



'Competitiveness in a Changing World'

A Conference Informing Ireland's EU Presidency

22 April 2026



 **Hertie School**
Jacques Delors Centre



Overview

The Consulate General of Ireland in Frankfurt, in partnership with the Center for Financial Studies at Goethe University, Jacques Delors Centre at the Hertie School, and Frankfurt Chamber of Industry and Commerce, will host a conference on 'Competitiveness in a Changing World' on 22 April.

This event brings together leading policymakers, regulators and political and industry experts to explore key economic and financial initiatives to be progressed during Ireland's upcoming Presidency of the EU, including the next EU Budget, the Simplification agenda, the Savings and Investment Union and the Digital Euro.

The seminar will be followed by a reception hosted by the Consulate from 18:00.

Agenda

14:00 Official opening of conference



Welcome address - Maeve Collins, Ambassador of Ireland to Germany



Keynote Speech - Jeanette Schwamberger, State Secretary, German Federal Ministry of Finance

14:15 - 17:50 Panel discussions moderated by:



Jana Randow, Senior European Economics Correspondent for Bloomberg



Nicholas Comfort, European Finance Reporter for Bloomberg



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14:15 Macroeconomic and global policy environment



Emma Cunningham, Director General, International and EU Division,
Department of Finance, Ireland



Philip Lane, Member of the Executive Board, European Central Bank



Brian Hayes, CEO, Banking and Payments Federation of Ireland



Monika Sus, Associate Professor, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy
of Sciences

15:00 Speech



Speech - Umut Sönmez, State Secretary, Hessian Ministry of Economics

15:10 Realising the European Savings and Investment Union



Oliver Gilvarry, Director General, Banking and Financial Stability Division,
Department of Finance, Ireland



Regina Doherty, Member of the European Parliament



Fiona Van Echelpoel, Deputy Director General, Market Infrastructure and
Payments Directorate, European Central Bank



Francesca McDonagh, CEO, Universal Investment



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15:55 Coffee Break

16:15 Simplification



Andrew Byrne, Director, EU Policy Coherence, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland



Sharon Donnery, Member of the Supervisory Board, European Central Bank



Michael Peters, Head of Financial Stability Department, Finanzwende



Denise Bauer-Weile, Management Board, UBS Europe SE



Stephen Fisher, Global Head of Political Affairs, Deutsche Bank

17:00 Future of Digital Finance in Europe



Fritzi Köhler-Geib, Member of the Executive Board, Deutsche Bundesbank



Anne-Marie McKiernan, Director, Financial Operations, Central Bank of Ireland



Catherine Murray, Director, Banking Division, Department of Finance, Ireland



Volker Brühl, Managing Director, Center for Financial Studies



Alexander Höptner, Chief Executive Officer, AllUnity



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17:50 Closing remarks



Closing remarks - Maeve Collins, Ambassador of Ireland to Germany

18:00 Networking reception

Networking reception hosted by the Consulate