



NEWSLETTER

INDEPENDENT SENATOR GERARD CRAUGHWELL

Opening Message from Independent Senator Gerard Craughwell

Over the past number of months, family health matters and grief required me to step back from some public engagements and parliamentary activities. I remain deeply grateful for the support, understanding and goodwill shown by County Councillors, colleagues and friends during that period. While my public profile may have been reduced, my commitment to public service, community advocacy and representing the interests of those I serve has remained unchanged.

Today, Ireland finds itself at a significant moment in its history as we hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. At a time of growing geopolitical uncertainty, evolving cybersecurity threats and increasing pressure on frontline public services, Ireland has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership both at home and abroad. The challenges facing Europe remind us that national security, strong communities and effective international partnerships are not separate issues - they are fundamentally connected.

Looking to the future, I am committed to contributing to these important conversations by advocating for stronger national resilience, supporting the frontline services that communities depend upon, and building meaningful relationships through parliamentary diplomacy. This newsletter reflects that journey - looking back on the values that have guided my work, addressing the challenges of the present, and outlining the priorities that will help shape a safer, stronger and more connected Ireland in the years ahead.



In retrospect 2026

The Taoiseach, Mr Micheál Martin, TD, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ms. Helen McEntee, TD, requested the honour of the company of Senator Gerard Craughwell at a ceremony to mark the start of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in Dublin Castle on Wednesday, 1 July 2026.

Ireland's Future: Security, Service and International Leadership

From supporting local communities to strengthening Ireland's role in Europe, this edition reflects on the values that have shaped my public service, the challenges facing our country today, and the opportunities that lie ahead as Ireland holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



National Security & Defence

Protecting Ireland's Maritime Borders and Critical Infrastructure

Ireland's vast Atlantic waters, critical subsea cables and strategic location make national security more important than ever. I will continue to advocate for increased investment in maritime surveillance, naval capabilities and the protection of critical infrastructure that supports Ireland's economy and communications networks.

"Protecting Ireland's sovereignty means investing in the capabilities necessary to monitor and secure our waters, air, infrastructure and national interests."

Building Ireland's Security Capacity in a Changing Europe

The changing geopolitical environment highlights the need for greater cooperation across Europe. I support practical measures that strengthen emergency preparedness, resilience and defence capabilities while maintaining Ireland's independent foreign policy traditions.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity Must Become a National Priority

As Ireland hosts major global technology companies and prepares for increased cyber threats associated with the EU Presidency, I call for stronger cyber resilience across government services, healthcare, local authorities and critical national infrastructure.

Learning from Past Cyber Attacks

I believe Ireland must continue investing in cyber defences, staff training and rapid-response capabilities to ensure public services remain protected from ransomware, espionage and other cyber threats.

"Cybersecurity is no longer just an IT issue - it is a national security issue."

Parliamentary Friendship Group

Strengthening International Relationships Through Parliamentary Diplomacy

As the Oireachtas Executive on the International – Interparliamentary Association and as former Convenor of the IPPFG for Germany (2020-2025) and current Convenor of the IPPFG for New Zealand (from 2025 onwards) I will continue to foster strong relationships with parliamentary colleagues and diplomatic partners overseas.

At a time of international uncertainty, parliamentary diplomacy provides important opportunities to strengthen economic links, cultural ties and cooperation on shared policy challenges including security, trade, innovation and education.

Building New Partnerships for Ireland

I strongly believe friendship groups can play a valuable role in expanding opportunities for Irish businesses, educational institutions and communities while promoting Ireland's interests abroad.

Frontline Services

Continuing the Fight for Frontline Services

Throughout my public career, I have remained a strong advocate for those delivering frontline services in communities across Ireland.

Putting Communities First

I believe national policy must always be measured by how effectively it improves the daily lives of citizens and supports those working on the front line of public service delivery.

"Resilient communities depend on resilient public services."

The challenges of the future will require leadership that is rooted in experience, guided by service and focused on outcomes. Whether at community level, in the national parliament or on the international stage, my commitment remains the same: working to build a safer, stronger and more connected Ireland for all.

The European Union in 12 Objects - A Senator's Reflection

In *The European Union in 12 Objects*, Bobby McDonagh, former Ambassador to the EU and UK achieves something rare: he explains the EU without reducing it. Through simple objects, he reveals a deeper truth - that Europe is less a structure than a conversation, less a destination than a continuous act of reconciliation.

Wise, subtle, and deeply humane the book reminds us that the European Union's greatest achievement is not regulation, currency or institutions, but the habit of cooperation among nations that once viewed history as a source of division rather than partnership.

McDonagh invites the reader to see the European Union not as a bureaucracy to be endured, but as an unfinished project in which diversity and unity are held in creative tension. In an age of noise and certainty, this is a book that values reflection, perspective and complexity.

Through a mirror, a jigsaw, a Persian rug and even a humble drawer, Bobby McDonagh reminds us that Europe cannot be understood through ideology alone. It is best approached as a living tapestry of identities, interests and aspirations, where, as Aristotle observed, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

The European Union in 12 Objects is not simply a guide to Europe; it is a reminder that the most enduring political achievements are those that recognise our interdependence while respecting our differences.



https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/our-publications-0/european-union-12-objects-bobby-mcdonagh_en