

# Environment Ireland speaker panel



**Martin Adams** leads the programme on Health and Sustainable Resource Use at the **European Environment Agency (EEA)**. This programme supports EEA's member countries and EU institutions in key policy areas of environment and health (addressing air pollution, chemicals and environmental noise), as well as on resource use and circular economy. Martin has worked at the EEA since 2007 in a variety of expert and management roles, initially responsible for air quality/emissions information, before in later years heading the Agency's team on air pollution, transport and noise. Prior to joining the EEA, Martin worked for a UK based environmental consultancy.



**Petra Biberbach** is Chief Executive of award-winning national charity, **Planning Aid Scotland**. With a career spanning public, private and third sector, Petra brings a wealth of expertise to the post in the fields of planning, sustainable development, renewable energy, community engagement and research. She is currently the Vice Chair of LINK Group and chairs the Property Development Group. Petra served as a member on the Independent Review of the Scottish Planning System and recently completed two terms as a board member of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority where she was Convenor of the Planning Committee. In 1998 she founded and became the first chair of the Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) which campaigned successfully for the reopening of the Borders Railway.



**Brian Carroll** is the Assistant Secretary General leading the Climate Action and Environment function at the **Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications**. Brian joined the Department in 2008, having worked previously as Head of Decarbonisation and Head of Finance and Corporate Affairs. He has wide experience across the public service, having also worked in the Departments of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Justice. Brian holds degrees in business, anthropology and economics, and is a graduate of University College Dublin, Trinity College, the Institute of Public Administration, and the Dublin Business School.



**Oisín Coghlan** has been Director of **Friends of the Earth** Ireland since 2005, the Irish member of the world's largest grassroots environmental network with over 2 million supporters in 75 countries. Oisín co-founded the Stop Climate Chaos coalition in 2007 and led the eight-year campaign for a climate law which culminated in the passing of the Climate Action Act in 2015. Oisín was one of the co-founders of the Environmental Pillar in 2009, the advocacy coalition of national environmental NGOs, and was recently re-elected to the Pillar's steering committee. Before joining Friends of the Earth, Oisín worked for 10 years in the areas of overseas aid and human rights.



**Evelyn Cusack** is Head of Forecasting at **Met Éireann**. She has been assigned responsibility at Senior Meteorologist level for managing the Forecast Division which incorporates both operational and strategic tasks. The primary responsibility is to ensure resilient 24/7/365 operations in the Central Analysis and Forecast Office and in the Central Aviation Office. These offices also support weather broadcasting on RTE radio and television and build and maintain an online presence for Met Éireann. Critical tasks include the provision of forecast and warnings services to the road maintenance community and the aviation community. Forecast Division provides a high degree of support to Emergency Management in Ireland in both planning and operational phases, and coordinates with the forecast and warning services of other European National Met Services as appropriate.



**Chris Elliot** is currently Professor of Food Safety and founder of the Institute for Global Food Security at **Queen's University Belfast**. He served as Pro Vice Chancellor responsible for the Medical and Life Sciences Faculty between 2015 and 2018. His main research interests are in the development of innovative techniques to provide early warning of toxin threats across complex food supply systems. Chris currently co-ordinates a flagship Horizon2020 project involving 16 European and 17 Chinese partners on food safety and also co-ordinates a European Institute of Innovation and Technology flagship research project. He is a visiting Professor at the China Agriculture University in Beijing and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a recipient of a Winston Churchill Fellowship and is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and Royal Society of Biology.



**John FitzGerald** is one of Ireland's leading economists and a Research Affiliate with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and an Adjunct Professor in TCD and UCD. He was a member of the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation from 2003 to 2006 and he is currently Chairman of the government's **Climate Change Advisory Council**.



**David Fitzsimons** is Director of the **European Remanufacturing Council** based in Brussels and a director of Oakdene Hollins, a circular economy consultancy. He is currently working with the World Economic Forum's Manufacturing and Production Council on the industrial scale remanufacture of used products, he is a member of a United Nations Environment Programme working group on Product Value Retention. In 2019, he led the Ellen MacArthur Foundation project 'BetterThanNew' and is a member of the Strategic Advisory Group for the UK Research Councils £25m investment programme for the circular economy. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the forthcoming PLATE conference chaired by Dr Colin Fitzpatrick at University of Limerick.



**Pádraic Fogarty** is an ecologist and environmental scientist. He was chair of the **Irish Wildlife** Trust from 2008-2012 and currently serves as their campaign officer and editor of their magazine 'Irish Wildlife'. He is author of the 2017 book 'Whittled Away — Ireland's vanishing nature'.



**Iain Gulland** is Chief Executive of **Zero Waste Scotland** and previously led its predecessor programme, WRAP Scotland. Zero Waste Scotland leads on the delivery of the Scottish Government's Circular Economy strategy and other low carbon policy priorities and is at the forefront of efforts to create a resource efficient, circular economy. Iain has more than 25 years' experience in sustainable resource management, including initiating recycling systems in the public and third sectors. He is the current President of the Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+) and he is a member of a number of Scottish Government strategic groups including the Economy and Environment Leaders Group, the Board of the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme and the Expert Panel on Environmental Charges.



**Bruce Harper** is a consultant at **Antaris Consulting**. He has more than a decade of experience in the field of environmental regulation. Bruce is a specialist in industrial emissions, and has deep sectoral knowledge gained over a varied career, from setting licence conditions as a licensing Inspector with the Environmental Protection Agency to writing Regulations and developing guidance for regulators and operators as an Environmental Policy Advisor in the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland. Bruce is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, with a BSc in Engineering with Management, and a master's in environmental engineering. He is a member of Engineers Ireland.



**Ciarán Hayes** was appointed as Chief Executive of Sligo County Council in January 2014. He has 42 years of service in Local Government having served in five Local Authorities, 20 years of which are at a senior management level. He has a BA in Public Management and a H. Dip in Computer Studies. As Chief Executive, he has been instrumental in the emergence of Sligo as capital of the North-West and is presently presiding over €250m capital infrastructural investment. In addition to his duties as Chief Executive, he has led the Local Government Sector's response in recent years to the challenges of Climate Change and was instrumental in the establishment of the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs). Separately, he is a Board Member of Ireland International Airport, Knock (IWAK) and the Governing Board of IT Sligo. Ciarán is currently Chair of the **National Local Authority Climate Action Steering Group**.



**Gilbert F. Hounbo** became the sixth President of the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** on 1 April 2017. Nominated among the UN Executive Heads, Hounbo is also the Chair of **UN-Water** – the United Nations coordination mechanism for water and sanitation – since September 2017. Born and raised in rural Togo, Hounbo has spent more than 30 years working to improve the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people, with extensive experience in political affairs, international development, diplomacy and financial management. Prior to his appointment as IFAD President, Hounbo was the Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) where he led field operations in more than 100 countries and managed its bilateral and multilateral partnerships. He served as Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo from 2008 to 2012, where he introduced economic reforms and enhanced the rule of law and civil liberties. From 1996 to 2008, he undertook a number of roles at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) including Chief of Staff and Assistant Secretary-General, Africa Regional Director, where he led poverty alleviation programmes in 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to this, he spent a decade in the private sector, including at Price Waterhouse, Canada, where he worked in Audit and Financial Advisory Services. Hounbo has a *Maîtrise en gestion des entreprises* from the University of Lomé, Togo, and a *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées* in Specialised Accounting from the University of Québec, Canada. He is a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants.



**Seán Keating** is a Director of Services with Tipperary County Council. He is currently responsible for the **Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)**, which is a national shared service across the thirty-one councils. Seán previously worked for many years delivering development assistance to third countries, initially in Africa with the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and then with the European Commission in various postings across South East Asia. He returned to Tipperary as Director in 2005 and has since held a variety of positions, including responsibility for the merger of North and South Tipperary County Councils.

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**Mary Kelly-Quinn** is an Associate Professor in the School of Biology and Environmental Science, at the **University College Dublin**. Her research focuses on assessment of land-use and other anthropogenic activities on the physical, hydrochemical and ecological quality of surface waters with particular reference to multiple stressors and climate change. Some of the key projects completed include HYDROFOR (forest-water interactions), RIVTYPE (characterising reference conditions for Irish rivers and typological classification) and ESManage (framework for identification and valuation of freshwater ecosystem services). She is currently coordinating three, large-scale, EPA-funded projects with national and international partners; RECONNECT (mapping and assessing barrier impacts on rivers), SSNet (managing the small stream network for improved water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem services protection), ESDecide (freshwater ecosystem services decision support). Further afield she is collaborating with the University of Addis Ababa and in Kenya with the University of Pwani on water quality issues.



**Conor Murphy** is a Professor in the Department of Geography at **Maynooth University**. His research interests are interdisciplinary and focus on Hydroclimatology, Historical Climatology and Adaptation to climate change. Conor has been awarded over €5 million in funding as PI or Co-I from National and European sources. His research engages closely with enterprise, public bodies and communities. He has consistently published in top ranking international journals including; Science, Nature, Nature Climate Change, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. He has also published numerous book chapters and government reports informing policy in the area. Conor sits on the National Climate Change Adaptation Committee and has acted as expert reviewer for reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He also sits on the Climate Change and Environmental Sciences Committee of the Royal Irish Academy.



**Trish Murphy** is a founding member and current project officer for the **Inishowen Rivers Trust (IRT)**, an eNGO that aims to engage communities in the protection and enhancement of the natural waterbodies of Inishowen, Co. Donegal. Trish has a PhD in Zoology from UCC and has recently completed a course on Nature Based Solutions for Water and Land Management at Cranfield University. She has delivered science education programmes throughout Donegal through schools and community centres and co-ordinates training for the IRT. Trish volunteers with a number of environmental groups and continues to push experiential learning and education as a key enabler for community based environmental engagement.



**Philip Nugent** is the Assistant Secretary leading the Circular Economy, Natural Resources and Waste Policy function in the **Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications**. He has responsibility for leading a cross-Government approach to the circular economy, as well as geoscience policy and regulation (minerals, mining and petroleum), the Geological Survey, inland fisheries, and waste and resource efficiency. Philip joined the Department in 2019 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government where he served in a range of roles across marine and terrestrial planning and housing.



**Dr. Micheal O'Briain** is Deputy Head of the Nature Unit and a Senior Expert in DG Environment at the **European Commission**. He has worked on a wide range of EU nature and biodiversity policy issues since joining the European Commission in 1992, especially on establishment of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. Prior to working in Brussels Micheal was national director of the IWC (now BirdWatch Ireland). He is a graduate and former research associate of University College Dublin where he completed a PhD in zoology.



**Abigail O'Callaghan-Platt** is a researcher for the environmental NGO **VOICE Ireland**. Through her career she has worked on various projects focusing on the socio-economic aspects of sustainable development. Currently for her work in VOICE she works on engaging and empowering communities to develop and implement sustainable local level initiatives.



**Michael Quinn** is the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Services for Planning and Economic Development in **Waterford City & County Council**. He was previously responsible for Corporate Services, Culture Housing and Community Services and was Head of Finance. Prior to joining the Council in 2005, Michael was a Senior Commercial Finance Manager in Eircom.



**Edwin Poots MLA** is **Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**, having been appointed on 11 January 2020 following the restoration of devolved government. He was first elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 25 June 1998 for the constituency of Lagan Valley. Mr Poots previously served on Lisburn City Council. He was a member of the Environment Committee and chaired the Committee of the Centre (Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister) in the 1998–2003 Assembly. On 8 May 2007, he was appointed Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure in the Northern Ireland Executive, a post he held until 9 June 2008. He was subsequently made Deputy Mayor of Lisburn on 23 June 2008. On 1 July 2009 Mr Poots was returned to the Executive as Minister of the Environment. In May 2011, he was appointed as Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety until 23 September 2014. From 2014 to 2016 he was a member of the Public Accounts Committee, Committee for Justice and the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development. During the previous mandate Mr Poots was a member of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Committee on Procedures.



**Dr Oriana Romano** is the Head of Unit, Water Governance and Circular Economy in Cities in the **OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities and Regions**. She set up the OECD Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions, supporting governments towards the transition to the circular economy. She has led multiple circular economy policy dialogues and created the OECD Roundtable on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions.



**Eamon Ryan TD** is the **Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications**. He was appointed to this role in June 2020. Eamon Ryan was elected to represent Dublin Bay South in the 2020 general election. He was born in Dublin and raised in Dundrum and Dartry. He studied commerce in UCD before taking a job managing a marketing course in the university's School of Business. He went on to found a cycling tourism company, Irish Cycling Safaris, in the late 1980s and in 1996 won the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. He was the founding chairperson of the Dublin Cycling Campaign and began his political career as a Dublin City Councillor for the Rathgar-Rathmines ward. He then went on to serve both as a TD for Dublin South and as a Government Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. In recent years he has worked for a European climate organisation and chaired the digital policy group in the Institute of International and European Affairs. He is currently leader of the Green Party/Comhaontas Glas.



**Mark Scott** is Professor of Planning and Dean of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy in **University College Dublin**. His research focuses on the environmental and sustainability dimensions of spatial planning, including greenspace and health, green infrastructure, climate change adaptation and resilience, and planning for rural places. He has published extensively in these areas with over 100 journal articles and book chapters, along with co-authoring recent books in the fields of urban renewal and rural environmental planning. He has received research funding of approximately €6 million from national and EU awards. Mark is a Corporate Member of the Irish Planning Institute and is a member of the Institute's Policy and Research Committee and Climate Action Committee.



**Paul Scott** (CEcol., CEnv., MCIEEM) is an Environmental Planning Manager in the EU and International Planning Regulation Unit in the **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**. He has over 20 years' experience in ecological and environmental assessment including SEA, EIA and Appropriate Assessment (Habitats Directive) research, capacity-building and practical application in the UK and Ireland. A graduate of University of Liverpool and the University of Manchester, Paul was a research associate in the EIA Centre, University of Manchester before practicing as a consultant ecologist in Ireland where he developed SEA and AA methodologies and guidance and co-managed Scott Cawley, an ecological consultancy for 15 years. He is on the network of European Union Member States EIA/SEA Experts, the Advisory Forum of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management and has also presented at international workshops on AA and SEA.



**Jim Skea CBE** is Professor of Sustainable Energy at **Imperial College London** with research interests in energy, climate change and technological innovation. He is Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group III for the 6th assessment cycle. He was Research Director of the UK Energy Research Centre 2004-12 and Director of the Policy Studies Institute 1998-2004. He was a member of the UK Committee on Climate Change from its inception in 2008 until 2018. He is currently chairing Scotland's Just Transition Commission. Until June 2017, he was President of the UK Energy Institute.



**Deborah Spence** is Head of the **Arthur Cox Environment & Planning Group**. With over 20 years' experience in both advisory and contentious work, she regularly works on complex issues arising from the interplay of EU Legislation and caselaw with national legislation and caselaw, and how that impacts on infrastructure projects and industry operations in Ireland across a very broad range of public and private sectors. Solutions driven, her most recent focus has been on natural resources including harvesting, swapping waste derived fuel for fossil fuel, as well as solar, wind and biomass energy projects.



**Jane Stout** is a Professor in Botany at **Trinity College Dublin**. She is an internationally renowned expert on pollinator and pollination ecology, and a prominent voice for biodiversity and its value. Her research seeks to understand how land management practices, including agriculture and urbanisation, affect ecological processes and the benefits of nature for humans. Jane works across disciplines, and with a broad range of stakeholders in public and private organisations, to improve environmental policy and practice. She is co-founder and Chair of the Board for the Irish Forum on Natural Capital, and co-founder and deputy Chair of Steering Group for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.



**Greg Straton** is an Assistant Principal Officer in the Health and Wellbeing Unit of the **Department of Health**, the unit have responsibility for the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025. His work in the unit includes the Healthy Ireland Fund, the Healthy Cities and Counties Network Ireland, Healthy Ireland Outcomes Framework and the Warmth and Wellbeing Pilot in partnership with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Greg is currently the representative of the Department of Health on the CYPSC national steering committee. Before joining the Civil Service in 2017 he was the CEO of Treoir and previously the CEO of the Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative (SPIRASI).