

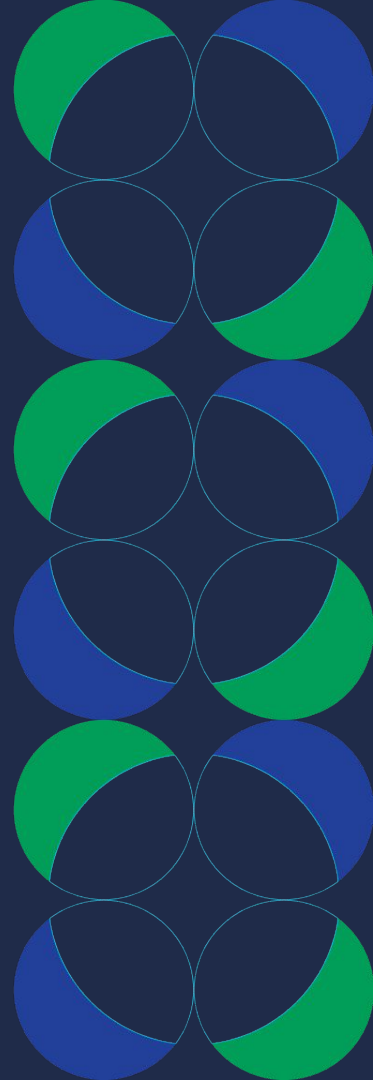


More in
Common

On the eve of the Irish EU Presidency

A snapshot of public opinion

Conleth Burns and Cian Ward
June 2026



Introduction

Ireland takes up the EU Council presidency keen to project a confident, values-led internationalism. But the public mood underneath is more guarded, more inward-looking and more sovereigntist than the presidency's outward agenda suggests.

Irish voters feel European and have settled the question of whether they belong in Europe – but they are far from settled on what direction Europe should take, or on how much of Ireland's own sovereignty they are willing to pool to get there.

They are sympathetic to causes abroad while holding firmly to neutrality, even as that word means quite different things to different people.

And despite an economy that leans heavily on the United States, voters are drifting away from America and towards Europe. The country's attention is on the cost of living, housing and immigration, not on the world stage.

This report sets out the national mood on the eve of the presidency, and then traces Irish attitudes across three arenas: Ireland and Europe, Ireland between America and Europe, and neutrality and Ireland's place in the world.

Executive summary

The national mood

The public's focus is squarely domestic – cost of living (66%) and housing (58%) dominate, while EU relations, defence and Ukraine barely register. Beneath the affordability squeeze runs deeper disillusionment: two in five would let the system "burn," three in five think it's rigged, and almost half sometimes feel like a stranger in their own country. Yet national pride stays high (71%) and holds across every party.

Ireland and Europe

Membership is settled – 61% call it a good thing and two-thirds would vote to remain – but what Ireland does with it is contested. Voters tilt towards national control over more cooperation and want Ireland to challenge the larger member states. The instinct is people-first and immediate: 63% prioritise workers' rights over competitiveness, and the public want a cost-of-living presidency.

Ireland, America and Europe

Despite the economy's dependence on FDI (particularly America FDI), Irish instincts now point east: by three to one (75% to 25%) voters prioritise closer ties with the EU over the US. Trust in America has collapsed – it's now the lowest-rated Western ally tested, and 73% have little or no trust in the US under Trump. Scepticism of Brussels and of Washington increasingly sits with the same voters, but when forced to choose, Ireland chooses Europe.

Neutrality and Ireland's role in the world

Neutrality endures but means different things – a third want it absolute, a third would leave room to depart. Voters back a self-reliant Europe (77%) but won't fund defence themselves, rating it either equal to or below housing and energy. Sympathy is clear: Ukraine over Russia by ten to one, and a clear pro-Palestinian conviction alongside strong backing for the Occupied Territories Bill. But what this sympathy means in practice can be limited.

On the eve of the EU presidency

The national mood



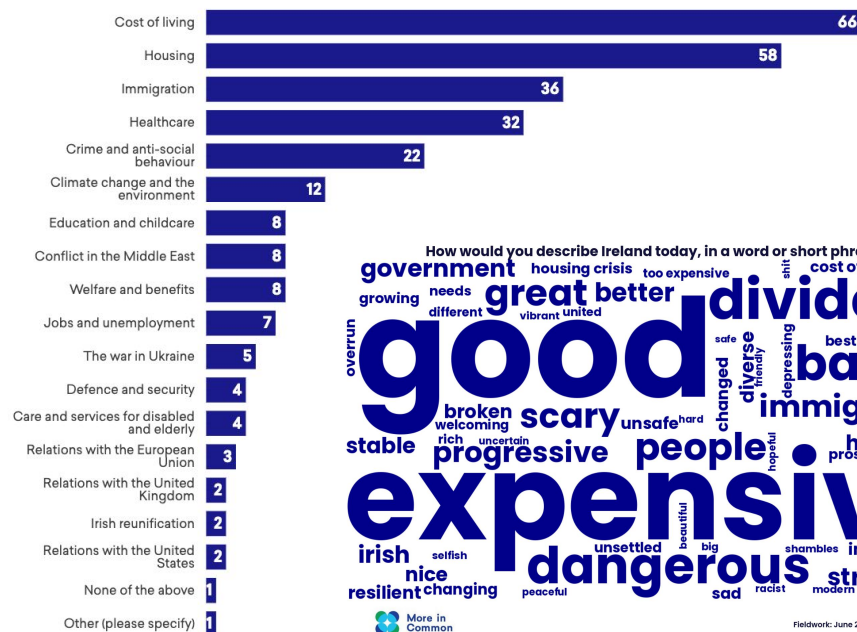
The desire for a cost-of-living presidency

The issues weighing on the Irish public's mind are those closest to home. Cost of living (66%) and housing (58%) dominate the biggest issues facing the country, with immigration (36%) and healthcare (32%) behind. Cost of living and housing have effectively swapped places since tracker polling last year – but both remain of top concern across the country.

When asked to describe the country today in a word or two, similar sentiments are shared with "expensive" overwhelming almost everything else.

The European questions that will define the presidency barely register: relations with the EU (3%), defence (4%) and the war in Ukraine (5%) all sit near the bottom of the biggest issues facing the country. The Irish public enters its presidency looking inward at affordability within its borders, just as the government is asked to look outward.

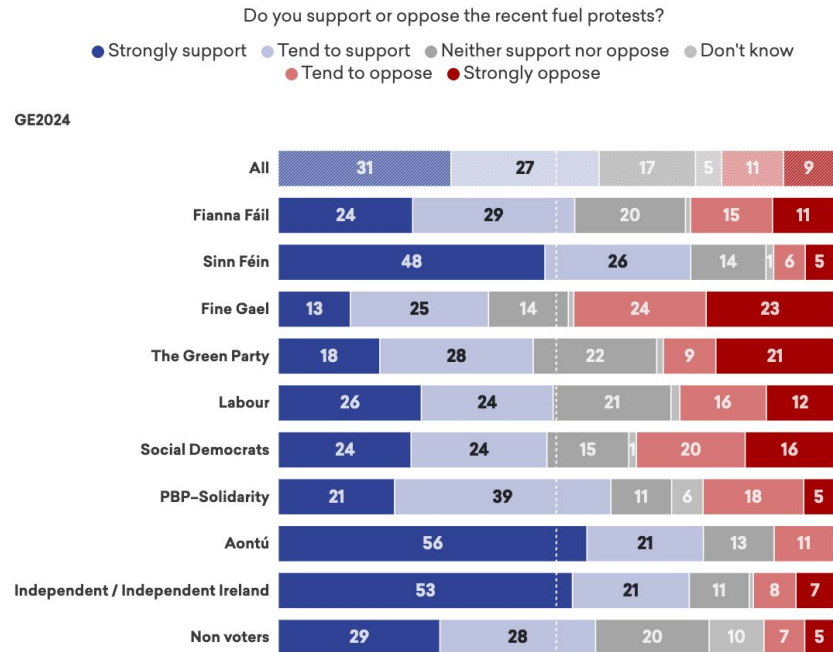
What do you think are the most important issues facing Ireland today? (Please select the three most important)



Ireland's protest voters

When fuel protests disrupted motorways, roads and other pieces of infrastructure in early April, most people were on the protesters' side – close to six in ten supported the protest, against around one in five opposed. Three in ten Irish voters strongly supported the fuel protests.

Strong support for the protests is highest among people who feel that Irish society doesn't value them (10 points higher support than those who say Irish society does value them), it was also significantly strong among Aontú, Independent Ireland and Sinn Féin voters.



More than fuel: two in five would let the system burn

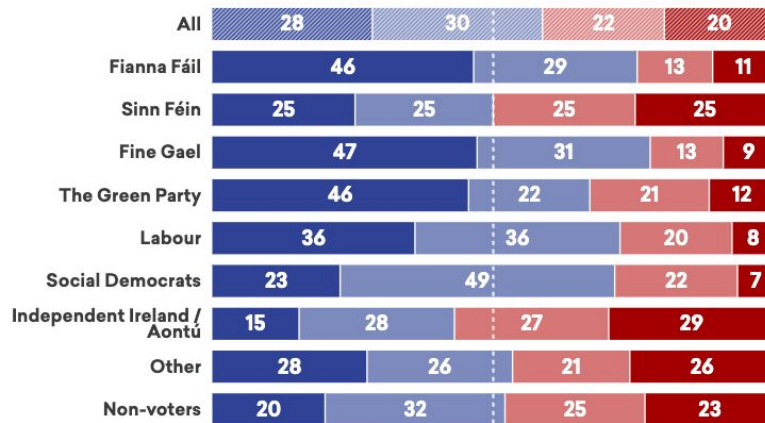
April's fuel protests were not only about fuel. The breadth of support for them points to something deeper running through Irish politics – a growing instinct to favour more radical action to tear the system down rather than repair it.

Asked whether our institutions are worth preserving and improving, or whether they should just be left to burn, two in five voters (41%) lean towards burning – a share identical to the number of Britons who hold this view.

The instinct runs strongest among the smaller and anti-establishment parties and independents, and reaches half of Sinn Féin voters. Among the government parties, it is significantly lower. The fuel protests point to a deeper sense of disillusionment and a question over whether the system is worth saving at all.

Which comes closest to your view? Please use a scale of 1-4 where 1 means you agree with the first statement and 4 means you agree with the second.

- 1 - Our political and social institutions are worth preserving and improving, not destroying.
 - 2
 - 3
- 4 - When I think about our political and social institutions, I cannot help thinking “just let them all burn.”

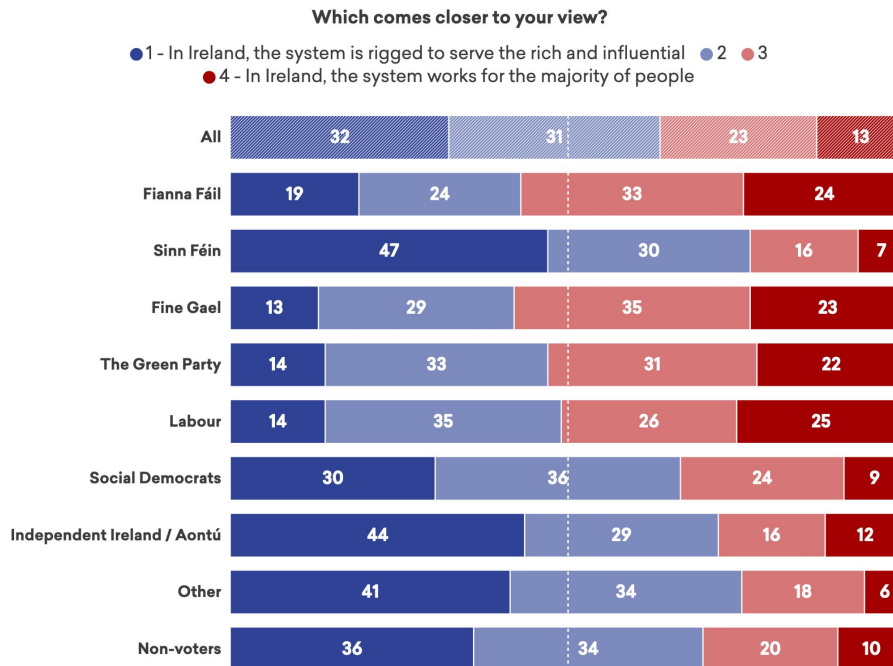


A system that is stacked against ordinary people

This burn-it-down instinct rests upon another widely held belief – by more than three in five Irish people – that in Ireland the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential, with just over a third thinking the system works for most people.

Unsurprisingly, voters for government parties are more likely to say they system works for most people.

However, a majority of both Green Party and Labour voters are also likely to say that the system works for most people.



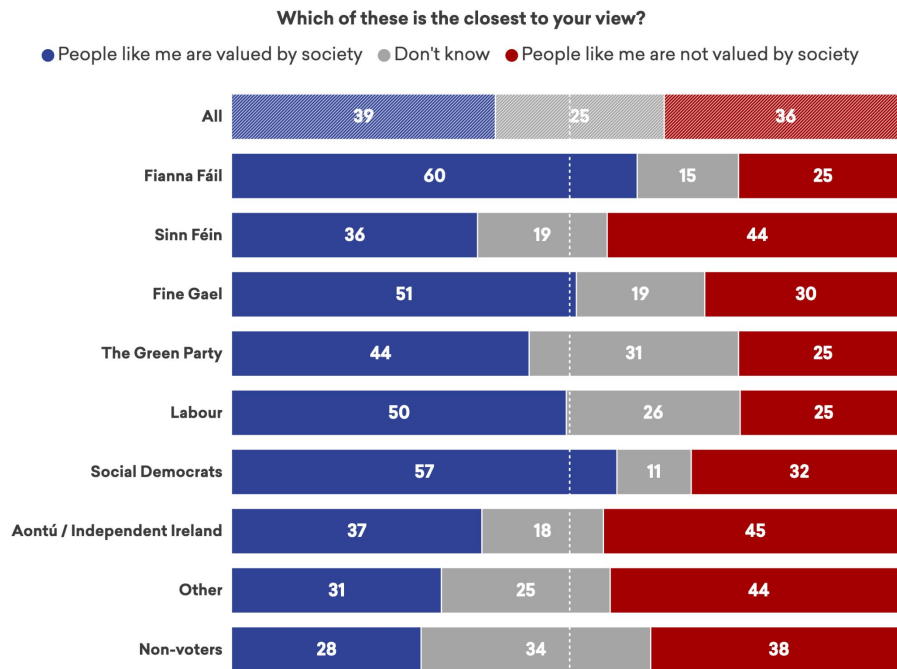
Feeling overlooked in Ireland today

If the system is widely seen as rigged, a significant minority of the public also feels personally overlooked by it.

More than a third (36%) say people like them are not valued by society, against 39% who feel they are.

This cleavage maps directly onto the protest divide: those feeling unvalued are concentrated among Sinn Féin (44%) and Independent Ireland and Aontú voters (45%), while Fianna Fáil and Social Democrat supporters are more secure (60%/57% feel valued).

Such a feeling tracks closely with stronger support for protests and an appetite to tear things down.



Loss of belonging: a stranger in my own country

That feeling of being overlooked shades, for many, into something sharper: a sense of not belonging in their own country. Almost half (47%) say they sometimes feel like a stranger in their own country.

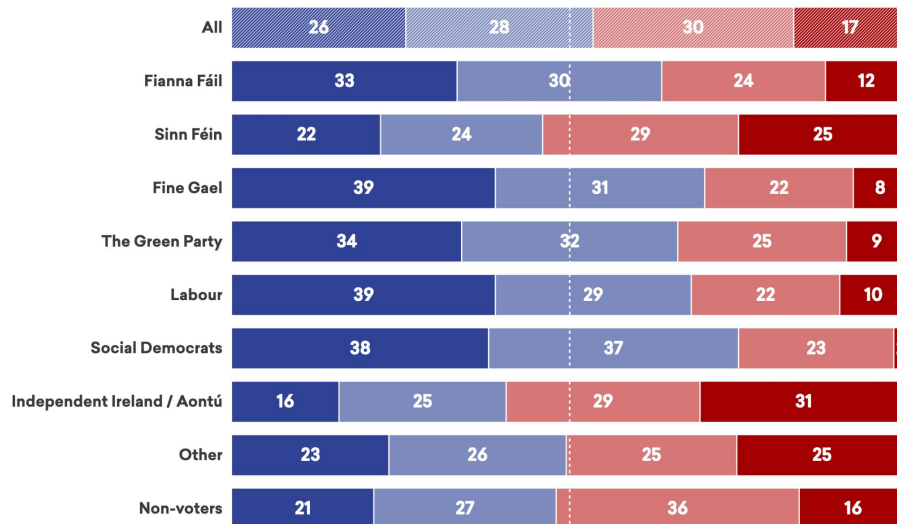
The feeling is far from uniform – it is most acute Independent Ireland, Aontú and Sinn Féin voters, six in ten of whom recognise the feeling, and notably lower among Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Social Democrat, Labour and Green Party supporters.

Such views also come across strongly in focus groups when discussing recent changes in immigration policy in Ireland particularly around IPAS centres – a topic More in Common will explore further with a forthcoming report on immigration and integration in the Autumn.

For each statement, please indicate how well it describes you

Sometimes I feel like a stranger in my own country

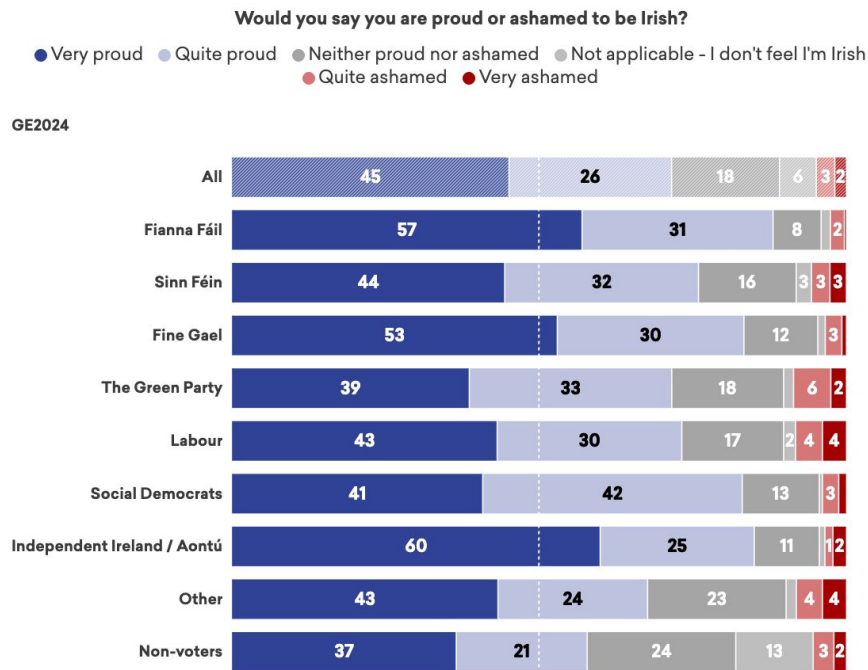
● Does not describe me at all ● Does not describe me particularly well ● Describes me quite well ● Describes me very well



Pride in being Irish and confident of our role in the world

Beneath the discontent sits a deep and stable national pride. Seven in ten Irish people (71%) say they are proud to be Irish, with very few ashamed – and that national pride holds across every party and is held strongly both by voters and government parties and anti-establishment voters such as Independent Ireland/Aontú.

Irish voters are also confident about their own role in the world. Three in five Irish people (61%) think Ireland is perceived positively by the rest of the world, and most (53%) also feel Ireland has its own distinct voice on the world stage and more think its international reputation has improved or maintained in recent years than worsened.



Clear concerns about the economy, but a sense of agency about the future

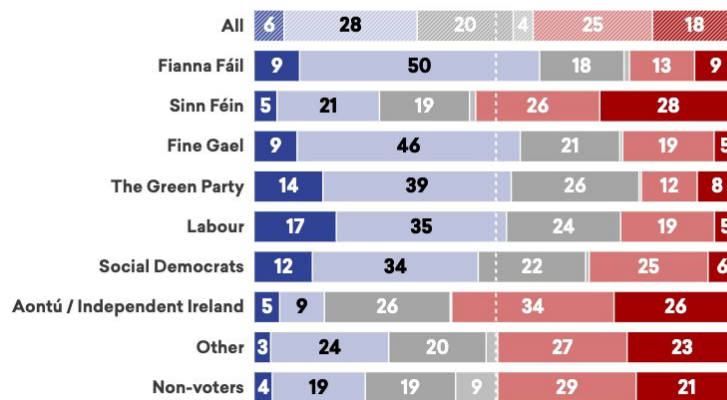
Sentiment about the economy is more pessimistic than optimistic – more than four in ten (43%) think the current situation in Ireland is either fairly or very bad, against a third (34%) who say it is fairly or very good.

However, that pessimism shouldn't be mistaken for fatalism. Asked whether Ireland's future depends mainly on its own decisions or on what happens in the wider world, the public splits down the middle – half lean towards Ireland having agency over its own path rather than being buffeted by international events.

Generally speaking, how would you describe the current economic situation in Ireland?

● Very good ● Fairly good ● Neither good nor bad ● Don't know ● Fairly bad ● Very bad

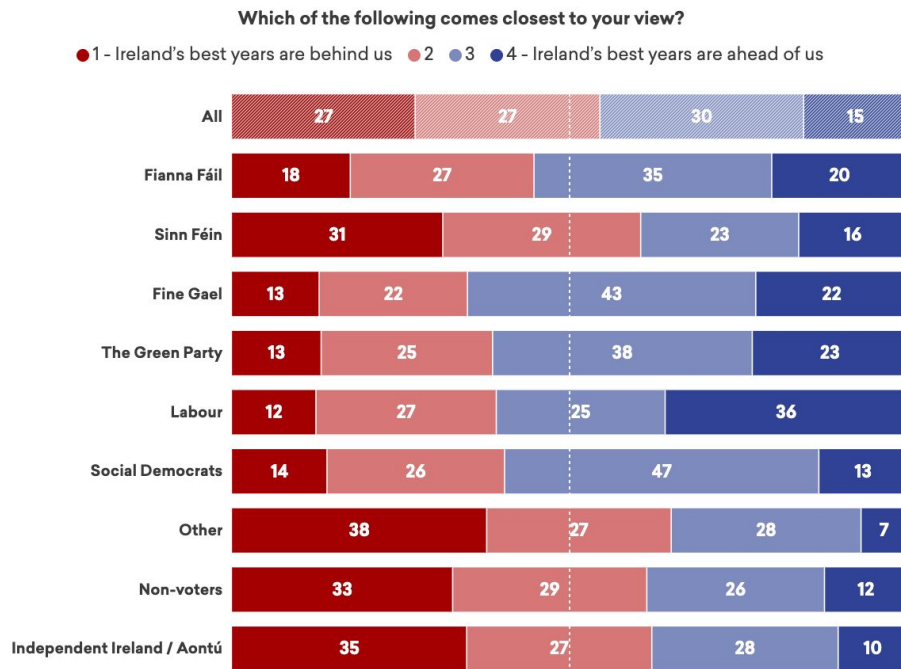
GE2024



Doubts about the future, but local optimism

However, ask whether Ireland's best years are ahead or behind and Irish public's confidence softens. The Irish public are slightly more like to think its best years are behind it (54%) than ahead of it (45%). There are clear differences across the political spectrum. Optimism for the future is highest among Fine Gael (65% ahead), Green and Labour voters (both 61% ahead), while the pessimism clusters among Independent Ireland/Aontú and non-voter voters (both 62%) who believe that Ireland's best days have passed.

Yet zoom in to people's own local area and the mood lifts slightly: asked to describe their local area, the words that dominate are "quiet", "friendly", "peaceful", "good", and "safe". As with More in Common's findings in many other countries, the local picture is more optimistic than the national one.



On the eve of the EU presidency

Ireland and Europe

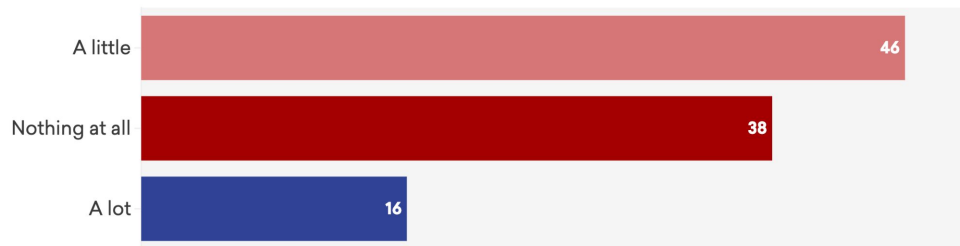


The Presidency has barely registered

Awareness of the Presidency is shallow. Only 16 per cent say they have heard "a lot" about it, 46 per cent "a little," and 38 per cent nothing at all.

For most of the public, the centrepiece of Ireland's year on the European stage is, as yet, off the radar – a low salience that came through clearly in our focus groups in the last couple of weeks.

How much, if anything, have you heard about Ireland's upcoming presidency of the EU Council?



"It's large security measures. The fact that Dublin Castle has closed down that cafe... There's not a huge amount of reporting on it and I don't think many people are looking into it either."

Barry, Galway West



"I just think we need to focus on what's going on internally... they want to seem like they're doing God's work by helping anybody else out. But what's going on internally inside of Ireland, they're not really focused on that."

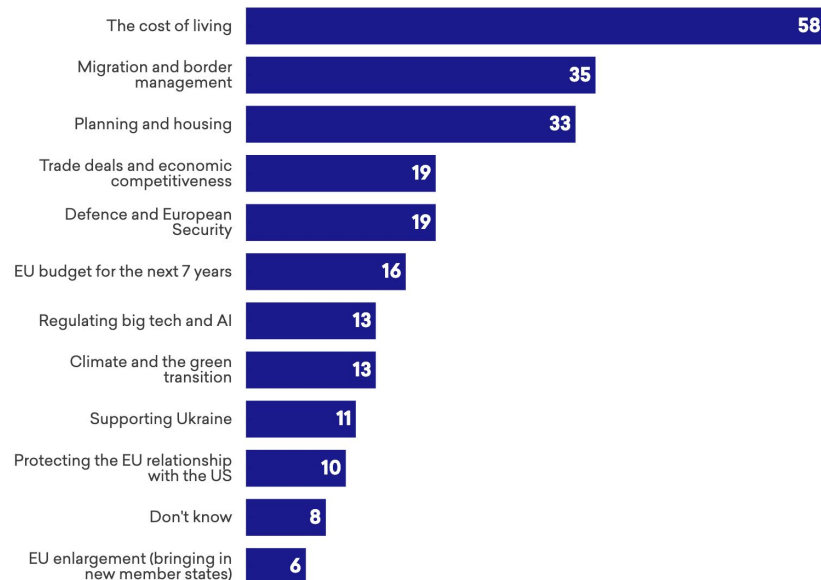
Joe, Dublin Central

Cost of living dominates presidency priorities

The cost of living dominates as Irish public's priority for Ireland's EU presidency, selected by three in five Irish people (58%) and topping the list across almost every group, with migration and border management (35%) and planning and housing (33%) completing the top three priorities.

Beneath this top level consensus, there are significant divides. Migration is the most polarising priority, ranging from 69% among Independent Ireland/Aontú voters down to just 19% among Green voters, and it rises steadily with age. Gender splits the electorate along a domestic-versus-international axis: women are more likely to prioritise housing and the cost of living more, while men are more likely to prioritise defence, Ukraine and regulating big tech and AI.

Which of the following should be Ireland's top priorities during its presidency?
Select up to three

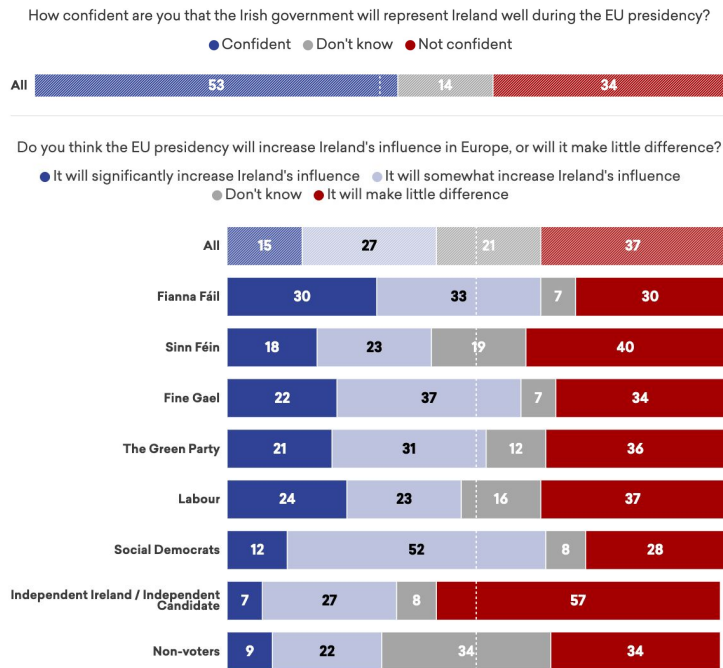


Confidence in representing Ireland, but split on whether the Presidency will increase Irish influence in Europe

Most Irish people are confident the government will represent Ireland well during the upcoming Presidency – just over half (53 per cent) think the Government will represent Ireland well during the Presidency; while a third (34 per cent) are not.

The doubt is concentrated among Independent Ireland/Aontú (60 per cent not confident) and Sinn Féin (50 per cent) voters.

But the public are split over whether the Presidency will increase Ireland's influence in Europe. Only 42 per cent think the Presidency will increase Ireland's influence in Europe (only 15% think it will significantly increase), against 37 per cent who expect it to make little difference.



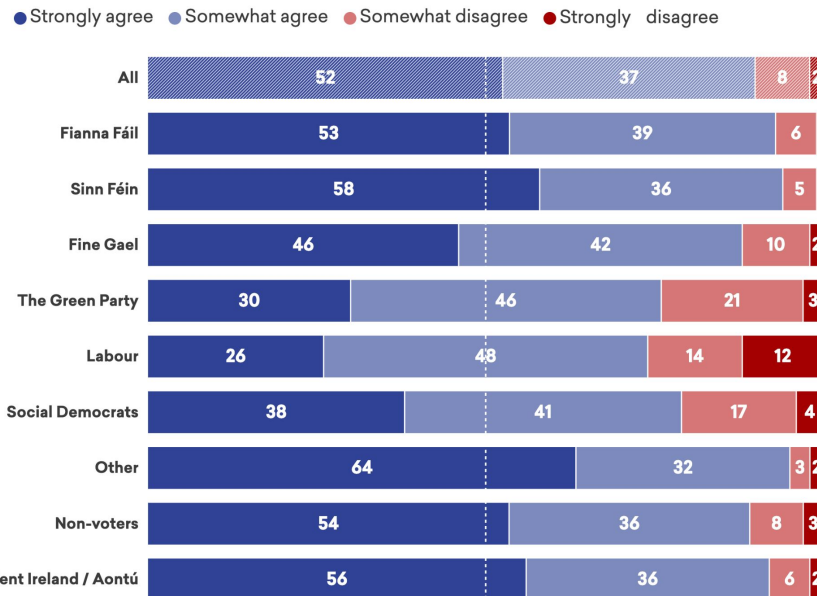
Anxious about the world, but focused on home

Anxiety about the world lies underneath the public's view of the presidency. Nearly nine in ten Irish voters (89 per cent) think the world is becoming a more dangerous place. The view is near-universal – strongest among Sinn Féin and Independent Ireland/Aontú voters, and weakest among Social Democrat, Labour, Green and People Before Profit voters, but even then more than three quarters are anxious about the state of the world.

But that sense of anxiety about the state of the world doesn't push foreign affairs up the priority list. It sits alongside a public preoccupied with the cost of living, housing and immigration. Asked to name the single biggest threat to Ireland's security, voters put uncontrolled migration first (30 per cent), then conflict in the Middle East (17 per cent), cyber attacks (17 per cent) and rising extremism in Europe (16 per cent). The threats the Presidency tends to foreground come lower down: Russian activity in Irish waters (14 per cent), a breakdown in relations with the US (10 per cent) and the war in Ukraine (8 per cent).

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The world is becoming a more and more dangerous place



EU membership isn't in question from the Irish public

Ireland's EU membership is one of the few settled facts in Irish politics. Six in ten voters (61 per cent) say EU membership is a good thing for the country, against just 16 per cent who say it is bad. Asked how they would vote in an "Irexit" referendum, two-thirds (67 per cent) would vote to remain and only 17 per cent to leave.

That consensus reaches into every group. Remain majorities run from 87 per cent of Fine Gael and 82 per cent of Fianna Fáil voters down through Sinn Féin (63 per cent). The remain majority includes Independent Ireland and Aontú voters where more voters would want to remain (54 per cent) than leave (37 per cent).

No part of the Irish electorate is majority-Eurosceptic. What's contested is not the fact of Irish membership but what Ireland does with that membership.

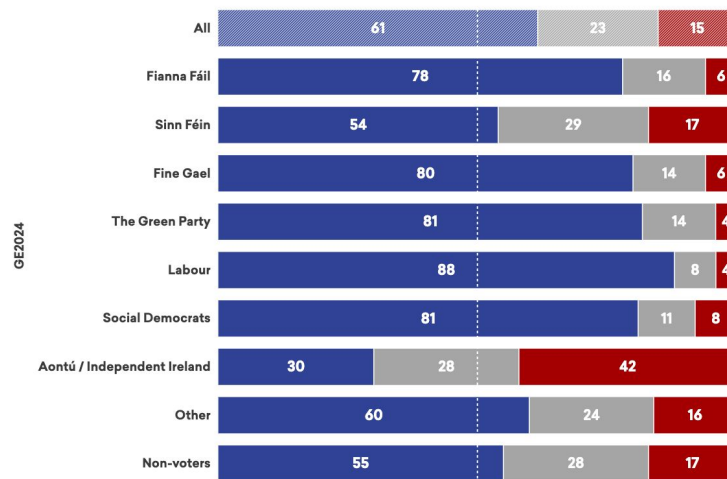
If there were a referendum on Ireland leaving the EU ("Irexit"), how would you vote?

● For Ireland to REMAIN in the EU ● Don't know ● Would not vote
● For Ireland to LEAVE the EU



Generally speaking, would you say that Ireland's membership of the EU is...?

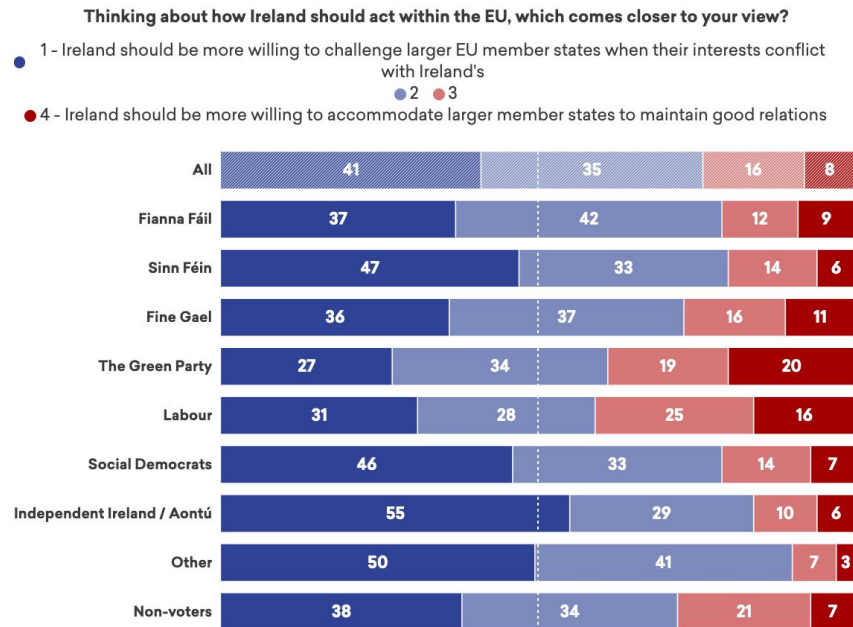
● A good thing ● Neither a good nor a bad thing ● A bad thing



Inside Europe, national interest comes first

The same voters who want Ireland to stay in the EU also want the country to have a greater grasp of the the reins. Asked to choose between more European cooperation and more national control, voters tilt to national control (45 to 41 per cent) – and more than three-quarters (76 per cent) say Ireland should be more willing to challenge the larger member states rather than accommodate them.

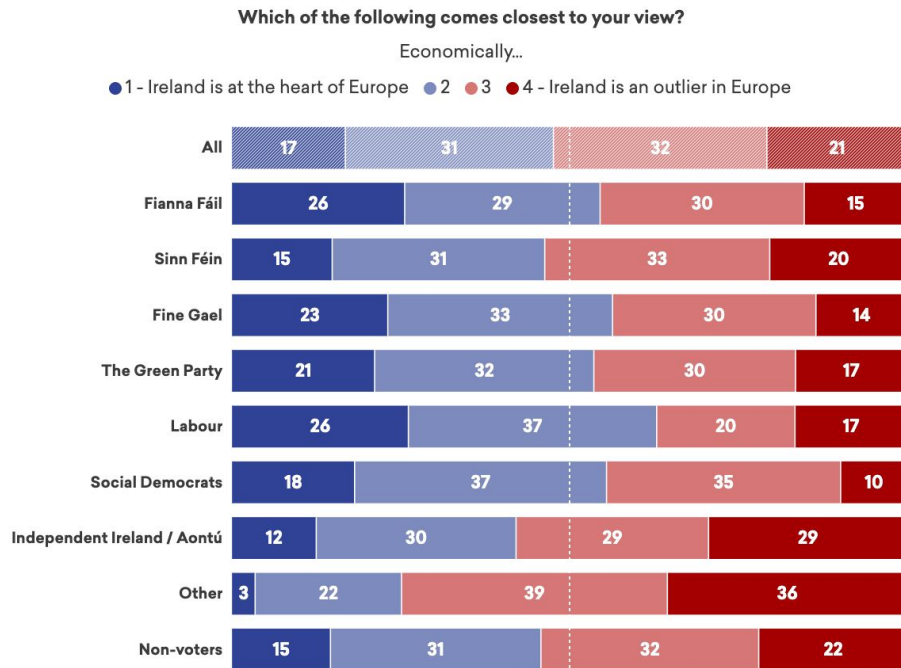
This is where voters of the governing parties and the rest of the electorate part company. Fianna Fáil (59 per cent) and Fine Gael (62 per cent) are comfortable ceding ground to "more cooperation"; the Independent Ireland and Aontú bloc wants national control by two to one (75 per cent), with Sinn Féin close behind (55 per cent). Irish voters lean towards protecting national control with Ireland inside the EU – something the Presidency's consensus-building role will be measured against at home.



A committed member that still feels like an outsider

The Irish public is committed to Europe, but doesn't quite feel at the centre of it. Asked to place the country on a scale from "at the heart of Europe" to "an outlier," a small majority (53 per cent) come down on the outlier side economically. On culture, voters are split almost down the middle – 51 per cent feel close to the heart, 49 per cent on the outside.

The sense of distance is sharpest among the parties most sceptical of Brussels. Among Independent Ireland and Aontú voters, 57 per cent see Ireland as an economic outlier, and Sinn Féin aren't far behind at 54 per cent. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael voters feel more woven in with more than half feeling at the heart of Europe.



Conditional support for EU enlargement

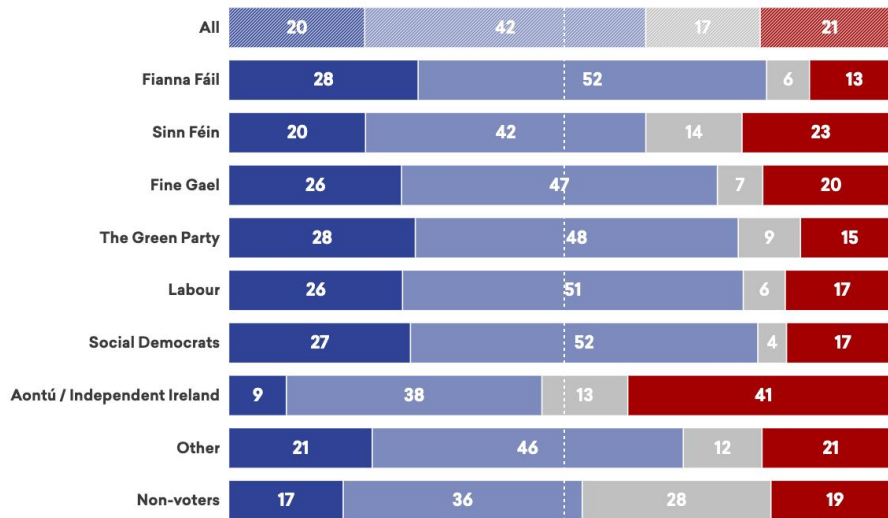
Support for Irish EU membership doesn't stretch to an open door for new members. Only 20 per cent of voters want the EU to keep expanding as a point of principle. Whereas a plurality – 42 per cent – would welcome new members, but only if they fully meet the standards, while 21 per cent think the EU is big enough already, while another 17 per cent don't know.

Put together, most Irish voters are open to enlargement in principle but wary about letting standards slip to get there. A conditional mood worth knowing as enlargement plays an important part in the EU Presidency discussions.

Outright opposition to enlargement stays low across most of the electorate and only really gathers among Independent Ireland and Aontú voters.

The EU is currently in negotiations with several countries about joining, including countries in the Western Balkans and potentially Ukraine. Which comes closest to your view?

- The EU should continue to expand and welcome new members
- The EU should be open to new members but only if they fully meet the standards
- Don't know
- The EU has enough members and should not expand further



A people-first approach to competitiveness

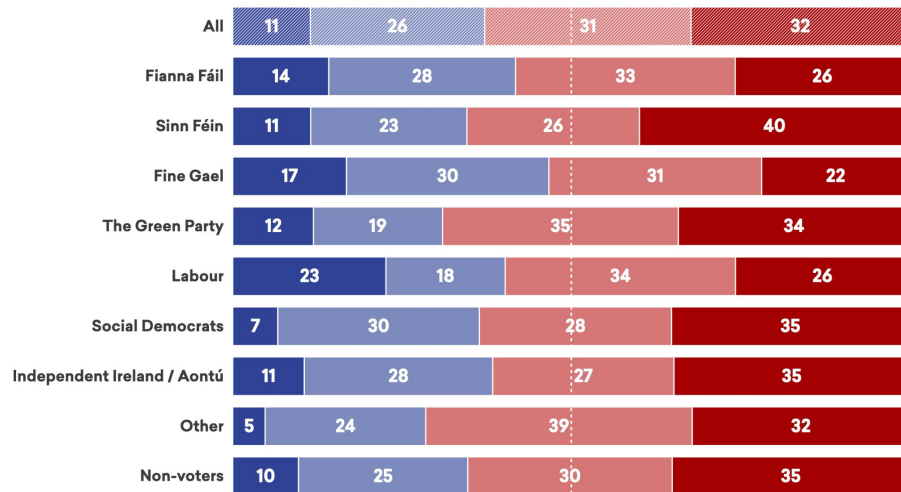
Many debates in Brussels in the past year have centred on how to make Europe leaner and more competitive – but Irish voters are pulling the other way.

Asked to choose, nearly two in three (63%) want the EU to prioritise workers' rights and public services even at a cost to business, against just over a third (37%) who would put competitiveness first even if it means fewer protections for workers.

The instinct is broadly shared, and strongest on the left – around two in three Sinn Féin (66%), Green (69%) and Social Democrat (63%) voters come down on worker protections, but even Fine Gael, the only party where the split is close to even, tilts towards workers (53%) over competitiveness (47%).

Thinking about the future direction of the European Union, which comes closer to your view?

- 1 - The EU should focus on being as competitive as possible, even if this means fewer protections for workers
- 4 - The EU should prioritise workers' rights and public services, even if this makes it harder for businesses to succeed



Ease the short term pain on bills

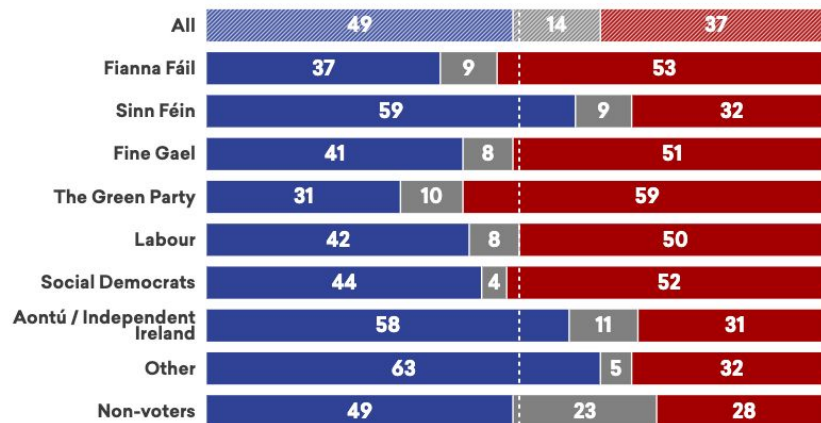
While many debates in Brussels focus on investing in Europe’s long-term strength, Irish voters want the focus to both be more immediate and closer to home.

Nearly half (49%) would bring down the cost of living now even if that means Europe falls behind economically, against just under two in five (37%) who want to invest for the future.

Voters are divided on how Europe is faring economically: a slim majority (51 per cent) think it's holding its own in the world economy, while the rest are less sure. That helps explain why attention sits on day-to-day costs rather than Europe's medium-term competitiveness.

Thinking about the future direction of the European Union, which comes closer to your view?

- To bring down the cost of living for people right now, even if that means Europe falls further behind economically in the short term
- Don't know
- To invest in making Europe's economy stronger for the future, even if that doesn't immediately help with the cost of living



On the eve of the EU presidency

Ireland, America and Europe



Irish public recognise reality of dependence on FDI

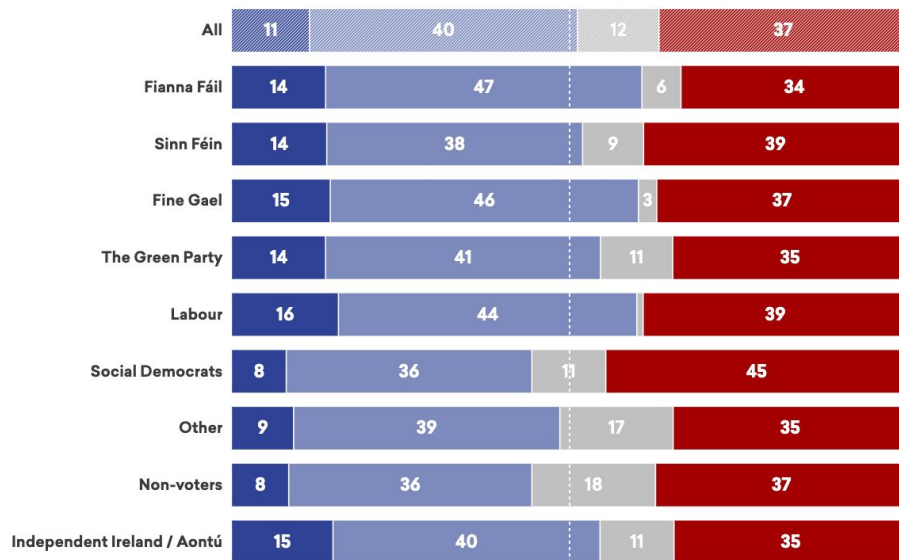
Irish voters are clear-eyed about what powers and is likely to power the economy in the coming years.

Asked what will drive growth over the next ten years, just 11 per cent point to Irish-owned firms. The rest name foreign multinationals (37 per cent) or say it depends on both (40 per cent) – so more than three-quarters see the multinational sector as central to or a part of Ireland's future prosperity.

This isn't contested across party lines: the dependence is understood and almost accepted as simple fact. What divides voters isn't whether the model exists, but how secure it feels and whether it's the model Irish voters want their future to be based on.

Thinking about Ireland's economic growth over the next ten years, which comes closest to your view?

- Growth will be driven mainly by Irish-owned firms
- Growth will depend roughly equally on both
- Don't know
- Growth will be driven mainly by foreign multinationals

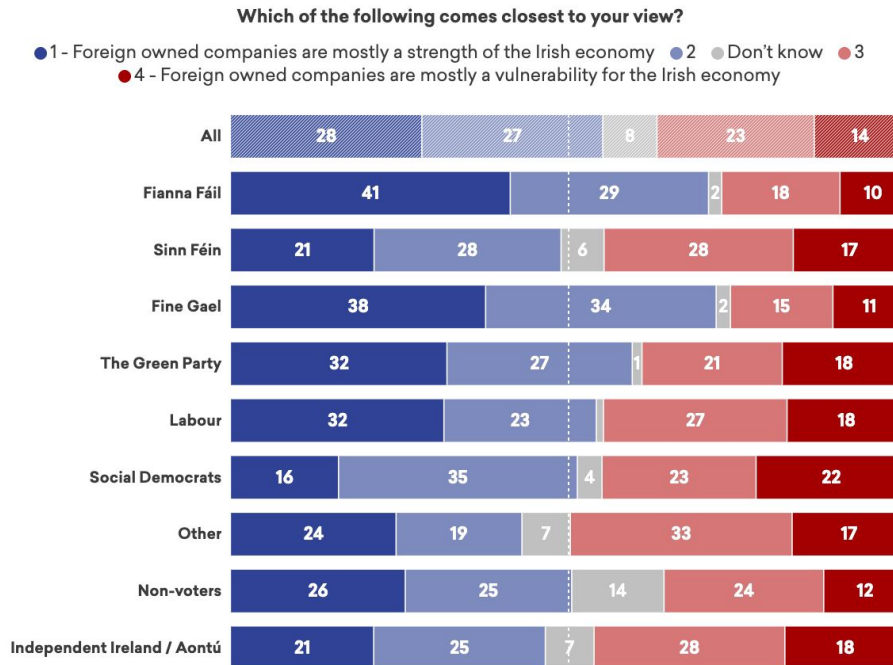


FDI model is a strength today, but questions over future

Voters value the role of multinational companies in Ireland’s economic growth: 55 per cent call foreign-owned companies mostly a strength for Ireland, against 37 per cent who lean towards vulnerability. But the public are split when asked whether they trust Ireland’s FDI model to keep delivering, only 47 per cent are confident and 43 per cent are not.

More than two-thirds of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael voters stay confident, but among Independent Ireland and Aontú voters a majority are not (53 per cent), one in five "not at all."

The voters keenest to keep Brussels at arm’s length are the same ones who doubt the American model – sceptical of the influence of both at once.



Rebalancing the FDI model back to Irish growth

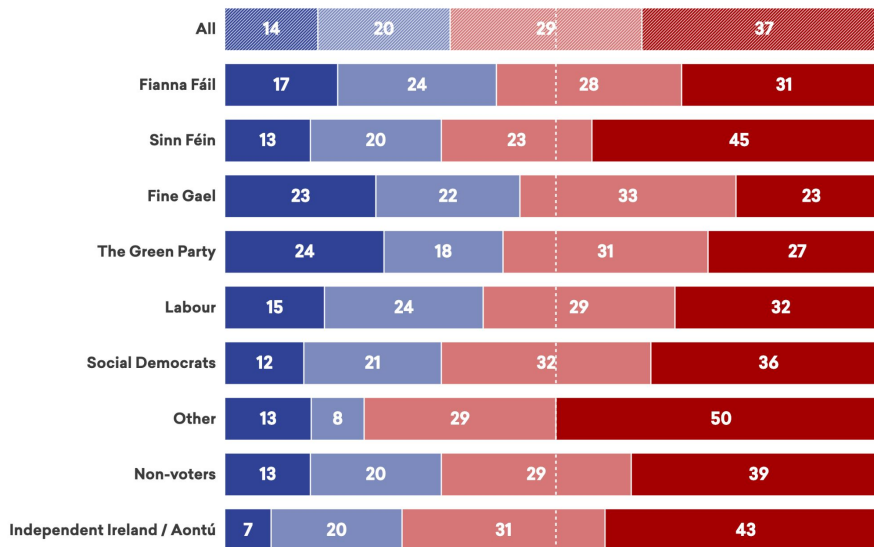
The Irish public see a significant part of its economic success being built on foreign direct investment – but now they see a bigger economic priority as tilting the balance back towards home.

Asked which should matter more, two in three (66 per cent) choose supporting Irish-owned businesses to grow and compete, against just 34 per cent who pick attracting more multinationals.

However, only 11 per cent expect Irish firms to drive growth over the next decade, against 37 per cent who say multinationals and 40 per cent who say both. The instinct is to rebalance towards home – even though most don't expect home-grown firms to be doing the heavy lifting.

Which should be the bigger economic priority for the Irish government?

- 1 - Attracting more foreign multinationals to invest in Ireland
- 2
- 3
- 4 - Supporting Irish-owned businesses to grow and compete



Asked to choose, Ireland picks Europe over USA

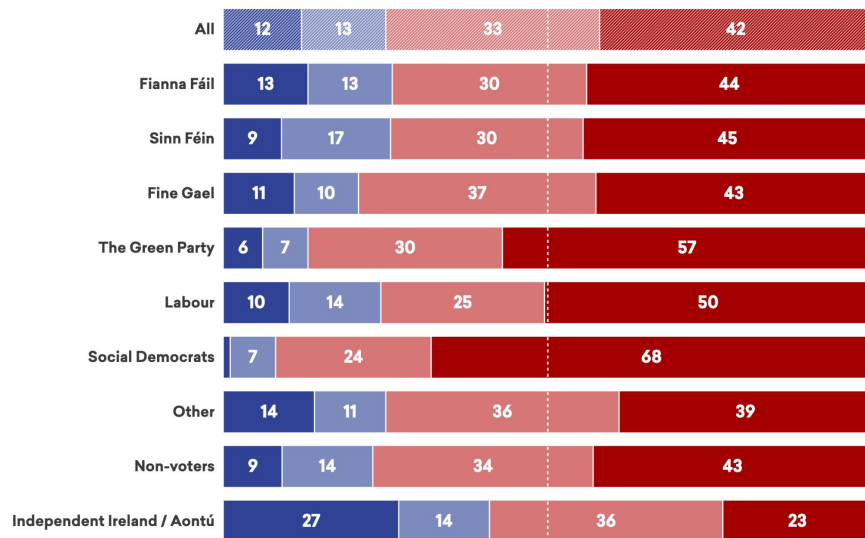
For all the economy's reliance on the United States, voters' instincts point east. Asked which should be Ireland's higher priority over the next decade – closer economic ties with the US or with the EU – 75 per cent lean to Europe and just 25 per cent to America. The pull holds across every group, from Social Democrat, Labour and Green voters at one end to Independent Ireland and Aontú at the other (still 59 per cent).

The same Europe-facing and domestic-rooted instincts shows up in economic priorities: by two to one (66 to 34 per cent), voters would rather the Government grow Irish-owned businesses than chase more multinationals.

Voters lean towards Europe even as the economy stays closely tied to the US. The Presidency's focus on Europe matches where the Irish public's instinct already sits.

Looking at the next decade, which should be Ireland's higher priority?

- 1 - Building and maintaining closer economic ties with the United States
- 2 - Building and maintaining closer economic ties with the European Union
- 3 - Building and maintaining closer economic ties with the United States
- 4 - Building and maintaining closer economic ties within the European Union

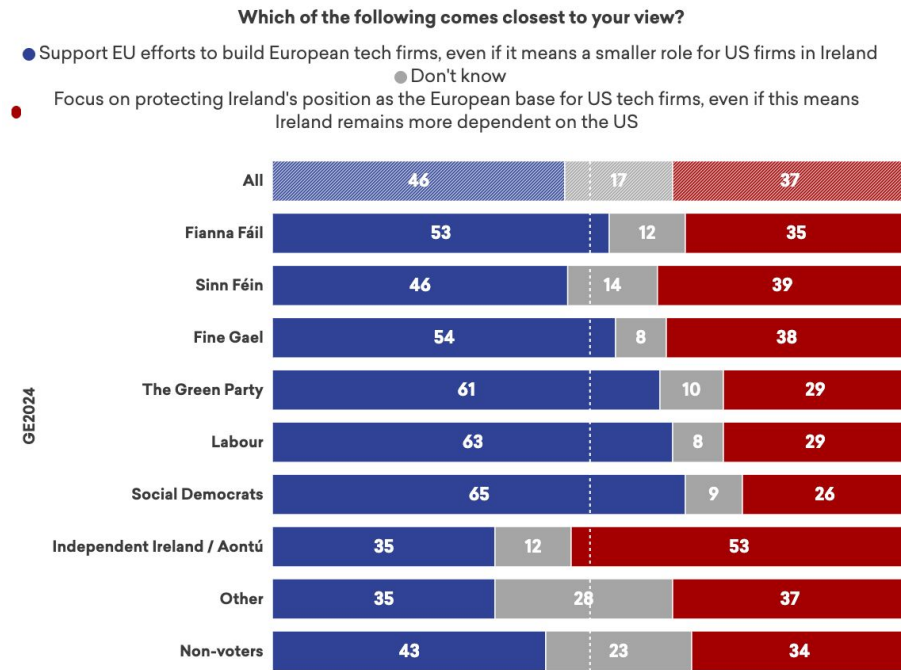


Cautious backing for EU tech sovereignty

Asked whether they'd support the EU building its own tech firms to rival Apple, Google and Meta, 46 per cent said they would – even if it meant a smaller role for Ireland as the European home of US tech – against 37 per cent who would protect Ireland's position as that base.

In other words, a plurality of the Irish public would accept a smaller role for Ireland as the US tech base in exchange for a stronger European tech sector.

Only Independent Ireland and Aontú voters lean the other way, prioritising the US base (53 per cent) and the jobs that come with it. Across the rest of the electorate, the European instinct wins – most strongly among Social Democrat, Labour and Green voters but also government voters – even when the cost is spelled out.



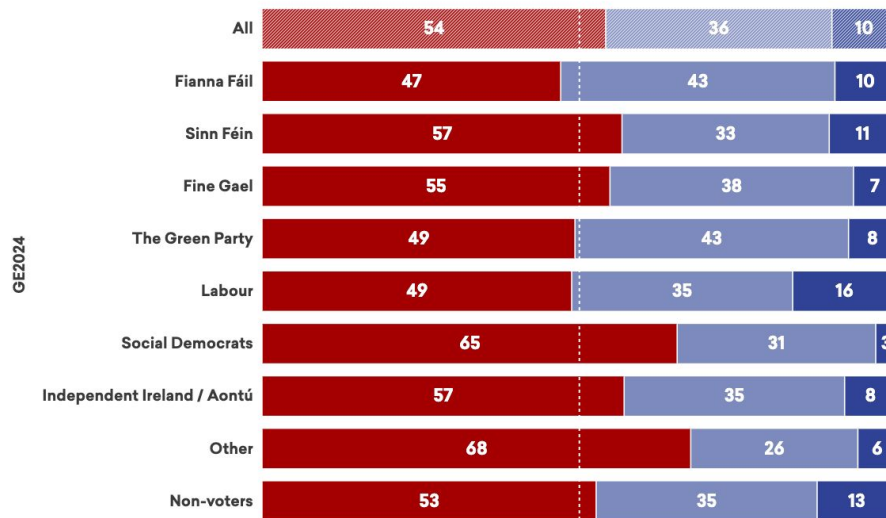
Sceptical of the firms on their doorstep

More than half of voters (54 per cent) say US tech firms based in Ireland – Apple, Google, Meta – have too much power over decisions made in the country, against 36 per cent who see their influence as deserved. While two in five Irish voters (40 per cent) think Ireland, as their lead EU regulator, is too lenient, with just 10 per cent saying too tough.

Scepticism is broad but tilts left and to the margins of the Irish electorate: Sinn Féin (57 per cent), Social Democrats (65 per cent) and Independent Ireland/Aontú (57 per cent) are most likely to say these firms have too much power, with Fianna Fáil least concerned (47 per cent). On regulation, the same pattern holds: most think Ireland is too soft on these firms rather than too tough.

Thinking about US tech companies based in Ireland - like Apple, Google and Meta - which comes closer to your view?

- They have too much power and influence over decisions made in Ireland
- The power and influence they have is deserved
- They should have more influence and power for what they bring to the country



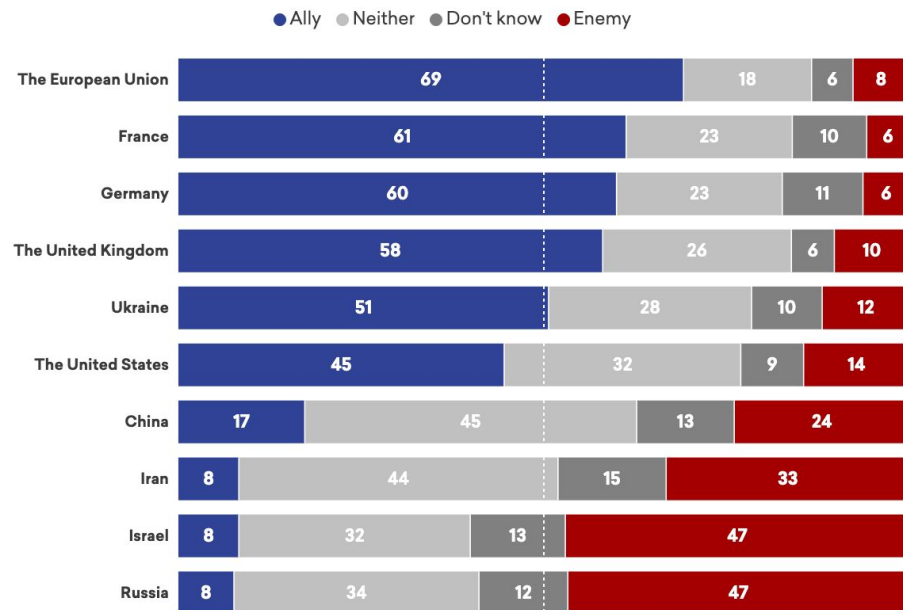
Turning away from America: the lowest-rated ally

Asked to judge a range of countries as allies or enemies, Irish voters place the United States at the bottom of the Western field.

Just 45 per cent call the US an ally – behind the EU (69 per cent), France (61), Germany (60), the UK (58) and even Ukraine (51). Almost a third (32 per cent) won't call it an ally at all, parking it at "neither."

It's a striking demotion for a country bound to Ireland by investment, emigration and more than a century of ties. The US sits in a tier of its own – well clear of Russia, Israel and Iran (each rated an ally by just 8 per cent), but adrift of the European partners Irish voters instinctively trust.

For each of the following countries and organisations, do you think they are an ally of Ireland, an enemy of Ireland, or neither?

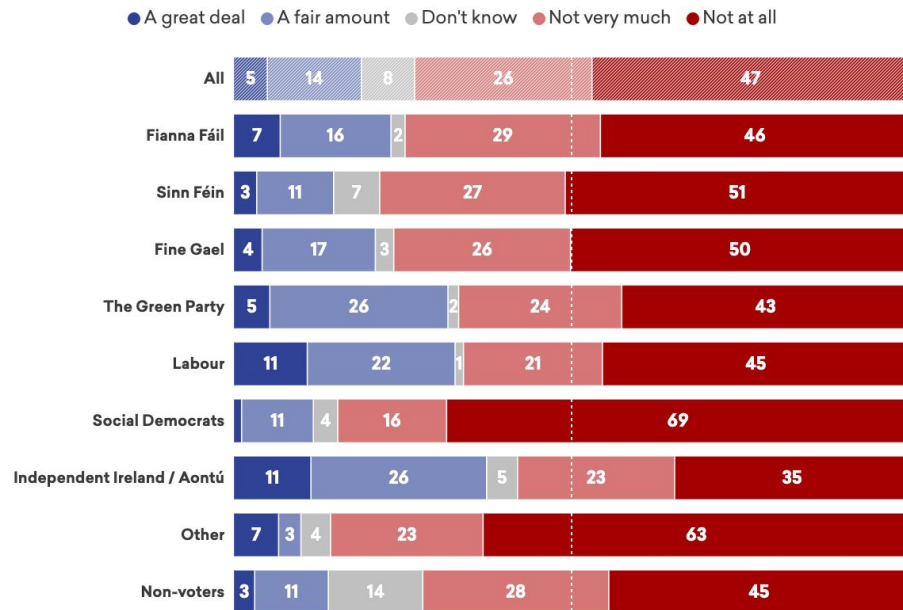


No trust in Trump's America

Part of that Eurocentricity of perspective is shaped by the outright distrust the Irish public have with the current White House administration. Asked how much they trust the US under Trump to act as a reliable economic partner, 73 per cent say not very much or not at all – including 47 per cent who say "not at all." Just 19 per cent express any meaningful trust.

This question barely divides the Irish electorate. Distrust runs from 58 per cent of Independent Ireland and Aontú voters – the warmest group towards America on most measures – up to 76 per cent of Fine Gael and Sinn Féin voters alike. Whatever else separates Irish voters, scepticism of Trump's America is close to a complete consensus.

How much, if at all, do you trust the United States under the Trump administration to act as a reliable economic partner for Ireland?



Confidence in the US relationship is collapsing among Irish voters

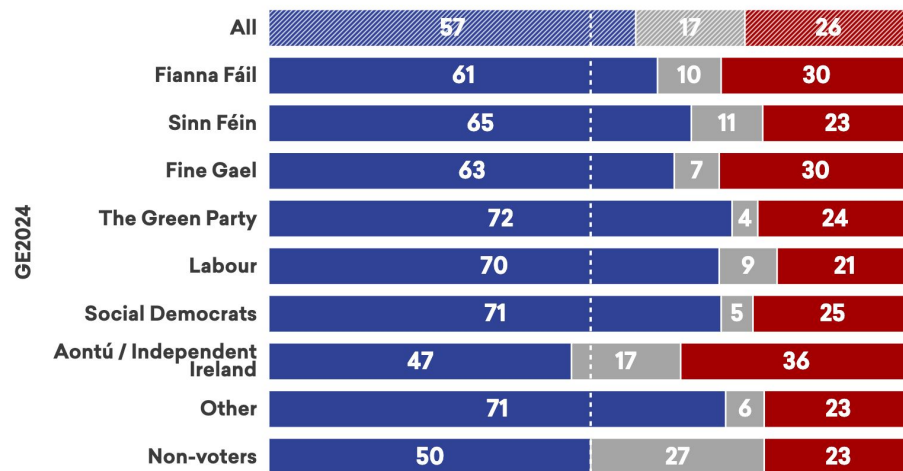
The economic tilt towards Europe is underpinned by an Atlanticism under real strain. Just a quarter of voters think EU leaders should prioritise working with President Trump over standing up to him – a view that holds across the political spectrum.

The public are also split on whether to use the Presidency as a go-between: only a third think Ireland should act as a bridge between Brussels and Washington.

This marks a significant shift for a country whose social, economic, cultural and political ties have long pointed towards staying close to America.

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- EU leaders should prioritise standing up to US President, Donald Trump
- Don't know
- EU leaders should prioritise working with US President, Donald Trump



On the eve of the EU presidency

Neutrality and Ireland's role in the world



Neutrality endures, held in different ways

Almost two-thirds of voters want Ireland to stay neutral in some form – but they mean very different things by it.

A third (33 per cent) say Ireland should stay neutral in all circumstances; another third (32 per cent) would remain neutral but leave room to depart when the situation demands; and around a quarter (23 per cent) would move away from neutrality altogether, including 9 per cent who would join NATO.

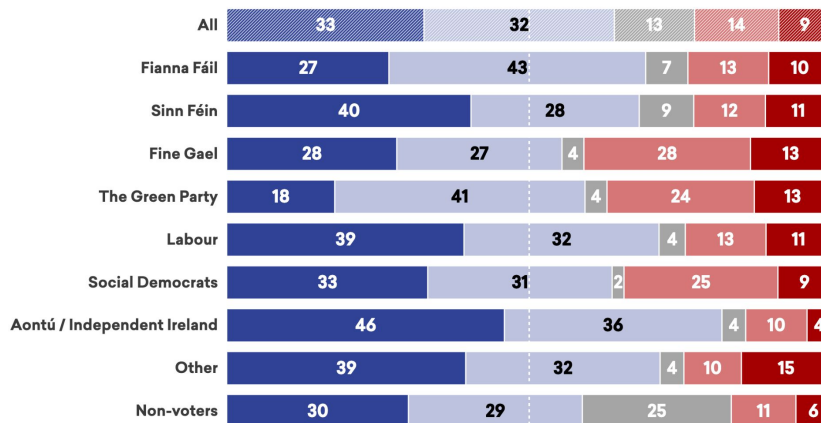
How firmly neutrality is held maps onto the broader divides running through Irish politics. Absolute neutrality peaks among Independent Ireland and Aontú voters (46 per cent) and Sinn Féin (40 per cent). Fine Gael is the most willing to loosen it – 41 per cent would soften or move beyond neutrality, and only 28 per cent treat it as absolute.

"Neutrality" is a word many Irish voters use, but they don't all mean the same thing by it.

Which of the following comes closest to your view on Irish military neutrality?

- Ireland should maintain its policy of military neutrality in all circumstances
- Ireland should generally remain neutral, but be willing to depart from neutrality in exceptional cases
- Don't know
- Ireland should move away from military neutrality and align more closely with EU or NATO defence arrangements
- Ireland should join NATO

GE2024



The triple lock divides the same way

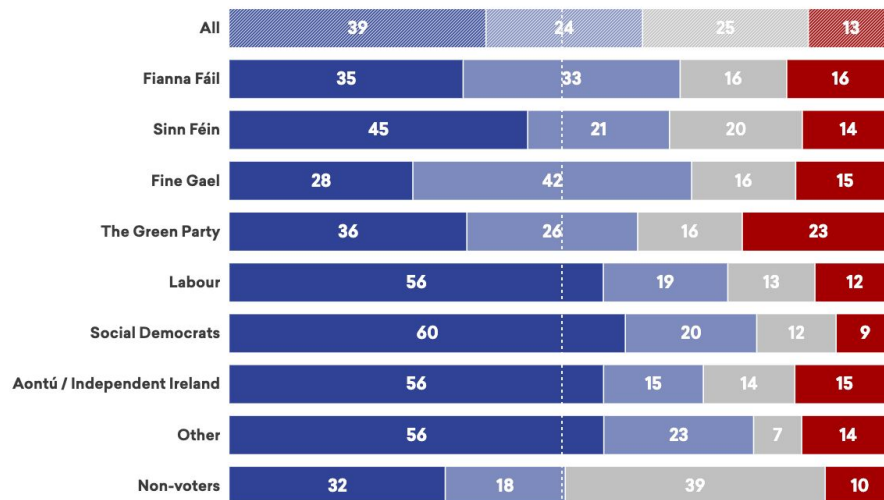
The same instinct of Irish voters on neutrality shows up the live policy debate around the triple lock which requires approval from the Dáil, the Government and the UN before the deployment of more than 12 defence force personnel abroad and which the government is proposing to loosen with the current Defence (Amendment) Bill 2026.

Irish voters remain split on the proposal – 39% would keep the triple lock as it is, 24% would remove the UN requirement as the government proposes, 13% would scrap it altogether, and a quarter say they don't know.

Fine Gael voters are the most reform-minded, the only group where more would remove the UN requirement (42%) than keep the lock (28%). Support for keeping the triple lock is strongest among Social Democrat (60%) and Labour voters (56%) with Independent Ireland and Aontú voters (56%), with Sinn Féin (45%) close behind.

The "triple lock" is the current rule for deploying Irish troops overseas. It means that sending more than 12 Defence Forces personnel abroad – for example on a peacekeeping mission – requires three approvals: the Government, the Dáil (Irish parliament), and a mandate from the United Nations. The Government has proposed removing the UN requirement. Which of the following comes closest to your view

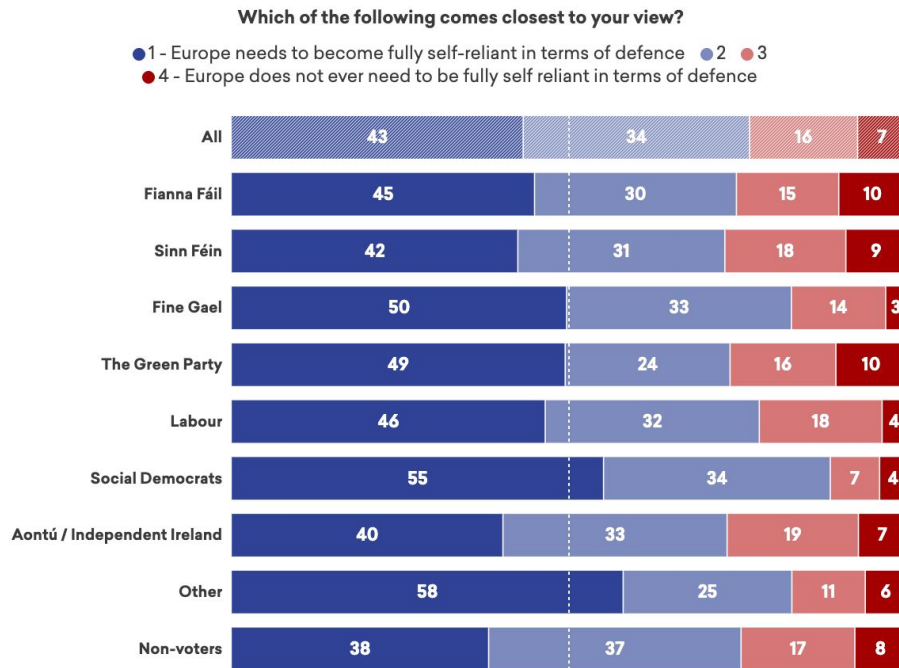
- Keep the triple lock as it is
- Remove the UN requirement, as the Government proposes
- Don't know
- Scrap the triple lock entirely



A strong Europe with a neutral Ireland

More than three-quarters (77 per cent) think Europe needs to become more self-reliant on defence, a view held consistently across groups. Yet that support has limits closer to home. Asked to weigh defence against housing, energy and transport, only 14 per cent rate defence the more important, while 40 per cent rate it less important and 46 per cent rate the two equally.

The pattern holds across the board, and Fine Gael voters are the most protective of defence – even there, only a third (33 per cent) rate it below housing, energy and transport. Irish voters are content for Europe to carry the weight of its own defence, but less willing to put Ireland’s own taxpayers money towards it. That caution, though, isn’t a reluctance to act against Russia – there the objection is moral rather than military.



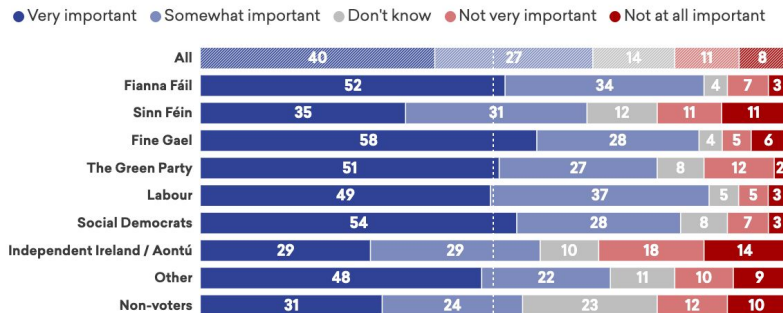
Ireland is firmly on Ukraine's side

Asked which side they sympathise with in the war, voters are more than ten times as likely to name Ukraine as Russia – 65 per cent to just 6 per cent, with the rest split between "both" and "neither." Two-thirds (67 per cent) also say it matters for Ireland that Ukraine successfully defends its sovereignty. There is no meaningful constituency for Russia anywhere in the electorate.

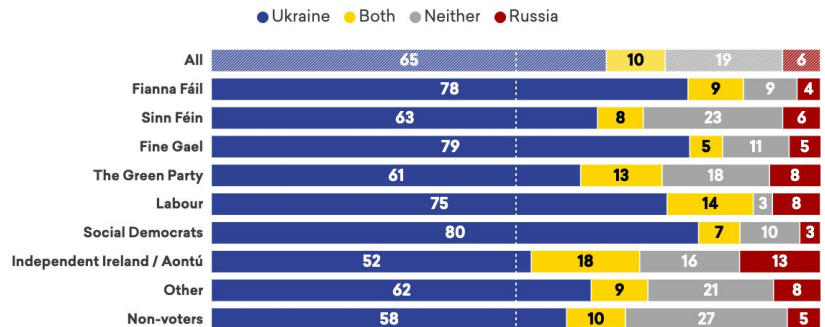
Warmth varies by degree – Fianna Fáil (78 per cent) and Fine Gael (79 per cent) voters are the most strongly pro-Ukraine; Independent Ireland and Aontú voters are the coolest towards Ukraine, though still sympathetic on balance (52 per cent Ukraine, with a fifth choosing "neither").

The disagreement to come isn't about who's right in the war – it's about what Ireland should be willing to do about it.

Thinking about the war in Ukraine, how important is it for Ireland that Ukraine defends its sovereignty against Russian aggression?



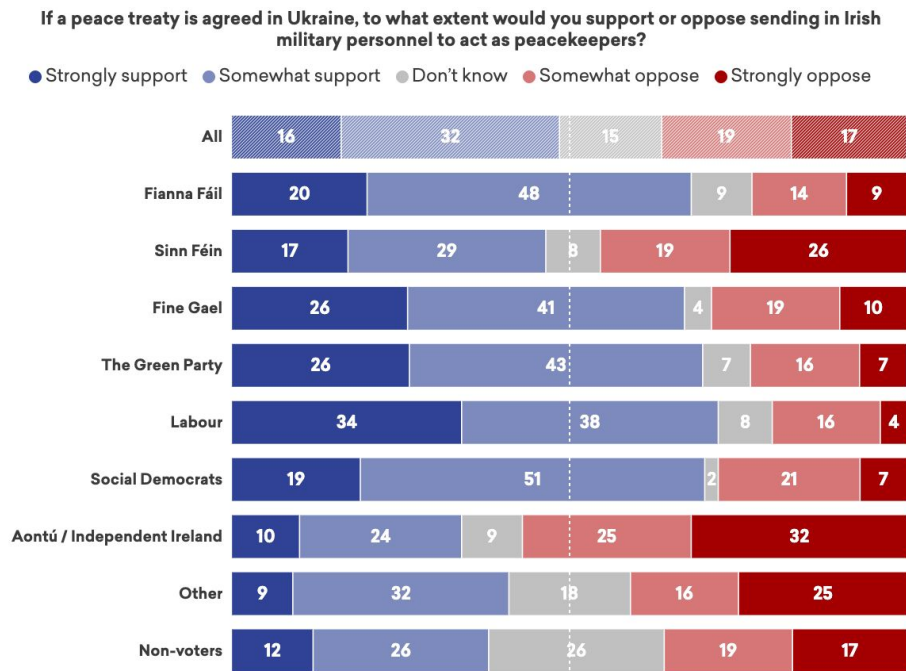
Which side do you sympathise with more in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?



Sympathy for Ukraine, but limits on funding and troops

Support for Ukraine extends beyond sympathy to action. A plurality back continued EU funding and arming of Ukraine (45 to 37 per cent), and on sending Irish peacekeepers if a treaty is agreed, more support the idea than oppose it (48 to 36 per cent). Backing softens as the ask moves from feelings of support for Ukraine to practical commitment – but on both questions, more voters are willing than not.

Where there is hesitation, it sits with the same groups each time. On peacekeeping, opposition is highest among Independent Ireland and Aontú (57 per cent) and Sinn Féin voters (45 per cent), while only around a quarter of Fianna Fáil (23 per cent) and Fine Gael (29 per cent) object. The pattern repeats on funding, where those two groups are again the most resistant. For many Irish voters, though, sympathy for Ukraine carries through into with some readiness to back it.



Sanctions become local: the Aughinish test

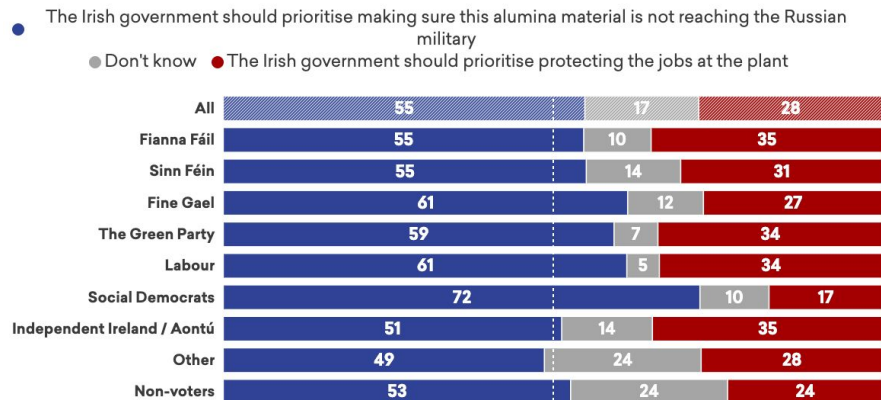
The same instinct shows up when the question turns concrete. Aughinish Alumina, the Russian-owned refinery in Limerick, is a real test of how far sympathy for Ukraine translates into action. Asked to choose, 55 per cent say the Government should make sure the plant's material doesn't reach Russia's war effort, against 28 per cent who would protect local jobs. The favoured outcome is to keep the plant running but stop exporting to Russia (37 per cent).

Willingness to act is led by Fine Gael and Labour (61 per cent), and Social Democrat voters (72 per cent), but it reaches across the board. Even Independent Ireland and Aontú and Fianna Fail voters, the most jobs-protective group, don't put the jobs ahead of denying Russia – 51 per cent still prioritise blocking the material, against 35 per cent who'd protect the plant. Most voters know little about Aughinish – 39 per cent have heard nothing at all and a further 21 per cent not very much so these responses read as instinct rather than settled opinion.

Which of these comes closest to what you think should happen with the Aughinish plant?



Aughinish Alumina is a large industrial plant and refinery in County Limerick, employing several hundred people and owned by a Russian company. Recent reports have highlighted concerns that its material may be ending up in Russian weapons. Which comes closer to your view?



In their own words

Ireland's preparedness for the threats it faces

In the focus groups, people told us they took the threats facing Ireland seriously but doubted Ireland could meet them

They raised Russian ships in Irish waters and the vulnerability of undersea cables, and some felt that being closer to Europe now made the country a bigger target.

Yet hardly anyone thought Ireland could defend itself: what they saw as a tiny army and a few naval ships after years of underspend left people describing the country as 'starting from scratch' and admitting the real plan was to 'hope nobody attacks us', while leaning on Britain or the US to step in if the worse was to materialise.



*"We kind of want our cake and eat it to be honest. We want to be neutral on every issue but also have the Americans coming in paying for all our companies, but not to pay for any guns... I don't think we're there." **Barry, Galway***

*"I think it's almost like we're freeloading at the moment with the defence. Let's say if Ireland in theory did get attacked, we'd be totally dependent on the US coming in and saving us... So I think we're having our cake and eat it too on that." - **PJ, Galway***

*"I just think we've had such an underspend on defence for so long. We're pretty much starting from scratch... So I think we just got to live in hope that nobody does attack us. I don't think there is a plan. I think it's just a hope against hope." - **Stephen, Galway***

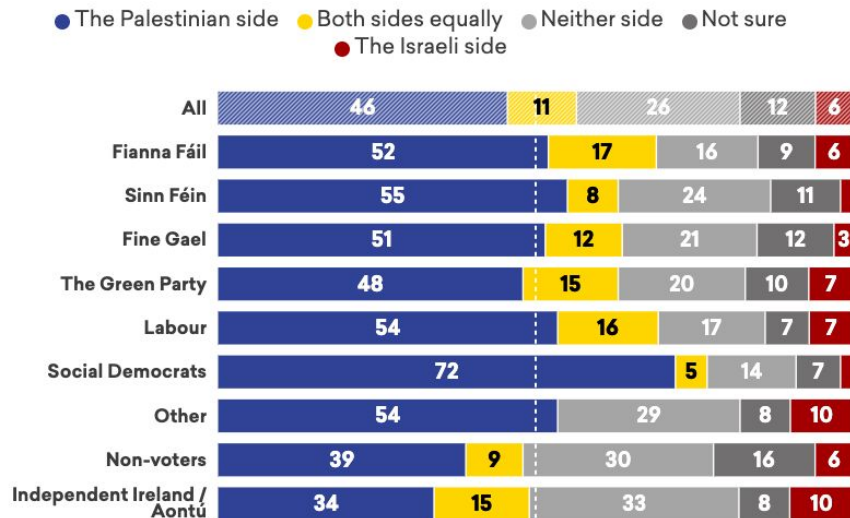
Irish sympathies lie with Palestine – but strong negative views for both Israeli government and Hamas

On the Israel–Palestine conflict, Irish sympathy points clearly one way. Voters side with the Palestinian side over the Israeli side by 46 per cent to 6 per cent, with a quarter (26 per cent) choosing neither.

But the sympathy is with civilians: views of the Israeli government are heavily negative (63 per cent negative), and so are views of Hamas (56 per cent negative). What draws Irish sympathy is the Palestinian people – 46 per cent view them positively – rather than either side's leadership.

The Irish pro-Palestinian conviction is clear, even the issue sits well down the list of national priorities (just 8 per cent name it among the top issues).

Which side in the Israel-Palestine conflict do you sympathise with more?

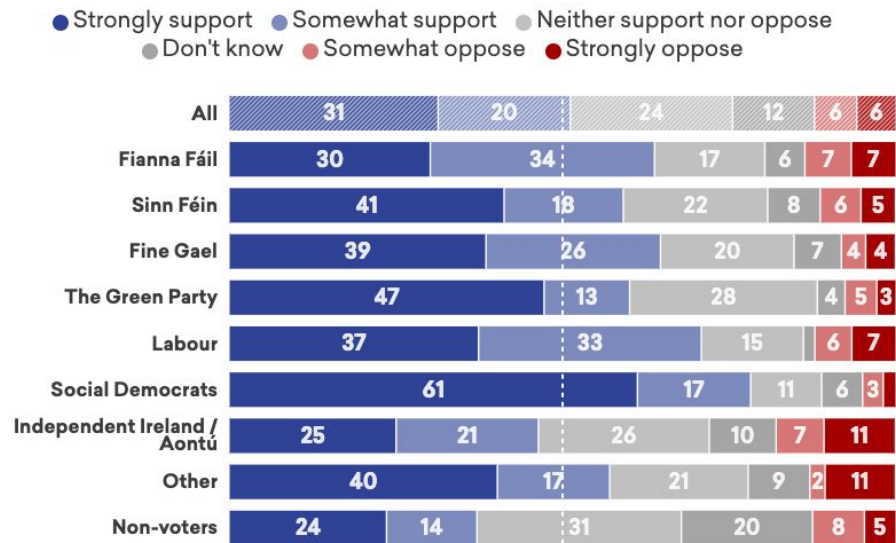


Strong backing for the Occupied Territories Bill

The Government's Occupied Territories Bill, banning imports of goods from Israeli settlements, has clear public backing: 51 per cent support it and 12 per cent oppose, with 24 per cent neither supporting nor opposing. The Irish public are also more five times more likely to strongly support than strongly oppose the bill.

Strong support is highest on the left: 61 per cent of Social Democrat voters and 47 per cent of Green voters strongly back the Bill, with Sinn Féin at 41 per cent. Independent Ireland and Aontú voters are the most reserved, with 25 per cent in strong support. Across every group, more support the Bill than oppose it.

The Occupied Territories Bill has been published, banning Ireland from importing goods from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. To what extent do you support or oppose the Occupied Territories Bill?



On the eve of the EU presidency

Methodological note



Methodological note

Fieldwork dates

- Poll 1: 26th April 2026-2nd May 2026
- Poll 2: 6th June 2026 - 15th June 2026

Sample size

- Poll 1: 2,277
- Poll 2: 2,066

Population effectively represented: Adults in Republic of Ireland aged over 18 using computer assisted web interviewing

Sample detail:

Respondents have been weighted according to age/sex interlocked, 2024 General Election vote, province, ethnicity, and education level.

For further information, please contact: ireland@moreincommon.com



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