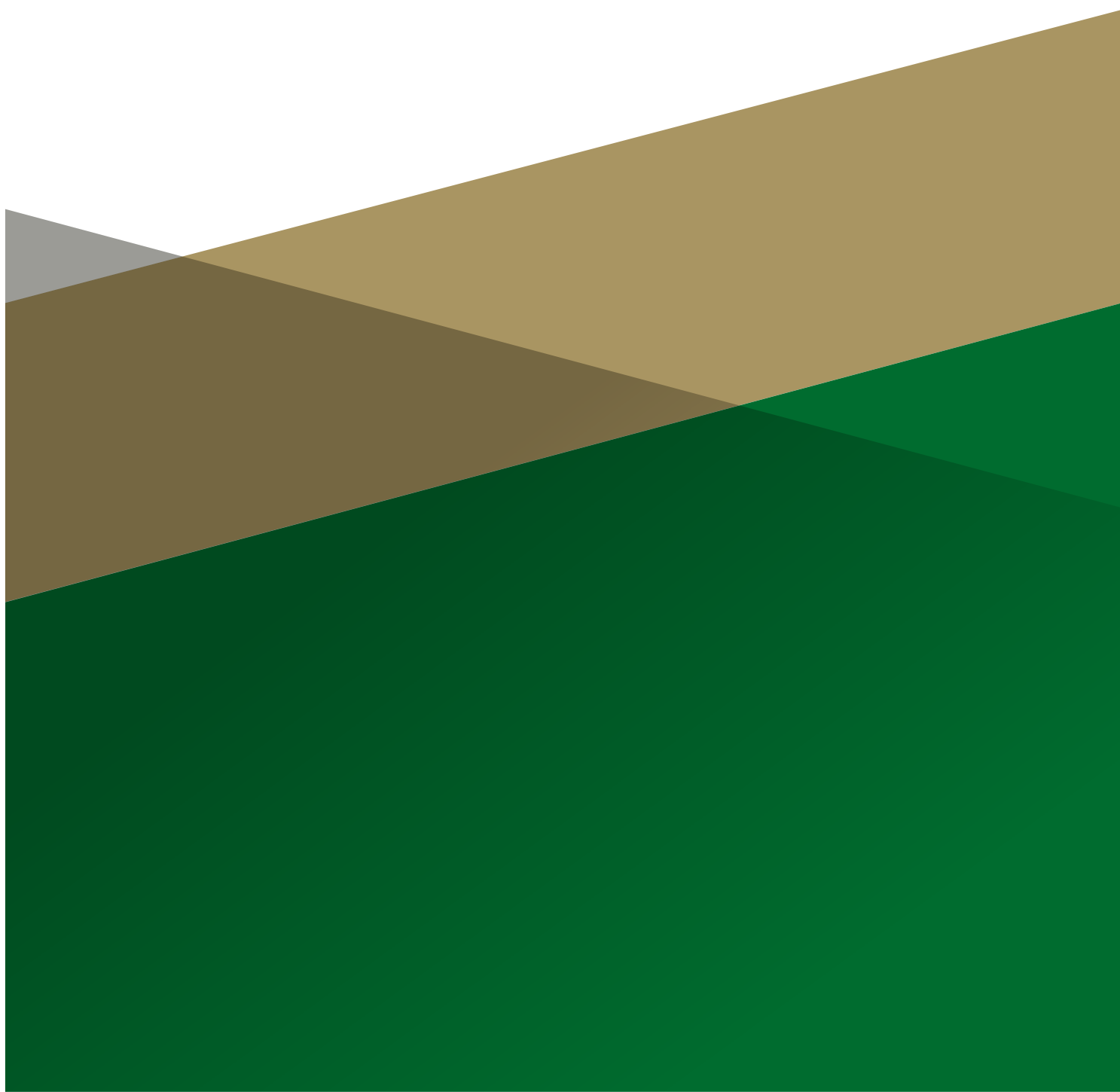




An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

2021 Annual Report



Department of Foreign Affairs

Mission:

The mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to serve the Irish people, promote their values and advance their prosperity and interests abroad, and to provide the Government with the capabilities, analysis and influence to ensure that Ireland derives the maximum benefit from all areas of its external engagement.

Values:

The organisational values of the Department of Foreign Affairs are:

- » Diversity;
- » Integrity;
- » Leadership;
- » Service;
- » Excellence.

Foreword

Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Simon Coveney T.D.

2021 was another challenging year for Ireland and the world. Once again, our lives were largely dominated by the response to COVID-19, and this Department's work remained central to the Government's pandemic response in servicing our citizens at home and abroad.

As the pandemic ebbed and flowed around the globe, DFA continued to provide detailed travel advice and other consular support to Irish citizens in need. Often in extremely difficult and complex circumstances, consular assistance was provided to over 1,200 Irish citizens last year, including those affected by crises in Afghanistan, Morocco and Ethiopia. In parallel, our work with and for our diaspora communities continued throughout 2021.

As in 2020, in addition to pandemic response, there was a strong focus on strategic priorities in 2021. On Brexit, in London, Brussels and across the EU, this Department was to the forefront in defending Ireland's vital interests, including the hard-won peace and stability on our island, against the backdrop of significant political challenges. In New York, we used the first year of our term on the UN Security Council to highlight priority issues including on Women, Peace and Security, climate, peacekeeping, and in relation to specific conflicts of concern such as Syria, Somalia, Ethiopia, and in the Middle East.

Under the Global Ireland initiative, key strategies were launched, framing our aspirations for engagement with the Nordic-Baltic region and the Latin American Caribbean region. Our network expanded to 94, with four new offices opening in Kyiv, Manchester, Manila, and Rabat.



Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney © Julien Behal / DFA

Looking back, 2021 can be characterised as a year of renewed activity after the hiatus imposed in some areas during the worst of the pandemic. It was also a year when invaluable foundations were laid, equipping us to respond to emerging crises. When I travelled in Kyiv in August 2021 to officially open our Embassy, it was with cautious optimism about the opportunities presented by the expansion of Ireland's diplomatic presence in our European neighbourhood. Although regional security issues were deteriorating, none of us imagined that some 6 months later the team would be supporting the evacuation of Irish citizens as the Ukrainian people experienced the devastating impacts of war.

Regrettably, the outworkings of the Russian invasion of Ukraine will be far-reaching and with us for some time. As we face these and other challenges together, I am proud to say that this Department and its staff continue to be at the heart of the Government's response, working on behalf of Irish citizens to promote and protect our shared values and interests.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Simon Coveney". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Simon Coveney T.D.

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Foreword

Secretary General,
Joe Hackett

Throughout the year there was a strong organisational focus on deepening the capacity of all staff to deliver on our core mandate of serving our fellow citizens, promoting Ireland's values and interests and, advancing the prosperity agenda.

The Department's footprint continued to grow as the total number of staff in the Department increased to 2,717 with 254 new recruits across our network both at HQ and at our offices around the world. I want to acknowledge the enormous contribution that all of the teams, at home and abroad, have made to ensuring that we continue to deliver for citizens of Ireland, despite the challenges faced. I also want to thank the many family members that have provided invaluable support to the work of the Department. As the Covid-19 pandemic evolved throughout 2021, many in the Department continued to operate from home where possible. Some essential public services meant that many of our staff were fulltime in the office and I want to commend all of the Department's workforce for their flexibility and their commitment to serving our citizens.

The necessity of crisis response triggered by the pandemic has created a renewed impetus around learning, and use of technology to support the Department's business needs. In 2021 the continued move away from paper applications to the Passport Online Service, marked a significant step forward in providing a secure and efficient passport service for our citizens. Over 94% of passports issued in 2021 were online applications, and while we are committed to providing further improvements in service delivery, it is important to emphasise that demand for passports is higher than ever, with 634,000 passports in 2021, and over 1 million issued by early November 2022.



Secretary General, Joe Hackett © DFA

As online engagement becomes an increased feature of our working lives, this Department focussed keenly in 2021 on a number of initiatives in the area of cybersecurity, including mandatory training for all staff, and in August, the appointment of the Department's first Director of Cyber Security.

The training and development agenda is also central to our culture of continuous learning. To this end, the Global Island Policy Series of seminars consolidated its transition online, with 16 seminars hosted over the course of the year. These online events provided valuable insights on topical regional and thematic priorities including food security, disinformation, and Ireland's climate commitments.

Throughout 2021, as the Department continued to grow in size, important steps were taken to on-board new staff, provide training and development opportunities, and to promote Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) in the Department. During 2021, 14 of the 26 Heads of Mission that were appointed were female, bringing the total number of female Heads of Mission to 37 out of a total of 96 i.e. 38%.

As at time of great change and challenge, I am pleased with the progress made in 2021 to strengthen further capacity in this Department, leaving us ready and equipped to work effectively on behalf of Government and our fellow citizens in the period ahead.

Joe Hackett
Secretary General



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Delivering for Ireland - implementing our Statement of Strategy



The Department's Strategy Statement 2021-23 focuses on how we implement the commitments assigned to us in the Programme for Government: Our Shared Future and meet international challenges. This work is divided across 5 High Level Goals:



OUR PEOPLE:

To serve our people at home and abroad and to promote reconciliation and cooperation



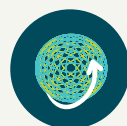
OUR EUROPE:

To advance Ireland's interests, influence and values in our shared Europe



OUR VALUES:

To work for a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world



OUR PROSPERITY:

To advance Ireland's prosperity by extending our influence and promoting our interests internationally



OUR EFFECTIVENESS:

To strengthen our effectiveness and capacity to deliver on our goals

2021 At a Glance

634,000
passports issued



Consular assistance provided to
1,243
people



254 new recruits



4
new missions
opened
in 2021

€570 million
managed by Irish Aid

 **Irish Aid**
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025



Expanding Ireland's footprint overseas

A key commitment under Global Ireland is to open at least 26 new missions by 2025. This aim made further progress in 2021 when four new missions opened: in Kyiv, Manchester, Manila and Rabat.

A core focus for DFA under the Global Ireland programme has been for missions to adopt an integrated 'Team Ireland' model. That is, working in close cooperation with State Agencies and other Government Departments to strengthen Ireland's international reputation.

Ireland's expanded mission network has also delivered increased Government capacity to serve our citizens, including by providing practical consular assistance to Irish citizens in difficulty abroad. The embassy in Rabat played a lead role in repatriating Irish citizens from Morocco in December 2021 (when flights were cancelled in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19).

Focus On United States and Canada

In line with the Government's *Strategy for the US and Canada 2019-2025*, we continued to focus on strengthening and deepening Ireland's unique relationships with the United States and with Canada. Under the Global Ireland initiative, Minister Coveney announced in July that the government would open Consulates General in Miami and Toronto in 2022, bringing Ireland's footprint to 12 diplomatic missions across the US & Canada.



An Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D. chairs the Security Council in September 2021
© Manuel Elías, UN

High-level visits

With continued restrictions on international travel, high-level political engagement with the new US administration largely took place virtually in early 2021, including the Taoiseach's St. Patrick's Day programme in the United States.

With the easing of some travel restrictions later in the year, a number of high-level visits and meetings took place, including Minister Coveney's meetings with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken; Minister Brophy's visit to New York, which included engagements with Irish diaspora organisations. There were also some significant visits by US political leaders to Ireland in 2021, including a visit by US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen for a series of engagements with political and business leaders.

The Taoiseach and Minister Coveney were in New York in September 2021 for engagements with the United Nations and they took the opportunity of their visits to have a number of significant engagements with US political contacts. Minister Coveney also travelled to Washington D.C., where he met with Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, Congressmen Richard Neal and Brendan Boyle, Senators Chris Murphy, Patrick Leahy and Dick Durbin, and Administrator of the US Agency for International Development, Samantha Power.

In addition to these important bilateral engagements, significant progress was made in the European Union's relations with the United States; the EU-US Summit in Brussels in June, the first in seven years, along with the return of in-person visits, saw a major boost to transatlantic engagement in the latter half of the year.

Culture and People-to-People Links

In November, Ireland resumed the processing of American and Canadian Working Holiday programme applications. The programme had been effectively paused due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, and the resumption of this programme is a very welcome development.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the first visit of the Council on International Educational Exchange Frederick Douglass Scholars took place in the summer of 2021 to mark the 175th anniversary of Frederick Douglass' historic visit to Ireland and his meeting with Daniel O'Connell. The scholars took part in a four-week study abroad experience, during which they had the opportunity to meet the Taoiseach and undertake a series of cultural and educational visits throughout Ireland.

Latin America and the Caribbean Strategy

Ireland's 'Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to 2025' was approved by Cabinet in December 2021, marking the culmination of extensive work across Government as part of the Global Ireland 2025 programme. Ireland's first-ever Strategy for the region aims to deliver a step-change in Ireland's bilateral and multilateral relationships across five strategic objectives: political cooperation; economic relations; the work of Team Ireland; culture, diaspora and public outreach; and work on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Department of Foreign Affairs is working with Government Departments and State Agencies to implement the action points outlined in the Strategy, and will report annually to Government on progress.

In line with Ireland's objective to enhance its engagement with the Caribbean, Ireland's current Ambassador to Brazil presented credentials to the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in April 2021, becoming Ireland's first-ever accredited Ambassador to the organisation. Engagement with the CARICOM states continued throughout 2021 through a range of different fora, including in Brussels and New York, and through the accredited Embassies.

The LAC region continued to be impacted by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. As Brazil experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases, Ireland made a donation of 47,520 vials of the drug Atracurium in June. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage coordinated this dispatch in collaboration with this Department, the HSE and others. Embassy Brasilia and the Consulate General in São Paulo received the medication upon its arrival in São Paulo and facilitated its transfer to the Brazilian authorities.



Cover image: Flags of The Americas © EduLeite/Getty images



The Greening of the Torre Costanera in Santiago, Chile as part of Saint Patrick's Day celebrations, March 2021 © Sky Costanera



Ambassador O'Halloran Bernstein meets with Governor Raúl Jalil during a visit to the region of Catamarca, Argentina. October 2021 © Office of the Governor of the Province of Catamarca



Minister Colm Brophy and Brazilian Ambassador to Ireland H.E. Marcel Biato announce the donation of COVID-19 medications from Ireland to Brazil © Julien Behal/ DFA



Ireland in Frame exhibition in Mexico City, September 2021 © Verónica Garduño Soto

Official Opening of Embassy Amman

November 2021 saw the official opening of the Embassy of Ireland buildings in Amman. Minister Coveney attended the opening ceremony, along with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Ayman Safadi. During his speech, Minister Coveney referred to the importance of the expansion of

Ireland's Embassy network through the Global Ireland initiative. In addition to supporting Ireland's activities in Jordan, the new Embassy is also accredited to Iraq, and will play a key role in deepening Irish-Iraqi political and economic engagement.



Minister Simon Coveney T.D. and HE Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Ayman Safadi with DFA staff at the opening of the new Embassy of Ireland Chancery building in Amman © Rajiv Ramen

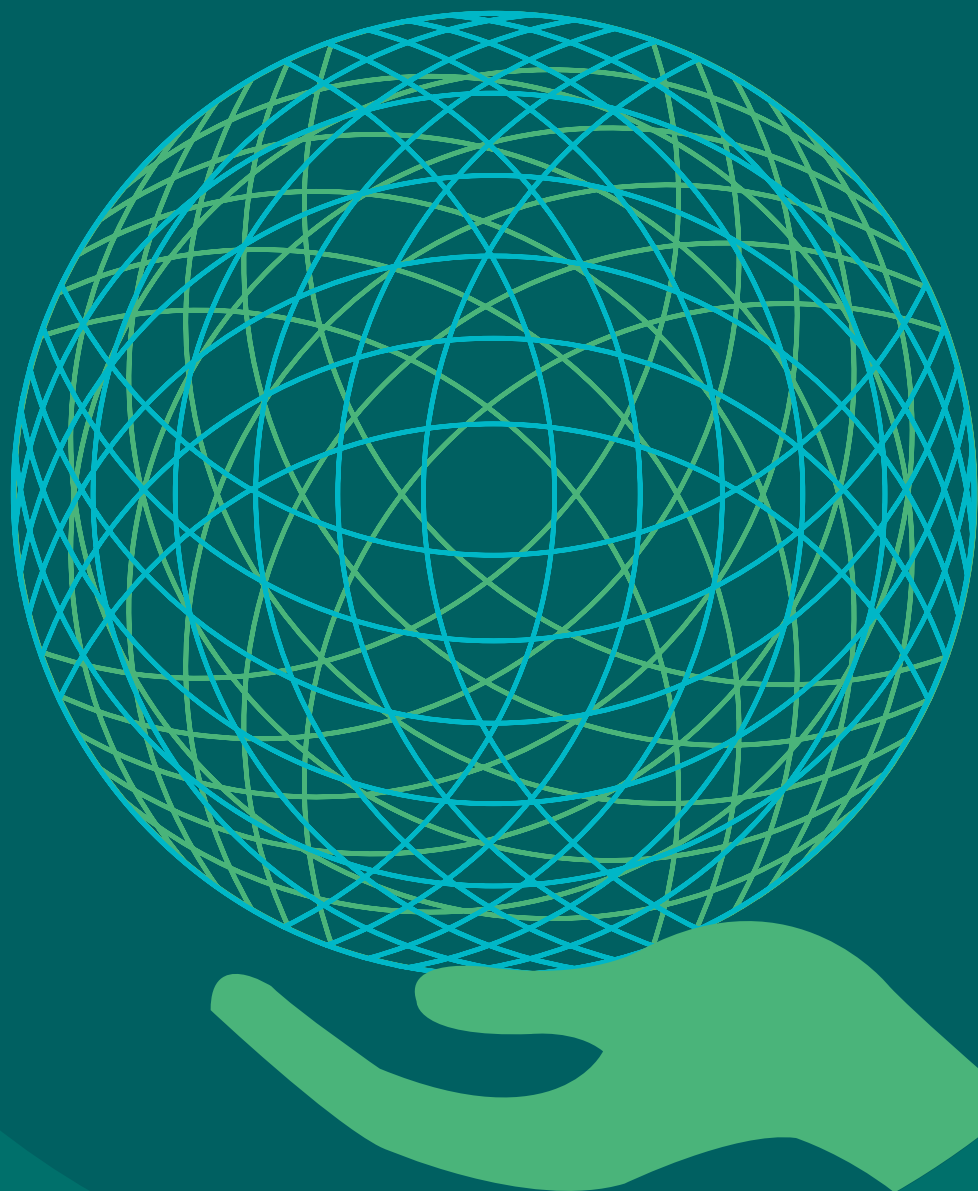
Cover Image: The Northern Lights / Aurora Borealis from Malin Head in Inishowen, County Donegal.
© Adam Rory Porter Photography
@ The Northern Light Gallery
www.inishowenart.ie



Nordic Strategy

Minister Coveney launched the Nordic Strategy at a virtual event in the company of Nordic Ministerial colleagues on 2 June 2021. The preparation of the Strategy as part of the Global Ireland initiative was informed by extensive contacts with other Departments and State Agencies. The Strategy provides a framework for deepening our bilateral and multilateral engagement with Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden and to promote greater exchanges with the Nordic region over the next five years. The Strategy also envisages a deeper trading and research relationship with the region.

**Our People:
To serve our people at
home and abroad and to
promote reconciliation
and cooperation**



To serve our people at home and abroad and to promote reconciliation and cooperation

We are committed to working with all communities and traditions on the island of Ireland to build consensus around a shared future. This consensus will be under-pinned by the Good Friday Agreement and by absolute respect for the principle of consent. We will work to protect the island of Ireland from the worst effects of Brexit, and as our inextricably linked histories of Ireland and Britain enter a new phase, we will endeavour to foster enhanced links between our states to protect and strengthen our bilateral relations. Delivering first class consular and passport services to our citizens is a central component of the Department's work. Our global diaspora remain an integral part of the wider Irish family and the Department will continue to work with them in maintaining and deepening this vital relationship.

Developments in 2021:

Advancing North-South and East-West Relations

Throughout 2021, the Irish Government continued to work towards the goal set out in the Programme for Government, to build on the foundations laid in the Good Friday Agreement to deepen peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland, and to strengthen our bilateral relations with our closest neighbour in the post-Brexit context.

NORTH-SOUTH

As pandemic-related restrictions on travel eased, a number of successful visits were made by the Taoiseach, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other members of the Cabinet, involving counterparts in Northern Ireland and the British Government. These included meetings and events with the Northern Ireland political parties, a range of civil society partners, and business leaders.

The Minister, and senior officials, met extensively with victims groups in response to British Government proposals to move unilaterally away from the processes agreed in Stormont House. The Department engaged extensively with victims and survivors of the Troubles and worked to ensure that their voices were at the heart of our response to the British Government proposals.

A plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) took place on 30 July 2021. Unfortunately, disruption to the NSMC meant that only nine of the 27 Council meetings initially planned for 2021 took place. Despite the absence of formal meetings of the NSMC, practical initiatives previously agreed in the framework of the Council continued to operate and deliver significant benefits for citizens, North and South. The important work of the North South Implementation Bodies, which operate under the auspices of the NSMC, also continued throughout 2021.

The Irish Government also continued to make progress under the commitments that it made under the New Decade, New Approach agreement. Included amongst these were increased funding for reconciliation, through the Department's Reconciliation Fund and through the International Fund for Ireland.

Commemorations

In 2021, the centenary of partition and of the establishment of Northern Ireland was marked in an inclusive and sensitive manner as part of the Government's Decade of Centenaries Programme. The centenaries marked in 2021 provided an opportunity for reflection on these hugely significant events in our shared history and their impact on the island as a whole and on the communities directly affected.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs participated in an event in Belfast to mark the centenaries hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Minister also attended an ecumenical service held by the main Christian Churches on the island of Ireland to mark the centenary of the partition of Ireland and the formation of Northern Ireland. In November, Minister of State Byrne attended the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Ulster Memorial Tower in Thiepval, France.

The Taoiseach spoke at a conference organised by Monaghan County Council on border minority groups' experiences of partition. Furthermore, as has been the practice in recent years, the Taoiseach also laid a wreath at the cenotaph in Enniskillen on Remembrance Sunday.

EAST-WEST

Even with the COVID-19 restrictions, there was extensive Ministerial, Parliamentary, and official engagement in 2021; overall, there were at least 54 East-West meetings held at Ministerial or senior official level. The Taoiseach addressed the 60th plenary meeting of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly in February, the Tánaiste led our first trade mission since the beginning of the pandemic to London in September, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs travelled to Britain on seven separate occasions.

Best use was made of the East-West institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement. Both the Taoiseach and Tánaiste attended the British Irish Council Summit in Cardiff in December, as well as the Summit in Northern Ireland in June which was also attended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The BIC Summits, and the extensive work carried out under its twelve work sectors, continue to highlight the value of consultation and co-operation across all seven BIC members.

In 2021, there were two meetings of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, one in London and another in Dublin. At the December meeting in Dublin, the two Governments discussed areas for future

cooperation and development, including Cyber-Security and Green Energy. These meetings serve as a clear demonstration of the two governments working together within the framework of an institution established by the Good Friday Agreement, in spite of a number of setbacks in the bilateral relationship over the course of the year.

To progress the Programme for Government ambitions to deepen our relationship with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, the Ireland-Scotland Joint Bilateral Review 2021-2025 was published in January, followed by the publication of the Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-2025 in March. One of the key commitments in the Ireland-Wales Shared Statement was to inaugurate an annual Ireland-Wales Forum. The first meeting was held in Cardiff in October 2021 and was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Welsh First Minister. The Forum brought together a number of Irish and Welsh ministers for a series of discussions focused on bilateral relations, trade cooperation and economic development, as well as renewable energy. The next Ireland-Wales Forum will be hosted in Ireland in October 2022.



Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney T.D. and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis MP, at a meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, June 2021 © Julien Behal/ DFA

Mission Network Expansion

Extensive work was undertaken in 2021 to expand our footprint and relationships across Great Britain. In October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs opened a new Consulate General for the North of England in Manchester, and formally re-opened our Consulate General in Cardiff. Throughout 2021, we have also invested in our Embassy in London (our largest bilateral mission) continuing to develop the strongest possible physical statement of our commitment to the British-Irish relationship.



Consul General, Sarah Mangan, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, and Minister Simon Coveney, with DFA staff at the official opening of the Consulate General in Manchester © Jill Jennings

Consular Services

Responsive Travel Advice To COVID-19

With COVID-19 public health measures and entry restrictions evolving around the world throughout 2021, the provision of accurate and high-quality travel advice continued to be a key citizen service. International Travel Unit worked in collaboration with the Department's mission network to update and maintain 199 country-specific travel advisories. The Department operated a citizen correspondence service with a dedicated phone line and email to answer travel related queries from the public in a timely manner.

In addition, the Department also worked closely with the Department of Health regarding information on inbound travel into Ireland as well as assisting in the rollout of EU Digital COVID Certificates (EU-DCCs) to Irish citizens vaccinated in third countries. In consultation with the mission network, the Department sourced and provided over 300 sample vaccination certificates across 120 countries to the Department of Health.



6.2 million
visits to the Department's
Travel Advice



8,222
updates to the
Travel Advice

43,957

calls dealt with on
Travel Advice phone line



17,629
emails sent to citizens
from dedicated
Travel Advice mailbox

CITIZEN REPATRIATIONS

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to lead to a large number of requests for information on international travel and for consular assistance. In addition to providing ongoing travel advice updates, the Department continued to provide consular assistance to citizens affected by changes to the requirements for international travel, and assisted with the repatriation of a number of citizens to Ireland. This included crisis support provided to over 150 people in Morocco at the end of 2021, through the recently established Embassy in Rabat.

CONSULAR PROTECTION

Despite the pandemic, demand for consular assistance from Irish citizens abroad in 2021 remained high. Over 1,200 citizens were provided with consular assistance in cases of arrest, imprisonment, missing persons, serious injury, mental health difficulty and death. Many of these cases were complex and Ireland’s Embassy and Consulate network, along with the Department’s Consular Directorate, provided support and advice to Irish citizens and their families in the most difficult of circumstances.



Travel and consular advice was promoted on DFA social channels throughout 2021 © DFA

CONSULAR SERVICES

Consular Services, which incorporates the Authentication and Apostille Unit and the Marriages Abroad Unit, provides essential services to citizens, businesses and the legal profession. Staff in both units continued to work in the office throughout COVID-19, dealing with consistently high volumes of applications.



1,495

Civil letters of freedom issued
to citizens marrying abroad

54,789

Apostille and authentication
stamps issued



PASSPORT SERVICE

Passport Service operations continued to be significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. In order to protect the integrity of the Irish passport, the processing of passports requires physical attendance on-site.

Passport Service staff who were processing applications or in customer service roles could not work from home. As a result, routine operations were paused for the first four months of the year. The Foreign Birth Registration (FBR) service was paused for most of the year, resuming in November 2021. The Passport Service continued to provide passports and FBRs for emergency and urgent situations.

At the end of April 2021, the Minister re-categorised the Passport Service as an essential service within the Covid-19 Recovery Framework. In May 2021, the Passport Service began scaling up resources in anticipation of the demand to come for the rest of the year and into 2022.

Notwithstanding necessary restrictions in the early part of the year, the Passport Service issued a total of 634,000 passports and 5,000 FBR certificates in 2021.

In 2021, the Passport Online service allowed passport processing to continue during periods of restrictions when paper applications could not be submitted. 94% of all applications received in 2021 were submitted through Passport Online. In 2021, Passport Online expanded to first time applicants in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US, greatly increasing the number of citizens who now have access to this online service (currently 97%).

The expansion of Passport Online to first time applicants saw our Consulate General in New York (CGNY) lead the rollout in the United States. CGNY liaised between HQ and other US missions to ensure a smooth transition for both citizens and staff to a wholly online passport service. CGNY also led on the establishment of a US-based Webchat system, manned by staff in Consulate General San Francisco and CGNY.

The first iteration of the Passport Reform Programme concluded in 2021, following the successful procurement of a company to design and implement a new passport processing system. This complex and large scale project will transform the infrastructure of the passport issuance system in the coming years.

The integration of the Passport Online System into MyGovID also took place in 2021. MyGovID offers users safe, online access to government services. The link between the two systems enables citizens to apply for their passport using their verified MyGovID account.

Diaspora Services

EMIGRANT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) is a tangible expression of the Government's support of and commitment to the global Irish community. Since its inception in 2004, the programme has supported the work of Irish organisations and communities around the world. Grants have ranged from small amounts for small voluntary groups, to major allocations awarded to community organisations operating on a large scale.

In 2021, over €13 million of funding was granted to organisations which support the welfare of Irish emigrants and Irish communities abroad, to bodies promoting Irish culture and sports, and to networks connecting Irish business professionals abroad.

Through the ESP, the Government provides financial support to organisations engaged in the delivery of front line advisory services and community care to Irish emigrants, particularly to the more vulnerable and marginalised members of our community abroad, including the elderly. In addition, the ESP also facilitates Irish Government investment in a range of cultural, community and heritage projects, which foster a vibrant sense of Irish community and identity, as well as strategic capital projects.



Minister of State for the Diaspora, Colm Brophy T.D., meeting New York based ESP recipients © Nuala Purcell

GAA

Since 2007, a funding partnership arrangement with the GAA has supported the GAA's global games development programme. The Global Games Development Fund has provided funding for projects in GAA clubs in Europe, US and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America. Clubs receive financial support for equipment and coaching and to facilitate inter-club tournaments. This provides opportunities for the Irish diaspora and other communities abroad to play Gaelic Games in one of the over 440 GAA clubs now active outside of Ireland. It also serves to strengthen Irish networks and Irish identity internationally and to nurture a sense of Irish community.

The growth of Gaelic Games internationally, through the Global Irish Development Fund, has been very welcome. From supporting 14 projects in 2013, the Global Games Development Fund has grown to contribute funding to 92 different projects across the globe for 2021. Some projects are one-off events; others have activities lasting the course of a year. In 2021 the Department contributed €200,000 to the Global Games Development Fund, this amount being matched by the GAA.



India Wolfhounds train on Shantipath, New Delhi © India Wolfhounds



Lead Entrepreneur Áine Denn with Back for Business participants
© Orla Murray/ Coalesce

COMHALTAS CEOLTOIRÍ ÉIREANN (CCÉ)

The Department also collaborates closely with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in promoting Irish culture worldwide and fostering a deeper sense of connection amongst the Irish diaspora to their roots. With the assistance of funding through the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP), Comhaltas use Irish music to reach out to the younger generation of Irish communities abroad and to our affinity diaspora. 2021 saw €209,067 allocated to Comhaltas under the ESP for activities in Britain, South America, Japan, Australia, North American and Canada.

DIASPORA AFFAIRS

The Department of Foreign Affairs provides funding through the Diaspora Affairs Fund for projects and programmes to support the implementation of national Diaspora strategic objectives and strengthen the links between Diaspora and Irish communities.

In 2021, the Department collaborated with the Citizens' Information Board to develop a one-stop information portal (*Returning to Ireland*) that provides advice and support to for Irish emigrants and their families looking to return to live and work in Ireland.

2021 also saw the fourth cycle of 'Back for Business'. This programme supports entrepreneurs recently returned from abroad and those who are planning to return to live in Ireland. The programme links participants with lead entrepreneurs who share experiences of growing successful businesses in Ireland. Thirty-six returning entrepreneurs were selected for Back for Business 4, of whom thirty participants completed the cycle. Over the course of the programme, their combined turnover rose from €321,300 to €860,000, ten participants began exporting for the first time, and their total employees rose from 16 to 51.

Funding is also provided to EPIC, the Irish Emigration Museum, for a Historian in Residence, and for the development of *Out in the World*, an exhibition telling the story of Ireland's LGBTQ+ diaspora. This exhibition was launched in June 2021 and has travelled to many locations and events including at Milwaukee Irish Fest, the Irish Fair of Minnesota, Sydney World Pride and the Scottish Storytelling Centre Edinburgh.

The Diaspora Affairs budget also supported Ireland Reaching Out, a Diaspora connection project; Fáilte Ireland's development of the Global Irish Festival Series; and To Be Irish at Christmas, which brought Irish people across the world together at Christmas.

**Our Europe:
To advance Ireland's
interests, influence and
values in our shared Europe**



To advance Ireland's interests, influence and values in our shared Europe

Our engagement with the EU remains central to Ireland's foreign policy. We look up and out at the world from the solid foundation of our common European home. As a committed member of the European Union, we will work with our European colleagues to help each other during this time of crisis, and as we rebuild our economies.

The EU's founding values of peace, solidarity, greater cooperation, free movement, free trade and democracy are needed today more than ever, particularly as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis. We will work to ensure that Ireland makes a strong contribution to the EU's global engagement and to the promotion of peace and security in Europe.

Developments in 2021:

EU-UK Relations

Brexit continued to be a priority focus for the Government throughout 2021 as the Brexit transition period ended, and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland came into effect. The **Department continued to co-ordinate the whole-of-Government response to Brexit** throughout the year, supporting business and citizens in dealing with the permanent changes arising from the end of the transition period. In parallel, **our teams at home and abroad continued to support the engagement of the Taoiseach and Ministers on Brexit** with interlocutors in other EU Member States, the UK, the US, and further afield.

Implementation of the **Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)** progressed relatively smoothly throughout 2021, with all of the Specialised Committees established under the Agreement meeting in the course of the year. The **Partnership Council**, which is co-chaired by the EU and the UK and oversees the implementation of the entire agreement, met in June, while the **Trade Partnership Committee**, which has oversight of the Trade Specialised Committees, met in November. The Department co-ordinated Ireland's active contribution to the preparation of the EU position for these meetings and Irish officials attended as part of the EU delegation.

All of the **Specialised Committees under the Withdrawal Agreement** also met in 2021, including the Specialised Committee on the Implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, which met four times.

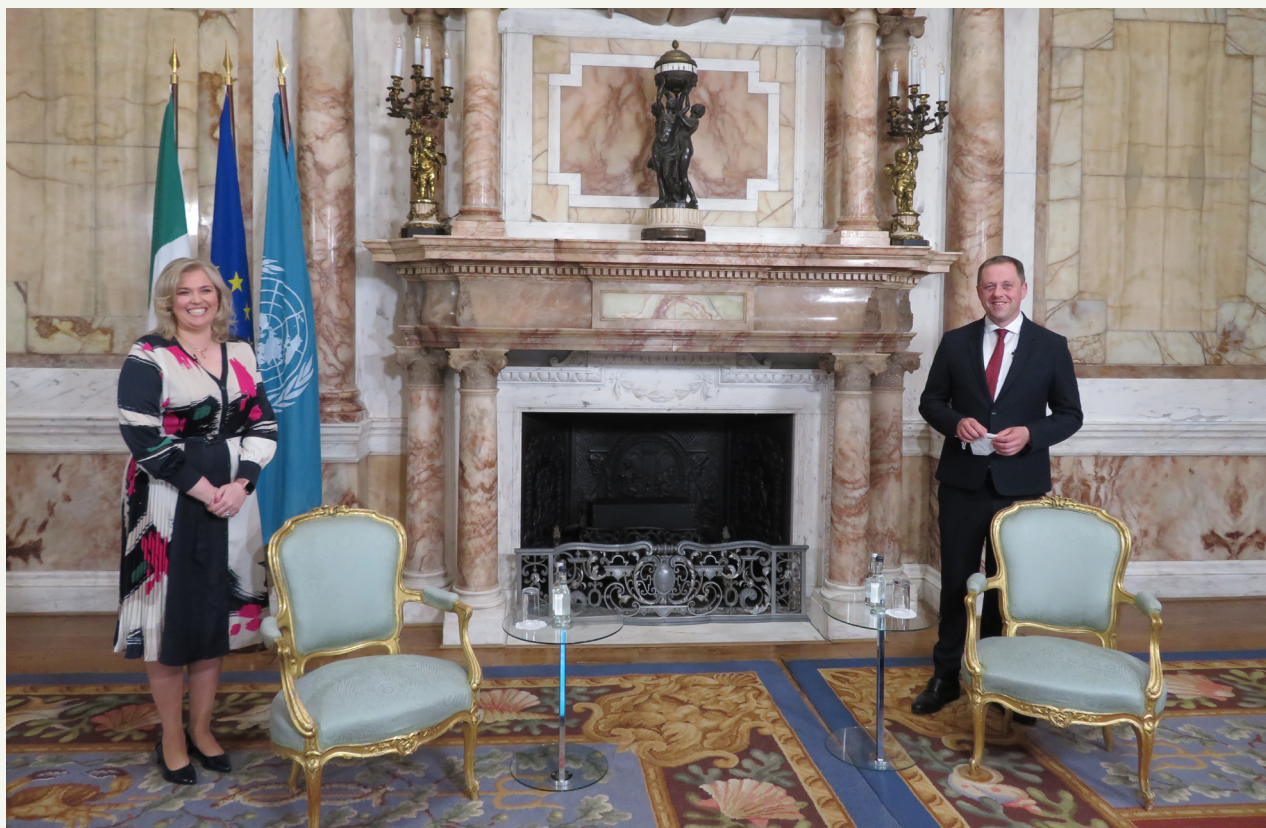
In June, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the allocation of the **Brexit Adjustment Reserve**. Ireland will receive just over €1billion, the largest allocation to any Member State.

While EU-UK relations remained hampered by disagreements related to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, an integral part of the Withdrawal Agreement, Member State support for the Commission package and for the Protocol remained steadfast, supported by strong engagement at Ministerial and official level across EU capitals.

Both the Government and the European Commission consistently engaged directly with Northern Ireland stakeholders on the concerns related to the Protocol throughout 2021. In direct response to this engagement, in October 2021, **the EU published a package of bespoke proposals** to ease the movement of goods and medicines between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and to give Northern Ireland stakeholders a greater role in the Protocol's governance. EU-UK talks on these proposals took place through to the end of 2021.



Minister Simon Coveney T.D. attending the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels, May 2021 © European Union



Noelle O'Connell, CEO, European Movement Ireland/Ireland's National Citizen Representative to the Conference on the Future of Europe and Thomas Byrne T.D., Minister of State for European Affairs at Ireland's 14 May 2021 national launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe held at Iveagh House © Ciarán Murray, EMI

Conference on the Future of Europe (COFOE)

The Conference on the Future of Europe represents the largest exercise in participative democracy undertaken by the European Union to date. Launched formally on Europe Day 2021, the Conference offered citizens the opportunity to provide their views on the EU's optimal future directions with reference to nine broad themes. Themes included climate change and the environment, health, digital transformation, and European democracy.

The flagship element of Ireland's programme of national Conference events saw the DFA collaborate closely with European Movement Ireland (EMI), building on an earlier partnership that had focused on the Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Europe. This 2021 strand of Ireland's national programme of Conference events consisted of a series of regional and sectoral meetings and had participation from a broad and inclusive cross-section of

demographics of people across Ireland. National engagement on the Conference additionally included government-led events organised by DFA where Minister Byrne engaged with smaller groups of citizens in virtual discussions, including the LGBTQI community, new Irish/migrant communities, the Traveller community, and Inner City areas/Communities with fewer opportunities.

Pan-European Conference Plenaries were a key part of the EU-level deliberations on the Conference's work. Plenary membership consisted of representatives from the Council of the EU, the European and national parliaments, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, along with citizen representatives. Two plenaries ran during 2021 (June and October); Minister Byrne participated in both as Ireland's lead Council representative.

Engagement on Belarus

In 2021, Ireland took an active role in the EU's response to the actions of Alexander Lukashenko's regime in Belarus. After a Ryanair flight, travelling between two EU capitals in May, was forced by the Belarusian authorities to divert to Minsk, EU foreign ministers imposed sanctions against those responsible. Another package of sanctions was imposed in response to the regime's treatment of migrants at the EU's eastern borders.

On a more positive note, Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leader-in-exile of the Belarusian opposition, visited Ireland in July 2021 and met the Taoiseach, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the Belarusian community in Ireland. Minister Coveney noted at the time that the people of Ireland have an enduring connection with the people of Belarus, fostered through years of personal connections, and that Ireland would continue to stand with the Belarusian people in their struggle to exercise their fundamental democratic and human rights.

OSCE engagements and Eastern Partnership summit

Ireland continued to engage at the OSCE Ministerial Council, Permanent Council, Forum for Security Cooperation and through high-level engagement to tackle current threats to security in all dimensions. Ireland also continued to support the work of civil society as well as a greater emphasis on climate change in the OSCE's work.

Developments within the Eastern Partnership region continued to be overshadowed by complex geopolitical developments in each of the partner countries. The Eastern Partnership Summit of the leaders of the 27 EU Member States and the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine took place on 15 December.



Minister Coveney meets Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Belarusian democratic opposition leader © Julien Behal/ DFA

Opening of Ireland's Embassy to Ukraine and visit of Minister Coveney to Kyiv

The Embassy of Ireland to Ukraine opened in Kyiv on 7 June, 2021, with the first resident Ambassador, Thérèse Healy, presenting her credentials to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 19 August. On 23 August, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, T.D., officially opened the Embassy as part of the Government's Global Ireland Strategy. The Minister highlighted the new phase Ireland's bilateral relations with Ukraine were now entering, and welcomed the opportunity it afforded to deepen bilateral cooperation.

In attendance was then Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Dmytro Senik, who spoke of the historic and cultural connections between Ireland and Ukraine.

Minister Coveney also represented Ireland at the inaugural summit of the International Crimean Platform (ICP) during his visit. The ICP, a consultative format initiative of President Zelenskyy, who hosted the event, was established to further develop a coordinated approach by those in the international community wishing to resolve the issue of illegally-occupied Crimea. All participating countries, including Ireland, had signed up in advance to the ICP Declaration, and in his address to delegations, the Minister joined all other delegations in condemning Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

Additionally, the Minister took the opportunity to meet with some representatives of the Irish community in Kyiv, including officials from the OSCE Monitoring Mission, the EU Advisory Mission and the Irish business and cultural community.



Ireland's first resident Ambassador to Ukraine, Thérèse Healy, presents her credentials to the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Presidential Administration in Kyiv © Eduard Kryzhanivskyi



The Embassy of Ireland to Ukraine was officially opened by Minister Simon Coveney T.D. in August 2021 © Nastya Telikova

Tensions on the Russian border

Russia's increased military build-up along borders with eastern Ukraine heightened tensions in the region and destabilised its relations across Europe more widely in 2021. Ireland played an active part in the EU's response to events as they developed. On 12 July, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council decided to prolong sanctions targeting specific economic sectors of the Russian Federation for a further six months.

The security situation in Europe became an increasingly prominent topic in the final weeks of 2021. Following a meeting of Foreign Ministers on 13 December, EU leaders met on 16 December, publishing European Council conclusions stressing the urgent need for Russia to de-escalate tensions. The Council reiterated its full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and noted that any further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and a severe cost in response, including restrictive measures coordinated with partners, which Ireland wholly endorsed. The Council also encouraged diplomatic efforts and stressed its support for the Normandy format (France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia) in achieving the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, which had been signed in 2014 and 2015 to bring an end to the conflict in the separatist regions in eastern Ukraine caused by Russia.

Civilian CSDP

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) allows the EU to play a leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and the strengthening of international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. EU civilian crisis management is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management. In 2021, Ireland had up to 21 experts deployed to Civilian CSDP missions in Europe, the Caucasus, Africa and the Middle East.

These experts worked with partners to support them in building their capacities in the area of rule of law and policing, and also engaged in Security Sector Reform and monitoring tasks, all of which are vital to establishing and maintaining security and stability. As the COVID-19 pandemic developed, the Department of Foreign Affairs continued to ensure the safety of our funded experts, while resuming deployments to missions in support of our commitment to the full implementation of Ireland's Civilian CSDP National Implementation Plan.

Focus on France:

2021 was a particularly strong year for Franco-Irish relationships. In May, then French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian accompanied by then Secretary of State Responsible for European Affairs, Clément Beaune visited Dublin to meet with Minister Coveney and Minister of State Byrne. During the visit, a **Joint Declaration** was adopted by Minister Le Drian and Minister Coveney.

On 26 August, French President Emmanuel Macron, on his first visit as President, came to Ireland to meet with President Michael D. Higgins and Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D. A number of French Ministers accompanied President Macron. Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (European and Foreign Affairs), Minister Bruno Le Maire (Economy, Finance and the Recovery) and Secretary of State Clément Beaune (European Affairs) met with their Irish counterparts, Minister Coveney, Minister Donohoe and Minister of State Byrne as part of the visit. Subjects discussed over the course of the bilateral meetings included pressing issues on the EU and International agenda, including Afghanistan, the response to Covid-19, economic recovery, the upcoming French Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers and EU-UK relations.



French President Emmanuel Macron visits Trinity College Dublin with An Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D. © DFA

The visit marked the strength of Franco-Irish relations, as exemplified by the **Joint Plan of Action** signed during the visit. It represents an ambitious agenda that reflects Ireland's 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 cooperation. It also contains projects in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and culture. The two Governments have also reiterated their strong support for the flagship Celtic Interconnector project. The Plan will last from 2021-2025 and involves a number of Government Departments and State Agencies.



Signing of Joint Plan of Action with Mr. Simon Coveney T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, and Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs © DFA



A Career for EU Gairm san AE

A Career for EU

A Career for EU, the Government's strategy to increase Irish representation in EU Institutions and Agencies, was launched by Minister of State for European Affairs, Thomas Byrne T.D., in May 2021. The strategy contains actions that aim to significantly increase the numbers of Irish officials within the EU Institutions over the coming years. By ensuring that Irish citizens continue to serve in the EU Institutions, we safeguard Ireland's place at the heart of Europe and we continue to shape the future of our shared Union.

This strategy seeks to improve awareness of EU careers in Ireland across all sectors and to increase the number of Irish people applying for jobs in the EU institutions. In particular, engagement with second- and third-level students has been broadened to communicate the range of opportunities for all interests. The strategy also provides targeted support to Irish candidates preparing

for an EU jobs competition, including postgraduate scholarships, online training for computer based tests and interview coaching. As part of the strategy, practice material in Irish has been developed with NUI Galway, in recognition of Irish becoming a full official language of the EU on 1 January 2022.

The Department, particularly through the Permanent Representation to the EU and with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, is also working closely with the European Commission and the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) to address the structural issues with recruitment to the EU's Institutions.

Those interested in reading the strategy and learning more about the supports provided to Irish candidates for EU roles can find out more at: www.dfa.ie/eujobs.

**Our Values:
To work for a fairer,
just, secure and
sustainable world**



To work for a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world

The Department aims to promote Ireland's values in all areas of its work. Through our development cooperation work and our engagement in multilateral fora we aim to make further progress in eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting inclusive economic growth, and promoting and protecting human rights internationally. We will provide support for those countries that are poorest and most vulnerable to climate shocks and ensure that climate change is included as a core theme in strategy development where Ireland has a significant development cooperation programme including Small Island Developing States.

Membership of the UN is a cornerstone of Ireland's foreign policy. At a time of ever-more complex global threats, which have no international boundaries, such as climate change and pandemics, only coordinated international action and collaboration will bring about solutions. Through our seat on the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 session, we will play a constructive role through our commitment to peacebuilding, human rights, disarmament, sustainable development and a rules-based international environment.

Developments in 2021:

Ireland at the UN Security Council

The UN is at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy, and Ireland began its two-year term on the **UN Security Council** on 1 January 2021. Ireland's term is guided by three principles: Building Peace, Strengthening Conflict Prevention, and Ensuring Accountability, which are central to the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Ireland held the **Presidency** of the Security Council in September 2021, advancing the work of the Council and Ireland's priorities. We led negotiations on the first ever Security Council Resolution on **peacekeeping transitions**, which was adopted unanimously and with the co-sponsorship of all Council members. This landmark resolution strengthens the UN's ability to ensure that the hard-won gains of peace are maintained when a peacekeeping mission ends or transitions to a different type of UN presence.

Ireland brings to the Council our experience of overcoming conflict on our island, our understanding of the crucial role of women in peacebuilding, and a determination to speak up for others. We therefore prioritised the **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** agenda throughout our Council term, including during our Presidency, when we focused particularly on including women peacebuilders as civil society briefers in Council meetings. Setting a new record, sixteen of the seventeen civil society briefers during our Presidency were women.

Ireland also chaired a High-Level meeting marking the 25th Anniversary of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** during our Presidency. This meeting highlighted the importance of the CTBT and the need for its entry into force and universalisation, which is a longstanding foreign policy priority for Ireland.

Throughout 2021, Ireland took a leadership role on Climate and Security as co-chair of the Informal Expert Group, together with Niger. In December, Ireland and Niger tabled a resolution on **Climate and Security**. This followed a High-Level Open Debate chaired by the Taoiseach during Ireland’s Council Presidency. While the resolution was ultimately vetoed, it achieved the second highest number of co-sponsors for any resolution in the history of the Security Council.



Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and President of the Security Council for September 2021, Geraldine Byrne Nason, chairs the Security Council © Ariana Lindquist, UN



UN Security Council members vote unanimously to adopt Resolution 2594 on peacekeeping transitions in September 2021 © Evan Schneider, UN



Minister Coveney visits the Bab al-Hawa humanitarian operation at the Turkey-Syria border in January 2021 © 3K Pro Fotograficilik / Mr Cem Onur Deliğa

As co-penholder, with Norway, for **Syria** humanitarian issues, Ireland worked to ensure that vital aid could reach all those in need. In July 2021, Ireland and Norway led negotiations on a resolution that extended the mandate for the UN's cross border aid operation between Turkey and North West Syria for 12 months, ensuring that crucial humanitarian aid could continue to reach over three million people in need in North-West Syria.

In addition to Chairing the Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ireland worked throughout the year to maintain the attention of the Security Council on the crisis in **Ethiopia**, keeping a strong focus on the dire humanitarian situation, as well as calling for a negotiated ceasefire, and political dialogue. In 2021, when the conflict was at its peak, Ireland called a Security Council meeting on Ethiopia almost every month.



Ireland's nameplate at the UN Security Council © DFA

Afghanistan

Following the Taliban seizure of power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Department of Foreign Affairs immediately responded to support evacuation of Irish citizens and their dependents, facilitate the provision of refuge to at-risk Afghans, provide humanitarian support to the Afghan people and to defend human rights in Afghanistan, particularly the rights of Afghan women and girls.

The Department of Foreign Affairs supported the **evacuation of over 100 Irish citizens and their dependents** following the onset of the crisis. Instrumental in these evacuations was the deployment of an Emergency Civil Assistance Team to Kabul. This was a joint team comprised of DFA officials and members of the Defence Forces, who facilitated the evacuation of a number of Irish citizens and residents. The Embassies of Ireland in Abu Dhabi and Ankara were vital in supporting those efforts, working with EU Member States and partners in the region.

Since August 2021, more than 500 Afghans and their families have reached safety in Ireland under the **Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)**. These include human rights defenders, women human rights activists, members of NGOs and civil society, media and members of minority groups, among others. The Department of Foreign Affairs provided support to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and worked with the Department of Justice in ensuring safe passage to Ireland for those on the programme.

Ireland has consistently advocated at the **UN Security Council** for the protection of human rights of Afghans, particularly those of Afghan women and girls, and has condemned the Taliban for the systematic erosion of those rights. On 19 August, days after the takeover, Ireland and Mexico convened an urgent meeting of the **Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security** to discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

Chairing an **Open Debate on Afghanistan during Ireland's Presidency of the UN Security Council** in September 2021, the Minister for Foreign Affairs called on the Taliban to guarantee Afghan women and girls' full and equal access to education. The Minister provided a platform at the debate for women's rights activist Wazmah Frogh and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, both of whom spoke passionately and movingly on behalf of Afghan women and girls. At the **UN Human Rights Council**, Ireland participated in the Special Session on Afghanistan in August 2021 and supported an EU-led resolution on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan during the 48th session of the Council, which passed decisively.

Ireland also responded to the **dire humanitarian situation** in Afghanistan as public services and food security collapsed in 2021. Ireland's humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan increased fivefold to over €5.3 million for the year, distributed through UN agencies and NGO partners. In December, Ireland negotiated for a humanitarian carve out in the UN Taliban sanctions regime, to ensure humanitarian organisations are not impeded in the delivery of their vital aid. Ireland also contributed to the EU response, which allocated more than €1 billion to Afghanistan in 2021.

Ireland's Third Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a process at the Human Rights Council through which the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States are assessed on a regular basis. Ireland's third Universal Periodic Review took place in November 2021. The delegation was headed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman T.D., who reiterated Ireland's commitment to keeping human rights at the centre of Ireland's domestic and foreign policies. Minister O'Gorman outlined Ireland's domestic human rights record, while recognising areas for improvement. In an exceptionally participative interactive dialogue, 103 UN Members provided 260 recommendations across 14 thematic areas in relation to equality and non-discrimination, treaties and international obligations, and women's rights, amongst others.

Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council held three sessions in 2021. Ireland was active during each of these sessions, delivering a total of 61 national statements throughout the year. The Council also held a number of Special Sessions in 2021 to address human rights situations of particular concern in countries including Sudan (November), Afghanistan (August), the occupied Palestinian territory (May) and Myanmar (February). In July, the Council adopted by consensus an Irish-led resolution championing civil society space and highlighting the essential role civil society plays in the Covid-19 response and recovery. The resolution also draws attention to the growing challenges facing civil society, which have been compounded by the pandemic. The Resolution is an important incremental step in ensuring that this vital issue continues to receive the international attention that it deserves. The resolution mandates the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report examining the key challenges identified by civil society and recommendations to address these. The Council also adopted a new resolution, co-sponsored by Ireland, which recognised for the first time the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Ireland as Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Champion

As part of our role as an Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Champion, Ireland, in partnership with Germany, initiated a series of interactive sessions at the UN for sharing best practices and examining the barriers at the international and the national level to women's participation in peacekeeping and the means by which they might be addressed. The events took the form of panel discussions, and as the series developed, it attracted a range of other co-sponsors, including Namibia, South Africa, Kenya, Bangladesh, Canada and Indonesia. In collaboration with the other co-sponsors, Ireland produced an outcome report – *Breaking Barriers: Women in Peacekeeping* – providing six concrete, actionable recommendations for the UN Department of Peace Operations and Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries.

New Guidance on Business and Human Rights for Business Enterprises in Ireland

In April 2021, the Minister for Foreign Affairs launched new guidance on business and human rights for business enterprises in Ireland. This guidance was developed by the Implementation Group for the National Plan on Business and Human Rights, which was launched in 2017. The launch was followed by a series of practical workshop for businesses, organised by the Trinity Centre for Social Innovation, in partnership with organisations such as The Global Business Initiative on Human Rights and Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI).

Entry into Force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force on 21 January 2021, having received the requisite fifty ratifications. Ireland was among the first fifty countries to ratify. The rapidly growing support for the Treaty was motivated by a concern shared by many states about the risks of nuclear weapons and driven by deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use. It is the first new legal multilateral instrument on nuclear disarmament to be adopted in over 20 years. Moreover, it is also the first instrument to explicitly prohibit nuclear weapons under international law. Minister Coveney marked the Treaty's entry-into-force with a statement that noted that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee they will not be used.

Statements to the Security Council in 2021

	No. of Statements
Middle East	59
Thematic	53
Africa	46
Europe	15
Central Asia	9
Latin America	7
Asia	5
Total	194

Ireland at the UN Security Council

Statements to the Council in 2021

= 194



Presidential Statements agreed in 2021

= 24



Resolutions adopted in 2021

= 57



Women Civil Society Briefers during Ireland's Presidency

= 16 out of 17

Irish Aid

The Government of Ireland supports programmes, provides assistance, and works with partners in over 130 countries, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The Government of Ireland has taken an “All of Government” approach to delivering foreign aid, which means the departments such as the HSE, Department of Finance, and Department of Food, Agriculture, and the Marine all fund official development assistance (ODA) programmes. In total the Government invested over €976 million in ODA in 2021. The Department of Foreign Affairs managed the bulk of this through Irish Aid- a budget of €570 million. In A Better World, Ireland’s Policy for International Development, we highlight our international development priorities. These are:

- » Reducing humanitarian need
- » Supporting climate action
- » Promoting gender equality
- » Strengthening governance.

In October 2020, in line with our commitment to support climate action, Irish Aid set up a specific Climate Unit, which oversees, shapes, supports, and coordinates our climate targets abroad. Ireland, along with fellow members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), recognise that tackling climate change is one of the most fundamental methods of reducing poverty, and assisting partner countries in developing carbon neutral, climate resilient pathways to development. Ireland’s climate priorities reflect the scientific consensus on climate change and is further supported by the most recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that insist we must act this decade to avoid extreme climate warming. Ireland refined its focus to work on three key areas in its international climate action during 2021:

- i. Adaptation and building resilience to climate change
- ii. Sustainable oceans and blue economy
- iii. Climate and security

In addition to our climate focus, Ireland also supports a wide range of other programmes. In terms of strengthening governance, we support programmes that promote democracy and governance, support accountability and transparency, strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, and enable a healthy civil society space. COVID-19 has had a detrimental effect on the lives of women and girls across our partner countries. Our gender equality programmes target urgent and sustained action on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to support the achievement of the SDGs. In our efforts towards reducing humanitarian need, our humanitarian funding has increased steadily in recent years and we consistently rank in the top 20 humanitarian donors. In 2021, we provided additional funding to support the provision of much needed assistance in Myanmar, Lebanon and Venezuela. We also responded quickly to rapidly deteriorating situations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Bilateral Overseas Development Aid by Sector - 2021

Sector	€000's	As a %
Humanitarian Assistance	124,237	24%
Multi-sector	93,556	18%
Health, HIV and AIDS	70,882	14%
Human Rights, Governance and Gender Equality	65,637	13%
Programme Management and Administration	48,946	9%
Education	37,002	7%
Agriculture	24,159	5%
Social Protection	17,011	3%
Basic Nutrition	12,394	2%
Environmental Protection	11,299	2%
Promotion of Development Awareness	9,324	2%
Water and Sanitation	2,282	<1%
Total	516,729	100%

The majority of our ODA is concentrated in nine key partner countries. Embassies in these countries manage a range of programmes targeting our four key priority areas, in addition to consular engagements with local partners and governments. The nine partner countries Irish Aid has embassies in are Ethiopia, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia. We also have ODA programmes in Palestine, Liberia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Ireland maintains a strong partnership with multiple multilateral institutions. Ireland provides core funding to both the United Nations and the European Union. This core funding is used across a variety of programmes including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

For a deeper insight into the full range of all of our work, our Annual Reports are available on the Irish Aid website at <https://www.irishaid.ie/news-publications/publications/>.

Top 30 Recipient Countries of Ireland's Bilateral ODA 2021

Recipient Country	€000s
Ethiopia	40,642
Mozambique	27,113
Tanzania	25,195
Uganda	24,412
Malawi	17,722
Sierra Leone	16,218
Palestine	10,793
South Sudan	9,752
Zimbabwe	9,113
Kenya	8,765
Syrian Arab Republic	7,964
Somalia	7,214
Democratic Republic of the Congo	6,639
Afghanistan	6,434
Yemen	6,400
Liberia	5,879
Sudan	5,407
Central African Republic	5,267
Zambia	4,974
South Africa	4,812
Lebanon	3,906
Vietnam	3,631
Niger	3,232
Jordan	2,932
Turkey	2,882
Nigeria	2,511
Myanmar	2,423
Colombia	2,406
Chad	2,178
Bangladesh	2,170

** Please note that in the case of countries with major humanitarian crises, funding may be allocated to neighbouring countries or on a non-country specific basis.

Our Prosperity:
To advance Ireland's
prosperity by extending our
influence and promoting
our interests internationally



To advance Ireland's prosperity by extending our influence and promoting our interests internationally

Promoting our economic growth remains a key priority for the government. The Department of Foreign Affairs plays a leading role in fostering the international dimension of Ireland's economic growth, in close cooperation with the State Agencies, Irish business and the Global Irish Network.

Our network of diplomatic missions is actively promoting Ireland as open for business and a destination for inward investment. We build and maintain strong bilateral relations to promote our economic interests abroad, helping us contribute to job creation, the identification of opportunities for exports, and the promotion of tourism and education in Ireland. Our missions also ensure that accurate information about the benefits of doing business in Ireland is communicated to key international decision makers and opinion formers.

The Department also promotes Ireland through the delivery of a strong programme of cultural engagement through our missions abroad.

Developments in 2021:

Saint Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day offers a unique opportunity to promote Ireland's economic and political interests overseas.

The Government's 2021 St Patrick's Day strategy strongly delivered on the objective of enhancing Ireland's reputation and visibility despite the restrictions of the pandemic.

DFA delivered an online programme, which was cutting-edge in terms of innovation, outreach and engagement despite the absence of person-to-person events. Ireland's mission network, supported strongly by State Agencies, and utilising virtual "Ireland House" hubs and creating bespoke receptions (attended by more than 55,000 households), including greetings from the Taoiseach and Ministers created a model that that facilitated a global reach in a challenging environment.

The overall theme of St Patrick's Day 2021, was one of 'recovery and renewal', stressing in particular the importance of our Diaspora, which had been largely unable to travel and connect physically with Ireland for almost a year.

A St Patrick's Day video was produced to highlight Ireland's values to the world on our national day, and to engage the Global Irish community. Warmly received internationally, it has had more than 3.5 million views.

The 48-hour period encompassing St Patrick's Day was the busiest in the history of the Department of Foreign Affairs' social media accounts. There were over 4.7 million impressions on the @dfat Twitter account and 2.17 million views of the DFA Facebook posts in this period.

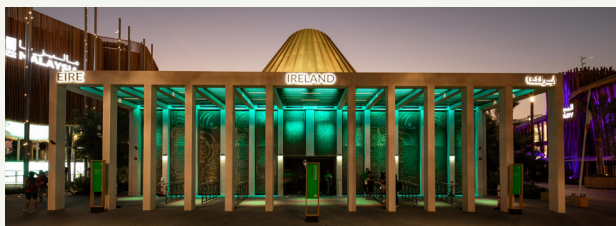
Expo 2020 Dubai

Ireland's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai, launched in October 2021 (postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic), was impactful, distinctive, proactive, outward looking, and engaging on a person-to-person level.

Ireland 'changed the game' and introduced a new paradigm for successful Expo participation based on the following reasons:

- » The overarching theme of human creativity in Ireland's programme connected with the audience and stood in marked contrast to most other pavilions where the emphasis was on technical displays.
- » The focus on, and commitment of, resources to personal engagement with the more than 350,000 visitors to the pavilion was very well received.
- » Ireland's external focus through inclusive events spread over the duration of Expo, produced significant impact and sustained momentum. The events included the 'Riverdance at Expo' residency, attended by more than 80,000 guests; the Expo World Choir, with participants from 146 countries, and viewed by 1 million online; and a three-day St. Patrick's Festival at Expo, culminating in the St Patrick's day gala concert.

Expo 2020 Dubai was a tangible expression of the "Team Ireland" concept with strong collaboration across Government Departments, State Agencies, the cultural and educational sector as well as the Irish business diaspora.



The Ireland Pavilion at Expo 2020 © DFA

Bloomsday

Ahead of the centenary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in February 2022, global celebrations of Bloomsday escalated in 2021 through a number of key initiatives.

The Department partnered with the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) to produce *Opening Ulysses*, a short film created in collaboration with Irish Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Filming took place in more than 40 locations across six continents, from Alaska to Abuja, Santiago to Seoul, Canberra to Chicago. The film invited global audiences to engage with *Ulysses* through a playful, virtuosic reimagining of its opening line: *Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed*. The film was viewed over 2.2million times within a month of publication, and went on to win several prizes at the 2022 Institute of Creative Advertising & Design Awards.

2021 also saw the first ever *Global Joycean Book Giveaway*. Our diplomatic network partnered with hundreds of local organisations including national and public libraries, secondary schools, universities, development NGOs, bookshops, literary cafés, cultural centres, broadcast media and transport hubs to spread awareness of this literary milestone. Over the Bloomsday period, more than 5,000 copies of *Ulysses*, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* were distributed more than one hundred cities on six continents, in 18 languages ranging from Chinese, Japanese and Latvian to Hebrew, Greek and Bahasa.

Saint Brigid's Day

The celebration of St Brigid's Day, on the 1st February, has become a new and innovative way for the Department to showcase the work of trailblazing, inspirational Irish women who are making their mark across a range of fields. The day has become a celebration of those who are carrying on Brigid's legacy as a trailblazer, and helps to raise the profile of many extraordinary Irish women around the world.

Since its inception in 2018 followed by a small pilot programme in 2019, interest in Brigid's Day across Ireland's diplomatic mission network has grown exponentially, with 35 missions participating and programmes taking place in 28 different locations worldwide. This was despite the challenge presented by the Covid pandemic.

With the great enthusiasm that St Brigid's Day has inspired so far, the Department is looking forward to expanding this celebration of women, creativity and bringing Brigid to an even wider range of locations in the future.

Ireland-US Poetry Partnership

A new multiyear poetry partnership between Ireland and the United States was launched by An Taoiseach Micheál Martin and President Joe Biden on St. Patrick's Day 2021. The leaders expressed their welcome for the partnership at their St. Patrick's Day meeting, noting that it "affirms the inspirational power of poetry."

The Ireland-US poetry partnership 2021-23 is a joint initiative of Poetry Ireland and the Poetry Foundation (USA), focusing on engagement with and services for young people as it connects communities of poets and audiences in both countries through poetry recitation programmes.

The new initiative is named Hope Rhymes, taking inspiration from Seamus Heaney's reference in *The Cure at Troy* to a moment when 'hope and history rhyme'

Colmcille 1500

December 2021 marked 1500 years since the birth of Colmcille, one of the three patron saints of Ireland and a foundational figure bonding Irish, Scottish, and European history.

To mark the occasion the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) commissioned seven new artworks in the visual arts, music and literature in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs. Works included a new drama by prominent Irish-language poet and dramatist, Biddy Jenkinson; the composition of a new song inspired by the saint's life by Julie Fowles, Éamon Doorley, Zoë Conway and John McIntyre; and poems based on the saint by the Crowned Gaelic Bard in Scotland, Sandy NicDhòmhnaill Jones. These contemporary reflections on Colmcille's significant international legacy brought together Irish and Scottish artists in a celebration of the deep cultural and artistic ties linking the two countries.

**Our Effectiveness:
To strengthen our
effectiveness and capacity
to deliver on our goals**



To strengthen our effectiveness and capacity to deliver on our goals

The Department upholds the highest ethos of public service. We aim to be an open and accountable Department, with a professional and capable workforce in a positive working environment, which delivers best practice in governance, is responsible to national and global changes and challenges, and provides a unified service to the Government and Irish Citizens.

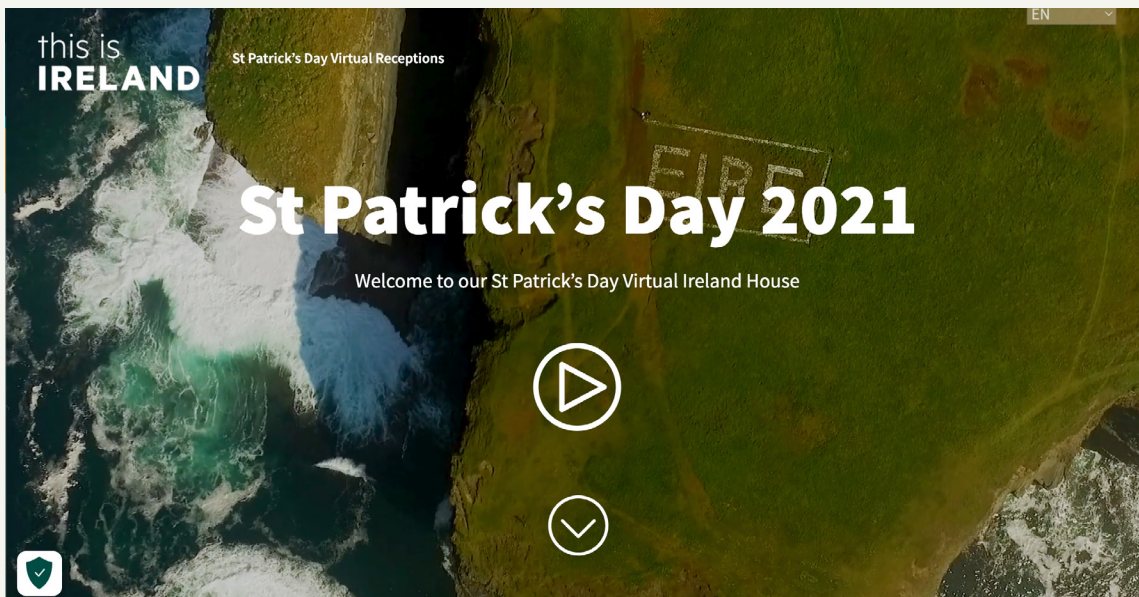
Rather than looking at our high-level goals in isolation, we recognise that they are intertwined and support one another. The work of every individual in this department is linked to the delivery of these goals.

Developments in 2021:

Digital Diplomacy

Throughout 2021, the Department and its diplomatic network continued its engagement with digital diplomacy, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt in-person engagement. Mission and Departmental social media channels were central to our celebration of St Brigid's Day, Europe Day, Bloomsday, Pride, the launch and initial months of Ireland at Expo, and Hallowe'en, and the promotion of key programmes of activity, such as the commencement of Ireland's two-year tenure on the UN Security Council.

St Patrick's Day was marked around the world with a series of country-specific 'virtual receptions' with over 80 events taking place. Each reception included short messages from An Taoiseach, and the Ambassador/Consul General in the country along with tailored content for that region. To showcase the broad array of rich content created for St Patrick's Day, the Department hosted a 'Virtual Ireland House' hub at [Ireland.ie/spd](https://ireland.ie/spd), providing international visitors a means of finding and viewing activities from Ireland and across the world. A short St Patrick's Day video was also created to recognise the contribution of frontline workers and other members of the diaspora to the global response to the pandemic. It received over 3.3 million views in less than 24 hours on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.



A 'Virtual Ireland House' hub at [Ireland.ie/spd](https://ireland.ie/spd) hosted a broad array of digital content to mark St Patrick's Day 2021 © DFA

A similar multidimensional virtual approach was taken to celebrate Africa Day, with funding provided by the Department to 23 local authorities that organised virtual events. A designated Africa Day hub was created on Ireland.ie and specially commissioned social media videos, including the award-winning short video “A Swallow’s Tale”, received over 625,000 views between Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

To Be Irish at Christmas returned in 2021 after the success of 2020. The programme was launched in December by the Minister of State for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora, Colm Brophy, T.D., to support the special connections between the Irish at home and abroad in the run-up to Christmas. Built around a dedicated online platform, ToBelrish.ie, the initiative showcased the best of what it means to be Irish during the holiday season through music, performances, gifts and the sharing of ideas. The programme’s achievements in 2021 included over 2 million visits across the various To Be Irish platforms.

A range of innovative approaches to digital diplomacy across the mission network was also seen, including “An Irish Night In”, hosted by our Embassy in Berlin; Ireland’s participation at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics; and the “Generation Green” profiles of young Australians with Irish heritage, all of which can be viewed back on the Department’s YouTube channel [Youtube.com/IrishForeignMinistry](https://www.youtube.com/IrishForeignMinistry).



Minister of State for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora, Colm Brophy, T.D., and cellist Patrick Dexter, launch the “To Be Irish at Christmas” 2021 programme © DFA



The award-winning short video “A Swallow’s Tale” was commissioned to celebrate Africa Day 2021 © DFA

Social Media and Press Relations in 2021

@DFATIRL

82,709

Followers of our official Departmental Twitter Account @dfatirl

An **increase of 20%** since 2020

105 **Twitter accounts** with 10 operated by HQ and 95 by missions abroad

794,593 **audience** across all accounts

19% increase since 2020

@DFATIRELAND

33% increase since 2020

24,079 Facebook users "liked" the DFA HQ Facebook page.

The majority of our followers **are female** and 66% are under 45 years old

70 accounts with 4 operated from HQ and 66 by missions abroad

324,849 Facebook users "liked" our pages by the end of 2021

16% increase on 2020

More than **44,000** new 'likes' in 2021

DFALINKEDIN

34,051 **followers** across 11 LinkedIn accounts

19,272 followers of the DFA LinkedIn page, a 40% increase on 2020

47% growth of our network over 2021

13.1% of our followers work in **government administration** while **5.6%** work in **Higher Education** and **4.4%** in the **Non-profit Sector**

Top five locations of DFA LinkedIn followers



INSTAGRAM **25 accounts with more than 40,000 followers**

Press and Media

651 **press queries** handled in 2021

48 media accredited for visit to Ireland by French President Emmanuel Macron, 26 August 2021

Over **5 million** views of the **St Patrick's Day 2021** videos

2.7 million views of the **Bloomsday 2021** video across DFA channels

Our Online Presence in 2021

94
Diplomatic
Mission
Websites



69 Embassies



17 Consulates



8 Multilateral Organisations
& Other



Website Visits: **14,628,853** **15,872,075** **↑ 8.5%**
2020 2021



**Busiest day
of the year**

When non-essential international travel resumed for people in Ireland



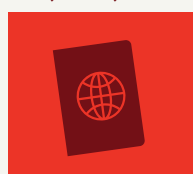
of visitors accessed
via mobile/tablet
devices



of visitors accessed
via desktop

Top five pages
accessed

3,111,554



Track your
Passport

2,432,110



Passport
Contact Us

2,019,423



Passport Online

1,801,950



Coronavirus
Travel Advice

1,737,224



Travel Advice

Top ten Irish Embassy
websites by number
of visitors:

1. **India**
2. **Great Britain**
3. **UAE**
4. **USA**
5. **Turkey**
6. **South Africa**
7. **Nigeria**
8. **France**
9. **Spain**
10. **Canada**



Top ten locations outside the
island of Ireland from which
our websites were accessed:

1. **London**
2. **Glasgow**
3. **Manchester**
4. **Birmingham**
5. **Dubai**
6. **New York**
7. **Croydon**
8. **Bristol**
9. **Nottingham**
10. **Edinburgh**

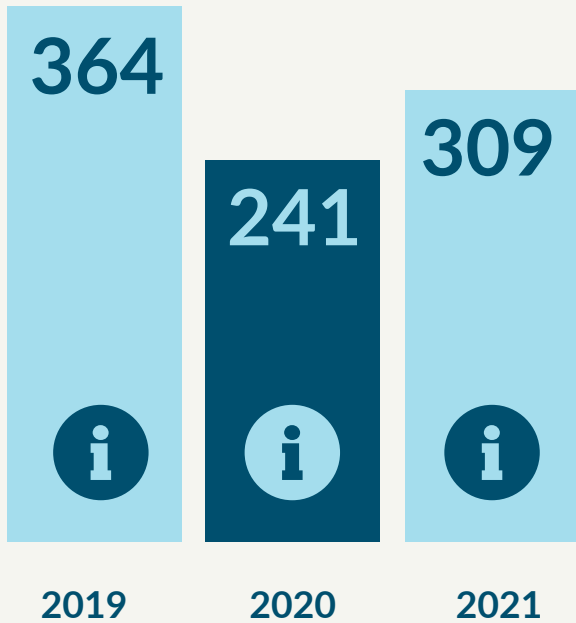


Average amount of time
spent on the website



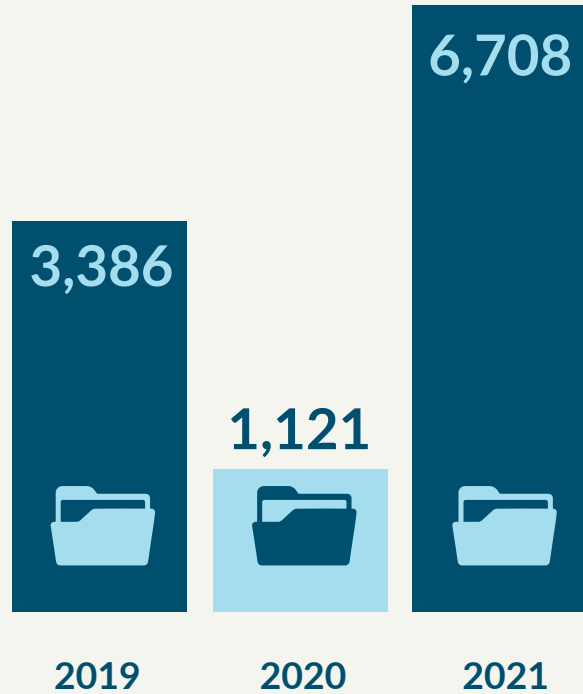
2.18 Average
amount of
pages per
session

Freedom of Information requests answered by DFA



In 2021, over 2,000 Anglo-Irish files were made available to the public by DFA under new legislation, broadening the public historical record and helping to deepen understanding of Anglo-Irish relations and all island cooperation.

Archives Transferred to National Archives



Data Protection & the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

In accordance with the DFA Data Protection Policy, all officers, both at home and abroad, must complete data protection training at least once every two years. In 2021, the Department created and launched its own Data Protection E-Learning course. This Data Protection E-Learning course is accessible by and relevant to all DFA officers whether based at HQ or across the wider mission network as the GDPR also applies to the processing of personal data carried out by embassies and consulates of EU Member States located outside the EU. The content in this course was informed by the relevant legislation, guidance published by the Data Protection Commission and learning from the Department's own experience of implementing the GDPR.

Green Foreign Ministry

The Department has been consistently active nationally and internationally across all aspects of the Climate Action agenda. Enhancing the sustainability of our buildings, operations, systems and processes at headquarters and across the network of Irish diplomatic and consular missions is a key priority in the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-23. The aim is to achieve the status nationally and internationally as a Foreign Ministry with strong green credentials.

In July 2019, the Department launched its Green Foreign Ministry initiative, following which, a Green Committee was established. Chaired by a senior official in the Corporate Services Team, and with members drawn from across our global network, it is tasked with championing the sustainability agenda across the network and monitoring progress in achieving its goals. The Green Committee oversaw the preparation of a detailed Action Plan that lists almost 60 sustainability measures under six separate headings that the Department began implementing in late 2019.

Some highlights from 2021 are as follows;

- » Establishment of international sustainability network of like-minded foreign ministries.
- » Establishment of Mission Sustainability Officer Network
- » The Department achieves 49% increase in Energy Efficiency since 2011 surpassing the target of 33% and well on the way to the target of 50% by 2030.
- » Installing electric vehicle charging points at the rear of the Department's Headquarters at Iveagh House.
- » Expanded rollout of low-consumption all-in-one laptop devices, with full system access and video calling capability, thus enhancing e-working opportunities and reducing the need for travel to meetings both pre and post covid.

Security

Security of our people and systems was a top priority across our expanding mission network in 2021. Notwithstanding the imposition of Covid restrictions, the Department undertook a number of in country mission security reviews. Strategic partnerships with An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces were further enhanced by delivering virtual and webinar based security training for both emerging crises and pre departure training for colleagues undertaking postings. Quality guidance and supports were provided to the Department's offices and officers worldwide by trusted security partners in 2021.

Evaluation & Audit

The Evaluation and Audit Unit (EAU) is an independent unit within the Department's corporate governance structure, reporting to the Secretary General. The Unit's role is to support, protect and enhance the delivery of the Department's mission by providing objective assessment, assurance, advice and insight regarding corporate performance, governance, risk management and internal control. In the course of its work, the EAU works closely with Departmental colleagues, striving to strengthen the effectiveness of our development and diplomatic programmes.

To achieve greater accountability over the EAU's managed evaluations and reviews, senior Departmental management are responsible for implementation of recommendations, which are monitored and tracked by the Unit. The work of the EAU is reviewed by the Audit Committee of the Department, which provides an independent appraisal of the audit and evaluation function including overseeing progress made in implementing the recommendations arising from audits and evaluations.

AUDIT COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

The EAU continues to provide the Secretariat to the Department's independent Audit Committee, supporting the Committee in its role of advising the Secretary General on the suitability and robustness of the Department's systems and procedures for governance, risk management, internal controls, and evaluation of policies and strategies. The Audit Committee's activities and work for the year are captured in the Committee's 2021 Annual Report, which is published on the Department's website at <https://www.dfa.ie/about-us/accountability/who-we-are-accountable-to/audit-committee/>.

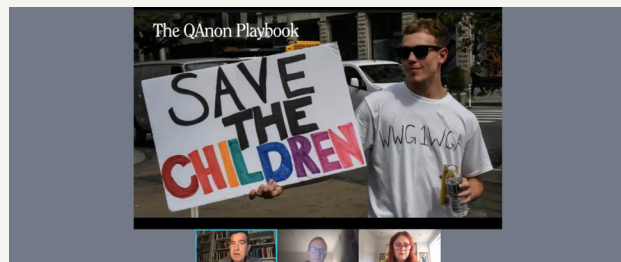


A demining project co-funded by Irish Aid and operated by Halo Trust in Vietnam © HALO Trust 2021.

Global Island Policy Series (GIPS)

The Policy Planning Unit (PPU) contributes to strategic policy formulation by providing forward-looking analysis of long-term trends and carrying out innovative policy projects.

PPU's Global Island Policy Series of seminars began to transition to an online platform in June 2020; this transition was consolidated in 2021. This enabled the Unit to attract a wider range of international speakers, and it empowered our Embassies abroad by giving them a greater degree of involvement in the proceedings. The webinars focused, inter alia, on Central and Eastern Europe, Measuring Economic Prosperity at Home and Abroad, President Biden's First 100 Days, Climate Change, and China's New Nationalism.



David Bruck (DFA), Mark Little (Kinzen), and Kristina Wilfore (She-Persisted.org) discuss current and future trends in disinformation and the ways to counter it in a GIPS webinar on Friday December 3 2021 © DFA

Evaluation and Audit Unit highlights 2021

Internal Audit of Department of Foreign Affairs Approach to Project Management	Programme Grant II and Humanitarian Formative Evaluation		
Internal Audits of Overseas Missions	Review of Ireland Mission Strategy in Vietnam and the Mekong sub-region		
Internal Audits within Bilateral Programmes – Consular Services, Procurement and Grant Management	Spending Review Management of the Department of Foreign Affairs' Overseas Leased Property Portfolio		Business advisory work on risk management and strategy planning
Audit Committee Annual Report and Secretariat	Strategic Evaluation of the Malawi Country Strategy 2016-2020		Evaluation Peer Review
Tracking and follow up of audit and evaluation report recommendations	Review work on Tanzania Mission Strategy 2017 to 2021 focusing on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment		The COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition

COVID reporting

In 2021, Policy Planning Unit (PPU) continued to play a central role in collecting, collating and circulating regular COVID-19 reports across the wider Government system. Drawing on Ireland's network of diplomatic missions, PPU's reports highlighted the latest updates from abroad regarding cases and mortality, public health measures such as lockdowns, and the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme worldwide, including strategies to encourage vaccine uptake. Missions also uploaded a total of 1,558 Country Situation Reports to DFA's database. In total, Policy Planning Unit produced 19 COVID update reports over 2021.

In addition to these regular reports, PPU responded to urgent requests from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), the Department of Health, and other Government Departments to provide briefing on specific topics such as vaccine certificates, restrictions on indoor dining in the hospitality sector, and ventilation measures in schools. These reports drew on best practice from EU partners and the wider world to inform Ireland's policy response. PPU also provided 7 flash reports to these recipients over the Christmas/holiday period. This reporting continued in 2022 as the pandemic moved into its next phase.

Cybersecurity

In August 2021, the Department appointed a Director of Cyber Security with overall responsibility for information security working closely with relevant national security agencies including the National Cyber Security Centre, An Garda Síochána and The Defence Forces regarding the evolving cyber security threat landscape.

The Director was a key contributor to the development of the National Cyber Security Centres "Public Sector Cyber Security Baseline Standards" published in November 2021.

The cyber security team launched mandatory cybersecurity awareness training for all staff to ensure staff are aware of current cyber threats.

Developing and investing in skills, expertise in cyber security is a key action area of the Departments ICT strategy.

Training & Development

2021 saw the continued rollout of the Department's Learning & Development Framework.

Due to the continued COVID-19 restrictions around face-to face meetings, Training & Development Unit continued to successfully deliver all staff training online.

Further improvements were made to the online delivery of the pre-posting programme. In 2021, we presented and facilitated 80 individual sessions to 178 staff. The majority of these sessions were recorded and made available to staff on the Learning Management System (LMS) platform.

We also successfully ran the second iteration of the new Heads of Mission (HoM) Programme for 25 new HoM's and introduced a Deputy Heads of Mission (DHoM) Programme for 46 new DHoM's. These leadership programmes were designed to support colleagues over the first 12 months in these challenging roles.

One of the highlights of 2021 was the rollout of a Staff Information Handbook for new staff joining the Department remotely; this comprehensive handbook complemented the newly introduced Buddy programme. During 2021, we also inducted 80 new colleagues into the Department.

In 2021 there were 73 One Learning courses completed by 620 colleagues. We also supported 33 officers through the Refund of Fees scheme at an approximate cost of €117,143.

2021 also saw the continued rollout of the Department's Foreign Language Policy. In 2021, we increased the number of officers undertaking foreign language lessons by 13% from the previous year.

Learning & Development – Local Staff

The HR Abroad Local Staff team were nominated, and subsequently won, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) award which recognises HR/L&D teams that have worked together to demonstrate excellence in HR leadership and partnered across the organisation to deliver value through people interventions that sustain and achieve business success.

Cost of training €14,236.04 for 1,107 local staff in 2021.

See Appendix II for detail on learning and development.

Appendix



Appendix I: DFA Financial Overview 2021

The Department's spending in 2021 was allocated across six Expenditure Programmes which correspond to the High-Level Goals as set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023.

Five of these Programmes were managed through the Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) expenditure framework and the remaining one through the Vote 27 (International Co-Operation) framework. The budget allocations for each Programme included pay and non-pay administration costs incurred by DFA business units in Ireland and Ireland's diplomatic missions across the world. The Programmes were implemented in support of the Department's main work priorities as outlined throughout this Annual Report.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is committed to the provision of value for money to Irish taxpayers and to transparency in all our financial dealings -

The total 2021 gross expenditure Allocation for Vote 28, including a Capital allocation of €10.5 million, was €281 million (versus €270 million in 2020, an increase of +4%). The overall administrative allocation for Vote 28 in 2021 was €207.56 million, which represented an increase of +4.8% on the 2020 allocation. The balance is represented by Programme expenditure.

The main focus of capital investment in 2021 was the Passport Reform Programme, the continuing investment in ICT to support Ireland's global network of diplomatic missions, as well as investment in State properties and the opening of new diplomatic missions under the Global Ireland programme.

The Department continued to advise and assist Irish citizens who found themselves stranded or in particularly vulnerable positions overseas as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In December 2021, the Department arranged a repatriation flight from Marrakesh in Morocco to facilitate the safe return of stranded Irish citizens there. Finance Division supported the operation through its online payment system which allowed for citizens to pay for their tickets securely in advance, mitigating the financial risk for the Department.

Any additional costs which arose from these repatriation operations were met through savings generated elsewhere in the 2022 allocation, primarily in the Travel and Subsistence budget due to the ongoing reduction in activities resulting from the pandemic.

In addition, and following approval from the Management Board, Finance Division also diverted un-used budgets resulting from the pandemic to facilitate colleagues to purchase equipment for use while they worked from home.

The Government provided a gross allocation to Official Development Assistance (ODA) of €868 million in 2021. The Department's Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) under Vote 27 - International Cooperation administered €571 million of this overall allocation. This represented an increase of some €30 million in overall ODA (or approx. 4%, on 2020 levels). It also represented the seventh successive year in which the Government increased the overall allocation to ODA and further evidence of Ireland's commitment to making incremental, sustainable progress towards achieving the UN's ODA target of 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2030.

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT REPORT

As per *Circular 20/2019: Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement*, the Department is required to publish details of the number and value of contracts over €25,000 by priority sector which have incorporated Green Public Procurement.

In the limited instances where the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) procures domestically in relation to these priority sectors it is our policy to use central Office of Government Procurement (OGP) frameworks which include relevant green considerations.

The majority of domestic procurement by the Department involves the engagement of professional services and consultancies and this is reflected in the table below.

Reference year 2021	A. Total number of contracts issued over €25,000 by priority sector	B. Total value of contracts issued over €25,000 by priority sector	C. Total number of contracts issued over €25,000 by priority sector which have incorporated GPP	D. Total value of contracts issued over €25,000 by priority sector which have incorporated GPP
Other Priority Sectors				
Consultancy/Advisory	17	€1,530,283.00	2	€70,000.00
General Services	9	€26,913,233.00	1	€480,000.00
Totals	26	€28,443,516.00	3	€550,000.00

Department of Foreign Affairs Accounts Vote 27: International Cooperation

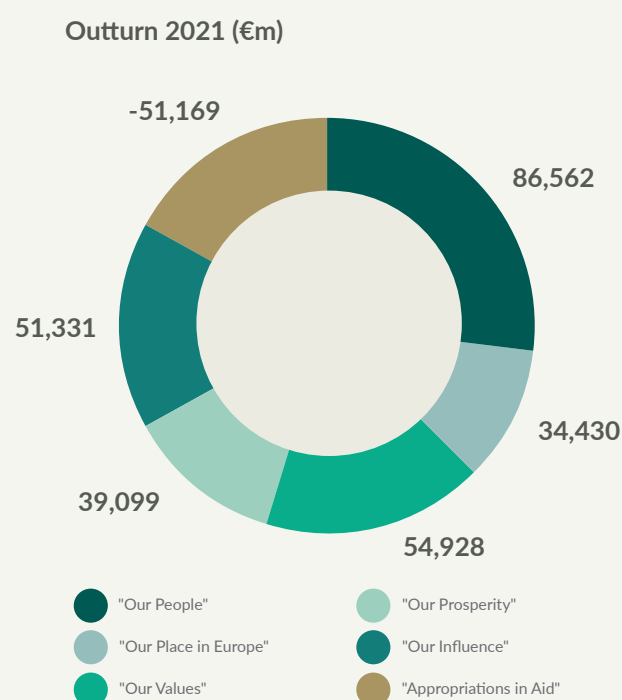
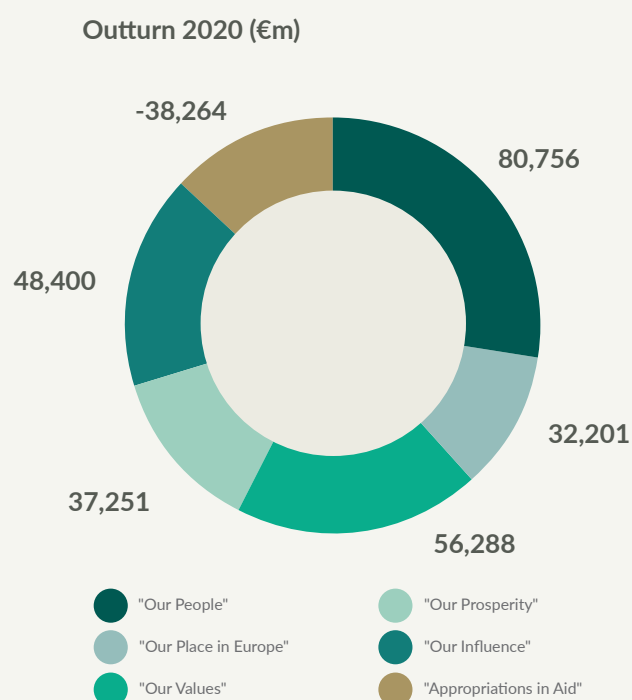
PROGRAMME: WORK ON POVERTY AND HUNGER REDUCTION

Outturn by Subhead Figures in €000's

Subhead	Outturn 2020	Outturn 2021
A.1 Administration - pay	18,968	20,861
A.2 Administration - non pay	12,947	14,163
A.3 Bilateral co-operation and humanitarian assistance	414,013	444,668
A.4 Contributions to international funds for the benefit of developing countries	57,137	45,507
A.5 Contributions to United Nations and other development agencies	44,654	43,074
Gross Expenditure	547,719	568,273
B Appropriations-in-Aid	1,046	1,041
Net Expenditure	546,673	567,232

Vote 28: Foreign Affairs

Programmes		Outturn 2020	Outturn 2021
A	 "Our People"	€80,756m	€86,562m
B	 "Our Place in Europe"	€32,201m	€34,430m
C	 "Our Values"	€56,288m	€54,928m
D	 "Our Prosperity"	€37,251m	€39,099m
E	 "Our Influence"	€48,400m	€51,331m
Total Expenditure		€254,896m	€266,350m
F	Appropriations in Aid	- €38,264m	- €51,169m
		€216,632m	€215,181 m



Appendix II: DFA Our Colleagues at Home and Abroad

The number of postings commenced in 2021 has increased by approximately 15% from 2020. The number of postings ending 2020 remained the same in 2021 whilst the number of cross postings increased by approximately 85%.

Local Staff numbers have increased by approximately 4% from 2020. Vote 27 staff numbers have decreased by 3 and Vote 28 staff numbers increased by 33 in 2021.

Posting Numbers



Number of postings commenced 2021
151

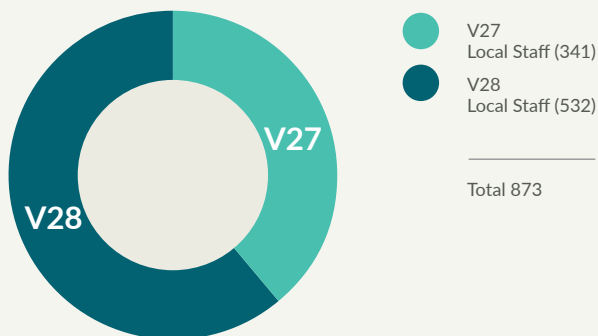


Number of postings ended 2021
121

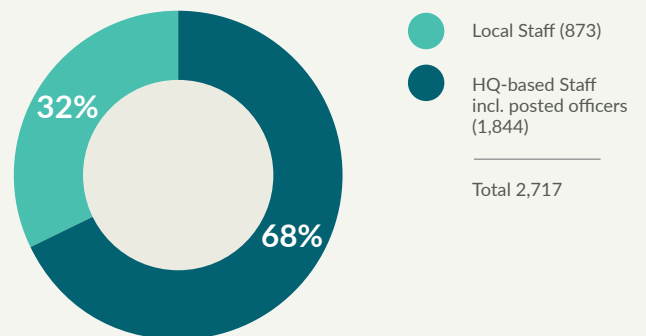


Number of cross postings 2021
26

Local Staff Numbers (Not including vacancies)

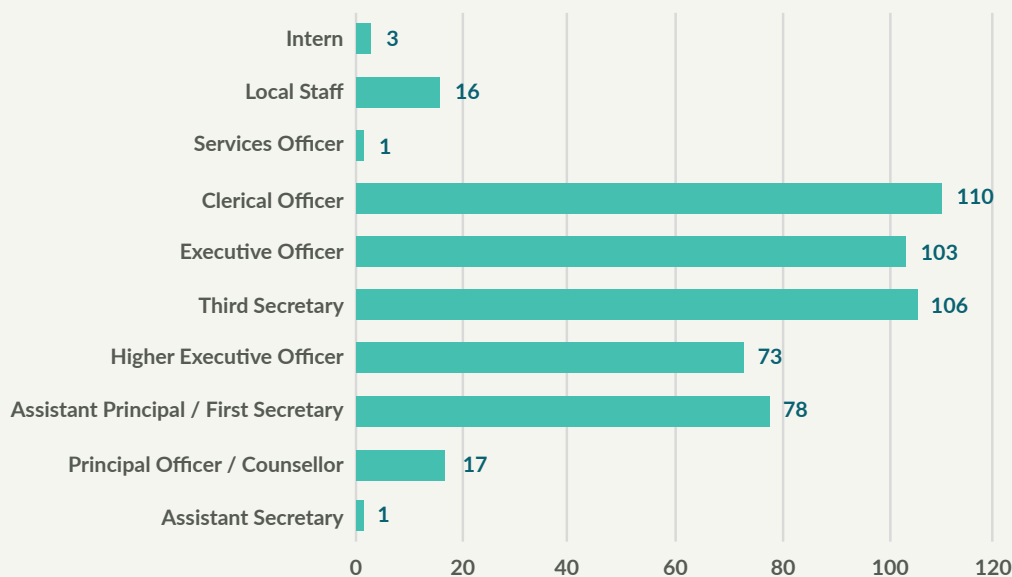


Proportion of Local Staff to HQ-based staff

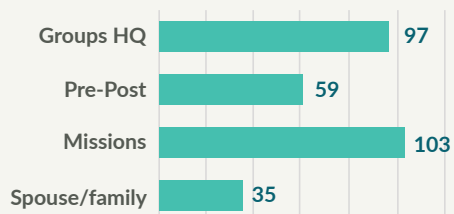


Training & Development

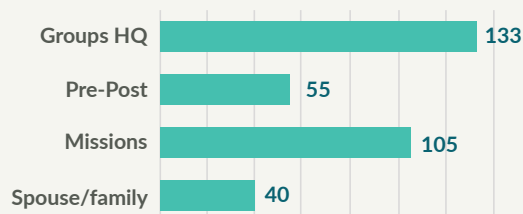
One Learning Courses 2021



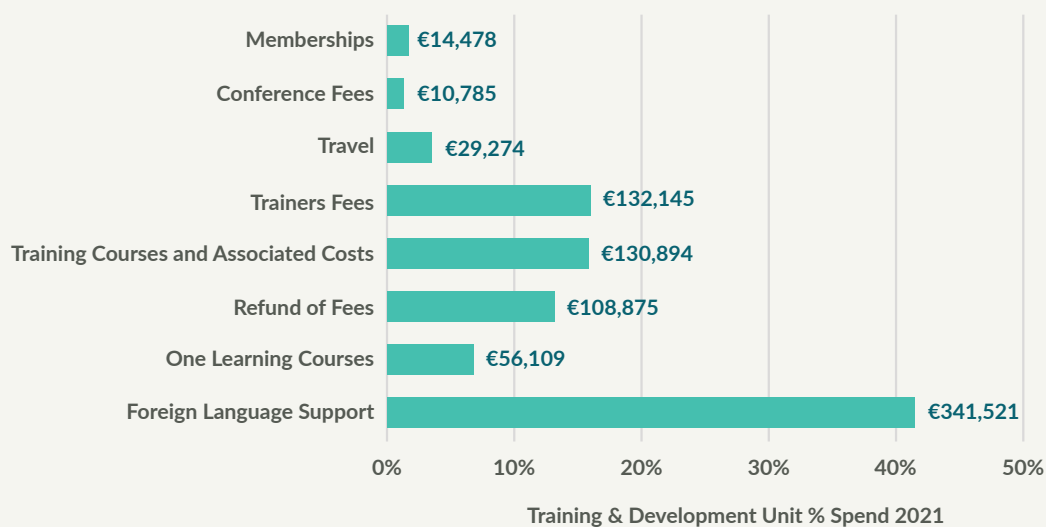
Foreign Language Lessons 2020



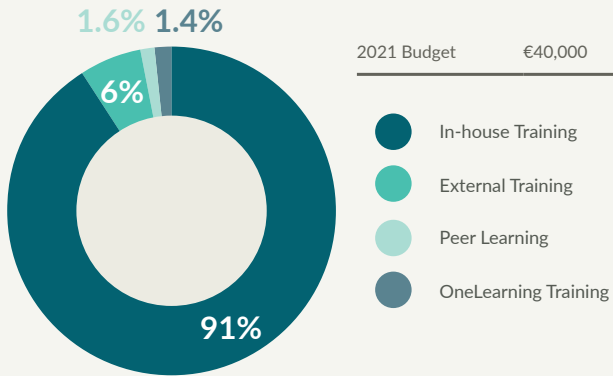
Foreign Language Lessons 2021



Training & Development Unit Spend 2021



Overall L&D Cost - Local Staff



Local Staff Numbers Trained & Cost - 2021

1,107 Attendees			
Outsourced OneLearning		In-house Peer Learning/Mentoring	
270 Vote 27	837 Vote 28		
889 Local			149 Posted
69 HQ			
€14,236 spend			

Local Staff Training in 2021



A more equal, diverse and inclusive Department

The Department of Foreign Affairs has continued to take actions to advance Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) throughout 2021. GEDI remains a core pillar of the Department's HR Strategy 2019-2022, which broadly integrated key elements of the 2018 Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

In 2021, DFA published its third report on the Gender Pay Gap along with an associated Action Plan. Since 2013, DFA has reduced its Gender Pay Gap from over 30% to 15% in 2021. As part of DFA's commitment to reducing the Gender Pay Gap, it led on the establishment of an Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Gender Pay Gap, which acts as an informal means of sharing best practice in the area of reducing the Gender Pay Gap and promoting Gender Equality.

DFA also undertook a major stream of work by engaging with the Irish Centre for Diversity and their "Investors in Diversity" Bronze and Silver Programme, with a view to assessing the Department's progress on diversity and inclusion and identifying areas where further attention

was required; this work fed into a new GEDI Action Plan launched in July 2022. DFA also published a Guide to Supports for Maternity, Adoptive and Parental Leave, providing a source of information and supports for colleagues and their line managers before, during and after such leave. It began work on a Guide to Supporting Transgender Colleagues and on a Menopause policy, which were both launched in 2022.

The GEDI working groups additionally organised events with significant staff engagement (e.g. for EU Diversity Month, Black History Month, and International Women's Day).

The Management Board Sub-Committee continues to act as the governance structure for the consideration of equality and diversity issues. Under the Sub-Committee structure, five voluntary staff Working Groups – on Gender, LGBT+, Social Inclusion & Disability, Multiculturalism and Parents & Carers - empower all colleagues to contribute to this agenda.



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

