The European Policies of the EU member-states: *Ireland*

Maria Trakaki, UoA

2024-2025
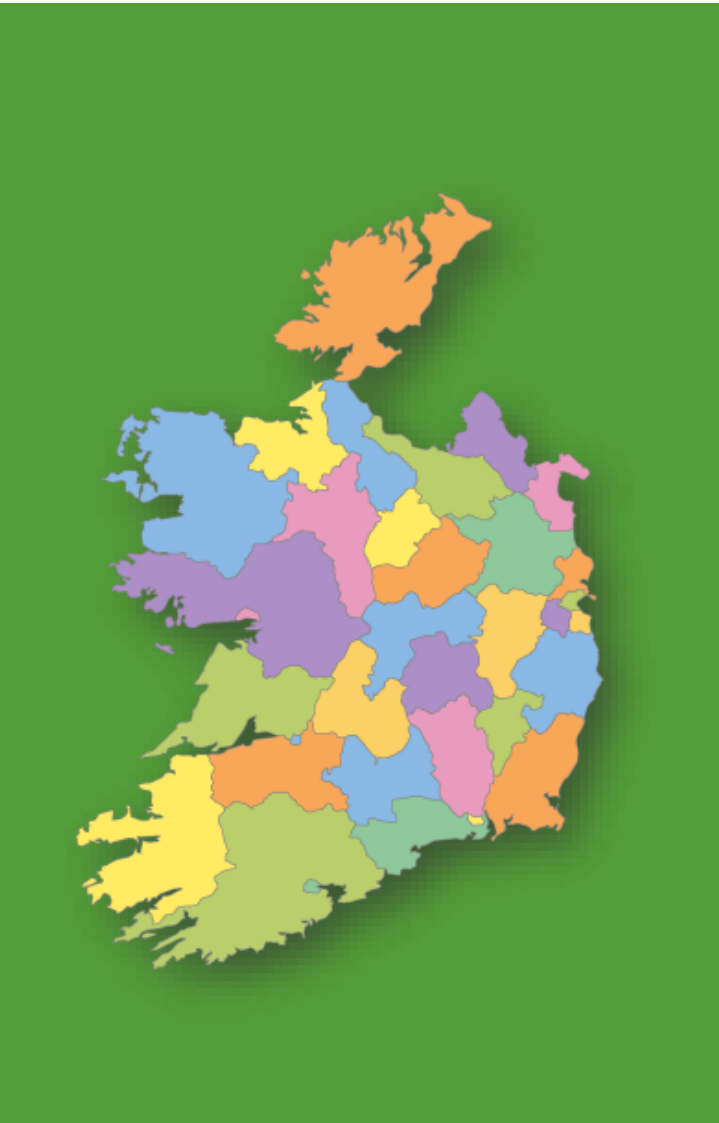
Factors that influence Ireland's european policies

- **Size**: One of the smallest EU member-states
    - approx. 70.000 km^2
    - approx. 5.345.000 population

- **Place on the map**:
    - Geographically isolated from the European continent
    - Only land border with the UK (Northern Ireland)
    - North Atlantic Ocean – Irish Sea

Factors that influence Ireland's european policies

- **Year of accession**:
  Ireland joined the EEC in 1973

- **History**:
  - Ireland was a part of the British Commonwealth
  - Irish Free State 1922
  - Irish Civil War (1922-23)
  - The Troubles (1968-98) — Northern Ireland
  - Ireland's non participation in WWII and the Cold War

- **Economy**:
  - Close economic ties with the UK (reason for joining EEC)

  - Twice the average GDP per capita of the EU (211%)
  - Net beneficiary (1973-2018) → Net contributor (2019-)

  - Budget surplus 1.3% (2023)
  - Bailout package in 2010

Exports (%)
- UK: 10,6%
- US: 30,2%
- EU: 38,5%*
- Rest of world (China etc.): 20,4%

Imports (%)
- UK: 20,8%
- US: 15,8%
- EU: 30,2%*
- Rest: 33%

* Figures differ from Eurostat 2022

An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh — Central Statistics Office

Ireland's Trade in Goods 2022

Exports

UK
€22.2 billion

US
€63.1 billion

EU
€80.5 billion

Rest of World
€42.7 billion

Total
€208.6 billion

Imports

UK
€29.4 billion

US
€22.3 billion

EU
€42.6 billion

Rest of World
€46.6 billion

Total
€141.0 billion

Mineral fuels
Exports
€1.8 billion
Imports
€13.1 billion

Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals
Exports
€134.1 billion
Imports
€38.1 billion

Machinery and transport equipment
Exports
€28.3 billion
Imports
€52.4 billion

Exports to UK
Great Britain
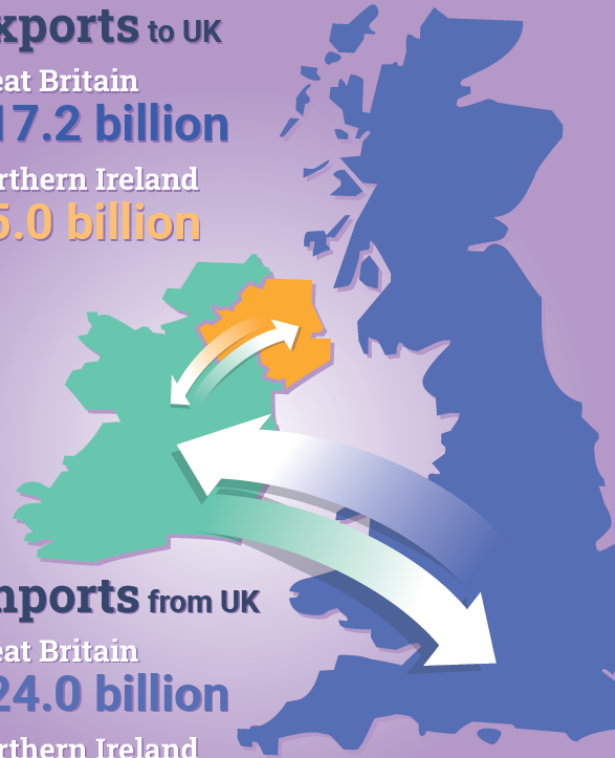**€17.2 billion**
Northern Ireland
€5.0 billion

Imports from UK
Great Britain
€24.0 billion
Northern Ireland
€5.4 billion

Factors that influence Ireland's european policies

- Ireland is a **neutral** state
  - Not a part of NATO
- Participation in **peace-keeping** operations

- **Domestic political situation**:
  - Multi-party political system
  - Coalition Governments
  - 2 Parliamentary Chambers
    Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann

Factors that influence Ireland's european policies

Majority: 81 seats

- **Head of State / President:** Michael Higgins
- **Prime Minister:** Simon Harris (Fine Gael)

- **Political parties in Ireland:**
    1. <u>Fine Gael</u> (50)
    2. <u>Fianna Fáil</u> (38)
    3. Sinn Féin (37 seats out of 160)
    4. Labour Party (7)
    5. People before Profit (6)
    6. <u>Green Party</u> (2)

- **Representation in the EP:**
    o Renew Europe: Fianna Fáil
    o GUE-NGL: Sinn Féin
    o EPP: Fine Gael
    o Greens/EFA: Green Party

"Why and What Europe?"

- **Why did Ireland join the EEC?**
  - British application
  - Common Market
  - Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

- **What Europe does Ireland want?**
  - Ireland in Eurozone, not Schengen
  - EU budget contributor
    Approx. €3.5 billion (2021-22)
    (Source: European Commission)
  - Ireland is a tax haven

- Ireland's main European Policies:

- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Research and Innovation
- Economic Policy

"Why and What Europe?"

Irish Neutrality

- Ireland has been militarily neutral since 1922
  ↳ participation in peace-keeping operations

- Participation in the CSDP
  Common Security and Defence Policy

- Participation in NATO Partnership for Peace

Ireland & Brexit

- Brexit 2017-2020
  - Withdrawal Agreement

- Good Friday Agreement 1998
  - No hard border on the island

- Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland
  - Single Market
  - Common Travel Area

Ireland & Brexit

- Windsor Framework 2023
  - "Green" and "Red" lanes

- Brexit Adjustment Reserve
  - €5.37 billion
  - €1 billion to Ireland (2021-2023)

Ireland & the Ukraine War

- **Ireland in support of Ukraine**

- €380 million of aid to Ukraine
  [Source: www.president.gov.ua]

- 105,000 Ukrainians have fled to Ireland (2024)

- Public opinion polls in favor of maintaining Ireland's military neutrality policy

Euroscepticism in Ireland

- 83% in favor of joining the EEC in 1973

- 73% against leaving the EU
    Eurobarometer 101, Spring 2024

- 88% in favor of the Euro
    Eurobarometer 101, Spring 2024

- 46% in favor of the direction the EU is taking
    Eurobarometer 101, Spring 2024

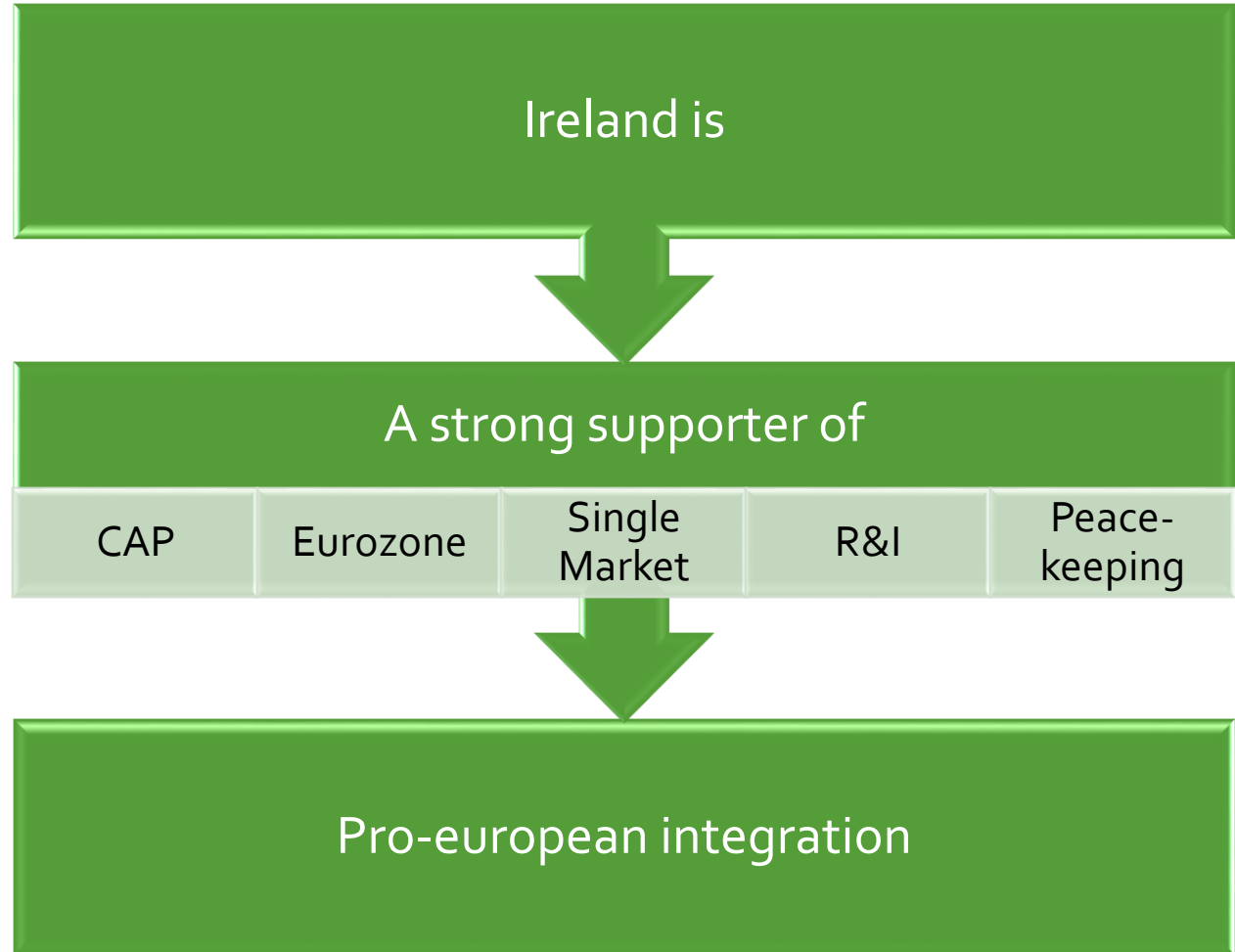- 2 eurosceptic parties expressing soft policy scepticism (Sinn Féin, PbP)

Euroscepticism in Ireland

9 EU-related Referendums 1973-2012

- **Accession to the EEC (1973)**
  - 83% Yes,
- **Treaty on SEA (1987)**
  - 70% Yes, 30% No
- **Treaty of Maastricht (1992)**
  - 70% Yes, 30% No
- **Treaty of Amsterdam (1998)**
  - 62% Yes, 38% No
- **Nice Treaty 1 (2001)**
  - 46% Yes, 54% No
- **Nice Treaty 2 (2002)**
  - 63% Yes, 37% No
- **Lisbon Treaty 1 (2008)**
  - 47% Yes, 53% No
- **Lisbon Treaty 2 (2009)**
  - 67% Yes, 33% No
- **Fiscal Treaty (2012)**
  - 60% Yes, 40% No

Source: cso.ie

Conclusions

Ireland is

↓

A strong supporter of

| CAP | Eurozone | Single Market | R&I | Peace-keeping |

↓

Pro-european integration

Thank you for your attention!

Sources:
- dfa.ie
- Eurobarometer
- ireland.ie
- Wikipedia (political parties in Ireland, EP)
- ireland.reprentation.ec.europa.eu
- assets.gov.ie
- cso.ie