French businesses in Ireland and Irish companies in France in solar and wind energy is impressive and a perfect illustration of the forward-looking approach of our economic relationship.

Partners in education, research, innovation, science and culture

The already very strong cooperation between universities and research institutes of both countries is developing fast. Ireland and France welcome the strengthening of these links which are the bedrock of our partnership for the generations to come.

Priority projects to be implemented 2021- 2025

I/ Working together to support sustainability

Ireland and France, in cooperation with French and Irish business sectors, will pursue efforts to develop cooperation on sustainable growth within three particular streams: renewable energy; sustainable cities; and, sustainable agriculture.

Renewable energy

- We support the promotion of successful research collaborations in the area of renewables and collaboration between both countries in the context of Horizon Europe.

Research and innovation in renewable energy and energy efficiency are key.

- We will strive to conclude an MoU between l'Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Énergie (ADEME) and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) which paves the way for enhanced cooperation in this field in the first Semester of 2022.

We welcome the investment made in both countries by Irish and French companies in solar power and in onshore and offshore wind power in particular. Ireland and France will continue to encourage such mutual interest notably by the organisation of seminars and workshops focusing on the application of the EU regulatory framework in both countries.

- We will endeavour to share experience in the area of renewables e.g. in relation to integration of renewable energy to the energy grid, maintaining security of supply and in relation to public engagement strategies, particularly in relation to offshore wind.

We recall our strong support for the Celtic Interconnector which will provide the first direct electricity link between Ireland and France and will further EU energy market integration, facilitate the development of renewable energy, enable solidarity and enhance security of supply.

Recognising the massive potential that offshore energy has to contribute to Europe's energy needs, we will explore the potential for future EU Projects of Common Interest which will facilitate exchange of renewable energy.

We will also work together to explore common approaches to the development of further electricity interconnection, including the potential role for hybrid interconnectors. We will maintain our efforts to deepen our cooperation in the context of our membership of the North Seas Energy Cooperation, and in the development of a regional offshore electricity grid.

Smart Cities

Following the model of the cities of Dublin and Marseille, Ireland and France will continue to encourage our cities to develop a dialogue on climate action and sustainable city management in order to find the best way to contribute to the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the EU green pact through the exchange of best practices.

We welcome new projects in the area of smart cities aiming to bring together key actors from city government, private sector and academia.

Sustainable agriculture and fisheries

Agriculture has an important role in both climate action and the protection of the environment (air, biodiversity and water). Farmers are also often heavily impacted by the effects of climate change. Ireland and France are both actively working on ensuring productive and resilient agriculture systems.

- We value the efforts undertaken by professionals in the livestock sectors in Ireland and France to contribute to climate action, environmental protection and food security and we reaffirm the economic importance of the livestock sector for our rural communities.
- We reaffirm the importance of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to support farmers' sustainable food production systems, contribute to food security and to meet the societal expectation of its citizens.
- We will continue furthering cooperation and exchange of experiences on planning and implementing CAP programmes, (including on farmer health, safety and wellbeing).
- Recalling our respective active involvement in international agricultural sustainability initiatives, we are determined to ensure that the special characteristics of the livestock sector is noted in EU and International climate discussions.
- We will work together at EU level in order to raise environmental standards globally. In the context of international agrifood trade, we will support the continued efforts of Irish and French farmers in terms of climate, environment, biodiversity and protection of forests.
- We reaffirm the importance of coherent and holistic strategies at national, European and international level in terms of agriculture, food, health, environment and trade.
- We note the importance of research, training and extension services in supporting a productive, competitive and sustainable agrifood sector.
- We also encourage both countries' education and training institutions in the farming sector to develop and further enhance the exchange and mobility of young farmers and agrifood students between Ireland and France.
- We reaffirm the importance of a new EU Common Fisheries Policy, as well as joint actions on guaranteeing the continuity of supply of good quality seafood.
- We welcome the bipartite agreement on horse movements between both countries and underline the importance of this prestigious sector for both our economies.

II/ Increasing our trade connectivity

As its nearest EU neighbour, France is a key gateway between Ireland and the rest of the European single market.

Every day, thousands of valuable consignments, particularly agrifood goods, pass through French ports on their way to France and the rest of Europe. Likewise, goods from France and elsewhere use these ports daily en route to Ireland. While many are taking advantage of the substantial increase on direct maritime links, the UK Landbridge remains a vital route for goods

moving between Ireland and the rest of the Single Market, in particular in supporting just in time supply chains.

Ireland and France will apply themselves to ensuring the efficient flow of this trade.

We will continue working together to maximise the opportunities presented by new direct maritime links for business, trade and tourism.

We will also support the development of trade and business partnerships between Ireland and the key ‘gateway’ regions of Hauts de France, Normandy and Brittany in particular.

Ireland will expand its diplomatic footprint in France in order to support our trade and business relationship, opening a new Consulate General in Lyon and appointing a new Honorary Consul in Roscoff to support partnerships in Brittany.

We will host business networking and trade promotion events, drawing on the networks of Team France Export and the Conseillers de Commerce Extérieur, the France Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Network Irlande.

- Ireland and France welcome the Smart Ports project managed by the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO) and encourage information sharing, data flows and showcasing of expertise by both countries in this area.
- We welcome France’s decision to increase from 90 to 150 the number of Volontaires internationaux en Entreprises (V.I.E.) by 2023, and thus to continue the ongoing growth of the number of volunteers which has been observed in Ireland for several years. All EU citizens of relevant age and academic background can apply and benefit from the exceptional growth of the Irish economy. These volunteer placements will help young graduates to get to know Ireland and will help French companies in developing their activities in Ireland and beyond. More generally, we will encourage young people to gain work experience in the partner country.
- Having regard to the Commission’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, we will aim to improve employment prospects for women through promoting equal economic independence, closing the gender pay gap and advancing gender balance in decision making.

III/ Fostering the Digital economy

Digital economy is at the core of the economic recovery post pandemic and at the core of the EU agenda. We welcome the proposed Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA) relating to innovation, growth and competitiveness on the European digital market as well as the online protection of European citizens.

- We will pursue our important dialogue on the EU law applicable to data retention by law enforcement agencies through regular exchange between our administrations and official offices.

Ireland and France have vibrant tech ecosystems.

- We welcome cooperation on the Scale-Up Europe initiative to encourage the scaling up of digital companies and the emergence of a European tech system and to foster SME participation in the digital economy.
- We also support the initiatives in favour of connecting our start-ups notably through the French Tech and Irish digital hubs

IV/ Strengthening our higher education, further education, training, research and innovation links

Higher education

French students represent the largest contingent of European Erasmus students in Ireland and France is the number one destination for Irish students in the EU.

Strengthening cooperation between Irish and French Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is a key priority. Our economies are knowledge based. The quality of the education we offer to the upcoming generation is key for our future prosperity.

Ireland and France will strive to develop their attractiveness for French and Irish students as well as encouraging academic staff mobility between our two countries, including through the Erasmus+ programme.

- We will work with French and Irish HEIs that have established relationships to highlight opportunities to deepen their engagement through the new support mechanisms established under the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027.
- Recalling the importance of recognising that students from Northern Ireland can avail of the opportunities from Erasmus+, we will work jointly to facilitate the placement of students from Northern Ireland in French HEIs.
- We will encourage the deepening of cooperation between our HEIs through the promotion of opportunities including joint awards and programmes, innovative module delivery, mobility and dual degree programmes. There are currently 45 double degree programmes between Irish and French universities. We will encourage HEIs to work towards the goal of having 60 by 2025.

- We will encourage secondary schools as well as Further Education Institutions to use the Key Actions in the Erasmus programme to facilitate class visits, students and staff mobilities and student internships in each other's countries.

We welcome the partnerships that have been established by our HEIs through the European Universities initiative:

- Trinity College Dublin and the University of Montpellier as part of CHARM-EU.
- NUI Galway and the University of Bordeaux through the ENLIGHT consortium.
- TU Dublin and the University of Technology Troyes through the European University of Technology.

We will continue to encourage and support the participation of our HEIs in new networks of European universities.

- Ireland and France welcome the structuring project by the Brittany region and its four universities as an anchoring point for numerous collaborations with Irish institutions.
- We welcome the upcoming signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 Irish Atlantic Universities (UCC, UL and NUIG) and 4 Breton Universities
- We will champion the Irish-French Teachers' Academies project to develop initial and continuing education programmes and strategies, based on the experience and lessons learned from the pilot project with partnerships between French INSPE and Irish HEIs engaged in teacher education in the autumn 2021.
- We welcome the upcoming signing of a joint declaration between the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister for Education of Ireland and the Minister for National Education, Youth and Sport and the Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation of the French Republic aiming at developing the mobility of future teachers.
- We will nurture cooperative research projects and dual degrees where possible supported by industry in Ireland and France.
- We will develop, in partnership with the Irish University Association, Technological Higher Education Association and France Education International, a new expertise on the French baccalaureate grades conversion for CAO procedure to access Irish Higher Education Institutions.

Further Education and Training

- We welcome the upcoming signing of a joint statement between the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister for Education of Ireland and the Minister for National Education, Youth and Sport of the French Republic

aiming at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of teaching and vocational training. We welcome the upcoming partnership between the Campus of qualifications of Normandy and the Education and Training Boards of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire (DDLETB), Kerry, Laois and Offaly, Limerick and Clare and Cavan and Monaghan.

- Ireland and France support the establishment consortia of institutions or partnership agreements between rectorates in France and Education and Training Boards in Ireland.
- We will expand the Franco-Irish network on culinary arts, hospitality and tourism (FICAHT) with its forum and its student competition supported by companies from both countries.
- We welcome the upcoming Memorandum of Understanding between the rectorates of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Occitanie regions of France and the Education and Training Boards of Dublin and Dublin Dún Laoghaire, which extends our excellent partnership to the Mediterranean regions of France.

Research & Innovation

We will encourage our researchers and innovators to develop collaborations of excellence worthy of being awarded funding through Horizon Europe. In support of this goal:

- We will encourage respective National Contact Points for Horizon Europe to continue to work together to help identify high potential projects. Directors for Research & Innovation at respective Ministries for Higher Education and Research & Innovation and at Enterprise agencies will meet to jointly consider what steps can be taken to help facilitate this collaboration.
- We will organise an event to take place in 2022 that will bring researchers and innovators from Ireland and France together with both research and innovation funding agencies to help identify further collaborations and to share experiences of how innovative Irish-French collaborations have been successful in securing EU funding.
- We will continue to support the further development of the Ulysses research programme and promote its expansion through the addition of further strategic partners.
- We will strive to strengthen Irish-French participation in Horizon Europe after Ulysses funding, helping researchers that have benefited from Ulysses funding to access workshops designed to enhance their prospects of securing European funding.
- We will nurture cooperative research projects and dual degrees where possible supported by industry in Ireland and France.

V/ Promoting the French language in Ireland and Irish studies in France

At the linguistic level, Ireland and France are committed to actively promoting language learning as a cement between people designed to equip them to better harness the opportunities offered by the European Union.

Ireland is an active observer member of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and committed to promoting the French language.

- We will work together to promote Irish studies at university level in France, where French and Irish faculty and researchers work so vibrantly together to bring a vital academic perspective to our relationship and to pass that on to future generations of students.
- We will promote the learning of French at secondary level in Ireland, as set out in Ireland's Languages Connect Strategy, through concrete actions to promote French as modern language in the European area.
- We welcome the upcoming signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education, the French embassy and the selected Irish schools in the language assistants scheme to guarantee the follow-up and the quality of the programme (based on existing guidelines).
- We agree to promote jointly the language assistants scheme to host schools and universities for both French and Irish students and support the training initiatives from Post Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) and the French Embassy in the programme (webinars and campaign on social media).
- We agree to support the development of French language for the potential introduction of foreign languages at primary level, starting in September 2021 with the Primary School Language Sampler Module.
- In order to promote the quality of both teaching and learning French within the Irish education system, and the mobility of the Irish students and teachers within the francophone area, the French Embassy and PPLI agree to promote the value of the DELF and DALF to attest the proficiency in French language.
- We agree to intensify mobility scholarships and provide training workshops throughout the year to teachers in all regions of Ireland including a co-financed scholarship programme in partnership with the Department of Education.
- We will strengthen Ireland's links with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and its operators. Ireland and France support membership of the Irish University Association (IUA) and the Association of French and Francophones Studies in Ireland (Adeffi) in the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie following the first Irish participation in the AUF international competition 'My thesis in 180 seconds' in 2021.

- We agree to make the celebration of the International Day of La Francophonie a key moment of cooperation.
- We welcome the presence of French media, in particular within the framework of the launch of the digital platform TV5MONDE plus, which contributes to the promotion of the Francophonie and thus increases the presence of the French language in Ireland following Ireland's accession to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie in 2018 as observer.

VI/ Fostering our cultural cooperation

Ireland and France will build on the strong and historic cultural relationship between both countries. We will develop a contemporary artistic programme that addresses the issues of today's world and engages diverse new audiences with geographic and demographic inclusivity. We will promote these cultural links through high-level presence, synergy and visibility in major cultural events in both countries. Priority cultural events will include Saint Patrick's Day, the Fête de la musique, Bloomsday, literary and artistic festivals, film and animation festivals and trade fairs and the Limerick Wild Geese Festival among others.

We will seize opportunities to promote Irish-French friendship through exhibitions and commemorations, and encourage debate through special initiatives and annual events including La Nuit des Idées, International Women's Day, St. Brigid's Day and the Franco-Irish Literary Festival. These debates will focus on priority policy themes including climate, equality, human rights, gender equality, European integration, Francophonie, and Alliance for Multilateralism initiatives, in particular the Partnership on Information and Democracy.

Collaborative platforms

- We will enhance consultations between the cultural sections of the two Embassies as well as with the Ministries of Culture, Culture Ireland and the cultural directors of the Foreign Ministries.
- We will intensify collaborations with the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, the Cultural Service of the French Embassy and the Alliances Françaises network in Ireland.
- We will enhance bilateral exchange programmes for cultural professionals, and develop residencies for artists, writers and translators to encourage collaboration in the creative sector.
- We welcome the CCI's ambitious Strategic Plan for the next five years, as well as its ongoing work with Ireland's Office of Public Works on a capital development plan to renovate and further enhance this unique Irish cultural space in France.

New strategic partnerships

- We will encourage greater bilateral cooperation in the film sector with the aim of concluding a new cinematographic co-production agreement between Ireland and France under the auspices of the Centre national du cinéma and Screen Ireland.
- We will support a new strategic partnership agreed between the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSMDP).
- We will support enriched collaboration between the Académie française and the Royal Irish Academy, including the confirmation of joint funding of the Michel Déon Prize until 2025. This joint literature prize is awarded in alternate years by the Royal Irish Academy in Ireland and the Académie française in France.

New programme initiatives

- In 2022, we will jointly celebrate the centenary of the publication of *Ulysses* in Paris as a pivotal moment in Irish, French and European modernism, including by supporting the Centre Culturel Irlandais' Joyce Season.
- We will support the creation of a new programme of Eileen Gray Fellowships celebrating the legendary architect and designer: one for architects and the other for makers of craft and design, administered respectively by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland and Design & Crafts Council Ireland, in partnership with the Centre Culturel Irlandais and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs.
- We will support the creation of a new Tomi Ungerer Fellowship to promote multi-disciplinary artistic exchanges, working with the Centre Culturel Irlandais and partners in Ireland and France. This initiative will support two artists from any artform with a socially engaged practice, one based in France or of French nationality and the other based in Ireland or of Irish nationality.
- The Centre Culturel Irlandais and the French Embassy in Ireland will work on a hip-hop initiative which will see hip-hop artists from both countries joining forces with artists from West Africa for a 2022 Fête de la Musique hip-hop concert.

Sport

- We will seek to increase the visibility of sporting events between our teams, especially ahead of the Rugby World Cup in France in autumn 2023 and the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024.
- We will continue to promote Ireland as a sailing destination and foster links between both countries by supporting initiatives such as La Solitaire du Figaro and Rolex Fastnet Race, which have significant audiences and interest in both countries.

- We will work together to secure a better recognition for Gaelic Games in France.

VII/ Strengthening our People-to-People Links

The links between our people are at the heart of our rich relationship.

Ireland and France wish to further intensify people-to-people contacts to nurture the emotional ties that have historically linked our two countries. We will encourage opportunities for exchanges at all levels of society, including in the areas of culture, tourism, and sports.

With this Joint Plan of Action, we agree a range of projects to intensify links between our peoples, such as

- **Artists:** new initiatives such as the Tomi Ungerer and the Eileen Gray fellowships will build further on the long history of artistic exchange between our peoples.
- **Researchers:** collaboration and exchanges between Irish and French researchers will be deepened through the new initiatives set out above to expand the Ulysses programme and through the framework of Horizon Europe.
- **Students:** the mobility of students in both higher and vocational education will be enhanced through the actions outlined above and the opportunities presented by the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027.
- **Schoolchildren:** Irish and French tourism agencies will promote educational tours to both countries as a support for language learning and creation of greater cultural awareness and understanding amongst the younger generation.

Ireland and France will encourage links between local authorities, associations and business groups, including twinning and project focussed cooperation. We will jointly hold a twinned towns day to promote local level cooperation which provides such richness to our people to people links.

Government-to-Government links

Efforts will be pursued to allow civil servants on both sides to better understand each other's way of operating, both to enhance bilateral cooperation and to promote better understanding in the EU institutional framework. Against this background:

- Ireland and France wish to develop exchanges and build contact between administrations and civil services.
- We welcome the decision of the Department of Foreign Affairs to send an official to École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) to further reinforce mutual understanding and links between our civil services.
- We also welcome the creation of the French language network to promote the French language across the Irish civil service, as announced in the Joint Declaration of 20 May 2021 and initiatives to promote activities for this network.
- We welcome the possibility for one Irish Police officer to study at the French National Police School (ENSP).

- We welcome the cooperation between our customs and SPS colleagues on the implementation of post-Brexit trade control and encourage the development of visits, staff exchanges and joint operations.
- We welcome reinforced links between our parliaments, in particular between the respective friendship groups and between the staff.
- We will endeavour to build greater links between French and Irish think tanks and to encourage opportunities for policy debate and exchange.

VIII/ Policy dialogue and cooperation

We wish to strengthen policy dialogue and cooperation between our countries in the following areas:

Foreign and European Policy

In May 2021, our Foreign Ministries launched an enhanced structured dialogue focussing on foreign policy issues of common interest, including the Middle East and climate.

Ireland and France share high levels of ambition regarding climate and environmental issues. Building on our commitment in the Joint Declaration to deepen and structure the dialogue between our Foreign Ministries and more specifically our EU Directors General and our Climate Ambassadors, we will work regularly together at the European level, with an aim to coordinating our positions on climate and energy transition issues.

Security and Defence

Irish Defence Forces and French Armed Forces personnel have well established links, having served together in a number of UN and EU crisis management operations. Looking ahead, Ireland and France will explore opportunities for further cooperation in such areas as:

- EU-UN Cooperation.
- Exchange of information on new and emerging threats and challenges.
- Potential for increased information exchange on Recognized Maritime Picture and Recognized Air Picture in support of international safety and security.
- Potential bilateral capability development initiatives
- Potential for collaboration on capability development within the framework of EU initiatives including the European Defence Agency (EDA), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and European Defence Fund (EDF).
- Promotion of links between Irish and French defence research, technology, innovation and enterprise entities.
- Forces language training.
- Military capability training.
- Civil and Military Staff Exchanges.

More broadly, Ireland and France will also continue to cooperate within the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), including in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and civilian crisis management activities.

Enterprise Policy

Ministries in charge of enterprise policy (Ireland's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the French Republic's Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de la Relance) will exchange views in the area of Industrial Policy to:

- Develop ideas and identify opportunities to support improved capacity and capability along key strategic value chains.
- Explore the potential for collaboration through Important Projects of Common European Interest, in particular in the area of health, and Industrial Alliances.
- Promote and support cross investments in the context of Choose France or Scale up Europe, and digital ecosystems.

And in the area of Single Market Policy to:

- Exchange on policy approaches to implementation and enforcement of Internal Market rules and identify areas for potential cooperation.

Trade policy

Trade is a core element of Europe's economic prosperity and competitiveness. Ireland and France support the EU's leading role in strengthening trade multilateralism and its leadership in reforming the WTO. They also support strengthening the links between the EU's trade policy and the European objectives of sustainable development.

Ministries in charge of trade policy will exchange policy approaches on achieving our shared ambitions of fairness and sustainability.

Finance

Ministries of Finance (Ireland's Department of Finance and the French Republic's Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de la Relance) will hold structured consultations at senior level on an annual basis and exchange views in particular on sustainable finance initiatives.

Climate, Energy and Ecological transition

Ministries for Climate and Energy and Ecological transition will strengthen policy dialogue between them, building on the new projects announced in this Joint Plan of Action.

They aim to put in place an annual bilateral dialogue on climate issues to exchange on solutions to bring to different impacts on change and in views of multilateral events, like COP.

IX/ Implementation

Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Embassies will coordinate the implementation of this Joint Plan of Action to ensure delivery on the ambitious projects agreed upon today. They will meet annually to review progress and update and adapt this Plan as necessary.

Dublin, 26 August 2021.

For Ireland

For the French Republic

Simon COVENEY TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Jean-Yves LE DRIAN
Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs