



**An Roinn Gnó,
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Business,
Enterprise and Innovation**

Annual Report 2017

June 2018
dbei.gov.ie

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Foreword

I welcome the publication of the Department's Annual Report for 2017. During the year, we made considerable progress towards achieving our headline targets in the Programme for Partnership Government, which tasked us with supporting a leap forward in the capacity and performance of our enterprise sector and delivering an environment that is conducive to the creation and maintenance of quality employment. The statistics show that employment continued to grow strongly in 2017, and we are on target to achieve our aims.

The position in relation to regional employment is particularly encouraging. The Regional Action Plans have played an important role in this regard and helped to drive momentum. We plan to refresh the Regional Action Plans for the 2018-2020 period to build on the success to date.

The Department continued its preparations for Brexit during 2017, putting a number of policy and operational measures in place to ensure that businesses are best placed to deal with the emerging challenges. This will continue to be a key focus for the Department going forward.

This report highlights the many achievements across the wide remit of the Department during 2017, and I am confident that the staff of the Department and its Offices and Agencies will continue to deliver on our mission in the year ahead. I would also like to acknowledge the work of my predecessors, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. and Frances Fitzgerald T.D., during their periods in the Department in 2017, and the continuing work of my Ministerial colleagues Pat Breen T.D and John Halligan T.D.

**Heather Humphreys, T.D.
Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation**

This is our first opportunity to report on progress made since the publication of our Statement of Strategy. The report details the progress delivered across the diverse business areas of the Department during 2017, and provides a summary of the key outputs, along with highlights under each of our high-level goals.

The Department plays a crucial role in delivering on Government priorities across a wide remit. This report outlines the many successes and positive developments that took place in 2017, including the creation and maintenance of quality employment in all regions of the country; providing excellent supports to businesses and entrepreneurs (particularly in the context of Brexit); driving the development of an internationally competitive innovation and research system; ensuring that our business regulation environment facilitates investment and growth and protects consumers; and facilitating a harmonious industrial relations and safe work environment. During 2017, responsibility for employment law and the National Minimum Wage transferred to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

I would like to thank the staff of the Department and its Offices and Agencies for their ongoing commitment and hard work and I look forward to working with them, and with our many stakeholders, to continue to advance our goals and priorities in the year ahead.

**Dr Orlaigh Quinn, Secretary General
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation**

Vision

We will make Ireland the best place to succeed in business, delivering sustainable full employment and higher standards of living across all regions of the country.

Mission

We will lead on the creation and maintenance of high quality and sustainable full employment across all regions of the country by championing enterprise across government, by supporting a competitive enterprise base to incentivise work, enterprise, trade and investment and by promoting fair and competitive markets.

Values

As a Department we foster a culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money, which is rooted in a public service ethos of independence, integrity, impartiality, openness and respect.

As Civil Servants we espouse the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, objectivity and quality, which are central to fulfilling our roles in supporting the democratic process and serving the people.

Introduction to Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) plays a key role in implementing the Government's policies of stimulating the productive capacity of the economy and creating an environment which supports job creation. The Department also has a remit to promote fair competition in the marketplace, protect consumers, promote stable industrial relations and safeguard workers.

Through its Agencies and Offices, the Department's remit covers a wide range of activity including:

- Facilitating the start-up and growth of indigenous enterprises,
- Attracting Foreign Direct Investment,
- Increasing exports,
- Improving competitiveness,
- Promoting innovation and growth through investment in research and development,
- Promoting fair competition for businesses and consumers,
- Ensuring fit for purpose, modern company law,
- Safeguarding the rights of workers, including their entitlement to occupational safety and health,
- Supporting and facilitating a positive industrial relations environment,
- Making evidence based policy, informed by research, analysis and robust evaluations,
- Identifying the future skills needs of enterprise, and
- Representing Ireland's interests in relevant EU fora, including:
 - Competitiveness Council (incorporating Internal Market, Industry and Research),
 - Foreign Affairs Council (meeting in its Trade formation)

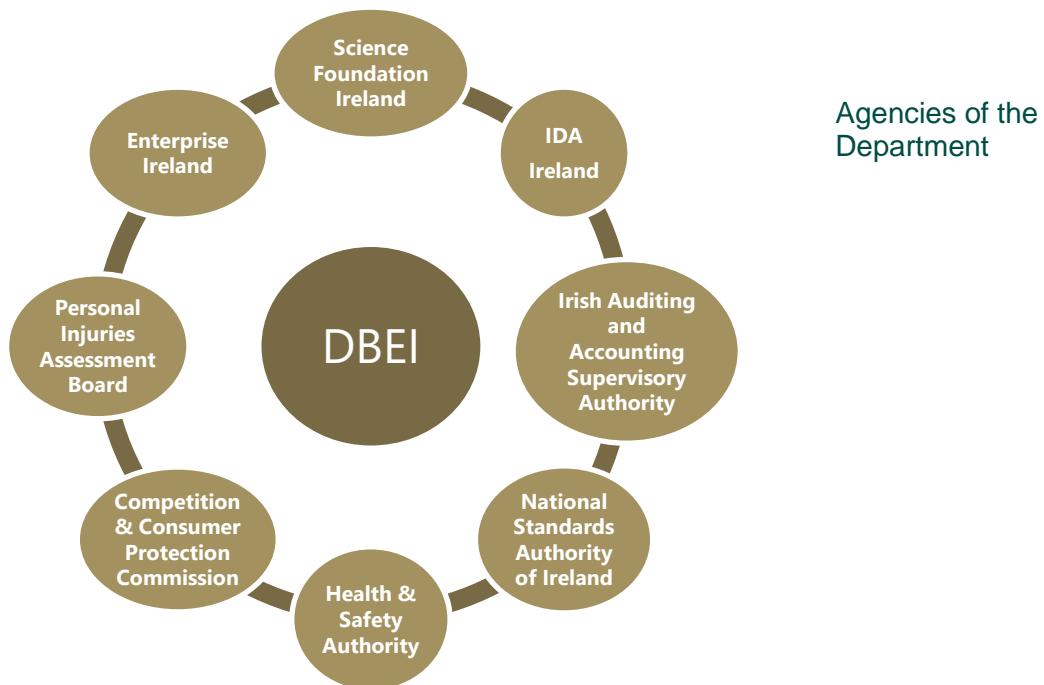
and relevant international bodies:

- World Trade Organisation (WTO),
- International Labour Organisation (ILO),
- Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) fora.

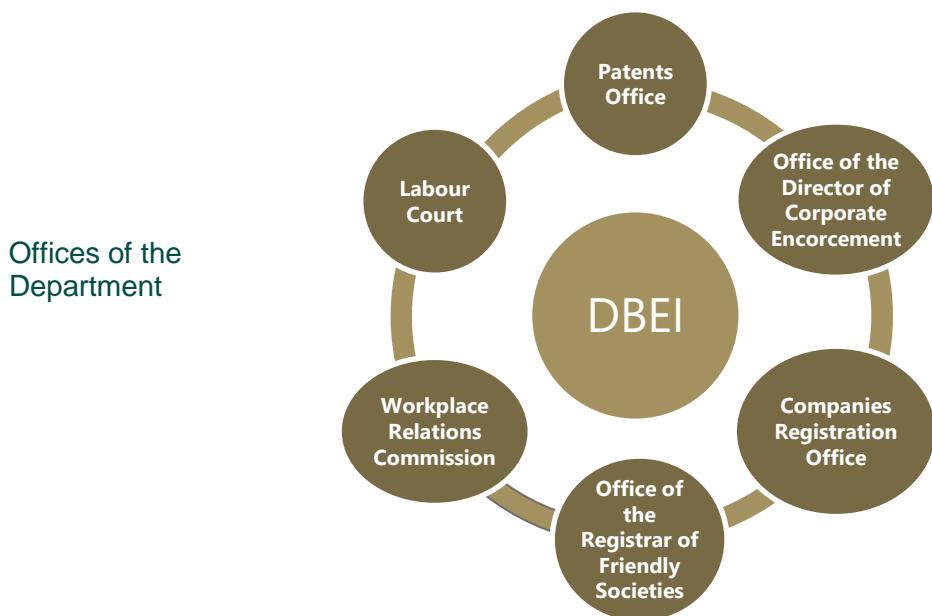
On 1 September 2017, responsibility for employment rights policy and associated legislative functions transferred from the Department to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The transfer of functions came into effect pursuant to the Labour Affairs and Labour Law (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2017, S.I. No. 361 of 2017.

The transfer involves some eleven pieces of primary legislation in the area of employment rights. The services and functions of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and the labour Court remain under the remit of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

Offices & Agencies



Agencies of the Department



Offices of the Department

In addition to these Agencies and Offices:

Local Enterprise Offices: The Department funds 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).

InterTrade Ireland: The Department co-funds InterTrade Ireland, the North South Body that promotes cross border trade between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Management Board

Membership	
Orlaigh Quinn	Secretary General
Dermot Mulligan	Assistant Secretary, Innovation and Investment Division
Clare Dunne	Assistant Secretary, Workplace Regulation and Economic Migration Division
David Hegarty	Assistant Secretary, Strategic Policy Division
Philip Kelly	Assistant Secretary, EU Affairs, Trade Policy and Export Licensing Division
Breda Power	Assistant Secretary, Commerce, Consumers and Competition Division
Declan Hughes	Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Enterprise, Digital and Finance Division
Michael O'Leary	Head, Management Support Unit & Secretary to the Management Board

- Martin Shanagher, Assistant Secretary, retired in 2017
- David Hegarty joined the Management Board in December 2017

Our Key Achievements in 2017 include:

The 6th Action Plan for Jobs was launched in February 2017, containing 164 actions across Government Departments and agencies, with the aim of helping to create an additional 45,000 jobs in 2017. **66,500 jobs were created in 2017.** The results of the concerted action on job creation since 2012 demonstrate that the process is working. More than 345,000 more people were at work at Quarter 4 2017 than in 2012 when the first Plan was launched. **Unemployment declined** from over 15% in early 2012 to **5.9% in April 2018.**

2017 was a very strong year for job creation among **Enterprise Ireland (EI)** clients with 19,332 new jobs created. 2017 resulted in the highest client employment in the history of the agency, highest net job creation (10,309) in the history of the agency and the lowest number of jobs losses since 1998. **209,338** people are now employed in companies supported by EI.

IDA Ireland created 10,684 net new jobs over the course of 2017, with every region in Ireland posting net gains in jobs. At the end of 2017 there were **210,443** people working in IDA Ireland client companies, the highest in IDA Ireland's history. This figure surpasses the five-year target of 209,000 which was set in 2015 in IDA Ireland's "Winning; Foreign Investment" strategy.

Surveys undertaken in 2017, revealed a strong performance by agency client companies in 2016 with total sales amounting to €222bn while their exports were €195bn, up 9.1% from the previous year. These companies spent **€43bn in the Irish economy** on payroll, Irish material and Irish Services in 2016.

The **Regional Action Plans for Jobs** are crucial in meeting the Government's ambition to create by 2020 an additional 200,000 jobs, of which 135,000 are outside the Dublin region. CSO data has shown an increase of 53,500 people in employment across the State in the year to Q2 2017, with 84% of newly employed people in this period, located outside of Dublin. All regions also saw increases in numbers employed in this period.

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) supported 1,471 young entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35 to participate in **Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur** competition in 2017 of which 93 business ideas shared an investment fund of €2 million. The aim of the initiative, is to support a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in Ireland.

In 2017 **Microfinance Ireland** approved €5.5m. in funding to 400 small businesses throughout the country, supporting the creation or sustainment of 1,141 jobs.

In 2017, DBEI published "Building Stronger Business: **Responding to Brexit by competing, innovating and trading**". This paper summarises impacts of Brexit across key policy areas within the Department and outlines the policy and operational measures underway and planned by the Department and its Agencies to respond to Brexit, including supports available to companies to help them prepare for Brexit.

Exchequer funding was secured in Budget 2018 to leverage up to €300 million of lending to eligible Irish businesses under the **Brexit Loan Scheme**. The Scheme, which will be launched in 2018, will provide working capital finance that is more competitively priced, easier to access and at more favourable terms than current offerings.

A **Technical Working Group on State Aid** was established in 2017. The Group comprises representatives from DG Competition, DBEI, DAFM and EI and its mandate is to consider how supports for Irish companies impacted by Brexit can be designed within the State Aid Framework. The Irish delegation is led by DBEI.

The finalisation of the **EU Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan** on the 8th December was an important development. This trade agreement is a landmark achievement for the EU and Japan, who together account for more than 1/3rd of the world's GDP.

Further Progress on implementing the 140 actions of **Innovation 2020**, the Government's national strategy for Research & Development, Science & Technology was made in 2017. Highlights include carrying out an extensive

consultation process and research into refreshing the Research Prioritisation areas with a view to preparing proposals for Government and the completion of the first call for proposals by the national **Health Innovation Hub**, a joint initiative of the Departments of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Health which was launched in September 2016. The Hub accelerates the commercialisation of innovative healthcare solutions by enabling healthcare companies and entrepreneurs to test their products and services in a real-life environment by providing access to the health service.

Publication of a consultation paper on the resale of tickets for entertainment and sporting events on 20 January 2017.

Enactment of the Companies (Accounting) Act 2017 which increases the thresholds for companies to qualify as small sized companies, simplifies the financial reporting for small companies and introduces a new category of company known as micro company.

Enactment of the Companies (Amendment) Act 2017 which extends the duration of an exemption for particular companies from having to prepare two sets of financial statements, based on the same financial information but according to two different accounting standards.

In January 2017 the **Personal Injuries Commission** was established. The Commission published its first report in December and makes a number of recommendations on the adoption of a standardised and internationally recognised approach to the diagnosis, treatment and reporting of soft tissue injuries by practitioners.

In March 2017, **Employment Permit Regulations** were consolidated into a single set of regulations which make them easier to understand and easier to use. The twice-yearly reviews of the occupation lists for employment permit purposes were completed on schedule with changes made to the

regulations to remove HGV drivers from the ineligible list.

Stable industrial relations continue to be a feature of the Irish economy and 2017 saw a welcome decline in days lost to industrial disputes from 71,647 in 2016 to 50,191 days lost in 2017. In this context the services of the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court continued to provide robust mechanisms for dispute and grievance resolution across enterprise.

In June 2017, Ireland was elected as Titulaire member of the **International Labour Organisation (ILO) Governing Body** (GB) for the period 2017-20. This is the first time Ireland has been elected to a Titulaire seat (one with speaking and voting rights) since we joined the ILO in 1923. It was the first international body we joined after independence.

In 2017, the **Health and Safety Authority** carried out 8,876 workplace inspections and 1,058 investigations, a total of 9,934. It also completed 395 market surveillance checks of chemical products in the Irish market, 5 of which were found to be in contravention and removed from the market.

BeSMART is the Health and Safety Authority's free online tool designed to help small business owners/managers to prepare risk assessments and safety statements for their workplace. BeSMART users increased by 8,496 in 2017, to 46,972 in total.

In 2017, the Health and Safety Authority's **Choose Safety** programme was delivered to almost 25,000 post-primary and further education students.

The third report of the **Low Pay Commission** was issued in July 2017 with a recommendation, approved by Government, for an increase in the national minimum wage to €9.55 per hour to take effect from 1 January 2018.

Statement of Strategy 2016-2019

Goal 1: Creating and sustaining high quality enterprise and employment

Lead on creating and sustaining high quality enterprise and employment across all regions of the country by supporting a strong indigenous enterprise base, the continued attraction of foreign direct investment and a strong entrepreneurial culture.

Driving Export Led Growth

As in previous years, there was a strong focus on initiatives to support export-led job creation in the DBEI agencies' targets. These included measures to grow sales and exports in Irish companies, further develop and embed foreign direct investment, increase collaboration between Irish and foreign-owned companies and support entrepreneurship and start-ups.

The Department provides direct support to businesses and entrepreneurs through its agencies, IDA Ireland for inward investment, Enterprise Ireland to indigenous firms and overseas investors in natural resource areas, 31 Local Enterprise Offices and through Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) to researchers.

Overall Job Creation

The Programme for Partnership Government (May 2016) set a target of 200,000 extra jobs by 2020, including 135,000 outside of Dublin, together with a reduction in the national unemployment rate to 6%.

In the year to Quarter 4 2017, 66,500 jobs were created. More than 345,000 more people were at work at Quarter 4 2017 than in 2012, when the first Action Plan for Jobs was launched. Unemployment declined from over 15% in early 2012 to 5.9% in April 2018.

Performance of Client Companies of Enterprise Agencies

The Department undertakes annual surveys on the client companies of the enterprise development agencies (Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Údarás na Gaeltachta) to provide evidence based research to inform enterprise policy.

Annual Employment Survey of Client Companies of Enterprise Development Agencies

This census of employment in approximately 8,000 client companies of the enterprise development agencies provides a rich dataset since 1972. It tracks permanent full-time employment as well as part time, temporary employment, gross gains, losses and net change. Breakdowns of these indicators are provided by region, enterprise sector and ownership. The headline results of the Annual Employment Survey 2017 are:

- Total employment (full-time and part-time) was 428,031 an increase of 5.2% since 2016
- Permanent Full-time (PFT) employment increased by 5.4% to 379,810
- Gross PFT job gains declined by 6% to 33,963 since 2016
- Gross PFT job losses at 14,594 were at the lowest level in a decade
- Net PFT job change declined by 6.9% since 2016 to 19,363

Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact of Enterprise Development Agency Client Companies

This annual survey of agency client companies with 10 or more employees (approximately 4,000 companies) provides details of total exports, sales, direct expenditure in the Irish economy and value added in agency client firms. Breakdowns are provided by business sector, region and ownership.

The headline figures for 2016, which is the most recent survey, were as follows:

- Total sales amounted to €221.6bn in 2016, an increase of 9.3% since 2015
- Total exports amounted to €195bn an increase of 9.1% since 2015
- Value added increased to €74.3bn in 2016 from €67.2bn in 2015
- Direct expenditure in the Irish economy (Payroll, Irish material and Irish Services) increased by 5.3% to €43bn in 2016.

Enterprise Ireland

Enterprise Ireland (EI) operates as an Agency of the Department and is responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Enterprise Ireland works in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, scale, innovate and win export sales on global markets. On an annual basis EI is working with approximately 5,000 companies through a network of market and sector advisers based across 10 national offices and 33 international offices. In this way, the agency supports sustainable economic growth, regional development and job creation.

2017 was a very strong year for job creation among Enterprise Ireland clients with 19,332 new jobs created. 2017 resulted in the highest client employment in the history of the agency, highest net job creation in the history of the agency and the lowest number of job losses since 1998.

209,338 people are now employed in companies supported by EI. This represents a net increase of 10,309 jobs for 2017, taking account of job losses. Despite the challenge and uncertainty created by Brexit, Irish companies have continued to win sales around the world that have supported this strong job creation across all the regions of Ireland.

Job creation was evenly spread across the country, with every county seeing job increases. Two thirds (64%) of the new jobs created were outside of Dublin. The West, Mid-West and North West saw the largest level of increase at 7% in 2017.

Enterprise Ireland attributes this strong performance by Irish businesses to the continuing growth of an entrepreneurial climate for start-ups, allied to strong jobs growth in the Construction (8% increase), Engineering (8% increase), Lifesciences (8% increase), Digital Technology (6% increase), Electronics (6% increase), Food (4% increase) and ICT sectors (5% increase).

January 2017 saw the launch of Enterprise Ireland's new Strategy *Build Scale, Expand Reach 2017 – 2020*, with targets focused on:

- Assisting clients to create 60,000 new jobs by 2020 while sustaining the existing record level of jobs;
- Growing the annual exports of client companies by €5bn to €26bn per annum;
- Driving innovation in Irish enterprise to increase R&D spend by 50% to €1.25bn p.a.;
- Increasing the level of spend made by client companies in the Irish economy by €4bn to €27bn per annum by 2020.

In support of this, EI is implementing extensive trade mission and event schedules focussed on global and sectoral opportunities, further developing in-market expertise and networks, placing greater focus on identifying new sectoral opportunities and stimulating demand for Irish products and services through international marketing campaigns.

The Department works with the agencies to ensure value for money and optimising economic impact from supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland through a robust economic appraisal

and cost benefit methodology. In 2017, the Department initiated a review of the key parameters and this work will be completed in early 2018.

Details of Enterprise Ireland's strategic response to Brexit are included under Goal 3.

IDA Ireland

IDA Ireland's 2017 results show that the Agency exceeded the job creation targets set out in its current strategy "Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019". Since 2015 the Agency has been working towards the objectives of this strategy including the creation of 80,000 new jobs and 900 new investments. Total FDI employment in Ireland at the end of 2017 stood at 210,443, meaning the Agency has already achieved its net job target of 209,000 jobs.

The IDA is continuing to work towards other objectives set out in its five-year strategy, especially that of increasing the level of investment by between 30% and 40% in each region outside Dublin by 2019. Strong progress was made in this respect in 2017, with 45% of IDA Ireland supported jobs created located outside Dublin and every region in Ireland posting net gains in jobs. Through its Regional Property Programme, the IDA is also developing appropriate property solutions in designated regional locations to attract overseas investment. This includes the construction of nine new advance facilities around the country. Buildings have already been delivered in Sligo, Castlebar and Tralee and further buildings in Dundalk, Galway, Limerick, Carlow, Waterford and Athlone scheduled for completion over the next two years.

Overall, IDA Ireland performed strongly in 2017 with client companies creating 19,851 jobs on the ground. IDA Ireland client companies now account for almost 12% of private sector employment or approximately 1 in 5 private sector jobs in the State.

Details of IDA Ireland's strategic response to Brexit are included under Goal 3.

Access to Finance

SME Credit Guarantee Scheme

The Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS), which was introduced in 2012, provides a State guarantee¹ through the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation to accredited lenders of 75% on eligible loans or Performance Bonds to viable Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The purpose of the Scheme is to encourage additional lending to SMEs and is not a substitute for conventional lending. SMEs are thus enabled to develop a positive track record with the Lender with the objective of returning to standard commercial credit facilities in time. It also places Irish SMEs on a competitive level-footing relative to other trading competitors who are able to avail of a guarantee in their own countries. During 2017, 129 facilities were sanctioned worth €19.72m which allowed 561 jobs to be created and 146 jobs to be maintained.

Statutory Instruments were made in 2017 to implement a new Credit Guarantee Scheme and a new Counter Guarantee Scheme, in accordance with legislative changes in the Credit Guarantee (Amendment) Act, 2016 as enacted in February 2016.

Credit Guarantee Scheme 2017

Reforms implemented in the new credit guarantee scheme include increasing the level of the guarantee from 75% to 80%, increasing the portfolio cap for each bank from 10% to 13%, and extending the range of financial providers and financial products covered (to include leasing, asset and invoice finance). Discussions began with finance providers in 2017 to put legal agreements in place to underpin the new Scheme, which is expected to be launched in 2018.

¹The Guarantee is paid by the State to the Lender on the unrecovered outstanding principal balance on a Scheme Facility in the event of a Borrower defaulting on the Scheme Facility repayments.

Counter Guarantee Scheme

The Counter Guarantee Scheme provides for the Minister to share risk with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland in such a way that the SBCI will in turn be able to access and draw down EU funding for Irish SMEs, representing another option available to financially assist SMEs.

Microenterprise Loan Fund

Microfinance Ireland (MFI) was established to support lending to microenterprises in the SME sector and was launched on the 1st October 2012. This initiative targets start-ups, established and growing microenterprises across all sectors, employing up to 10 people. Loans are for amounts from €2,000 to €25,000 and can be used for business start-up and expansion costs and working capital. In 2017, Microfinance Ireland approved €5.5 million in funding to 400 small businesses throughout the country, supporting the creation or sustainment of 1,141 jobs.

A record number of applications were achieved for the year, and despite approval rates in percentage terms being marginally lower in 2017 (43% v 44% in 2016), the number and value of loans approved increased when compared to the previous year.

Much of this strong performance is due to continued growth in brand awareness due to a wide range of PR, events and both digital and traditional marketing over the year, supported by the introduction of an enhanced lead management process during the year.

Local Enterprise Offices

The 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are the 'first-stop-shop' for providing advice and guidance, financial assistance and other supports to those wishing to start or grow their own business.

The LEOs can offer direct grant aid to micro-enterprises (10 employees or fewer) in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sector which, over time, have the potential to develop into strong export entities. The LEOs also offer 'soft' supports in the form of training and mentoring for anyone interested in starting or growing a business. In addition, the LEOs provide a 'signposting' service for the micro-enterprise and SME sector in relation to other relevant State supports, for example: Revenue; the Department of Social Protection; Microfinance Ireland; Trading Online Vouchers, LEADER, and Education & Training Boards (ETBs).

Since their establishment in 2014, the LEOs have continued to support a high level of performance amongst their clients across their range of services. In summary, during 2017:

- A total of 7,135 new full and part-time jobs (gross) were created by LEO clients overall.
- Taking into account losses in the client company portfolio, there was a net increase of 3,760 jobs (full and part-time).
- The LEO portfolio in 2017 consisted of 7,182 client companies, with an employment total of 37,485 (full-time and part-time jobs).

Key to the delivery of these jobs has been the provision of a range of development supports aimed at building company capacity and performance among the micro-enterprise sector:

- In 2017, the LEOs paid out direct financial assistance to 1,179 business projects, to the value of €17.8m. Of these, 469 were priming grants for start-up companies to the value of €6.4m.

In addition to direct financial assistance, the LEOs supported an even wider cohort of entrepreneurs and small businesses in 2017 through other soft supports:

- Start Your Own Business (SYOB) Training – 3,755 participants on 280 programmes
- 1,891 Other business development training programs involving 30,373 participants

- Provision of tailored one-to-one mentoring support to 8,393 participants
- 367 referrals to Micro Finance Ireland (178 grant applications approved) supporting the creation of 347 jobs.
- Promotion of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOVS) with 1,188 businesses participating supporting the creation of 356 jobs.

A very positive outcome of LEO investment and support is the progression of some LEO client companies to the Enterprise Ireland portfolio. During 2017, 89 LEO client companies progressed to Enterprise Ireland. These clients are among the best performing companies in the LEO client portfolio (and because of the transfer to EI their performance is not reflected in the 2017 outturn above).

Details of LEO Brexit supports are included under Goal 3.

LEO Communications

The LEOs delivered several promotional events nationally during the year which include:

- A Showcase Pavilion at the National Ploughing Championships;
- The Student Enterprise Awards;
- Local Enterprise Week;
- The National Enterprise Awards.
- National Women's Entrepreneurship

These events are central to the National LEO Communications Strategy to put out the message that the LEOs are on hand to support start-ups, businesses growth and job creation at local level.

Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) supported by the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)

1,471 young entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35 took part in "Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur" (IBYE) in 2017, bringing the total number of applications to over 5,7000 since the programme commenced in 2014.

The aim of the initiative, which has an overall investment fund of €2 million, is to support a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in Ireland, to promote entrepreneurship as a career choice, and to encourage Ireland's young people to set up new businesses which will ultimately create jobs.

Regional Action Plans for Jobs (RAPJs)

The Regional Action Plans for Jobs are crucial in meeting the Government's ambition to create an additional 200,000 jobs, of which 135,000 are outside the Dublin region, by 2020. CSO data has shown an increase of 53,500 people in employment across the State in the year to Q2 2017, with 84% of newly employed people, in this period, located outside of Dublin. All regions saw increases in numbers employed in this period.

This momentum and the collaborative approach that has strengthened through the Regional Implementation Committees is now being built on to refresh RAPJs for 2018-2020.

To further stimulate regional growth to 2020, in 2017 DBEI announced a €60 million competitive Regional Enterprise Development Fund, administered through Enterprise Ireland. A total of 21 projects across all regions secured up to €30.5 million through the first call. The second call will be issued in April 2018.

Engagement with Small Business Community

The Department's Advisory Group on Small Business (AGSB) provides a platform for structured engagement between Small Business owners and the Minister of State for Employment and Small Business. Mr. Pat Breen TD Minister of State for Employment and Small Business took over as Chair in 2016. The AGSB met four times in 2017, with a diverse agenda on topics such as Cost of Insurance, GDPR, Pre-Budget submissions, Brexit and the SME Test.

The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) is the EU's flagship policy initiative to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It comprises a set of policy measures organised around 10 guiding principles. The EU Commission's 2017 Report noted that Ireland performed above or well above the EU average in eight SBA areas:

- entrepreneurship
- 'second chance'
- responsive administration
- state aid & public procurement
- access to finance
- single market
- skills & innovation
- internationalisation

The Department developed the Irish SME Test in 2017. The SME Test is an integral part of the European Commission's Better Regulation guidelines since 2009. The purpose of the SME test is to request policymakers to think about the negative impact of any new legislation or regulation which may create a burden on SMEs. SMEs often have lack of information, time, or expertise to deal with administrative rules. As a result, regulation has a disproportionate effect in terms of compliance cost and administrative burden on SMEs.

The key points of the Irish SME Test are:

- Exemptions
- Deadline variation/flexibility
- Simplification of the implementation of regulations

At European level, the Department's representatives have been active members of the SME Envoy Network. In 2017, three meetings of the SME Envoy took place. In addition, participation has been active in the OECD's Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship. Relationships have been fostered through the Departments active role in both leading to potential future collaborations.

National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement (NEPS)

Ireland's first ever National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship was launched in October 2014 and it sets out the Government's strategic objectives as a facilitator within the Irish entrepreneurship ecosystem. It covers the six key elements that impact on entrepreneurs and start-ups. It also signposts the direction in which policy will progress in the coming years.

1. Culture, human capital and education;
2. Business environment and supports;
3. Innovation;
4. Access to finance;
5. Networks and mentoring and
6. Access to markets.

Marking the half way point of the Statement, 2017 saw the development and organisation of the Midterm Review. In addition, Action 45 of the 2017 Action Plan for Jobs calls for a mid-term review of the NPSE.

The Department, through the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Policy Unit, produced Terms of Reference, detailed progress reports and discussion documents, which were disseminated to stakeholders. Meetings were then organised and grouped into three; education, state bodies and entrepreneurs with related representative bodies. These meetings were held between May and June 2017. We had additional feedback from the participants of the 9th cycle of the female entrepreneurship programme “Going for Growth” and the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Alumni Board.

2017 saw the tendering of the Business Creation Data Package, which was won by Visionnet. Data from the Companies Registration Office was analysed, filtered and refined to measure entrepreneurship and the following data and statistics on New Company Start-ups was gathered:

- Quarterly numbers of New Company start-ups including a breakdown of Location (County), Industry, Gender Profile of Director, Age Profile of Director and First-time Director.
- New data of the numbers of business creations from the 1st January 2015 until the 1st January 2017, and then a breakdown of new start-ups every quarter from the 1st March 2017 to end 2017.
- Survival rates of companies born in 2012-2015 and lifespan of start-ups over 3 years old.

We continue to monitor progress against key performance indicators and work with partners in enterprise to achieve the ambition. The Department also continued its mapping exercise to identify the range of supports available to entrepreneurs. The document lists both State and non-State supports for entrepreneurs and acts as a useful tool for policy makers. Both are regularly updated. The details and findings from these exercises and the Business Creation Data Package have been included in the Midterm Review.

In this regard, 2017 saw continued progress in such international indicators in the areas of entrepreneurship and innovation, for example:

- In the GEDI Global Entrepreneurship Index (2018), Ireland’s world ranking rose to 8th, up from 9th the previous year and 18th in 2014.
- The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (2017) saw Ireland place 6th out of 63 countries.
- In the World Bank 2018 Doing Business Report, Ireland placed 8th out of 137 countries in the ‘Starting a Business’ rankings.
- The European Innovation Scoreboard (2017) continues to rank Ireland 2nd for innovators.

InterTrade Ireland (ITI)

ITI is one of the six North/South Implementation Bodies established under the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. It undertakes a wide range of business support programmes to assist SMEs on both sides of the border to pursue business opportunities in the other jurisdiction.

The Body provides a targeted portfolio of programmes to help businesses to build competitive advantage in the crucial areas of Science, Technology & Innovation and Sales and Marketing, all backed by evidence-based economic and business research. There remains unmet continued demand for ITI’s services on both sides of the border.

ITI’s activities in 2017 included:

- Providing opportunities and financial resources for North/South Technology Transfer projects to develop new innovative products and services which can drive exports;
- Scoping new areas for co-operation between firms North and South;
- Providing sales and marketing opportunities to help firms find new cross-border markets; and
- Providing access for SMEs to the €12 billion all-island public procurement market.

Main outputs delivered by ITI in 2017:

- Job creation was 1,301 against a target for the year of 1,100;

- First time innovator companies were 82 against a target of 56 and
- First time exporters companies amounted to 102 over double the target.

ITI was also successful in being awarded management of a significant project under the EU's INTERREG Programme. The new project entails the Body managing a diverse set of initiatives to assist companies to develop their Research and Innovation expertise, over a five-year period. This new initiative, which will complement the Body's existing range of programmes for SMEs, launched in 2017.

Details of ITI Brexit supports are included under Goal 3.

National Standards Authority of Ireland

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) is the State Agency responsible for standardization, conformity assessment and measurement.

NSAI aims to improve the performance of Irish business and protect consumers by developing standards, inspecting measuring instruments used in trade and conducting audits and issuing certificates on the application of standards to goods, services and measurements.

NSAI provides Ireland with the components necessary for an effective trading infrastructure for products and services to be developed, traded, and relied on nationally and around the world. This infrastructure also contributes positively to the Irish 'offering' that can influence decisions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), where organisations rely on a developed standards and conformity assessment infrastructure to achieve their objectives, such as in the medical devices sector.

NSAI provides services to industry and the public through its Certification, Standards and Agrément (building products and processes) functions. It is also responsible for both Legal and National Metrology functions, which ensures the accuracy of all measurements and measuring instruments used for trade and other purposes.

NSAI published 1,490 standards during 2017, including 4 new Irish standards such as the revised Reactive Pyrite standard and revised Code of Practice for Slating and Tiling. The total number of standards available in NSAI's catalogue now exceeds 23,000.

The number of standards purchased by Irish organisations in 2017 was 6,819, while the number of standards downloaded by Irish users exceeded 123,500, of which 15,500 were by third-level institutions.

The number of new registered users to the Agency's 'Your Standards, Your Say' portal exceeded the 12% target at 15% (+323).

NSAI provide a wide range of certification services to enable Irish industry improve quality, efficiency and placement of goods on the market and issued 309 new certificates to 123 organisations in business excellence related standards for Quality, Environmental, Health and Excellence Through People schemes.

NSAI had regular engagement with industry in 2017 with 16 free regional ISO 9001 and 14001 roadshows delivered. Almost 1,000 delegates, from a variety of businesses and organisations, attended these seminars.

The NSAI celebrated its 20th year in 2017 and half-way into its four-year strategy 'NSAI Strategic Plan 2016-2020', the Agency is on track to meet its objectives, by continuing to provide assurance to the public and in providing Irish and FDI companies with the necessary infrastructure and services to allow for their growth and competitiveness into the future.

Retail Consultation Forum

Almost one in every seven people employed in Ireland works in the retail and wholesale sector: it remains the largest private sector employer in the country. Through the Retail Consultation Forum, DBEI encourages Retail representatives to work together and with public bodies, to further develop the sector. Three Forum meetings were held in 2017, focused on key concerns of Brexit, Online Trading, Town Centre Renewal, and Skills. As chair of the Forum, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation has had ongoing engagement with the sector during 2017.

Highlights for the Retail Consultation Forum during 2017 included a workshop on Brexit impacts in November, and Retail being chosen as one of three sectors for a DBEI pilot study into firm-level impacts of Brexit. In 2017, DBEI has also been working with EI on the development of a pilot programme to support retailers to scale up online trading capabilities. The Forum's Skills working group has been focused on the introduction of retail specific training in the areas of Digital, Brexit, and Health & Safety.

National Design Forum

Like R&D or new technological applications, design innovation is a key business differentiator and source of international competitiveness. The Year of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) was a successful initiative funded by the Department which aimed to bring visibility to Ireland's dynamic design businesses, supporting them in trading in competitive foreign markets and ultimately creating jobs at home. Continuing the policy focus on design, the Action Plan for Jobs 2017 set out a number of actions for the ongoing development of the design sector in Ireland and to maximise its contribution to the overall economy. This included the establishment of a National Design Forum which would bring all the relevant parties together.

In May 2017, a National Design Forum was established, which aims to drive Ireland's capability and reputation as a source of design innovation. The National Design Forum brings together all relevant stakeholders including businesses, Government agencies, third level colleges, design practitioners and design organisations, providing a platform for a structured engagement focused on promoting the design agenda.

The key purpose of the Forum is to discuss key issues of relevance, with a view to identifying practical actions which could be taken by government (national or local), or by industry itself, to support the design sector. It is chaired by the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

Goal 2: Whole of Government approach to promoting enterprise and employment

Lead a whole of government approach to developing the most competitive environment for investment, productivity and sustainable jobs growth

Action Plan for Jobs 2017

The Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) is an integrated, whole-of-Government initiative under which Government Departments and agencies work to support job creation in the enterprise sector. DBEI leads the development of the APJ on behalf of Government, working closely with other Government Departments and agencies.

The sixth APJ, which was launched in February 2017, contained 164 actions across Government Departments and agencies, with the aim to help create an additional 45,000 jobs in 2017. 66,500 jobs were created in the year to Quarter 4 2017. The results of the concerted action on job creation since 2012 demonstrate that the process is working. More than 345,000 more people were at work at Quarter 4 2017 than in 2012 when the first Plan was launched. Unemployment declined from over 15% in early 2012 to 5.9% in April 2018.

The APJ is one of the key policy instruments used by the Government to deliver the Programme for a Partnership Government targets for 2020. They include 200,000 extra at work, including 135,000 in the regions; regional unemployment within 1% of the national average; and to reduce the national unemployment rate to 6%. The APJ 2017 was underpinned by the following strategic goals:

- Create 200,000 additional jobs by 2020, including 135,000 outside Dublin;
- Deliver strong competitive regions to drive regional employment;
- Grow trade and investment in existing markets and diversify into new markets;
- Become a global innovation leader to grow and diversify the composition of our exports;
- Achieve a top 5 competitiveness ranking;
- Drive productivity across all sectors of the economy; and
- Develop and attract high quality talent.

For DBEI, the main areas of focus in the APJ 2017 were:

- Responding to Brexit
- Attract Foreign Direct Investment, Grow Sales and Exports
- Ensuring Finance for Growth
- Stimulating Regional Growth
- Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy
- Promoting Innovation

Enterprise 2025 – Ireland's National Enterprise Strategy: renewed

Although Enterprise 2025, Ireland's national enterprise strategy, was published only in November 2015 much has changed in the world since then. During 2017 analysis was undertaken to review the strategy to ensure that it remains robust in response to a number of recent significant global changes. In particular, Brexit, US emerging policies, International tax developments, and the unrelenting advances in disruptive technologies. The Review also has regard to the potential vulnerabilities within our enterprise base – including concentrations in certain sectors and export markets, and in source markets for FDI.

Analysis of the implementation of the 56 strategic actions set out in Enterprise 2025 indicates solid progress is being made in all but two instances. In a small number of cases, progress is slower than

desired and barriers to progress were identified. In terms of metrics, the analysis indicates that both employment and exports are performing beyond expectations, with agency supported enterprises well ahead of anticipated growth projections. While acknowledging that such developments are positive, the pace and level of growth also raises key policy challenges in terms of capacity constraints. Of concern is our performance in overall competitiveness, progress in relation to enterprise investment in skills and levels of investment in RD&I, both by the State and by enterprises. Analysis of global trends and implications for enterprise and a comprehensive review of enterprise performance was completed during 2017. These analyses served to inform changes to our policy emphasis. A Senior Officials Group was established to consider the findings and consultations with relevant industry associations were completed during the year.

It is anticipated that Enterprise 2025 Renewed will be published in March 2018.

Delivering Skills for a growing economy

One of the main priorities for APJ 2017 was ensuring the availability of the required skills and talent base to meet the needs of a growing economy. In particular, the 2017 Plan built on the significant progress and reforms made since the first Action Plan in 2012. It focused on looking at new opportunities arising from the digitalisation of the economy and society. It aimed to progress the actions and recommendations of the National Skills Strategy 2025. It included a range of measures to reskill and upskill jobseekers through Springboard; provide more apprenticeships; foster stronger links at regional level between employers and the education and training sector through the Regional Skills Fora; and address skills shortages in specific sectors such as ICT.

ICT Skills

In late 2017 the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, whose Secretariat is based in DBEI, initiated a refresh of the ICT Skills Demand Forecast previously undertaken in 2013, as a key evidence based input into the development of the successor to the ICT Skills Action Plan, 2014-2018. The new Plan will seek to match the forecast demand through supply measures in order to ensure the continued growth of the Technology sector and, given the growing pervasiveness of ICT in other sectors, across the economy as a whole.

The forecast, which was completed in Q1 2018, was focused on establishing the demand for High Level ICT Skills at NFQ levels 6/7 and 8+ over the period 2017-2022, within the broad ICT sector and across other sectors of the economy. As well as inputting this forecast into the new iteration of the ICT Skills Action Plan, DBEI also forms the Joint Secretariat to the High Level ICT Skills Action Plan Steering Group with DES; this group is responsible for the implementation of the existing plan, and development of the new one.

Addressing the Skills Needs Arising from the Potential Trade Implications of Brexit

In late 2017 the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs also initiated a study examining the skills needs arising from the potential trade implications of Brexit. This study, which was completed in Q1 2018, was focused on establishing whether Irish based enterprise is adequately equipped from a skills and competency perspective to address the potential trade implications of Brexit and offset its impact. Based on a comprehensive, cross sectoral engagement with the Irish enterprise base, the study examined two trade related skillsets:

- Those skills related to diversifying trade into new markets, or expanding trade in existing markets (e.g. international management, sales, marketing, design and development, foreign languages, cultural awareness), and
- Those skills associated with the facilitation of trade across international borders (e.g. logistics, supply chain management, customs clearance).

Arising from this evidence base, the study recommends a suite of skills related interventions, aimed at contributing to the development of the trade related skills base in Ireland, and its accessibility to enterprise, in a manner that will help Irish based enterprise navigate the potentially more complex and diverse trading environment post-Brexit.

Competitiveness

The Department places a high priority on ensuring that the key enterprise competitiveness issues are identified and prioritised for action across the government system. Our Enterprise Policy priority is that Ireland achieves a top-five competitiveness ranking by 2020. Research, analysis and the secretariat role for the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) is undertaken by the Department.

The Council reports to the Taoiseach and the Government, through the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation on key competitiveness issues facing the Irish economy and offers recommendations on policy actions required to enhance Ireland's competitive position.

The NCC published the following reports during 2017:

Costs of Doing Business in Ireland 2017

This report benchmarks the key business costs and identifies areas where Irish enterprise costs are out of line in those in other countries. It focuses on costs that are largely domestically determined such as labour, property, energy, water, waste, communications and business services, and considers both price levels, and changes in those levels.

Ireland remains a relatively high-cost location. It points to the rise in both commercial and residential property, and the dramatic increase in residential rents which will inevitably impact upon wage demands, increase the cost of living and will damage competitiveness. It highlights the high costs associated with a range of business services (postal/courier, legal services and market research) and services associated with the construction sector (architecture and engineering).

Irish firms continue to face higher interest rates on loans of up to and including €1 million than their competitors abroad. Whilst hourly labour costs in Ireland were above those in the UK and the Euro area, labour cost growth has been below EU and Euro area averages in the 5-year period to 2016.

Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2017

This assessment of Ireland's competitiveness performance vis-a-vis a range of close trade partners and competitor countries, uses the most up-to-date and internationally comparable data available. Improved public finances, productivity growth, export growth and the labour market contributed to Ireland's improved competitiveness performance in international rankings, (6th in the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook). The exporting sectors of the economy continued to perform strongly and many of Ireland's traditional strengths (competitive taxation regime, highly skilled young workforce, and supportive environment in which to do business) remain.

The key concern of the Council is that Ireland maintains these rankings in a rapidly growing economy, close to full employment and facing threats which include Brexit, a potential shift in trade and taxation policy in the US, and the uncertain nature of global growth. The challenges include our narrow export base, the productivity gap between the most productive firms and the rest of the enterprise base that is lagging, ensuring Irish enterprise stays at the forefront of technology and innovative activity, and ensuring that the economy does not overheat as it addresses infrastructure gaps.

Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2017

This report identifies the policy responses required to meet the main competitiveness challenges facing the business sector under two broad themes as follows:

Theme 1 Ensuring growth is sustainable:

1. Delivering Macroeconomic Sustainability
2. Delivering Productivity Enhancing Infrastructure
3. Environmental Sustainability and transitioning to a low carbon economy
4. Building and Sustaining Talent

Theme 2 Generating an uplift in enterprise competitiveness:

5. Maintaining Cost Competitiveness
6. Fostering Productivity Growth
7. Building Innovation Capacity
8. Enhancing and Diversifying Ireland's Export Base

The Department engaged with other Government Departments to further develop meaningful actions to support competitiveness for inclusion in the Action Plan for Jobs 2018.

Benchmarking Ireland's Productivity Performance, 2004-2014

Ireland's productivity performance is relatively strong and above the Euro area average and levels seen in the UK. However, Ireland's performance is greatly influenced by shifts in the composition of employment and the influence of Foreign Direct Investment on output.

The narrow base of enterprises in high value-added sectors (particularly in Pharma and ICT) disguises to a degree underperforming sectors and boosts Ireland's productivity level. The narrow base of sectors driving productivity leaves Ireland vulnerable to shocks and serves to highlight the scope to enhance productivity at sector and firm levels. Facilitating enterprise and start-ups, trade, access to finance, skills and infrastructure are key to productivity and competitiveness gains.

Benchmarking Competitiveness, Ireland and the UK, 2017

The unprecedented challenges posed by Brexit provide urgent impetus to enhance our competitiveness performance. International competitiveness rankings show the following:

- World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranks Ireland 18th and the UK 7th out of 190 economies.
- WEF Global Competitiveness Report ranks Ireland 23rd and the UK 7th out of 138 countries.
- The IMD measure of competitiveness ranks Ireland 7th and the UK 18th out of 61 countries.

In comparison to the UK, Ireland has a similar perceived performance in international competitiveness rankings with respect to: the quality of institutions; the performance of the Health and Primary Education sectors; the quality of higher education and training; and the efficiency of product markets. Relative to Ireland, in addition to its larger market size, the UK has higher rankings with respect to: infrastructure; financial market development; labour market efficiency; technological development; innovation; and business sophistication.

Ireland's performance on current macroeconomic headline data, while welcome, generally improves Ireland's overall competitiveness score, overstating our overall competitiveness position. The Council considers there is a need to preserve fiscal sustainability, increase investment in infrastructure and talent, maintain cost competitiveness, and drive innovation and productivity across all economic sectors.

Economic Infrastructures

The availability of competitively priced world class infrastructure (energy, telecoms, transport, waste and water) and related services is critical to support economic growth and enterprise development.

The Department identifies the investment and policy priority actions that need to be addressed to support enterprise activity growth and job creation, and endeavours to have these actions implemented. It monitors and reviews the current and future infrastructure needs of the enterprise base, with a particular focus on the internationally trading sectors.

Throughout 2017 the Department highlighted the main issues and priorities for business users across each infrastructure area drawing on analysis carried out by the Strategic Policy Division. The Department worked closely with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in its development of the Renewable Energy Support Scheme. Analysis on infrastructure needs also informs the development of the Ireland 2040, Ireland's National Planning Framework, which is led by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The Department's analysis, together with the enterprise strategic aims set out in Enterprise 2025 provided the basis for DJEI's submission to the consultation process and its engagement throughout 2017.

In parallel, the Department engaged on an ongoing basis across the public and private sectors to advocate for policy measures to improve the availability and quality of economic infrastructure to support enterprise development and growth.

Taxation

Certainty, stability and predictability in taxation policy facilitate enterprise decision-making, minimises business costs and supports enterprise growth. Informed by the enterprise perspective, DBEI coordinated a joint agency Pre-Budget Submission 2016 involving IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and SFI. The primary purpose of the submission was to ensure that Budget 2018 continues to support enterprise, in particular, the export potential of firms and Ireland's attractiveness as a location for foreign direct investment and for the attraction and retention of talent. The PBS set out some key principles relating to relative competitiveness internationally, certainty, fairness and simplicity and sustainability. This submission made recommendations in relation to Ireland's corporation tax regime, the personal tax system, helping SMEs to be Brexit ready, rewarding entrepreneurial risk, stimulating innovation, and remaining competitive for FDI.

The Department also maintains a watching brief on international tax developments and engages with firms through the enterprise development agencies to keep abreast of potential implications and to inform national priorities.

Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, 193 United Nations Member States, including Ireland, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals cover the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future.

During 2017, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment began preparing Ireland's first National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Plan will set out how the goals will be implemented in Ireland and outline arrangements for interdepartmental coordination, stakeholder engagement and periodic progress reporting.

This Department will have responsibility for the implementation of a number of Sustainable Development Goals under the plan, an example of which is the Corporate Social Responsibility National Plan and Stakeholder Forum. Monitoring their implementation is a key priority for DBEI.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Ireland's 2nd National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), "Towards Responsible Business", was launched on 26th June 2017. The CSR Stakeholder Forum, which is enterprise led with Secretariat provided by DBEI, was established to oversee implementation of the actions in the 2nd Plan.

With the 2nd National Plan on CSR, the Government's ambition is to make Ireland a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice through the adoption of best practice CSR at the heart of businesses and organisations.



For many businesses, CSR is recognised as an important aspect of their competitiveness. Businesses who embed CSR and responsible business practices into their business strategy, improve their sustainability, reputation, cost competitiveness, and ability to attract and retain talent, whilst also fostering social cohesion and protecting the environment.

In June 2018, the Forum will present a year one progress report 'CSR Check' at a CEO/Leaders Breakfast meeting.

Climate Change

The Department provided analysis and policy input into the National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework and other matters relating to climate change policy and targets as they pertain to the enterprise sector and ensured consideration of competitiveness impacts in policy options.

Strategic importance of Data Centres to Ireland's enterprise policy

In October 2017, the Government agreed to a strengthened Strategic Policy Framework to the continued development of data centres in Ireland. This strategic approach involves a number of complementary strands being led by other Departments including the Renewal Energy Policy Development Framework, amendments to the Planning and Development (strategic infrastructure) Act and the judicial review of major infrastructure projects.

Contributing to this strategic framework, DBEI initiated the development of a Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy. The overall objective is to drive a plan-led approach to data centre investments to realise the potential of regions, create high quality jobs, drive Ireland's ambition in the digital economy as a location of choice for investment and seed-bed for technology entrepreneurship while ensuring that potential downside costs are minimised. The national policy statement will be finalised by mid-2018.

Science Surveys

The Department produces official statistics on R&D in the Government and Higher Education sectors.

Research & Development (R&D) Budget

The Research and Development Budget 2016/2017 reports on total Government funding of R&D in Ireland (GBARD), total expenditure on R&D performed in-house in the Government sector (GOVERD) and total expenditure on in-house R&D in Ireland (GERD). This report also provides breakdowns of research personnel and expenditure by fields of R&D and by types of research. The headline figures for 2016/2017 were as follows:

- GBARD in 2016 was €718.9m a decrease of 2.4% over 2015. GBARD as a percentage of GNP fell to 0.32% in 2016 from 0.36% in 2015.
- GBARD as a percentage of GDP at 0.28% in 2015 is below the OECD and EU averages of 0.54% and 0.52% respectively.

- GERD (the sum of Government, Business and Higher Education expenditure) increased to €3.24bn in 2016, up from €3.13bn in 2015. GERD as a percentage of GNP stood at 1.43% in 2016, down from 1.52% in 2015. As a percentage of GDP Ireland's GERD at 1.2% compares with an OECD and EU average of 2.38% and 1.96%.
- GOVERD amounted to €98m in 2016, down slightly from €101m in 2015. GOVERD as a percentage of GNP was 0.04% in 2016, a decrease since 2015.

Survey of R&D in the Higher Education Sector

This is a biennial survey and provides details of total in-house expenditure on R&D and research personnel in the higher education sector. Breakdowns of research personnel and expenditure on R&D by fields of R&D and by types of research are also available.

The headline figures for 2014/2015 were as follows:

- Total expenditure on R&D in the higher education sector in 2014 amounted to €730.1m
- HERD as a percentage of GNP has fallen from 0.51% in 2008 to 0.45% in 2014.
- The total number of full-time equivalent researchers increased by 6% to 12,836 in 2014.
- UCC had the largest spend on R&D in the country at €122m in 2014, followed by TCD at €119m, UCD at €117m, NUIG at €96m and UL at €80m. These five institutions together account for almost three quarters of HERD in 2014.
- The percentage of HERD financed by industry increased from 3.3% in 2012 to 4.4% in 2014

Dashboard Statistics

The Dashboard Statistics, published monthly on the Department's website are a compilation of data from the Department, CSO, ONS and other external sources relating to early indicators of change that bear on enterprise policy.

Goal 3: Working ambitiously with our EU and International partners

Work ambitiously across Government with our EU and international partners to achieve progress in EU and International fora, across a wide range of interests, including in response to the implications of Brexit

Engagement at EU Level

The Department continued its engagement at EU level to achieve national and EU policy outcomes that are supportive of our enterprise, competitiveness and innovation agenda. The Department has a lead and coordination role in the Competitiveness Council and the Foreign Affairs (Trade) Council. Responsibility for the coordination, of the Employment Social Policy Health and Consumer Affairs (ESPCO) Council, transferred to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in 2017.

During 2017, Minister Mitchell O'Connor, Tánaiste Fitzgerald, Ministers Breen and Halligan represented Ireland's interests at the Competitiveness and Trade Councils respectively. There were three Formal and two Informal meetings of the Competitiveness Councils, as well as three Formal and two Informal Trade Council meetings held during the course of 2017 under the Maltese and Estonian Presidencies.

Issues progressed by the Competitiveness Council during 2017 included the Digital Single Market Strategy: Consumer Protection Co-operation and Geoblocking, the Single Market Strategy for Services: Single Digital Gateway, Improved Notification regime for the Services Directive and Proportionality Test for Regulating Professional Services.

Issues progressed by the Trade Council during 2017 included: ongoing trade negotiations with Mexico and Mercosur; finalisation of the EU Japan Economic Partnership following political agreement reached in July; the adoption of the EU's new antidumping methodology; the implementation of EU Free Trade Agreements; and preparations for the WTO Ministerial Conference, which was held in December.

In addition to representing the Department's and Ireland's strategic interests at Council, the Department's key EU interests were also pursued at the cross Government level via the Department of Foreign Affairs EU Senior Officials Group and a newly formed Interdepartmental Group on EU Affairs and Brexit, as well as, bilaterally through engagements with like-minded Member States and the Commission.

EU State Aid Regime

Adherence to State aid rules remained a priority for the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in 2017. The Department, in its capacity as the National Contact Point for overarching State Aid policy, continued disseminating information across Government Departments and the Department's enterprise agencies.

In addition, as the liaison point for all communications issuing to and from DG Competition, the Department coordinated Ireland's position on State aid issues during the course of 2017.

The objectives of the EU's State Aid Modernisation initiative are to foster growth in a strengthened, dynamic and competitive internal market, to focus enforcement on cases with the biggest impact on the internal market and to streamline the state aid rules, including the speed of decision-making by DG COMP.

A key reform in the modernisation process has been clarification from the Commission of the notion of State aid and exempting state aid from prior control via the General Block Exemption Regulation.

The General Block Exemption Regulation plays a crucial role in simplifying and clarifying State aid rules, cutting red tape and allowing for investments to go ahead as fast as possible. This also allows the Commission to focus its State aid control on the potentially most distortive cases.

Brexit

A dedicated Brexit Unit was established in late 2016 to lead on the coordination of the Department's policy and operational responses to Brexit, including our approach to the negotiations within the EU and bilateral relations with the UK.

To ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to Brexit across all areas of the Department in 2017, the Brexit Unit managed and supported:

- six meetings of the Co-ordination Group on Brexit, chaired by the Minister and consisting of the CEOs of both IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, and relevant enterprise, Single Market and trade officials from the Department to oversee implementation of our response to the emerging national, UK and EU developments;
- six meetings of the DBEI Cross Divisional Brexit Senior Officials Group, chaired by the Secretary General, Dr Orlaigh Quinn, comprising senior officials in relevant policy areas across the Department.

In November 2017, DBEI published "Building Stronger Business: Responding to Brexit by competing, innovating and trading". This paper summarises impacts of Brexit across key policy areas within the Department and outlines the policy and operational measures underway and planned by the Department and its Agencies to respond to Brexit, including supports available to companies to help them prepare for Brexit. It also describes the research programme underway, including a number of research projects commissioned by DBEI in 2017 to help build an understanding of the possible implications of Brexit on Ireland for enterprise, consumers and trading relations. These studies will provide an evidence base to inform Ireland's policy positions as part of the wider negotiation on the UK's future relationship with the EU and further mitigation measures to respond to Brexit.

As part of this programme of research a major study examining the "Strategic Implications for Ireland Arising from Changing EU-UK Trading Relations" commenced in June 2017. This study will provide an evidence base on key trade and investment questions to inform Ireland's position as part of the wider negotiation on the UK's future relationship with the EU and will inform the development of sectoral mitigation measures.

DBEI Ministers and officials participated in the Cabinet Committee on Brexit, the Inter-Departmental Group on EU and Brexit and the range of Brexit Working Groups mandated to identify impacts and implications of Brexit, as well as mitigation measures across the sectors with a view to minimise risks and maximise opportunities.

Engagement with stakeholders is an important pillar of the Government's domestic response to Brexit. Dialogue through one-to-one meetings and through existing enterprise and innovation related fora was a key aspect of DBEI's Brexit preparations in 2017.

To facilitate and encourage regular and comprehensive dialogue with enterprise, the Department established an Enterprise Forum on Brexit and Global Challenges in 2017. Membership includes 13 representatives from enterprise groups and the Forum is chaired by the Minister, with five meetings held in 2017. This Forum provides an opportunity for the Department to share emerging research and policy approaches with the enterprise sector and to receive feedback on proposals. It also gives enterprise a platform to share their research and feedback from companies with the Department and to raise issues of concern, to highlight opportunities, and to suggest policy responses.

In addition, the Department has established a Trade & Investment Working Group. Membership includes Assistant Secretaries from the Department of An Taoiseach, the Department of Finance, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department Foreign Affairs and Trade, the

Department Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and the Revenue Commissioners. This Group, which met 10 times in 2017, provides a forum for discussion of trade and investment policy implications arising from Brexit, and an opportunity to consider potential Irish positions on key policy questions.

The Department has also held two large external stakeholder engagement events ("Sectoral Stakeholder Dialogues") to capture inputs from a range of participants. The outputs from these events held in Carrick-on-Shannon (in January and addressing the full range of enterprise issues), and Dublin (held in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills in July, and considering the skills implications of Brexit) fed directly into the Government's All Island Civic Dialogue process.

Furthermore, Ministers and officials have also been engaged in extensive bilateral engagement with EU counterparts. There has also been engagement between the Department/Ministers and EU Commissioners, UK Ministers and Ministerial counterparts in other Member States and also the Commission's Chief Brexit Negotiator, Mr Michel Barnier.

Brexit State Aid Response– working group

As part of its response to the UK's decision to leave the EU, in November 2017, the then Tánaiste met with Commissioner Vestager and one outcome from this meeting was the establishment of a Working Group on State Aid comprising representatives from Directorate General for Competition, the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The objective of the Group is to scope and design schemes to support enterprises impacted by Brexit in line with State Aid rules. The Irish delegation is led by DBEI.

Rescue & Restructuring (R&R) Scheme

A Rescue & Restructuring scheme was approved by DG Comp in November 2017. Under this scheme, Enterprise Ireland can offer restructuring support to small and medium sized companies (SMEs) who are in severe financial difficulty and would almost certainly be condemned to going out of business without the intervention of the State.

While it is not expected that there will be a need for the State to provide rescue/ restructuring aid to companies, given the supports already in place and those being developed (i.e. the Brexit Loan scheme and the proposed longer-term business investment loan scheme, along with the EI supports and Local Enterprise Office and InterTradeIreland supports) it is considered prudent to have contingency measures in place so that we can respond swiftly to changing circumstances as necessary.

Enterprise Ireland's Strategic Response to Brexit

Enterprise Ireland's Strategy 2017-2020 represents a strategic response to Brexit aiming to grow more resilient Irish companies by building scale and expanding reach. To support its Strategy, the Department provided for additional capital monies in 2017 to enable EI implement a variety of initiatives and ramp up its supports to drive improvements in productivity, innovation, management capability and leadership skills, and to build the ambition of managers to look to other markets around the world. Enterprise Ireland's exchequer pay provision for 2017 included additional current monies to assist in the recruitment of an additional 39 posts to support the Brexit Strategy.

As part of Enterprise Ireland's strategic response to Brexit, several new initiatives were rolled out during 2017, including;

- February: Global Ambition Campaign launched to get more companies exporting and encourage companies to enter Eurozone;
- March: Launch of Brexit SME Scorecard, a new interactive online platform which can be used by all Irish companies to self-assess their exposure to Brexit under six business pillars.

- March: A €5k “Be Prepared Grant” was also introduced that supports the costs of SME clients in preparing a plan to mitigate risks and optimise opportunities arising from Brexit;
- April: Launch of new ‘Prepare for Brexit’ communications campaign to highlight action required by companies;
- May: Launch of New Eurozone Strategy to increase exports to the Eurozone by 50%;
- June: Prepare for Brexit Roadshows were rolled out nationally to engage with companies;
- September: International Markets Week which included a Brexit Zone, and the #Irish Advantage Campaign was launched which will target Eurozone buyers to buy Irish innovation in key Brexit impacted sectors;
- November: Launch of a fast track Agile Innovation Fund with a streamlined online application to give companies rapid access to innovation funding.

During 2017, EI also organised over 140 trade promotion events to help clients to maintain and grow their UK markets and to find new markets outside of the UK.

IDA Ireland’s Strategic Response to ‘Brexit’

Brexit has been a significant focus for the IDA with increased resources, new marketing strategies and events taking place in order to highlight Ireland’s suitability for companies looking to maintain EU market access into the future.

IDA’s Brexit-strategy involved significant engagement with its clients – in fact, IDA began engaging with clients on Brexit in advance of the referendum and these engagements intensified following the result in June 2016.

IDA Ireland has also held major Brexit events in key locations, including London, New York and Hong Kong and participated in ‘Brexit’ related conferences and events across the globe. This has been supported by a very effective international media campaign, targeting international investors that highlights the advantages of locating or expanding in Ireland.

The Agency has modified its global footprint so that there are now four official territories rather than three, with the UK now being treated as a distinct market. The IDA are also looking to avail of new opportunities from its non-traditional target markets. This includes the UAE, Turkey and South Africa. The Agency will continue to also focus on growing its relationships in Europe as well as in countries like China, India, South Korea, Singapore and Australia.

While certainly challenging, the UK’s departure does present some opportunities for FDI in Ireland – although the nature of any opportunities will depend on the eventual outcome of the EU-UK negotiations.

Our strengths in attracting Brexit related investment include our continued access to the EU market, political, economic and regulatory stability relative to many competitors, a voice in EU policy and regulatory fora, consistent public policy regarding FDI, and close proximity to and connections with the UK.

Companies in the financial services sector have the most immediate requirements relating to Brexit, and Ireland has already won, despite serious competition, investments from leading companies in that sector (such as JP Morgan, Bank of America, Barclays, Legal and General, Chaucer and Almac).

LEO Brexit Supports

Brexit supports through the 31 Local Enterprise Office throughout the country are focused on information and awareness, market diversification, increased competitiveness, and promoting innovation so that LEO client companies can better cope with the challenges arising on foot of Brexit as well as to explore any opportunities presented. As well as Brexit, related mentoring and training the LEOs have also delivered specific Brexit initiatives for micro-enterprises, including:

- The LEOs organised over 30 Brexit Information events aimed at core and non-core clients.

The LEOs also encourage their clients to participate in the Enterprise Ireland Brexit Roadshow which included a series of regional events to support clients in preparing and planning for Brexit.

- LEO Competitive Fund for Innovative Micro Enterprises: - this new competitive initiative incentivised LEO clients to engage in innovation to develop New Product, Process or Markets. 63 micro-enterprises were approved an investment of €25,000 each, totalling an overall investment of €1,575,000.
- Technical Assistance Grants for Micro Export to the LEO suite of grants provided an incentive for LEO clients to explore and develop new market opportunities. 279 clients were approved assistance under this measure totalling an overall investment of €505,400.
- The LEOs developed a Lean4Micro offer for micro enterprise clients. €845k. was allocation to LEOs in 2017 which delivered 179 LEO client participants in the programme.

Intertrade Ireland Brexit Supports

As the SMEs assisted by ITI may be significantly impacted by Brexit, this Department provided additional funding to the Body in 2017 to undertake a new Brexit Awareness Campaign for SMEs. This provides a range of tailored supports, including 'Brexit Start to Plan Vouchers' valued at €2,000, to enable companies to obtain specialist advice on issues such as currency planning, tariffs and customs, regulatory requirements and taxation issues. Over 1,500 companies attended ITI's Brexit Awareness Events in a variety of locations across the island during 2017. In total the Brexit Advisory Service engaged directly with over 2,350 SMEs across the island through the various elements of its Brexit Advisory Service in 2017.

The Department also provided specific funding to ITI to enable research examining the implications of Brexit on Cross Border trade. The first of these research projects, analysing the impact of new tariff rates on a range of product sectors being traded between both jurisdictions, was completed in June 2017.

Brexit Mitigating Measures for SME's

Brexit Loan Scheme

The then Tánaiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation Frances Fitzgerald TD, in partnership with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed TD, secured Budget funding for a new Brexit Loan Scheme which will provide affordable financing to eligible Irish businesses with up to 499 employees that are either currently impacted by Brexit or will be in the future. The scheme, through a combination of State and EU guarantees, will leverage up to €300 million of lending to eligible Irish enterprises at a maximum interest rate of 4% with a cost to the Exchequer of €23 million (€14 million provided by Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and €9 million provided by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine). The Scheme is open both to State Agency clients and those businesses that do not have any relationship with State Agencies. The finance will be easier to access, more competitively priced, and at more favourable terms than current offerings on the market.

The new Scheme will be delivered by the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) through commercial lenders to get much needed working capital into Irish businesses.

Longer-term Investment Loan Scheme

For longer term solutions, the Department, together with the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine and the Department of Finance, began work on the examination of policy proposals for a new longer-term business Investment Loan Scheme to support businesses in investing strategically for a post-Brexit environment.

Business Finance Advisory Hub

Development of a Business Finance Advisory Hub which would support financial planning and general financing needs of SMEs was also initiated in 2017. The proposed Hub will assist businesses to make more informed financial decisions, building on existing supports available from bodies such as Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Offices. It will primarily be an online offering, which will provide standardised information and tools, and act as a signpost to appropriate Government supports and resources. In addition, the Department commissioned two surveys of businesses on the impacts of Brexit and levels of preparedness in 2017, so as to determine how best to support firms meet the challenges of Brexit.

Trade Agreements and Trade Missions

In 2017, Ireland worked closely with the EU Commission and Member States to bring several trade agreements to a successful conclusion. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada (CETA) entered into force provisionally from the 21st September 2017. This means that Irish companies may now take advantage of the provisions of CETA including the elimination of tariffs on almost all key exports, access to the Canadian procurement market, the easing of regulatory barriers and more transparent rules for market access. It is of interest to Irish business and consumers as it removes over 98% of tariffs. This will make imports cheaper and our exports more competitive. CETA will present new opportunities for Irish business and professionals to work and provide services in Canada.

Another important development was the finalisation of negotiations of the EU Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan on the 8th December. This ambitious trade agreement is a landmark achievement for the EU and Japan, who together account for more than one third of the world's GDP. Like CETA, it will open up new and exciting opportunities for Irish exporters and companies across a range of sectors, including the agri-food sector, which will see particular benefits with new market access for dairy products and beef.

The Department has been actively engaged with promotion of the new opportunities presented by the suite of EU Trade Agreements. In September, the former Tánaiste, Frances Fitzgerald, led a major trade and investment mission to Singapore and Japan with 60 Enterprise Ireland client companies. This was a valuable opportunity to highlight the importance of new market access and diversification in the context of Brexit, and to promote the benefits for Irish companies of new EU trade deals with both countries.

This mission was just one part of a comprehensive programme of international trade events delivered by Enterprise Ireland in 2017, giving Irish companies the opportunity to meet with potential buyers and network with key influencers in countries around the world. In total, 57 internationally focused trade events were organised throughout the year.

The Department also continued to work with the Commission and Member States to ensure that Ireland's interests are promoted and safeguarded in ongoing EU trade negotiations, such as those with Mexico and Mercosur; new EU trade defence legislation; and on investment related issues.

EU Single Market in Services

In January 2017, the European Commission launched its Services Package, which contains concrete initiatives which seek to deepen the integration of the EU Single Market in Services. This package includes proposals for a new European Services E-Card, aimed at further facilitating cross-border service provision in the construction and business services sectors. The package also includes proposals for improvements to the notification procedure within the Services Directive, with the objective of ensuring any new restrictions to service provision, that are being proposed for insertion

into Member States national laws, are in keeping with the free movement principles of the Single Market.

The Department conducted a public consultation on these proposals in 2017 and represented Irish interests at EU Council negotiations. The Notifications Directive was discussed at Council in May 2017, where a Council General Approach was agreed. Negotiations on the E-Card remain ongoing.

In May 2017, the European Commission also published a Single Market Compliance Package. This included a proposal for a Single Market Information Tool. This aims to give the Commission enhanced information gathering powers from individual market players when investigating cases of incorrect application of Single Market legislation. This proposal is being considered in detail by Council Working Parties and by the European Parliament.

In addition to participating in negotiations on these new legislative proposals, the Department continued its engagement at EU level, including with the European Commission, and with other Member States, and in representing Ireland at relevant EU Working Groups and Committees on Single Market issues.

The Department also continued to administer the SOLVIT and Internal Market Information (IMI) Systems, responding to SOLVIT cases and raising awareness of these administrative tools among businesses and citizens.

2017 also saw the completion of an initiative to enhance the functionality of Ireland's Point of Single Contact (PSC), a website which all Member States are required to operate pursuant to the EU Services Directive.

In October 2017, the Department hosted a meeting of the Your Europe Editorial Board in Dublin, which was only the fourth time that this meeting had taken place outside of Brussels. Minister Helen McEntee TD, Minister for European Affairs, gave the opening address to the meeting, which was attended by representatives from over 27 European Economic Area countries.

Digital Single Market

DBEI's Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019 recognises there are significant challenges and opportunities presented for many businesses from the evolution of the digital market, which has and will continue to change how business is done internationally. The Statement recognises that Ireland must build on our strengths in particular sectors, for example, the ICT sector, to take advantage of opportunities in these areas.

It commits to continuing to advocate ambitious initiatives to deepen the Single Market, especially in services, and the Digital Single Market, in policy areas within the Department's responsibility, and to support the continued mainstreaming of competitiveness across other policy fields. Furthermore, the Department will continue to seek efficiencies and improved customer service through continuous focus on digital opportunities.

The EU Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategy was published in May 2015 and is based around 16 initiatives supporting three key pillars: simplifying access for consumers and business; shaping the environment for digital networks and services to flourish; and maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

It consists of both legislative and non-legislative measures to tackle these 16 initiatives. In 2017, 24 legislative proposals have been published spanning telecoms rules, broadcasting, consumer protection, data privacy, cybersecurity and eGovernment, aiming to break down barriers for citizens, consumers and SMEs conducting business and availing of services online.

The Mid-term review of the DSM was published in May 2017 and noted good progress had been made and agreements had been reached on many of these proposals.

The Mid-term review also outlined further areas where the EU needs to act further to ensure a fair, open and secure digital environment. These include:

- clarifying rules on the cross-border flow of non-personal data based on principles such as free movement of data (Free Flow of Data);
- preparing an initiative to improve access and reuse of publicly funded data;
- tackling cybersecurity;
- reviewing platform to business (P2B) trading practices and ensure a fair and innovation-friendly business environment; and
- work with platforms to ensure that illegal content online can be easily reported and effectively removed.

Digital Economy and EU Digital Single Market issues span both intra and cross Departmental work Programmes. In the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation there are Units responsible for considering and gathering internal views on those issues for which we have policy responsibility in order to ensure there is policy coherence within DBEI. These relate primarily to copyright and consumer and competition policy.

Subsequent to the appointment of the Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection in June 2017, DBEI assumed responsibility for the leadership of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Digital Single Market (IDC on DSM). This cross-Governmental DSM group, responsible for leading the whole-of-Government effort on advancing and protecting Ireland's interests in relation the Digital Single Market, had previously been led by the Department of the Taoiseach. The Minister Chaired the IDC on the DSM in September 2017 and DBEI hosted and Chaired the IDC in November 2017 which addressed the theme of trust, which is seen as a key pre-requisite of digital transformation. The issues of Cybersecurity and eGovernment were addressed by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Office of the Chief Government Information Officer respectively.

The Digital 9 (D9) group is made up of digital frontrunner countries comprising Ireland and Nordic, Benelux and Baltic states based on the positioning of countries in the EU Digital and Society Index (DESI). Its focus is on delivering strategic oversight on the optimal application of digital policy and on acting as a forum for exchange of best practice. The Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection led an Irish delegation to the Digital 9 which took place in Sweden in October 2017. The meeting was attended by Ministers from other D9 EU member states. The meeting discussed issues including the challenges of Digital Society today, the Future of Work, online platforms and the European Commission's proposal on the Free Flow of Data.

The Minister of State outlined that active engagement in the Digital Single Market is an enabler of Ireland's Digital Economy and the D9 Group provides an important forum through which the best practice and knowledge of like-minded member countries can be shared to greater effect. The Minister committed to hosting a meeting of the D9 Group in Ireland in May 2018 to further emphasise Irelands commitment to the digital agenda.

In advance of the D9, the Minister of State Chaired a D9 Online Platforms Business Roundtable with a number of companies selected by IBEC from their Digital Policy Committee on 11th October 2017. This focussed stakeholder engagement gave businesses the opportunity to discuss the issues and barriers that they are facing and what needs to be done to overcome these barriers and create an ideal business environment in the future. The feedback gathered form this Roundtable was relayed at the D9 meeting in Stockholm. Further engagement with trade associations, including IBEC and AmCham will take place in 2018 to progress Ireland's digital agenda and the Digital Single Market.

The Department also represents Ireland on the OECD Digital Economy Committee.

Supporting the EU INTERREG Programme

The INTERREG Programme is one of 60 cross-border funding programmes across the EU. It embraces the six Border counties of Ireland, all of Northern Ireland and part of Western Scotland.

For the current round of INTERREG (due to run from 2017 to 2022), there is a Research and Innovation (R & I) strand, in respect of which DBEI co-funds, together with our counterpart Department in Northern Ireland.

Total funding available for this R & I strand (from the EU and National Governments) is €71m over the period up to 2022. It is a requirement that most project activity must be located within Northern Ireland, the six border counties in the Republic of Ireland and Western Scotland.

The R & I strand comprises two distinct elements: an initiative to increase the number of SMEs engaged in cross-border Research and Innovation activity (€18m) under which a range of activities will be provided for SMEs; and a more research-oriented initiative to increase the level of cross-border business and industry-relevant research and innovation capacity within the Health and Life Sciences and Renewable Energy sectors (€53m).

Third level institutions within the geographical area will have a strong role, including the three Institutes of Technology in the border counties. A total of 514 PhD years' worth of research is involved over the life of the Programme and selected companies from the relevant sectors are also participating, which will result in their developing enhanced expertise, especially in the development of new products or processes.

Both elements of the Programme are now underway with individual projects having been formally launched during 2017.

EPSCO/European Semester

Up to September 2017 the Department coordinated the work of the Employment and Social Policy strands of the EU EPSCO Council. Ireland contributed to the work of two formal Council meetings and one informal Council meeting under the Maltese Presidency in the first six months of 2017. The Department co-ordinated one informal Council meeting under the Estonian Presidency in July. Responsibility for the co-ordination of further Council Meetings transferred to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in September 2017.

European Pillar of Social Rights

The European Commission published its proposals for a European Pillar of Social Rights in April, following on the completion of the consultation process with all Member States. The Commission proposed that the European Pillar of Social Rights would be introduced as an Inter-institutional Proclamation through the European Parliament and the Council. The Department co-ordinated the Irish position, involving 12 other Departments, through the various EU committees and EPSCO Councils until September 2017. In September, responsibility for the co-ordination of the Irish response to progress the EU Pillar of Social Rights was transferred to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Business Regulation Unit (BRU)

The Business Regulation Unit has continued to engage positively in various international groups such as the European Union's REFIT Platform, looking at regulatory fitness, the European Council's Better Regulation Working Group, and the OECD's Regulatory Policy Committee.

Small Advanced Economies Initiative (SAEI)

The Small Advanced Economies Initiative is a group of 7 countries (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore and Switzerland) that bring together officials and experts to consider policy issues of common interest where the perspective of being a small advanced economy influences policy choices.

The annual meeting of Principals took place in Helsinki in 2017 and the Irish Delegation, led by the Secretary General, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, included senior executives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser to Government. The delegates were all senior representatives of their countries' ministries (including Offices of the Prime Minister, Ministries of Business, Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Higher Education and Science, and Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade), associated agencies as appropriate, and the offices of Chief Scientific Advisers.

The OECD presented to a plenary session on productivity and competitiveness. Other presentations from the members and areas for discussion included big data usage to inform policy making, the future of work, future proofing working life competencies gained in Higher Education, economic complexity, digitisation, public research commercialisation, global value chains and trade policy.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The Department leads on Ireland's engagement with the ILO. In June, Ireland was elected as Titulaire member of the ILO Governing Body (GB) for the period 2017-20. This is the first time Ireland has been elected to a Titulaire seat (one with speaking and voting rights) since we joined the ILO in 1923. In order to facilitate preparation of national positions on the GB agenda the Department established an Interdepartmental Group which brought together Departments with policy responsibility for the GB's wide-ranging agenda.

A key feature of the work of the Group is the involvement of the Social Partners, to reflect the fact that the ILO is a tripartite organisation. In addition to participating in the March and November GB meetings, the Department led a tripartite delegation to the International Labour Conference in June.

European Metrology Programme for Research

In 2017, NSAI's National Metrology Laboratory participated in a number of research projects in the European Metrology Programme for Research and Innovation (EMPIR), including:

- EMPIR Eura-Thermal project
- Trace PQM project (Traceability routes for electrical power quality measurements)
- Humea project with the objective to develop or extend the measurement and research capabilities of the participating emerging NMI/DIs' countries in the field of humidity measurements.
- MetAmmi: "Metrology for additively manufactured medical implants".

In 2017 NSAI also hosted the membership of the IQNET General Assembly, the world's largest network of national certifications bodies, to ensure Ireland and Irish businesses can achieve wider recognition and market access.

Goal 4: Positioning Ireland as a Global Innovation Leader

Lead a whole-of-Government ambition to position Ireland as a Global Innovation Leader, driving an internationally competitive research system, creating an innovative enterprise base and building a better society

Innovation 2020

Innovation 2020, our national strategy for research and development, science and technology, sets a vision for Ireland to become a Global Innovation Leader.

The aim is to create an internationally competitive research and innovation system, driving a sustainable economy and ultimately, creating a better society. Key to this vision is supporting excellent science, nurturing talent and delivering impact.

Implementation of Innovation 2020 is being driven by a cross Government Implementation Group chaired by DBEI and involving the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, research funding agencies and relevant Government Departments.

The Implementation Group met three times in 2017. The second progress report on implementation of Innovation 2020 was brought to Government and published in December 2017. Key progress on Innovation 2020 actions in 2017 included:

- Five new Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Research Centres announced (bringing the total number of SFI Research Centres to 17);
- A new PhD and Research Masters Programme to provide funding for 150 new enrolments in disciplines aligned to enterprise;
- Continued development of Ireland's commitment to International Research Organisations as evidenced by:
 - Membership of the European Southern Observatory initiative;
 - Completion of Irish membership of LOFAR, the network of radio telescopes distributed across Europe;
 - Full membership of ELIXIR which brings together life-science resources from across Europe;
- Ireland has won €475 million of competitive funding under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for R&D;
- A new Enterprise Ireland/IDA IrelandTechnology Centre launched in meat processing – an industry led initiative to create a 'one-stop shop' for meat processing research and technology;
- Enactment of the Knowledge Development Box Certification of Invention scheme to enable SMEs to qualify for the lower rate of corporation tax;
- Seven Enterprise Ireland Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) projects launched addressing challenges such as illegal dumping, blocked gullies in high risk flooding areas, wayfinding solutions, and enabling older people to remain in their homes;
- Three new Enterprise Ireland Technology Gateways added to the network of gateways which deliver technology solutions for Irish industry close to their market needs;
- The launch of the third phase of the Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative to bolster the capability within the knowledge transfer system and sustains capacity to support the process of commercialisation of research;
- The launch of an integrated, state-of-the-art Consumer Research and Market Insight Centre for Irish agri-food research;
- The launch of Laureate Awards for frontier research across all disciplines beyond postdoctoral level;
- Implementation of research related recommendations arising from the Higher Education Authority Review of Gender Equality Recommendations.

Science Foundation Ireland

During 2017 Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) continued to play a key role in supporting the government's vision for Ireland to become a Global Innovation Leader, as outlined in Ireland's strategy for research and development, science and technology - Innovation 2020, as well as implementing a number of actions in the Action Plan for Jobs 2017 and other national strategies.

Throughout 2017, SFI continued to focus on supporting a high-quality research environment with the aim of establishing Ireland as a location renowned for the excellence and economic relevance of its scientific research. In 2017 Ireland was identified as 11th in global scientific rankings for overall quality of research, having broken into the top 10 for a period in 2016-2017. Ireland ranked 2nd in the world for Nanotechnology, 2nd for Animal and Dairy Science, 2nd for Immunology, 4th for Agriculture, 4th for Mathematics, 5th for Materials Science and 6th for Chemistry.

Programme activity

2017 was a year of significant accomplishment across all areas of Science Foundation Ireland's activity. 366 new awards were approved in 2017 across 30 programmes with a value of €212 million. Total payments to research bodies and organisations in 2017 were €173 million.

Key areas of progress in 2017 included:

- The first 12 SFI Research Centres have signed collaborative research agreements with over 300 industry partners representing cumulative company commitments of over €120 million and have won €132 million from a range of international funding agencies,
- Four new SFI Research Centres were launched: Confirm, FutureNeuro, BEACON and I-FORM with an investment of €74 million from SFI and industry funding of €40 million. The new SFI Research Centres will address critical and emerging areas of the economy including advanced additive and smart manufacturing, neurological diseases and the bioeconomy
- Science Foundation Ireland continued to support early career researchers through programmes including the SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant, the SFI Career Development Award, and the SFI Future Research Leaders programmes.
- Over €40 million invested in 34 excellent and impactful research projects under the SFI Investigators Programme. Six of the research projects received co-funding of €3 million from Teagasc, Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), the Marine Institute (MI), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- A joint initiative co-funded by Science Foundation Ireland and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Germany, to create a Fraunhofer Project Centre (FPC) for Embedded BioAnalytical Systems in Dublin City University (DCU).
- Three Royal Society University Research Fellowship (URF) awards funded under the SFI-Royal Society Partnership Scheme.
- Three awards were made under the most recent SFI-BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council) Partnership funding call, bringing funded awards to a total of fourteen and €6.7 million.
- Science Foundation Ireland entered a new partnership agreement with the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The agreement supports joint research and technology development projects in the areas of engineering, ICT, mathematical sciences, physics, chemistry and materials science. This builds on the existing relationship with the UK involving collaborative agreements with the Royal Society, Wellcome and the BBSRC.

- 50% of Ireland's patent-cited publications were funded in part or in whole by Science Foundation Ireland, demonstrating that the research being funded by Science Foundation Ireland is vital to the commercialisation process.
- Science Foundation Ireland values working in partnership, and by the end of 2017 had awarded 18 Strategic Partnerships with industry (including nine awards in partnership with Pfizer) and 16 SFI Research Centres Spokes awards.

STEM awareness (science, technology, engineering, maths)

Science Foundation Ireland held a number of STEM awareness initiatives in 2017. Science Foundation Ireland has been working with the national broadcaster, RTÉ, and other partners through its SFI Discover Programme, to catalyse a transformation in scientific coverage and programming, particularly that which highlights Irish stories relating to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) across all media platforms. Through the Science Foundation Ireland-RTÉ partnership, three one-off documentaries, five television series and three children's television series with scientific content have been aired. There has been an increased focus on science in broadcast media, with several independently-funded pieces airing, including documentaries, 'filmed for web' features and increased news coverage from RTÉ's dedicated science correspondent.

Science Week took place from November 12th-19th with over 1,200 events across the country, involving 315,000 participants. These events included 12 festivals taking place in: Cavan/Monaghan, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Limerick, Kerry, Cork, Waterford, Carlow, Tipperary and the Midlands. The Teagasc Festival of Food and Farming took place across Dublin, Meath, Carlow, Galway, Cork and Wexford. A number of events were coordinated by Science Foundation Ireland including 'Scintillating Science with Dara O'Briain' which sold out at the National Concert Hall and a Science Week Family Open Day in the Convention Centre Dublin, which also sold out.

New demographics were reached in innovative ways including a TV program 'Weather Live' which was presented by Met Eireann and aired on RTE One, interactive events at the Gaiety School of Acting and more. This year's Science Week also introduced the #StopAndAsk campaign, the aim of which was to enable society to make sense of the world around them and to facilitate conversations between the general public and the scientific community in Ireland. There was significant contribution from Science Foundation Ireland funded researchers and industry partners who participated in Science Week events throughout the country. Forty-four awards were made through the SFI Discover Programme totalling an investment of €2.8 million supporting the education and engagement of the Irish public in STEM.

Research Prioritisation

Research Prioritisation (RP) was adopted by the Government in 2012 as the principle guiding public investment in research in support of the enterprise sector. It aligns public investment with areas of strategic market opportunities for Irish-based enterprise. The current cycle of RP spans the five-year period 2013-2017. Innovation 2020 committed to reviewing the priority areas to ensure that they are still valid and to revise them, if necessary, in the light of changed circumstances. The objective is to evolve the priority areas to ensure that Ireland is favourably positioned to benefit from the global opportunities now and into the future, by responding to worldwide megatrends and global challenges that are shaping the global economy and Ireland's place in it. In 2017, three studies were completed which provide the evidence base for the next cycle of RP for the period 2018 to 2023. The studies are:

- A Global Market Opportunity Assessment to identify strategic areas of commercial opportunity in global markets for Irish-based enterprises.

- A Technology Futures exercise to assess technologies that are or will be critical to Ireland's economic and social development.
- An assessment of the current cycle of Research Prioritisation.

A Consultation Forum held in November 2017 elicited views from stakeholders representing academia, enterprise and the public sector. The final report setting out the revised priority was brought to Government and will be published in Q1 2018.

Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund

The Government decided that the revised research priority area would inform a new Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, which was announced in the context of the National Development Plan (NDP) under Project Ireland 2040. This confirms the establishment of a €500 million challenge-based Fund that will be implemented through the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) and its agencies, working with other Government Departments and agencies.

This Fund will be competitive and challenge-based and see investment in the research, development and deployment of disruptive technologies and applications on a commercial basis to create the jobs of the future: it will drive collaboration between Ireland's world-class research base and industry as well as facilitating enterprises to compete directly for funding in support of the development and adoption of these technologies. The Fund will help to position Ireland as a Global Innovation Leader.

Capital Expenditure on Research, Development and Innovation - review

In July 2017, DBEI published a review of the Department's Capital Expenditure on Research, Development and Innovation (RDI). The report contributes to the wider Government Spending Review 2017. The review traces DBEI expenditure from its objectives to inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts between the period 2000 to 2016.

The review finds that innovative firms have higher survival rates and ability to withstand shocks. Innovation also aids in developing product or service mix and increases capabilities to internationalise. Of the Enterprise Ireland clients, innovation active firms showed higher resilience and growth in employment, exports and value added. While progress has been made in developing Ireland's National Innovation System, the review identifies challenges to be addressed to continually enhance the impact of funding in the system. These include; broadening the base of innovation active firms; deepening the scale of investment; widening supports available; and supporting companies to diversify their product and market mix, which is critical in the context of Brexit and firms that are currently over reliant on a single market.

Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) is a joint initiative of DBEI and the Department of Health. The aim of the initiative is to drive collaboration between the health service and the enterprise sector leading to the development and commercialisation of new healthcare technologies, products and services. An Oversight Group, established to give overall strategic direction to the Health Innovation Hub Ireland, is chaired by an independent industry expert, with joint deputy chairs from DBEI and the Department of Health and comprises senior representatives from the enterprise development agencies, the HSE, and the Health Research Board. The Oversight Group met six times in 2017.

The 2016-2017 call (open and focussed) sought project proposals from companies or entities whose innovative products or services have the potential to significantly impact healthcare. Concepts and ideas from individuals or teams involved in healthcare delivery were also sought. The open call sought innovations that address any healthcare need. In line with the Smart Ageing Initiative, the focussed call was on Improving Care for Older Persons in the Healthcare System. In addition, HIHI

operate an ‘Open Door’ policy outside of the formal call process. In 2017, HIHI actively supported a total of 37 projects – 22 projects from companies and 15 ideas or innovative concepts from the healthcare system. HIHI are conducting these projects in 13 different clinical locations ranging from Hospitals, to HSE Community Care Groups, to Pharmacies.

During 2017, a Stakeholder Advisory Group, chaired by a representative from the HSE and involving representatives from the health service, industry and patient groups, was established. The Group acts as a forum between industry, health services, patients and the Hub to bring about improved patient outcomes, and efficiencies and effectiveness in health care delivery which will facilitate economic growth. The Group also aims to provide strategic input to the Oversight Group so that the Hub is advancing projects in domains of activity pertinent to the needs of the healthcare service and to the global health care marketplace. The Stakeholder Advisory Group met twice in 2017.

National Maritime Strategy

DBEI and its agencies, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland contributed to the on-going implementation of Harnessing our Ocean Wealth, the national maritime strategy.

DBEI participates on the cross-Government Marine Coordination Group, chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Its agencies participated on the inter-agency group tasked with advising the Marine Coordination Group on the implementation of the new Marine Development Team (MDT), which has been established under the auspices of the Irish Maritime Development Office. The MDT works closely with the DBEI development agencies to realise new enterprise opportunities in the marine sector.

DBEI, in association with six other public bodies, again organised a workshop on the theme of the Digital Ocean, as part of SeaFest 2017, the national maritime festival held in Galway in June. The workshop was attended by 380 delegates with a significant increase in the number of industry delegates in 2017.

EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Horizon 2020

Ireland continued its excellent performance in Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Ireland won €475 million in competitive, EU funding from the programme over the period 2014 to September 2017. Higher Education Institutes accounted for €254 million, or 53.4 %, of the total. Companies won €161 million, or 34%, with €98.6 million of this going to SMEs. Enterprise Ireland leads the Irish Horizon 2020 Network consisting of National Contact Points and National Delegates from various research and industry agencies and government departments.

DBEI chairs the cross-Government High Level Group on Horizon 2020 which is tasked with coordinating and driving implementation of the national strategy for Horizon 2020. These results indicate that Ireland is on track to achieve the national target set in the strategy of securing €1.25 billion in EU funding over the course of the programme.

The North South Ministerial Council agreed a challenging target of drawdown of €175m for north-south collaborations to the Horizon 2020 programme. To date €65m has been secured and despite uncertainty over Brexit, the overall target remains achievable. During 2017 InterTradeIreland conducted a survey of possible participants on the potential for cross-border partnerships under Horizon 2020 and will develop a range of supports based on the survey findings. These include bespoke training for Horizon 2020 funding applications, protected time for lecturers/researchers and a series of targeted events.

In preparation for the negotiations on the 9th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP9) which will be the successor to Horizon 2020, DBEI published its preliminary views on the new programme in September 2017. Ireland proposes that FP9 should adopt the ambitious goal of establishing the EU as the global leader in the generation of new knowledge through scientific

research and in applying that knowledge through innovative solutions to pressing societal and economic challenges.

The document sets out Ireland's preliminary position on FP9 and was produced following a consultation with national stakeholders, government departments and agencies.

EU Competitiveness Council

DBEI attended two formal and two informal Competitiveness Councils (Research) and was involved in the preparatory work leading to two sets of Council Conclusions relating to:

- Streamlining the Research and Innovation monitoring and reporting landscape: and
- From the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 towards the ninth Framework Programme

European Research Area

The European Research Area is a unified research area open to the world based on the EU internal market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely. Through ERA, the EU strengthens its scientific and technological bases, its competitiveness and its capacity to collectively address grand challenges.

The 2015-2020 European Research Area Roadmap identifies a number of key implementation priorities which are likely to have the biggest impact on Europe's science, research and innovation systems.

Based on the commitments set out in Innovation 2020, the Irish ERA Roadmap sets out the range of actions Ireland will take to deepen its engagement with ERA and the 6 ERA priorities.

International Research Organisations (IROs)

DBEI continued to strengthen Ireland's participation in international research collaborations by completing its membership of I-LOFAR and commencing discussions to join ESO, the European Southern Observatory (ESO), which is the foremost intergovernmental astronomy organisation in Europe and the world's most productive astronomical observatory. Membership of ESO was prioritised over membership of CERN for 2018 because of the large, established community of astronomy researchers in Ireland. Astronomy is an active area of research in each of our universities and several of our institutes of technology. Negotiations on the Accession Agreement for Ireland to ESO will continue in 2018.

Ireland joined the International LOFAR (LOw Frequency ARray) Telescope (ILT) in 2017. The ILT comprises a network of radio telescopes distributed across Europe which are linked together to function as a unified, super-telescope. This is a world-leading instrument, and the largest radio telescope in the world. DBEI, through its agency Science Foundation Ireland, provided a grant of €1.4 million in January 2016 towards the capital cost of the I-LOFAR radio telescope.

An all-Ireland consortium of Universities and Institutes of Technologies form the I-LOFAR consortium. Minister Halligan officially switched on the telescope adjacent to the historic Leviathan telescope in Birr Castle, Co Offaly in July 2017.

Ireland is now a member of 8 IROs – the European Space Agency, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, the European Molecular Biology Conference, Eureka, COST, CECAM, ELIXIR and LOFAR. Membership of such IROs provides opportunities for Irish researchers and innovators and is the tangible evidence of Ireland's commitment to developing its international innovation, research and development footprint.

EURAXESS and Accreditations of research institutions

The EU's Third Country Researchers Directive provides for a fast track procedure for admitting researchers from outside of the European Economic Area for a period of up to five years to undertake research in organisations accredited to the scheme. DBEI is responsible for managing the applications process for organisations that seek accreditation as research institutions. DBEI received ten new applications and three renewal applications in 2017. Currently, there are 59 organisations accredited to the scheme.

DBEI also funds the EURAXESS office, hosted by the Irish Universities Association, which processes the application for hosting agreements from the individual countries. In 2017, EURAXESS Ireland processed 439 new hosting agreements from researchers encompassing 58 different nationalities.

US-Ireland R&D Partnership

The US-Ireland R&D Partnership is a product of the peace process and involves the governments of the USA, Ireland and Northern Ireland working together to advance scientific progress by awarding grants for research on a competitive basis. Areas funded include health, telecommunications, energy, nanotechnology, sensors, agriculture and collaboration at the level of individual Research Centres.

A Steering Group co-chaired by the three jurisdictions guides the collaboration across the three administrations with secretariat support from InterTrade Ireland. A meeting of the Steering Group was hosted by the US in March 2017.

Up to 2017, there have been 40 successful projects under the partnership including the first U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Research Initiative Foundation Program Grant.

Ministerial Engagements

DBEI provided support to a Ministerial delegation to Brazil to highlight and promote research and innovation collaborations with academia and enterprises. DBEI also supported Ministers when meeting with foreign delegations.

Enterprise Ireland (EI) Innovation Investment and Activity

EI is responsible for supporting the development of manufacturing and internationally traded services companies. It provides R&D supports for companies to develop new technologies and processes that will lead to job creation and increased exports. EI does this through three main actions:

- Strengthening existing in-company R&D capacity
- Driving increased collaboration between industry and academia
- Commercialisation

Strengthening existing in-company R&D capacity

In providing support for Research Development and Innovation (RDI) the State recognises a market failure where companies (particularly SMEs) do not invest enough in R&D or that when they do invest they tend not to invest in enough large or ambitious projects. Enterprise Ireland's role in this regard is to de-risk such RDI so that companies will develop new and improved products and services.

Irish Manufacturing Research (IMR) Technology Centre

The official opening of the Irish Manufacturing Research (IMR) Technology Centre took place in May 2017. IMR, funded under the Enterprise Ireland/IDA Technology Centres Programme, provides research solutions and specialist expertise and training to the manufacturing sector in Ireland.

An initial State investment of €15 million will lever significant additional private and public research funding to create an international centre of scale for Ireland in industry driven Applied Manufacturing Research. IMR's vision is to help make Ireland a world leader in advanced manufacturing operations for both SME and indigenous export companies and for multinational corporations based in Ireland.

The new Centre brings together cross sector industries and academic partners to develop breakthroughs in emerging technologies such as productivity technologies, collaborative robotics, industrial internet of things and additive manufacturing.

Collaborative Innovations:

During 2017, a record number of collaborative projects (1,078) between companies and Irish Higher Education Institute (HEIs) were supported by Enterprise Ireland.

These projects range from small €5k Innovation Vouchers projects to Technology Gateway Industry projects to large and potentially transformative Innovation Partnerships averaging around €300k. These projects provide companies with new commercial opportunities, cost savings or increases in their innovative capability.

HPSU Spinouts: 15 new High Potential Start-ups (HPSUs) were created from research outputs from the Higher Education System in 2017. These HPSU's are high technology, often disruptive young companies with a strong ability to succeed, achieve export sales and contribute to employment growth in Ireland.

Horizon 2020 Success: Enterprise Ireland leads our national participation in Horizon 2020, Europe's Innovation and Research funding programme. Since its launch in 2014, €475 million in non-exchequer RDI funding has been awarded to Irish companies and higher level researchers (€139 million in 2017). In addition to this funding, Horizon 2020 provides connectivity to important leading edge partners and know-how which can enable step changes in companies' longer term performance.

SME Instrument: In 2017, Enterprise Ireland's work helping SMEs access the SME Instrument of Horizon 2020 meant that Ireland is now the most efficient country in getting Horizon 2020 proposals funded through the European Commission. In 2017, 8 companies won over €16 million with some SMEs winning over €2m each.

Big Ideas: Enterprise Ireland hosted the Big Ideas event during 2017. This event is a platform for High Potential Start-ups from the Irish research system, to pitch their innovations to investors and to turn their Big Ideas into profitable sustainable enterprise.

Space Sector: Through Ireland's membership of the European Space Agency, 18 Irish companies, including 4 new entrant companies, secured €12 million in European Space Agency (ESA) contracts in 2017 with Enterprise Ireland support. The Irish research industry secured a further €1.4 million in contracts, bringing the total value of ESA contracts placed in Ireland to €13.4 million in 2017.

Enterprise Ireland signed an Earth Observation Agreement with the European Space Agency to provide Ireland, for the first time, with access to near-real time Earth Observation data. Access to near-real time data will help to drive research, and support the development of commercial applications and internationally traded services, and additionally, inform national policy

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) enables public sector bodies to address challenges by connecting with businesses to procure research and development on innovative solutions. SBIR Ireland, administered by Enterprise Ireland aims to drive innovation across all sections of the Irish Public Sector via robust engagement with technology rich companies.

A new SBIR call launched in late 2017 saw 11 Challenges approved from a wide range of Contracting Authorities including the Office of Public Works, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and Local Councils including Clare, Limerick and Cork City.

Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) helps business to benefit from access to Irish expertise and technology, by making it simple to connect and engage with this research base in Ireland. This engagement helps progress innovation, the commercialisation of research, job creation and economic prosperity. In 2017, a review of the progress made by KTI in its first three years of operation (2013-16) was conducted by an international panel of knowledge transfer experts. The review acknowledged the progress achieved by KTI since its recent establishment.

KTI Impact Awards: In April 2017, the KTI awards ceremony celebrated the achievements of knowledge transfer professionals working in Irish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and publicly-funded research organisations (RPOs). In September 2017 KTI held its annual conference, attracting over 200 people (approximately half of whom were from industry) to discuss research collaboration and commercialisation. The 'Find R&D Funding' online interactive tool launched at the conference provides organisations interested in engaging in R&D with information on the various sources of funding, incentives and other supports available for research and development activity in Ireland.

TTSI3 Funding Programme: The third phase of the Enterprise Ireland Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI) commenced in January 2017. This five year €34.5 million programme, managed by Knowledge Transfer Ireland, sustains the capacity and capability to support knowledge transfer and commercialisation of research in Irish research performing organisations (RPOs).

The Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLI)

The PRTLI supports the provision of top-class research infrastructure (buildings, laboratories and cutting edge equipment) as well as human capital development through Structured PhD/Emergent Technology programmes across Ireland's higher education institutions. Responsibility for the programme transferred to the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation from the Department of Education and Science in 2010. The programme continues to be administered by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of DBEI.

Cycle 5, initiated in 2011 awarded funding across 33 distinct projects, totalling €277 million in Exchequer funding plus an additional matched funding of €58 million. The remaining four projects of the 33 projects commenced under Cycle 5 were completed during 2017.

The PRTLI investment in infrastructure and human capital continued to support our third-level institutions in formulating and implementing research strategies to give them critical mass and world class capacity in key areas of research. Cycle 5 has delivered in excess of 62,000m² of new/refurbished research area, in excess of 5,700 research workstations and in excess of 330 PhD students by programme end.

European Space Agency

Since Ireland joined the European Space Agency in 1975, Irish industry and research groups have been at the heart of Europe's space missions building a reputation as providers of innovative technologies for use in the European space programme.

Membership of ESA and investment in its programmes provides Ireland's businesses and researchers with access to a €5 billion per year technology development organisation that has no equal anywhere outside NASA and access to Global and European institutional space clients, prime contractors and

technology supply chains. In 2017, Ireland invested €17.8 million in its membership of ESA and a further supplementary investment of €1m was made at the end of the year.

During 2017, 18 companies securing ESA contracts, 4 of which were first-time ESA contractors. The value of industry contracts placed by ESA in Ireland in 2017 was €12 million. A further €1.4 million contracts were secured by the Irish research community, bringing the total value of ESA contracts placed in Ireland in 2017 to €13.4 million, demonstrating the progression of Ireland in this developing sector.

Total employment in ESA participating companies has grown from 1,300 in 2008 to over 2,000 in 2017 and is projected to exceed 5,000 by 2020. This high level of growth in employment reflects the combined efforts of Government in investing significantly in R&D, Enterprise Ireland and IDA working with industry and ESA itself translating the innovation capacity in Irish industry into products, systems and services for the European space programme and the global space market.

Irish companies, scientists and researchers continue to pursue exciting and emerging opportunities through the European Space Agency. During a trade mission to ESA in April 2017, several contracts with Irish companies were announced:

- Enbio announced a contract worth €650,000 to develop and manufacture advanced surface coatings for Neosat, the next generation of satellite platforms for telecommunications missions;
- Innalabs won a contract for €980,000 to develop a space qualified Rate Measurement Unit (RMU). This will be used for satellite Attitude and Orbit Control Subsystems in a range of space missions; and
- Pilot Photonics secured a contract for €335,000 to develop laser communications subsystems for use in a range of advanced communications satellite.

In May 2017, University College Dublin, in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast, was successful in its application to ESA's Fly Your Satellite Programme, giving Ireland the opportunity to develop and launch its first ever Satellite. It is anticipated that this satellite will be launched from the International Space Station in 2019. This is primarily an education project, preparing participants for a career in the space sector. It is also an important opportunity for the Irish space industry, who will be participating in the project, to qualify their technologies for space.

ESA's Director General, Mr. Jan Wörner, attended the closing ceremony of the Summer of Space, Space Studies Programme, in Cork County Hall, August 2017. Cork Institute of Technology hosted the successful 9 week programme. During his time in Ireland, Mr. Wörner also visited the ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland at Tyndall National Institute and met the founders of Thalman Health, an Irish company which develops wearable temperature monitors.

In October 2017, Enterprise Ireland signed a Technical Collaborative Arrangement with the ESA. This Arrangement will provide the state with unprecedented access to the Copernicus Programme's near-real time earth observation information. The data can be utilised for research, commercial development and policy informing purposes. National University of Ireland Galway will house the national Earth Observation Data Hub.

In November 2017, DBEI announced that the EU Commission had selected Maynooth University to host the Copernicus Relay and the Copernicus Academy for the EU's Earth Observation Space Programme, Copernicus. Both establishments will work to improve awareness, understanding and uptake of the EU's Earth Observation Programme, Copernicus.

EU Space Policy Developments

At the May 2017 Competitiveness Council for Space, under the Maltese Presidency, Council held a debate on the implementation of the Space Strategy for Europe agreed in 2016, and adopted Council

Conclusions setting out priority areas of the Strategy. The conclusions acknowledged the importance of a reinforced coordinated and complementary relationship between the EU and ESA and stressed the need to maximise the integration of Space into everyday life.

Member States also attended the Informal Space Ministerial Meeting, hosted by the Estonian Presidency, in November 2017. This meeting examined the EU's Earth Observation Programme, Copernicus. In opening the meeting, the EU Commission stated that the Copernicus Programme is exceeding its targets. During their exchange of views, Ministers highlighted Copernicus's role in addressing climate change and tackling security and migration issues, in addition to the Programme's role in fostering enterprise.

At the Competitiveness Council held on the 1st December, chaired by Urve Palo, Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology, Ministers adopted Council Conclusions on the Mid-term evaluation of the Copernicus Programme, the EU's Earth Observation Programme and discussed the way forward for EU Space Programmes.

The Mid-term review concluded that the Copernicus Programme is globally on track, in line with achieving the objectives, and that objectives are still relevant with current EU political priorities and users' needs. Council welcomed the approach to continue building the data chain to facilitate potential commercial exploitation by SMEs. In discussing EU Space Programmes, which include Copernicus and Galileo and the EU's Satellite Navigation Programme, Ministers highlighted the need for Programmes to adapt to global developments and challenges. Ministers also acknowledged the role that the Programmes play in improving Member States competitiveness, both within the EU space sector and globally.

Tyndall National Institute

Tyndall National Institute (Tyndall) is Ireland's largest dedicated research centre, specialising in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hardware and systems. Tyndall is a National Institute, operating internationally to facilitate and enable R&D & innovation in Ireland, and hosts a unique national research infrastructure.

The ICT sector in which Tyndall specialises is of huge economic importance globally, with turnover in excess of over \$3 trillion annually. It provides the technological basis upon which most other manufacturing sectors depend for improvements in productivity, and all services (healthcare, energy management, transport, environmental management) depend for efficiency and improving delivery. The Irish ICT industry is the largest single manufacturing sector in the country and has considerable potential for increasing the level and quality of its economic impact.

Under a formal Agreement with UCC the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation is committed to providing core funding to support the day-to-day operations of Tyndall. Tyndall leveraged the core grant provided by this Department of €4.5 million in 2017 to generate a total research budget of some €36 million. This included:

- Direct industry funding of €6 million.
- Income generated from EU research programmes (FP7 and Horizon 2020) of ca €7 million.
- Income secured from competitive research programmes (SFI, EI & other funders) of ca €23m

Direct outputs from this research funding in 2017 included:

- Ongoing engagement with the Horizon 2020 programme. To date 57 projects have been funded with a total value of €420 million. 8 of these projects were coordinated by the Institute itself. Total direct value to Tyndall is €30 million, with €16 million awarded to Irish industry.
- The awarding of 3 key large-scale infrastructural European projects, drawing down €23 million in EU funding with a direct value to Tyndall of €7 million.
- Nine new EI Innovation Partnership projects with industry.
- 26 invention disclosures made and 6 patents filed (plus 4 pending).

- Over 270 peer reviewed publications in key international journals.
- 11 commercial licences/options/assignments concluded with industry (with a further number under discussion).

Copyright

Progress was made during the year in advancing copyright issues at both domestic and EU level. Throughout 2017, drafting continued on the Copyright and Other Intellectual Property Law Provisions Bill. The Bill is designed to progress a number of recommendations contained in the Report entitled "Modernising Copyright" published by the Copyright Review Committee in late 2013.

At EU level, the European Commission published proposals to reform and modernise EU copyright law in December 2015 and September 2016. The proposals are designed to allow wider online access to copyright works by users and consumers across the EU. The following proposals were formally adopted by the EU Parliament and EU Council in 2017:

- Regulation (EU) 2017/1128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2017 on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market. This regulation enables consumers to access their online content services e.g., Netflix, RTÉ Player when travelling temporarily within the EU in the same way they access them at home. The Portability Regulation will come into force in EU Member States on 1st April 2018.
- A Directive (2017/1564/EU) and Regulation (2017/1563/EU) to implement the Marrakesh Treaty (an international copyright agreement) to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled. The objective of the Treaty is to improve access to books and other publications in formats such as braille, large print text and audio books for visually impaired persons worldwide and permit cross-border exchange of such copies between the EU and third countries that are parties to the Marrakesh Treaty. The Directive and the Regulation were formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in September 2017. On 17th December 2017, the Department commenced a public consultation on the transposition of the Directive into Irish law. The deadline for the transposition of the Directive into Irish law is the 11th October 2018. The Regulation will automatically enter into force after 12 months from the date of publication.
- During 2017 the Department was engaged in analysing the proposals and negotiating in the EU Council Working Party on the European Commission proposal for a Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market (COM(2016) 593 final). The proposed Directive is intended to harmonise copyright exceptions in the areas of research, education and cultural preservation and will improve the position of rightholders to negotiate and to be remunerated for the exploitation of their content online. The Department is actively engaged with stakeholders on an ongoing basis to inform Ireland's negotiating position on the various proposals in the Directive.

Primary legislation implemented in the area of Intellectual Property

No new copyright legislation was implemented in 2017.

Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017

The Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017 came into effect on the 19th May 2017. This legislation was introduced in response to the knowledge development box (KDB) tax relief measures introduced in the Finance Act 2015 which provide for a lower rate of corporation tax on profits arising from intellectual property assets resulting from research and development.

The KDB provides for a 6.25% rate of corporation tax payable on such profits arising and applies to three types of Intellectual Property Assets: long term patents, copyrighted software and inventions that are novel, non-obvious and useful. This latter category is specifically targeted at small companies with certain limits on profits and turnover.

Under the Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017 small and medium enterprises can apply to the Controller of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks for a KDB Certificate. This Certificate will form part of the eligibility criteria set out in the KDB tax legislation for SMEs wishing to avail of the lower rate of corporation tax.

The legislation also amends the Patent Act 1992 to allow for substantive examination of long term patents ensuring these patents meet the criteria to qualify for KDB.

Secondary legislation implemented in the area of Intellectual Property

Several Statutory Instruments were required to support the implementation of the Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017 namely:

- SI No. 204 of 2017 - Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017 (Commencement) Order 2017 - appoints the 19th May 2017, as the date on which the Act came into effect.
- SI No. 205 of 2017 - Patents, Trade Marks and Designs (Fees) (Amendment) Rules 2017, outlines the required fees when requesting a search report and written opinion under Section 29 of the Patents Act 1992, and also the fees for requesting a search report under Section 66 of the Patents Act 1992.
- SI No 206 of 2017 - Patent (Amendment) Rules 2017 - amends the Patent Rules 1992 outlining procedural changes to the patent process following the re-introduction of substantive examination of Irish patent applications. It also provides for third party observations to the Controller in relation to the patentability of applications.

No new trade marks legislation was published in 2017.

Standardisation

In 2017 NSAI engaged in new standardisation work in key emerging areas including Robotics, Additive Manufacturing and Blockchain.

Goal 5: Supporting Quality Employment, Dispute Resolution and Safety in the work environment

Promote quality employment, positive workplace relations, well-functioning dispute resolution mechanisms, a safe working environment and the evolution of the minimum wage

Employment Rights

The May 2016 Programme for Government (PfG) includes a commitment to tackle the problems caused by the increased casualisation of work and to strengthen the regulation of precarious work.

As well as the public consultation on this Programme for Government commitment, the Department engaged in a detailed dialogue process with ICTU and IBEC to assist in developing and refining a policy response. The Government approved the priority drafting of legislative proposals dealing with this Programme for Government commitment on 2nd May 2017.

Following the transfer of functions in September 2017 policy responsibility for this legislative proposal transferred to the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 was published on 7th December 2017.

The Low Pay Commission

The Low Pay Commission, established through the National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission) Act 2015, submitted its third report in July 2017.

Its recommendation to increase the minimum wage to €9.55 per hour was accepted by Government to come into effect from January 1st 2018.

Following the Government decision to transfer certain functions relating to employment rights, responsibility for the Low Pay Commission transferred to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection with effect from 1st September 2017.

Duffy-Cahill Report/Clerys investigation

A number of actions were initiated as part of the Government's response to the closure of Clerys. This included the Duffy-Cahill expert examination of legal protections for employees.

The Duffy-Cahill report provides a comprehensive analysis of the relevant provisions of employment law and company law. It makes a number of proposals for reform of the law, which are primarily concerned with amendments to employment law. The Department conducted a Public Consultation on the report following its publication in April 2016.

The Company Law Review Group was also asked to review company law aspects. This was with a view to recommending ways company law could be potentially amended to ensure better safeguards for employees and unsecured creditors. The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) reported to the Minister in June, 2017. On 13th July 2017, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, Frances Fitzgerald TD, published the *Report of the Company Law Review Group on the Protection of Employees and Unsecured Creditors*. Work is ongoing to develop a policy or legislative response, as appropriate, to the complex issues involved.

In relation to the employment law aspects of the Duffy-Cahill Report, following the transfer of responsibility for employment rights and policy to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection on 1st September, 2017 it will be for that Department to pursue any amendments in the area of employment law.

Separately, authorised officers of the Minister from the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) sought information from a number of parties in relation to the collective redundancies that took place in the trading company which was the employer of the staff of Clerys when it closed. The work of the authorised officers relates to the application of the Protection of Employment Act 1977 to the collective redundancies in question. A legal challenge was taken by two of the parties. The High Court ruled in favour of the WRC on 25 October 2016. An appeal was lodged and the matter is awaiting a hearing before the Court of Appeal.

Code of Practice on Longer Working

A new Code of Practice on Longer Working was signed into law by Minister Breen in December 2017. The Code, facilitated by the Workplace Relations Commission, was developed in consultation with the social partners, IBEC and ICTU, as well as the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Human Rights and Equality Commission.

The development of the Code arose from a Report recommendation from an Inter-departmental Group established in 2016 to consider policy around retirement age in both the public and private sectors.

The Code sets out guidance and best practice for employers, employees and their representatives to follow during the engagement between employers and employees in the run up to retirement. It also considers the issue of responding to requests to work beyond the current retirement age in the employment concerned.

This development comes about in the positive context of people living longer and healthier lives. The Code will support employers and employees in the private sector in reaching mutually beneficial arrangements around retirement ages.

Employment Permits

The State's employment permits system supports Ireland as an investment location by enabling enterprises to access required talent from overseas. Its broad purpose is to supplement in the medium term Ireland's skills supply by allowing these enterprises to recruit non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals where those nationals have specific skills or expertise which cannot be sourced within the EEA and where such recruitment may benefit the State's economic or social development. The trends in the numbers of employment permit applications received in 2017 reflected the continuing strong growth in economic activity.

The employment permits regime is ordered through an occupations list structure to prioritise particular skills, especially those where, due to rapid sectoral growth or technological development, there is a shortage or absence of specific skills immediately in the labour market. The occupations lists identify critical skills in short supply on the one hand, and skills for which there is ample capacity already in the resident labour market on the other. They are reviewed twice yearly in order to keep the orientation of economic migration firmly in step with the precise needs of the labour market.

During 2017, the Employment Permits Regulations were consolidated for ease of use. Changes to the lists to adjust for current skills needs following the scheduled review process were incorporated into this consolidation.

The bi-annual reviews of the lists which were conducted in 2017 were undertaken in an increasingly complex environment. As the State approaches full employment, labour demand is growing, and this has affected the nature of the demand placed on the economic migration system. In the light of these changing circumstances, the Minister has requested officials to undertake a review of the overall orientation of the economic migration system to ensure that it remains both relevant and appropriately responsive to developments in the labour market.

In addition, a Remuneration Review, examining the minimum annual remuneration thresholds for employment permits was conducted in 2017. This review will feed into the planned over-arching review of the employment permits system which is to take place in the first half of 2018.

In support of the Department's objective to improve service to businesses, the Employment Permits Online System (EPOS), which was launched in September 2016, was firmly established during 2017 as a preferred method of submitting applications for employment permits. It provides an intuitive, user friendly facility to submit online permit applications, supporting documents and secure online fee payment service. The system has supported faster turnaround of applications by removing the requirement for applicants to fill out application forms by hand and reducing errors and rejected applications. Currently, over 95% of employment permit applications received are being submitted online.

Further service enhancements are planned to make additional associated application forms available for submission online. Work is underway to allow requests for reviews of refusal decisions and requests for Stamp 4 support letters to be submitted online.

From 2015 to 2017, demand for employment permits has risen by almost 48%. The number of applications for employment permits during 2017 increased by 17% compared to 2016. The total number of employment permits that issued in 2017 was 11,354, up 21% on 2016.

The success of the employment permits system in responding to emerging skill shortages and delivering enhanced administrative efficiencies during 2017 is evident in the following statistics:

- processed 21% more employment permits compared to 2016;
- 37% of all employment permits issued in 2017 were in respect of Critical Skills Employment Permits, the employment permit designed to target skills shortages;
- 30% of employment permits issued were to ICT professionals.

Year	Applications Accepted	Total Issued	Total Refused	Total Withdrawn	Awaiting processing
2017	13,333	11,354	1,516	320	1,300
2016	11,317	9,383	1,651	207	1,238
2015	9,021	7,265	906	167	1,134

Note re table: Previous annual reports included the number of applications received rather than applications accepted. The 'applications received' figure included applications that were later rejected as being incomplete. EPOS has largely eliminated the instances of incomplete applications so the table above uses the more accurate heading of "Applications Accepted".

Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)'s core services include the provision of early resolution, mediation, conciliation, facilitation and advisory services, adjudication on employment and equality complaints.

The Commission monitors employment conditions to secure compliance with and enforcement of employment rights legislation and builds awareness of employment rights and obligations. The Commission also processes applications from employment agencies as well as licences under legislation regulating the protection of young persons in employment.

In 2017, the WRC received 14,001 specific complaints relating to employment and equality legislation. In that year, the Commission also reduced significantly the legacy adjudication caseload of employment rights and equality complaints inherited on establishment on 1 October 2015. At the end of 2017 this reduced to just under 300 cases.

During the year, the Commission demonstrated strong performance processing 92% of complaints to the Adjudication services in less than 6 months. The Commission handled 24% additional hearings in 2017 over 2016 levels. The Inspection service undertook a total of 4,747 workplace inspections resulting in €1.77 million in unpaid wages recovered during 2017. The Conciliation Service chaired some 2,200 conciliation conferences and facilitations in relation to collective disputes during 2017. The Mediation Service dealt with just under 600 telephone and face-to-face mediations while the Advisory Service initiated interventions in just under 70 new case referrals throughout 2017.

In June 2017, the Sligo Regional Services Office of the WRC was launched providing the full range of WRC's services including conciliation, mediation, adjudication and inspection. This was the first step in the WRC extending its full range of services across all of its regional offices to ensure that the same services provided in Dublin are available across the country. It is anticipated that Cork will be next with Shannon and Carlow offices to follow in due course.

Labour Court

Since the enactment of the Workplace Relations Act 2015, the Labour Court is now the single appellate body dealing with all appeals under employment rights legislation. This is in addition to its original role as the Court of last resort in industrial relations dispute resolution. In 2017 the Labour Court received 1,093 referrals, representing a 2.5% decrease on the number of referrals (1121) received in 2016. The average timescale for scheduling hearings of the Labour Court in Dublin in 2017 was 13 weeks from the date of appeal or referral. Outside of Dublin it was 16 weeks from date of appeal or referral in 2017.

Sectoral Employment Orders (SEO)

On 19 October 2017 Minister Pat Breen T.D. made the first Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) under the new legislative framework put in place by the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015. This Ministerial Order fixes the statutory minimum pay, pension and sick pay entitlements for craftsmen, construction operatives and apprentices employed in the construction sector.

The Order gave legal effect to the terms of a Labour Court recommendation which the Minister accepted in July 2017. The revised terms and conditions for the construction sector took effect from the date of signature of the Order i.e. 19 October 2017 and apply to almost 50,000 workers in that sector.

The Minister also received a recommendation from the Labour Court on 20th December 2017 for an SEO for the Mechanical Engineering Building Services Contracting Sector. The Minister accepted that recommendation and gave it legal effect by Ministerial Order on 6th March 2018. The terms of the Order apply to 10,000 skilled workers in the sector including plumbers, pipefitters and welders.

Employment Regulation Orders (EROs)

Minister Breen signed an Employment Regulation Order (ERO) for the Security Industry on 30th May 2017. The Order applies to security operatives employed by a security firm to provide a security service for contract clients of that firm. It provides for pay increases on 1st June 2017, 1st June 2018 and 1st June 2019. The Order also provides for other terms of employment including sick pay in the sector.

Working Group on Industrial Relations Structures for An Garda Síochána

In September 2017, Government considered the Report on Industrial Relations Structures for An Garda Síochána. The Report represented the completion of Phase I of the work of the group which was established to oversee this process and to advise Government in relation to the legislative and other changes that might be required. Representation on the group The Working Group was convened under an independent chair, Mr John Murphy, formerly Secretary General of this Department and comprised representation from relevant Government Departments, Garda management and the Workplace Relations Commission.

At the same time, the Government approved the heads of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2018. The Bill is intended to amend Industrial Relations legislation to allow access to the services of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and the Labour Court for the Garda representative associations.

Phase II of the work of the group commenced in November 2017 and involves working closely with relevant Departments, Garda management, Garda representative bodies and the WRC/Labour Court to put in place appropriate internal dispute settlement arrangements within An Garda Síochána in advance of providing access to the Industrial Relations institutions of the State. The group will also consider resource implications arising as a result of giving the Garda associations access to the services of the WRC and the Labour Court.

The Bill amending Industrial Relations legislation is being drafted as part of the phase II work of the group with a view to publication of the Bill in the first part of 2018 and enactment by year end.

Industrial Relations Environment

There was a decrease in the number of days lost to industrial disputes in 2017 compared with the figures for 2016.

- There were 50,191 days lost to strike action in 2017, whereas there were 71,647 days lost in 2016.
- Disputes at Bus Eireann and Irish Rail accounted for 37,915 of the days lost in 2017.
- Action by Crane Drivers and the dispute at TESCO accounted for the bulk of the remaining days lost.

Safety, Health and Chemicals Policy

The Safety, Health and Chemicals Policy Unit (SHCPU) acts as a liaison mechanism between the Department and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and is responsible, in consultation with the HSA, for formulating and developing policy at national, EU and international levels in relation to occupational safety and health and the manufacture and use of chemicals by Irish industry.

Research has demonstrated that good health and safety practice makes good business sense. It aids competitiveness, improves relations with workers and should be a central consideration in any successful enterprise. Successful businesses in Ireland, both indigenous and multinational, are now placing best practice in safety and health at the core of their enterprise strategy.

The principal aim of occupational safety and health and chemicals regulation policy is to support the embedding of occupational safety and health as an integral part of doing business in every Irish workplace and ensuring the existence of an environment that both protects workers' safety and health, supports competitiveness and ensures that the chemicals manufactured and used as a vital component of Irish industry, do not impact negatively on human health or the environment.

A key role of the Safety, Health and chemicals Policy Unit is to ensure that the HSA is adequately equipped from a legislative, staffing and financial perspective to enable it to fulfil its statutory functions in respect of Occupational Safety and Health, Chemicals Regulation, Market Surveillance and Accreditation as well as ensuring that the HSA complies with the range of governance standards applicable to State Agencies including Government policy on staffing and budgetary matters.

Chemicals Regulatory Regime

The chemicals regulatory regime as set out in EU Regulations such as “REACH” (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) and “CLP” (Classification, Labelling and Packaging continues to be complex and requires work at EU level on implementation, review and amendment. The Department, with expert support from the HSA, services these demands.

The REACH and CLP Helpdesks, operated by the HSA since 2007, continued in 2017 to focus major efforts on advising and supporting industry. The HSA worked to ensure that registrants are well prepared and supported in the run up to the 31 May 2018 EU REACH Regulation registration deadline.

The HSA, with the consent of Minister Breen, amended its Code of Practice for the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 572 of 2013). This was primarily done to change the classification of the Zika virus from a Group 3 biological agent to a Group 2 biological agent.

In 2017 the Department and the HSA worked very closely together to maximise the support provided by the HSA to Irish companies to assist them in complying with existing Chemicals regulatory obligations.

In addition, both the Department and the HSA began work on identifying issues of concern in relation to the regulation and use of chemicals by Irish industry arising from Brexit.

Accreditation Services

The purpose of Accreditation is to ensure that conformity assessment bodies (e.g. laboratories, inspection or certification bodies) have the technical capacity to perform their duties. Accreditation is continuing to gain increased recognition as an important and practical tool in the delivery of objectives across an increasing range of policy areas.

The Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB), the national body which has responsibility for the accreditation of laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies, is now a fully integrated part of the HSA.

In 2017 INAB delivered an ongoing programme of accreditation to industry and bedded down its new client relationship management system while developing a new pricing structure to reflect the costs of delivering its various accreditation services.

INAB saw an increased level of interest in using its services from UK notified bodies due to Brexit. The Department worked closely with INAB throughout 2017 in relation to identifying the challenges and opportunities presented by Brexit and to put in place formal mechanisms to deal with applications from Notified Bodies wishing to relocate from the UK to Ireland.

In addition, the Department secured additional resources for INAB in 2017 to assist it in fulfilling its role – in 2018 INAB will also assume the role of the national accreditation body in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Construction Sector

The Department is a member of the **Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (CSPAC)** which acts as a consultative and advisory forum to the Board of the HSA, identifies and prioritises key issues related to improving safety and health in the construction sector and develops a national action programme to promote and coordinate actions of the relevant representative organisations. Other members of the CSPAC are drawn from the HSA, Construction Industry Federation, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Local Government Management Agency, construction industry related professional bodies and occupational safety and health representative bodies.

The Department is also a member of **the SOLAS Stakeholder Oversight Group** which has been set up by SOLAS (Further Education and Training Authority) to undertake a review of the operation and future of training, certification and assessment schemes in the Construction sector.

Farming Sector

Farming remains the sector with the highest rate of accidents and fatalities. Bearing this in mind Minister Pat Breen T.D. in association with his colleague the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed TD, hosted a round table discussion involving all the main stakeholders in the agricultural sector including representatives from the farming representative organisations, agricultural contractors, training providers, insurance companies, veterinary groups as well as State organisations and other farm safety advocacy groups. All participants were asked to follow-up with proposals on targeted national actions that could be taken. This work will be built upon in 2018.

Healthy Workplace Framework Sub Group

This is a joint Department of Health and Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation initiative taking place under the Healthy Ireland Programme. Healthy Ireland is the National Framework to improve the health and well-being of the population of Ireland. The focus of the Workplace Sub Group is to develop a **Healthy Workplace Framework** which can be used as a practical resource for all workplaces.

Under the auspices of the Sub Group a comprehensive consultation process was undertaken across a range of private and public sector organisations in 2017. The views gathered through the consultation process, including the online survey and the evidence from research being conducted, are being used to inform the content of the final Framework.

In addition to participating in the Sub Group the Department provided seed support funding towards the establishment of a Post Graduate Course on Workplace Wellbeing with National University of Ireland Galway.

Connecting for Life National Cross-Sectoral Group

This Group is led by the Department of Health. Connecting for Life is the national strategy to reduce suicide from 2015-2020. Membership of the Group is drawn from a wide range of Government Departments including the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Agencies such as the HSA, HSE, TUSLA, National Office for Suicide Prevention as well as a range of other organisations involved in the promotion of positive mental health.

The Group is overseeing the roll-out of commitments relevant to the responsibilities of Group members as set out in the Connecting for Life Implementation Plan. This Department has identified a number of workplace related initiatives to reduce work related stress etc. as part of the overall Connecting for Life plan.

Workplace Safety and Health – BeSMART Initiative

BeSMART is the HSA's free online tool designed to help small business owners/managers to prepare risk assessments and safety statements for their workplace. 2017 figures show that uptake of the BeSMART tool continues to grow. In 2017 almost 8,500 additional users accessed BeSMART. This tool, now available to over 270 business types, aids compliance and saves time and money for businesses in meeting their legal obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

In 2017, the Department worked with the HSA in the hosting of a Mutual Learning Programme (MLP) which involved a high-level delegation from the European Commission and other EU Member States. The aim of the event was to facilitate and encourage mutual learning opportunities between EU Member States. BeSMART was the focus of the event and allowed the HSA to demonstrate how it helps small business owners/managers to prepare risk assessments and safety statements which can in turn reduce the chances of an accident occurring in a workplace and ultimately save time and money for businesses. See www.besmart.ie for more detail.

Workplace accidents and fatalities

In 2017, the number of workplace deaths reported to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), rose from 46 in 2016 to 47 but was below the 56 fatalities in 2015. As with 2016, the highest number of fatalities occurred in the high-risk sector of agriculture (24) with an additional 3 reported workplace fatalities in 2017. Construction saw a small decrease to 6 reported workplace fatalities in 2017, from 9 in 2016.

As in previous years, and in line with its risk-based approach to resource allocation, the HSA directed its inspection activity towards these high-risk sectors. This was done in addition to targeted national safety information and promotion campaigns in both high-risk sectors on foot of additional funding made available to the Health and Safety Authority during 2017.

Goal 6: Ensuring a High Performance Legal and Regulatory Framework for Business and Consumers

Ensure that our business regulation facilitates business investment and development, competition in the market place, high standards of consumer protection and corporate governance, and provides Ireland with a competitive advantage in the global market

Company Law, Competition and Consumer Protection

During 2017, we built on work previously done on the successful development of a stable, transparent and modernised company law framework in Ireland. We continued to develop and shape responses to new and emerging challenges in company law, competition and consumer policy at EU and national level. A key focus is working in collaboration with stakeholders, the Department's offices and agencies and other Government Departments to achieve the best outcomes in line with our high level goal.

Proposal for a Directive on consumer contracts for the supply of digital content

A proposal for a Directive on consumer contracts for the supply of digital content was published on 9 December 2015. The proposal aims to contribute to the proper functioning of the Internal Market while providing for a high level of consumer protection by laying down certain requirements on matters such as the conformity of digital content with the contract and the remedies available to consumers in the case of a lack of conformity of, or a failure to supply, digital content. Agreement was reached at the June 2016 Justice and Home Affairs Council on certain basic principles of the proposal and on some political guidelines for future work on it. Following intensive discussions on the proposal in the first half of 2017, the Maltese Presidency submitted a text of the proposal for a general approach to the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 8-9 June 2017. The Council approved the general approach, although statements from a number of delegations expressed reservations about the text were entered into the Council minutes. On 21 November 2017, the European Parliament voted on the draft report on the proposal from the IMCO and JURI committees. Trilogue meetings on the proposal were held between the Estonian Presidency, the European Commission and the European Parliament on 5 and 12 December 2017 and will resume in 2018 under the Bulgarian Presidency.

Proposal for a Directive on consumer contracts for the online and other distance sales of goods

A proposal for a Directive on online and other distance sales of goods was published on 9 December 2015 along with the proposal for a Directive on contracts for the supply of digital content. The proposal aims to contribute to the proper functioning of the Internal Market while providing for a high level of consumer protection by laying down certain requirements for online and distance sales contracts on matters such as the conformity of goods with the contract and the remedies available to consumers in the case of a lack of conformity. While the Commission's intention was that the digital content and sales proposals would be discussed in tandem, a majority of Member States took the view that rules for the online sale of goods should not be considered separately from the general rules on the sale of goods in the existing Consumer Sales Directive (Directive 1999/44/EC) which were being assessed as part of the REFIT fitness check review of a number of consumer protection Directives that commenced in January 2016 and was completed in May 2017. The review endorsed the need for a single set of rules for online and offline sales, a conclusion supported by Member States in the Working Party. While the Commission favoured amending the scope provision of the

online sales proposal in Council so as to extend it to all consumer sales contracts, a majority of Member States favoured instead the submission of a new legislative proposal and impact assessment. The Commission published an amended proposal covering all consumer sales contracts on 31 October 2017. Apart from the extension of its scope to all consumer sales contracts, it was similar in substance to the original online sales proposal. The Commission also published a working document on the impacts of fully harmonised rules on consumer sales contracts to supplement the impact assessment prepared for the online sales proposal. The amended proposal was circulated to national parliaments in early November for subsidiarity and proportionality checks. Working party meetings on the amended proposal took place on 27 November and 19-20 December 2017 and will continue in 2018.

Proposal for a Regulation on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws

Currently, the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC) 2006/2004 (CPC Regulation) harmonises the cooperation framework between national competent authorities in the Member States of the European Union with regards to their enforcement actions. This CPC Regulation covers a range of 18 EU Directives and Regulations concerning the Union consumer and marketing law acquis. The EU Commission has completed a review of the CPC Regulation and, as part of its Digital Single Market initiative, it issued a proposal for a revised Regulation in May 2016. The general objective of the proposal is to develop modern, efficient and effective CPC mechanisms that will reduce the consumer detriment caused by cross border and widespread infringements to Union consumer law. This includes in particular reducing situations where important cross border and widespread infringements are not detected or sufficiently addressed through the CPC framework and ensuring that consumer protection authorities reach similar outcomes regarding the same malpractices.

The Regulation (as agreed by the European Parliament, EU Council and EU Commission) was published in the Official Journal on December 27, 2017. Member States have 2 years, from the publishing date, within which to implement the Regulation.

Proposal for a Regulation on addressing geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment

The general objective of this proposal is to give customers (both consumers and businesses) better access to goods and services in the Single Market by preventing direct and indirect discrimination by traders artificially segmenting the market based on customers' residence (termed "geo-blocking"). Customers experience such differences in treatment when purchasing online, but also when travelling to other Member States to buy goods or services. The proposal defines specific situations when there can be no justified reason for geo-blocking or other forms of discrimination based on nationality, residence or location. The proposal also bans the blocking of access to websites and the use of automatic re-routing without the customer's prior consent. While traders remain free to accept whatever payment means they specify, the proposal includes a specific provision on non-discrimination within those payment means. Transactions where goods or services are purchased by a business for resale will, however, be excluded in order to allow traders to set up their distribution systems in compliance with European competition law. The proposal does not oblige traders to sell to a customer.

Agreement was reached at a trilogue between the Estonian Presidency, the European Commission and the European Parliament on 21 November 2017. The Regulation will be applicable nine months after its publication in the EU Official Journal (which occurred on 2 March 2018).

Proposal for a Directive to empower competition authorities of the Member States to be more effective enforcers

On 22 March 2017, the EU Commission published a proposal for a Directive to empower the competition authorities of the Member States to be more effective enforcers and to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market. The stated aims of the proposed Directive are to ensure that national competition authorities have effective investigation, decision-making and enforcement tools; are able to impose effective deterrent fines; have a well-designed leniency programme in place which facilitates applying for leniency in multiple jurisdictions; and have sufficient resources and can enforce the EU competition rules independently. Negotiations on the proposal commenced at the Council Working Group on Competition in mid-2017 and continue into 2018.

Public Consultation on Ticket Resale

The (then) Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D., published a consultation paper on the resale of tickets for entertainment and sporting events on 20 January 2017 along with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the (then) Minister of State for Tourism and Sport. The 24 responses to the consultation from sporting bodies, event promoters, consumer bodies, primary ticketing services providers, secondary ticket marketplaces public representatives and others were published on the Department's website on 9 May 2017. Departmental officials subsequently held follow-up discussion with the main stakeholders with a view to assessing possible options aimed at helping to ensure that ticket markets would work better for consumers. Officials also engaged with authorities in EU and EFTA Member States with legislation on ticket resale with a view to assessing the experience with, and effectiveness of, such legislation.

Hallmarking (Amendment) Bill 2016

The Bill commenced its passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2017 completing Committee Stage in Dáil Eireann in June 2017. Consideration of it will resume in 2018.

Competition (Amendment) Act 2017

The Competition (Amendment) Bill 2016 was enacted on 7 June 2017 and came into effect on 7 September 2017. This had originated as a Labour party Private Member's Bill. The Act grants three categories of self-employed workers (voice-over actors, freelance journalists and session musicians) an exemption from section 4 of the Competition Act 2002 which, effectively, allows them to collectively bargain. The Act also sets out an application process for any recognised Trade Union to apply to the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation for an exemption from the Act for other self-employed workers subject to certain conditions being met.

Company Law Review Group (CLRG)

The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) is an expert advisory group charged with advising the Minister on company law matters. The work programme of the CLRG 2016-2018 was determined by the Minister in consultation with the CLRG. The work of the CLRG is proceeding through plenary sessions and 9 sub-committees. The secretariat is provided by the Company Law Development and EU Unit.

The CLRG completed a number of items on its work programme in 2017:

- The provisions of the Companies Act 2014 relating to shares and share capital were reviewed by the Shares and Share Capital subcommittee and the resulting report (The Recommendations of the Company Law Review Group relating to Shares and Share Capital in the Companies Act 2014) was adopted by the CLRG.

- The Report of the Company Law Review Group on Protections for Employees and Unsecured Creditors was adopted at the CLRG Plenary meeting on 13th June. Proposals for legislative change are recommended in the Report which, while not representing a panacea, could potentially address some of the difficulties experienced by employees and unsecured creditors in situations of company insolvency, while improving transparency and accountability.
- The provisions of the Companies Act 2014 relating to corporate governance were reviewed by the Corporate Governance subcommittee and the resulting report (The Recommendations of the Company Law Review Group relating to Corporate Governance in the Companies Act 2014) adopted by the CLRG at Plenary on 30 November. This report fulfils a commitment given in the suite of measures announced by the Government aimed at enhancing corporate governance, increasing transparency and strengthening Ireland's response to White Collar Crime.

CLRG reports are submitted to the Minister and the reports are published on www.clrg.org. The Department is considering the reports of the CLRG and will make recommendations to the Minister on the policy or legislative response, as appropriate.

The CLRG is conducting a review on the enforcement of company law which is being progressed by the CLRG Compliance and Enforcement subcommittee. There is a strong focus on insolvency in the CLRG Work Programme 2016-2018 and consideration of these matters is ongoing. The Corporate Insolvency subcommittee met to consider the current EU proposal for a Directive on insolvency (second chance proceedings) as well as consideration of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency.

Enactment of the Companies (Accounting) Act 2017

The Companies (Accounting) Act 2017 transposes EU Directive 2013/34/EU into Irish law. It increases the thresholds for companies to qualify as small sized companies, simplifies the financial reporting for small companies and introduces a new category of company known as micro company. For those micro companies, the financial reporting obligations are reduced. The Act also introduces new reporting requirements for companies active in extractive industries and obliges some unlimited companies, funds and investment companies to file financial statements publicly.

Enactment of the Companies (Amendment) Act 2017

The Companies (Amendment) Act 2017 extends the duration of an exemption for particular companies from having to prepare two sets of financial statements, based on the same financial information but according to two different accounting standards, US GAAP and IFRS. The Act extends the facility to 31 December 2030.

The Companies (Statutory Audits) Bill 2017

The Companies (Statutory Audits) Bill 2017 was published on 6 November 2017. The Bill gives further effect to EU rules that were first transposed in 2016 by means of S.I. No. 312 of 2016. In particular, it avails of options that were not available in the context of secondary legislation and introduces some practical changes to the conduct of oversight of audit in Ireland. The Bill is one of the Department's actions in the Government's package of Measures to enhance Ireland's corporate, economic and regulatory framework. It completed Second Stage in the Dáil on 24 January, 2018 and consideration of it will continue during the year.

Review of the Industrial and Provident Acts

As part of a review of the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1893 to 2014 with the aim of further supporting Cooperatives in Ireland, the Department held a public consultation on the proposed legislative reform between 1 November 2016 and 31 January 2017. Replies received on foot of that consultation are being considered. The purpose of the review is to consolidate and modernise all existing legislation to ensure an effective cooperative legislative framework suitable for the diverse range of businesses operating the cooperative model in Ireland.

Cost of Insurance Working Group

The Cost of Insurance Working Group, under the chairmanship of the then Minister for Financial Services, was established in late July 2016 by the Department of Finance to review the factors influencing the increased cost of motor insurance with a view to identifying immediate and longer term measures to address these increasing costs. Officials from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and from the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) participated in the Cost of Insurance Working Group. The Cost of Insurance Working Group Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance was published in early January 2017. The Report makes a number of key recommendations including the establishment of a Personal Injuries Commission under the remit of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

Following publication of the Cost of Insurance Working Group's Motor Insurance Report, the Working Group considered the issue of employer and public liability insurance and produced a report. The Cost of Insurance Working Group Report on the Cost of Employer and Public Liability Insurance was published in early January 2018. In parallel with participation in the Working Group, the Department progressed the implementation of a number of recommendations for which it has lead responsibility from the Working Group's Cost of Motor Insurance Report.

Personal Injuries Assessment Board

The Personal Injuries Assessment Board was established in 2003 to benefit both consumers and business, through the speedier settlement of personal injury claims and the reduction of costs associated with litigation. Following ten years of operation a consultation process was held in 2014 in relation to the operation of the Personal Injuries and Assessment Board Acts and the submissions received were examined. In June 2017, the Government approved the General Scheme of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (Amendment) Bill 2018. The Department is working with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on the drafting of the Bill.

The aim of the Bill is to further enhance the role of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board within the personal injuries claims environment to the benefit of consumers, insurers, business and society more generally by achieving its goal of speedier, better and more cost efficient settlement of personal injury claims. The proposed legislation will also have regard to relevant recommendations in the Cost of Insurance Working Group Report on Motor Insurance.

Personal Injuries Commission

The establishment of the Personal Injuries Commission was one of the key recommendations in the Cost of Insurance Working Group Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance. The Personal Injuries Commission, chaired by Justice Nicholas Kearns, was established in January 2017. The Commission published its first report on the 7th December 2017 and makes a number of recommendations on the adoption of a standardised and internationally recognised approach to the diagnosis, treatment and reporting of soft tissue injuries by practitioners who are appropriately competent and trained. Work is progressing on the second phase of the Commission's work, which will focus on benchmarking of Irish motor insurance personal injury awards with those in other jurisdictions.

Taking Care of Business

The Business Regulation Unit, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority, held a Taking Care of Business event in Dublin Castle in November 2017 at which nearly 500 members of the business community – including SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs – could engage face to face with 30 state agencies, offices and services to get advice and find out what help is available. The event was also supported by a number of private-sector representative bodies. Almost 2,500 people have attended the series of these events around the country since 2013.

The Business Regulation Unit has also continued to engage positively in various international groups such as the European Union's REFIT Platform, looking at regulatory fitness, the European Council's Competitiveness and Growth (Better Regulation) Working Group, the Directors and Experts of Better Regulation, the Better Regulation Network, and the OECD's Regulatory Policy Committee.

Facilitating Regulated Trade

The Department seeks to promote and grow exports while at the same time ensuring that Ireland is fully compliant with its international obligations as a member of the UN and the EU to support global arms control, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and human rights. The Department operates a trade licensing and control regime in accordance with national and EU legislation. This regime is an important component of the business regulation framework for companies trading internationally from Ireland. A credible and efficient regime helps provide Ireland with a competitive advantage in the global market.

The Department represents Ireland at EU and other international fora with responsibility for trade controls and actively contributes to the updating of relevant legislation, both national and EU.

The Department administered approximately 700 export licences (total value in excess of €3 billion) in 2017 for Dual Use goods (goods which have a civil use but may also have a military application) and Military goods. The Department also implements UN and EU arms embargoes and trade sanctions and enacted 22 new Statutory Instruments to give effect to these controls.

The Department implements EU licensing requirements in respect of iron and steel imports from third countries. In 2017, 1,100 such licences were issued.

The Department publishes statistics on licences issued on its website every six months. A more comprehensive and detailed report on licensing activity is published annually.

Construction Contracts Act, 2013 – Regulation of Payments under Construction Contracts and Statutory Entitlement to Adjudication

The Construction Contracts Act, 2013 came into force for certain construction contracts entered into after the 25th July 2016 (S.I. No. 165 of 2016). The parties to a relevant construction contract must conform to the terms of the legislation and there is no opt out provision. Certain contracts are exempt and these include: a contract of less than €10,000 in value; a Public Private Partnership contract; a contract of employment; and a contract for a dwelling of less than 200 square metres where one of the parties occupies or intends to occupy it.

The purpose of the Act is to regulate payments, particularly the timing of payments, under a construction contract covered by the legislation. It provides new payment protections for subcontractors in the construction industry who had been considered vulnerable in the payment cycle in that industry. The Act also provides, for the first time in Ireland, a new statutory right for a party to a construction contract to refer a payment dispute for adjudication. The Act envisages that adjudications will be completed usually within 28 days of the referral of the dispute to an Adjudicator.

During 2017, the Chairperson of the Construction Contracts Adjudication Panel, Dr. Nael G. Bunni, made the first appointment under the Act of an Adjudicator from the Ministerial appointed Panel of Adjudicators to a payment dispute.

Dr. Bunni submitted his Annual Report on the first year experience of the operation of the legislation to Minister of State Pat Breen T.D., in August 2017. The Report indicates a very low incidence of payment disputes resulting in adjudication in the Act's first year in operation. It points to the present circumstances of significant growth within the construction sector as a factor in the low level of payment disputes in evidence at present.

National Metrology

The demand for calibration services remained steady for 2017, with just over 4,500 calibration certificates being issued during the year.

Legal Metrology

In 2017 legal metrology inspectors visited 3,550 premises and inspected 14,752 instruments. While a high level of industry compliance is evident, 852 warnings for non-compliance were issued. One prosecution was taken against a Donegal based fish processor, which resulted in a fine of €45,000 and a six-month suspended prison sentence being handed down.

Medical Devices Certification

NSAI continued to develop its services to the highest international standard and received initial 'Authorization' in June 2017 as a Medical Device Single Audit Program (MDSAP) Auditing Organization (AO). NSAI's primary objective is to ensure that Irish industry retains access to NSAI an internationally recognised certification body for placement of medical devices on the European and international markets.

Goal 7: Investing in our Staff and Optimising our Resources

Invest in and support our staff to further enhance individual and collective capacity, ensure high standards of corporate governance and optimise all our resources to deliver our Strategy, Mission and Goals

During 2017, the HR unit continued to enhance our capacity to deliver through our people, through active participation in the Civil Service Renewal Plan and through our internal New Ways of Working initiative.

Civil Service Renewal

A series of Staff Engagement Fora were held for each grade to better understand the issues impacting on their engagement following the results of the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, 2015. From this process, a feedback report was produced and an Action Plan developed. The Action Plan sets out specific initiatives that aim to address the issues raised. The Action Plan will be driven by five New Ways of Working Sub-Groups that were established according to the main themes arising from the feedback.

The Department participated in the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards and, while none of the Department's nominees won awards, four projects were shortlisted. These were the:

- Health Innovation Hub Ireland;
- Company Director Restriction & Disqualification Undertakings programme;
- CRO Company Conversion Project;
- Workplace Relations Reform Programme.

In relation to the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2017, the Department's response rate increased to 64% from 46%. The results are being analysed and actions will be initiated in 2018 to respond to the findings.

New Ways of Working

The New Ways of Working Steering Group continued to be a focal point for staff engagement and pursued its own work programme for the year. The group progressed projects within five subgroups looking at:

1. mobility and career development;
2. reward and recognition;
3. skills;
4. communication;
5. Innovative Work Practices.

Greater e-working was rolled out with ePQ's, e-Submissions and direct access devices.

People and Capability

Amidst a very challenging and fluid labour market, the Department worked closely with the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and training providers to both recruit staff to fill critical vacancies and to develop and strengthen our workforce. There are a significant number of staff working in new assignments due to the level of churn in the Civil Service and labour market in general. The Department is working to manage this through its Workforce Planning process.

The Department undertook a series of engagements across its Divisions and Offices to capture an up-to-date understanding of the strategic priorities and the requirements these placed on the workforce. On foot of this engagement, a three-year Workforce Plan (2017-2019) was developed which will both inform central bodies on DBEI requirements and also target HR interventions and supports to close skills gaps and strengthen our workforce, according to our specific demographics.

Internal Audit

Based on internationally accepted standards adopted by the Civil Service by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2012, the Internal Audit Unit functions provided assurance to the Secretary General and advice regarding the Department's financial and other internal processes and procedures during 2017.

Using technology to seek efficiencies and improve customer service

The Department completed initiatives to enhance efficiency by adopting centrally shared services for a number of applications which are common across Government, including its payroll and travel and subsistence management systems. It also made significant changes to the technologies which it uses in order to maximise further developments in shared systems and services.

New systems were also introduced to maximise the potential of collaborative and mobile working. While no major new customer facing systems were introduced during the year, incremental improvements were made to existing services. A new on-line service was put in place to streamline oversight of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs programme which made it easier for regional representatives to make returns to the Department.

Corporate Governance

Governance Framework, April 2016 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Governance-Framework.html>

The Department's Governance Framework was published in April 2016 and sets out the governance procedures, processes and principles that underpin the work of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

It was developed in line with the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service as part of the Civil Service Renewal Plan, 2014.

Statement of Strategy 2016-2019 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Who-We-Are/Statement-of-Strategy/>

The Department's Statement of Strategy covers the period 2016-2019.

The Statement of Strategy summarises the Department's strategy and provides an outline of our Mission and strategic goals. It sets out, concisely, the current context facing our stakeholders and the Department, and details the commitments we are making in terms of delivering on our strategic goals.

Freedom of Information (FOI) <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Who-We-Are/Corporate-Information/>

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals

The Department's FOI Publication Scheme was published in April 2016 in accordance with Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. The Scheme sets out information, under 6 headings, to assist members of the public in their understanding of the Department and its functions. In 2017 the Department received 260 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and these were processed in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014

Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Protected-Disclosures.html>

In accordance with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, the Department has a policy in respect of Protected Disclosures in place for staff. As required under Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, an annual report setting out the number of protected disclosures received and the action taken is available on the Department's website within 6 months of year end.

Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Who-We-Are/Corporate-Information/Regulation-of-Lobbying-Act-2015/Regulation-of-Lobbying-Act-2015.html>

The Lobbying Act is designed to provide information to the public about who is lobbying whom about what. A list of DBEI's Designated Public Officials under this Act is published on our website.

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/Late-Payments/Prompt-Payment-Returns/>

DBEI publishes on its website quarterly payment performance reports for both the Department and for the bodies under its aegis.

Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission Act, 2014

In line with our obligations under this Act, the Department is committed to proofing its wider policies, procedures and services across its business areas to ensure we comply with our requirements in the area of human rights and equality:

Workplace Relations Commission <https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/>

The WRC is the independent body set up by law to investigate or mediate complaints of discrimination. The WRC is covered by the European Convention on Human Rights.

Discrimination happens when a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated. Victimation is also covered by the legislation.

Corporate Social Responsibility <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Business-Sectoral-Initiatives/Corporate-Social-Responsibility/>

This Department is the lead Department on Corporate Social Responsibility - a concept whereby businesses and other organisations integrate their social and environmental responsibilities into their mainstream business operations, and business decisions are made with reference to wider sustainability issues.

National Women and Girl's Strategy

[http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/National%20Strategy%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%202017-2020)

DBEI is represented on the Strategic Committee of the National Women and Girls Strategy 2017-2020. It participates in the quarterly committee meetings and gathers and collates updates on Actions contained relevant to the Department. DBEI contributes to the common actions such as the development of in-house expertise in gender mainstreaming activities and considering gender impact in the development of new strategies.

DBEI also has specific actions under the strategy including the requirement to publicise and encourage participation by women in start-ups, support and publicise women specific entrepreneur awards and events through EI and the LEOs. The WRC are tasked with increasing awareness among employers and women of employment rights and redress mechanisms.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy <http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/WP15000115>

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 was published during 2017. The Strategy takes a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities both in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

The Department is represented on and is progressing actions under both the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 and Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024.

In addition, DBEI participated on the Group led by Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection that published the 'Make Work Pay Report, 2017'. This report identified and addressed the barriers that face individuals on disability as they seek to participate in (or return to) the workplace.

Innovation 2020 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Innovation-2020.html>

Ireland's cross Government strategy for research and development, science and technology, recognises the importance of gender equality in research.

The strategy notes that Ireland has the opportunity to build its international reputation for gender equality through improved participation of women in research and innovation activities, and sets out actions to address gender issues relating to career progression in research and innovation.

Other Relevant Legislation

In addition to the above, the Department operates within employment law and other relevant legislation that seek to ensure, amongst other things, human rights and equality, such as:

Civil Service Regulation Act, Public Service Management Act, Paternity Leave and Benefit Act, Equality Act, Industrial Relations Act, Workplace Relations Act, Data Protection Act, Employees (Provision of Information and Consultation) Act, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, Maternity Protection Act, Carer's Leave Act, Organisation of Working Time Act, Unfair Dismissals Act.

Appendix 1

Bills published or enacted in 2017

- Competition (Amendment) Act 2017
- Companies (Amendment) Bill 2017
- Companies (Statutory Audits) Bill 2017
- Companies (Accounting) Act 2017 No. 9 of 2017
- Companies (Amendment) Act 2017 No. 13 of 2017
- Legal Metrology (Measuring Instruments) Act 2017 was enacted on 28 November 2017

Appendix 2

Statutory instruments made in 2017

S.I. No. 5 of 2017	European Communities (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 6 of 2017	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) Order 2017
S.I. No. 43 of 2017	European Union (Actions for Damages for Infringements of Competition Law) Regulations 2017.
S.I. No. 67 of 2017	European Union (Third country auditors and audit entities equivalence, transitional period and fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.
S.I. No. 68 of 2017	European Union (Adequacy of competent authorities of certain third countries regarding transfer of relevant audit papers) Regulations 2017.
S.I. No. 69 of 2017	European Communities (Electromagnetic Compatibilities) Regulations 2017.
S.I. No. 75 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Iran) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 90 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 91 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Central African Republic) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 92 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 93 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Syria) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 127 of 2017	Companies Act 2014 (Section 1313) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 163 of 2017	Industrial and Provident Societies (Notice of Petition for Appointment of an Examiner to an Industrial and Provident Society) (Form) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 164 of 2017	Industrial and Provident Societies (Notice of Petition for Appointment of an Examiner to an Industrial and Provident Society) (Fee) Regulations 2017

S.I. No. 176 of 2017	European Union (Safety of Toys) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 230 of 2017	European Union (Equipment and Protective Systems for use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 231 of 2017	Employment Regulation Order (Security Industry Joint Labour Committee) 2017
S.I. No. 232 of 2017	European Union (Lifts and Safety Components for Lifts) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 233 of 2017	European Union (Pressure Equipment) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 246 of 2017	Companies (Accounting) Act 2017 (Commencement) Order 2017
S.I. No. 250 of 2017	Companies (Accounting) Act 2017 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2017
S.I. No. 253 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Syria) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 254 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Central African Republic) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 255 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Iran) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 256 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 257 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Republic of Guinea-Bissau) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 258 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Tunisia) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 259 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning South Sudan) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 260 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Sudan) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 261 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Iran) (No 3) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 262 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 263 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Zimbabwe) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 268 of 2017	European Communities (Intra-Community Transfers of Defence-Related Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 282 of 2017	European Communities (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 305 of 2017	Companies (Amendment) Act 2017 (Commencement) Order 2017
S.I. No. 360 of 2017	European Union (Disclosure of Non-Financial and Diversity Information by certain large undertakings and groups) Regulations 2017

S.I. No. 361 of 2017	Labour Affairs and Labour Law (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2017
S.I. No. 362 of 2017	Job, Enterprise and Innovation (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) (No. 2) Order 2017
S.I. No. 363 of 2017	Job, Enterprise and Innovation (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) (No. 3) Order 2017
S.I. No. 364 of 2017	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Alteration of Name of Department and Title of Minister) Order 2017
S.I. No. 455 of 2017	Sectoral Employment Order (Construction Sector) 2017
S.I. No. 513 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Central African Republic) (No 3) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 514 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 515 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Iran) (No 4) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 516 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning Syria) (No 3) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 518 of 2017	European Union (Restrictive Measures Concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (No 3) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 555 of 2017	European Communities (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment) (Amendment) (No 3) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 567 of 2017	European Communities (Aerosol Dispensers) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 569 of 2017	Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) Order 2017
S.I. No. 570 of 2017	Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) (No. 2) Order 2017
S.I. No. 578 of 2017	European Union (Safety of Toys) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2017
S.I. No. 600 of 2017	Industrial Relations Act 1990 (Code of Practice on Longer Working) (Declaration) Order 2017



An Roinn Gnó,
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Business,
Enterprise and Innovation



**An Roinn Gnó,
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta**
Department of Business,
Enterprise and Innovation

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2017

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An Brollach

Fáiltíom roimh fhoilsiú Thuarascáil Bhliantúil na Roinne le haghaidh 2017. I rith na bliana, rinneamar dul chun cinn suntasach ar ár bpriomhspriocanna faoin gClár do Rialtas Compháirtíochta a bhaint amach, a chuir de chúram orainn tacú le léim chun cinn i gcumas agus feidhmíocht ár n-earnála fiontraíochta agus timpeallacht a chruthú a chabhraíonn le fostáiocht d'ardchaighdeán a chruthú agus a chothú. Léirítéar sna staitisticí gur lean an fhostaíochta ag fás go láidir in 2017, agus go bhfuilimid ar an mbóthar ceart chun ár n-aidhmeanna a bhaint amach.

Is ábhar misnígh ar leith é cás na fostáiochta réigiúnaí. Bhí ról tábhachtach ag na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnacha ina leith sin agus chabhraigh siad leis an dul chun cinn a spreagadh. Tá sé i gceist againn na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnacha a athnuachan don tréimhse ó 2018 go 2020 chun tógál ar an méid a baineadh amach go dtí seo.

Lean an Roinn lena n-ullmhúcháin don Bhreatimeacht i rith 2017, agus cuireadh bearta beartais agus oibríochta i bhfeidhm chun a chinntíú go bhfuil gnóthaí sa staid is fearr is féidir chun dul i ngleic le dúshláin atá ag teacht chun cinn. Beidh sé sin fós ina thosaíocht mhór don Roinn sa todhchaí.

Tarraingítear aird sa tuarascáil seo ar an iliomad éachtaí a baineadh amach thar raon oibre leathan na Roinne i rith 2017, agus táim muiníneach go leanfaidh foireann na Roinne agus a hOifigí agus Gníomhaireachtaí ag baint ár misin amach sa bhliain amach romhainn. Ba mhaith liom aitheantas a thabhairt don obair a rinne mo réamhtheachtaithe, Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD agus Frances Fitzgerald TD, i rith a dtréimhsí sa Roinn in 2017, agus obair leanúnach mo chomhghleacaithe Aireachta, Pat Breen TD agus John Halligan TD.

Heather Humphreys, T.D.

An tAire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta

Is é seo an chéad deis a bhí againn tuairisciú ar an dul chun cinn a rinneadh ó foilsíodh ár Ráiteas Straitéis. Tugtar mionsonraí sa tuarascáil ar an dul chun cinn a baineadh amach i réimsí ilchineálacha gnó na Roinne i rith 2017, agus tugtar achoimre ar na príomhthorthaí, chomh maith le buaicphointí ár spriocanna ardleibhéal ar fad.

Tá ról tábhachtach ag an Roinn chun tosaíochtaí an Rialtais a bhaint amach thar réimse cúraimí leathan. Tugtar breac-chuntas sa tuarascáil seo ar na héachtaí iomadúla agus ar na forbairtí dearfacha a tharla in 2017, lena n-áirítear fostáiocht d'ardchaighdeán a chruthú agus a chothú i ngach réigiún den téarma; tacaíochtaí den scoth a sholáthar do ghnóthaí agus d'fhiontráithe (go háirithe i gcomhthéacs an Bhreatimeachta); forbairt córas nuálaíochta agus taighde a bheadh iomaíoch go hidirnáisiúnta a spreagadh; a chinntíú go n-éascaíonn ár dtimpeallacht rialaithe gnó infheistíoch agus fás agus go gcosnaítear tomholtóirí; agus timpeallacht shuaimhneach caidrimh thionscláioch agus oibre sábhalte a éascú. I rith 2017, aistríodh an fhreagracht as dlí fostáiochta agus as an bPá Íosta Náisiúnta chuig an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le foireann na Roinne agus a hOifigí agus Gníomhaireachtaí as a dtiomantas leanúnach agus a ndua mór agus táim ag síúil le hoibriú leo, agus leis na páirtithe leasmhara ar fad atá againn, chun leanúint ag spreagadh ár spriocanna agus tosaíochtaí sa bhliain amach romhainn.

An Dr Orlaigh Quinn, an tArd-Rúnaí

An Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta

Fís

Cinnteoimid gurb í Éire an áit is fearr dá bhfuil ann le rath a bheith ar ghnó agus soláthróimid lánfhostaíocht inbhuanaithe agus caighdeán maireachtála níos airde i ngach réigiún sa tír.

Misean

Cruthú lánfhostaíochta ardchaighdeáin agus inbhuanaithe a spreagadh i ngach réigiún sa tír, trína bheith inár gcrann taca ar son na fiontraíochta ar fud an Rialtais, tacú le bonn fiontraíochta iomaíoch chun daoine a dhreasú i dtreo na hoibre agus na fiontraíochta, agus fostaíocht agus margáí atá cóir agus iomaíoch a chur chun cinn.

Luachanna

Mar Roinn cothaímid cultúr ar cuid lárnach de iad freagracht, éifeachtúlacht agus luach ar airgead, atá fréamhaithe in éiteas seirbhíse poiblí lena mbaineann neamhspleáchas, ionracas, neamhchlaontacht, oscailteacht agus meas.

Mar Státseirbhísigh seasaimidne leis na caighdeáin is airde gairmiúlachta, macántachta, oibiachtúlachta agus cáilíochta, atá den riachtanas inár róil ag tacú leis an bpróiseas daonlathach agus ag freastal ar an bpobal.

Tús Eolais ar an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta

Tá ról lárnach ag an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta chun beartais an Rialtais a chur i bhfeidhm maidir le hacmhainn táirgiúlachta an gheilleagair a spreagadh agus timpeallacht a chruthú a thacaíonn le cruthú post. Tá sainchúram ar an Roinn freisin maidir le hiomaíocht chóir sa mhargadh a chinntiú, tomholtóirí a chosaint, caidreamh tionsclaíoch seasmhach a chur chun cinn agus oibrithe a chosaint.

Trína hOfiúgí agus Gníomhaireachtaí, tá raon leathan gníomhaíochtaí i gceist le sainchúram na Roinne, lena n-áirítear:

- Tosú agus fás fiontar dúchasach a éascú,
 - Infheistíocht Dhíreach Eachtrach a mhealladh,
 - Easpórtálacha a mhéadú,
 - Feabhas a chur ar iomaíochas,
 - Nuálaíocht agus fás a chur chun cinn le hinfheistíocht i dtaighde agus forbairt,
 - Iomaíocht chóir a chur chun cinn do ghnóthais agus do thomholtóirí,
 - Dlí na gcuideachtaí atá oiriúnach don fheidhm agus nua-aimseartha a chinntiú,
 - Cearta oibrithe a chosaint, lena n-áirítear an teidlíocht atá acu i leith sábháilteacht agus sláinte cheirde,
 - Tacú le timpeallacht dhearfach chaidrimh thionsclaíoch agus í a éascú,
 - Beartas a dhéanamh atá bunaithe ar fhianaise agus a mbeidh taighde, anailís agus cultúr láidir measúnaithe ina bhonn eolais faoi,
 - Scileanna a bheidh riachtanach don fhiontraíocht amach anseo a shainaithint, agus
 - Ionadaíocht a dhéanamh do leasa na hÉireann i bhfóraim ábhartha an Aontais Eorpaigh, lena n-áirítear:
 - An Chomhairle Iomaíochais (a chuimsíonn an Margadh Inmheánach, Tionscal agus Taighde),
 - An Chomhairle um Ghnóthaí Eachtracha (ag teacht le chéile ina foirmíocht Trádála)
- agus comhlachtaí idirnáisiúnta ábhartha:
- An Eagraíocht Dhomhanda Trádála,
 - An Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Saothair,
 - An Eagraíocht um Chomhar agus Fhorbairt Eacnamaíochta (OECD),
 - An Eagraíocht Dhomhanda um Maoin Intleachtúil.

An 1 Meán Fómhair 2017, aistríodh an fhreagracht as beartas cearta fostáiochta agus na feidhmeanna reachtaíochta lena mbaineann chuig an Roinn ón Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí. Tháinig an t-aistriú feidhmeanna i bhfeidhm de bhun an Ordaithe um Ghnóthaí Saothair agus Dlí an tSaothair (Riarachán Roinne agus Feidhmeanna Aire a Aistriú), 2017, I.R. Uimh. 361 de 2017.

Tá 11 phíosa reachtaíochta príomha i réimse na gceart fostáiochta ag baint leis an aistriú. Tá seirbhísí agus feidhmeanna an Choimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre agus na Cúirte Oibreachais fós faoi shainchúram na Roinne Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta.

Oifigí agus Gníomhaireachtaí



Sa bhreis ar na Gníomhaireachtaí agus Oifigí sin:

Oifigí Fiontair Áitiúla:

Maoiníonn an Roinn 31 Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil.

Idir-Thrádáil Éireann:

Cómhaoiníonn an Roinn Idir-Thrádáil Éireann, an Comhlacht Thuaidh Theas a chuireann trádáil trasteorann chun cinn idir Poblacht na hÉireann agus Tuaisceart Éireann.

An Bord Bainistíochta

Comhaltaí	
Orlaigh Quinn	An tArd-Rúnaí
Dermot Mulligan	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Nuálaíochta agus Infheistíochta
Clare Dunne	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Rialála Áite Oibre agus Imirce Geilleagraí
David Hegarty	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Beartais Straitéisigh
Philip Kelly	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Gnóthaí AE, Beartais Trádála agus Ceadúnaithe Easpórtálacha
Breda Power	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Tráchtála, Tomholtóirí agus lomaíochais
Declan Hughes	Rúnaí Cúnta, an Rannóg Fiontar Dúchasach, Dhigiteach agus Airgeadais
Michael O'Leary	An Ceannasaí, an tAonad Tacaíochta Bainistíochta agus Rúnaí an Bhoird Bainistíochta

- Martin Shanagher, Rúnaí Cúnta, ar scor in 2017
- Tháinig David Hegarty isteach sa Bhord Bainistíochta i mí na Nollag 2017

Áirítear lenár bpríomh-éachtaí in 2017:

Seoladh an 6ú Plean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist i mí Feabhra 2017, ina bhfuil 164 gníomh le haghaidh Ranna Rialtais agus gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais, agus é d'aidhm leis cabhrú le 45,000 post breise a chruthú in 2017. **Crutháodh 66,500 post in 2017.**

Léiríonn tortaí na dtreániarrachtaí sin ó 2012 i leith chun poist a chruthú go bhfuil ag éirí leis an bpróiseas seo. Bhí 345,000 duine níos mó ag obair sa cheathrú rátíe de 2017 ná mar a bhí in 2012 nuair a seoladh an chéad Phlean. Tháinig **laghdú ar an difhostaíocht** ó os cionn 15% go luath in 2012 **go 5.9% i mí Aibreán 2018.**

Bliain an-láidir ab ea 2017 le haghaidh cruthú post i measc chliaint **Fiontraíocht Éireann**, agus crutháodh 19,332 post nua. Bhí an fhostaíocht cliant is airde in 2017 ó bunaíodh an ghníomhaireacht, an cruthú post glan is airde (10,309) ó bunaíodh an ghníomhaireacht agus an lín is ísle caillteanais post ó 1998 i leith. Tá **209,338** duine fostaithe anois i gcuideachtaí a dtacaíonn Fiontraíocht Éireann leo.

Chruthaigh **GFT Éireann** 10,684 post nua glan i rith 2017, le méadú glan ar phoist i ngach réigiún in Éirinn. Ag deireadh 2017, bhí **210,443** duine ag obair i gcliantchuideachtaí GFT Éireann, an lín is mó i stair na gníomhaireachta. Sáraíonn an figiúr sin an sprioc cúig bliana – 209,000 – a socraíodh in 2015 sa straitéis “Winning: Foreign Direct Investment” de chuid GFT.

Tugadh faoi shuirbhéanna in 2017 a léirigh gur fheidhmigh cliantchuideachtaí na gníomhaireachta go láidir in 2016, agus gurbh ionann a ndíolacháin iomlána agus €222bn. B'ionann a n-easpórtálacha agus €195bn, suas 9.1% ar an mbliain roimhe sin. Chaith na cuideachtaí sin **€43bn i ngeilleagar na hÉireann** ar phárola, ábhair Éireannacha agus Seirbhísí Éireannacha in 2016.

Tá na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta

Réigiúnacha do Phoist ríthábhachtach chun uaillmhian an Rialtais a bhaint amach, is é sin 200,000 post breise a chruthú faoi 2020, a mbeadh 135,000 díobh taobh amuigh de réigiún Bhaile Átha Cliath. Léirigh sonraí ón bPríomh-Oifig Staidrimh méadú 53,500 duine i bhfostaíocht ar fud an Stáit sa bliaín go dtí an dara ráithe de 2017, agus go bhfuil 84% de na daoine nuafhostaithe sa tréimhse sin lonnaithe taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath. Bhí méadú ar lín na ndaoine fostaithe i ngach réigiún sa tréimhse sin freisin.

Thacaigh Oifigí Fiontair Áitiúla le 1,471 fiontraí óg idir 18 agus 35 bliain d'aois chun páirt a ghlacadh sa chomórtas **Fiontraí Óg na hÉireann** in 2017; roinn 93 smaoineamh gnó an ciste infheistíochta €2 mhilliún a bhain leis. Is é aidhm an tionscnaimh sin tacú le cultúr na fiontraíochta i measc daoine óga in Éirinn.

In 2017 cheadaigh **Micrea-Airgeadas Éireann** maoiniú €5.5m do 400 gnó beag ar fud na tíre, rud a thacaigh le 1,141 post a chruthú nó a chothú.

In 2017, d'fhoilsigh an Roinn “Building Stronger Business: **Responding to Brexit by competing, innovating and trading**”. Tugtar achoimre sa pháipéar ar thionchair an Bhreatimeachta ar réimsí beartais tábhachtacha laistigh den Roinn agus tugtar achoimre ar na bearta beartais agus oibríochta atá ar bun agus atá á mbeartú ag an Roinn agus ag a Gníomhaireachtaí chun freagairt don Bhreatimeacht, lena n-áirítear na tacáiochtaí atá ar fáil do chuideachtaí chun cabhrú leo ullmhú don Bhreatimeacht.

Daingníodh maoiniú státhiste i gCáináisnéis 2018 chun leas a bhaint as suas le €300 milliún iasachta le haghaidh gnóthaí incháilithe Éireannacha faoi **Scéim lasachta an**

Bhreatimeachta. Seolfar an Scéim in 2018, agus soláthróid sí airgeadas caipiteal oibre a bhfuil praghas níos iomaíche air, atá níos éasca le teacht air agus lena mbaineann téarmaí níos fabhraí ná a bhfuil ar fáil faoi láthair.

Bunaíodh **Grúpa Oibre Teicniúil ar Státhabhair** in 2017. Tá ionadaithe ó Ard-Stiúrthóireacht na hIomaíochta, an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, an Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara agus Fiontraíocht Éireann sa Ghrúpa agus é de shainchúram orthu machnamh a dhéanamh ar an gcaoi a bhféadfaí tacaíochtaí a cheapadh laistigh den Chreat Státhabhrach le haghaidh cuideachtaí Éireannacha a mbeidh tionchar ag an mBreatimeacht orthu. Tá an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ag stiúradh thoscaireacht na hÉireann.

B'fhorbairt thábhachtach é cur i gcrích **Chomhaontú um Chomhpháirtíocht Eacnamaíoch an Aontais Eorpaigh leis an tSeapáin** ar an 8 Nollaig. Is éacht shuntasach é an comhaontú trádála sin don Aontas agus don tSeapáin, a bhfuil níos mó ná an tríu cuid d'olltáirgeacht intíre an domhain acu in éindí.

Rinneadh tuilleadh dul chun cinn ar an 140 gníomh i **Nuálaíocht 2020** a chur i bhfeidhm; is í Nuálaíocht 2020 straitéis náisiúnta an Rialtais le haghaidh Taighde agus Forbartha, Eolaíochta agus Teicneolaíochta a rinneadh in 2017. Áirítear leis na buaicphointí tabhairt faoi phróiseas cuimsitheach comhairliúcháin agus taighde a dhéanamh ar na réimsí Tosaíochta Taighde, ag féachaint le tograí a ullmhú don Rialtas. Anuas air sin, cuireadh an chéad ghairm ar thograí i gcrích don **Mhol Nuálaíochta Sláinte**, comhthionscnamh idir an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta agus an Roinn Sláinte a seoladh i mí Mheán Fómhair 2016. Cuireann an Mol dlús faoi thráchtálú réitigh nuálacha cúram sláinte ach a chur ar chumas fiontraithe agus cuideachtaí cúram sláinte a dtáirgí agus seirbhísí a tháistíl i dtimpeallacht fíorshaoil trí rochtain a thabhairt ar an tseirbhís sláinte.

Foilseachán páipéar comhairliúcháin ar athdhíol ticéad le haghaidh imeachtaí siamsaíochta agus spóirt an 20 Eanáir 2017.

Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasaíocht), 2017 a achtaí a mhéadaíonn na tairseacha do chuideachtaí a chailíonn mar chuideachtaí beaga, a shimplíonn an tuairisciú airgeadais do chuideachtaí beaga agus a thugann isteach catagóir nua cuideachta ar a dtugtar micreachuideachta.

Acht na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017 a achtaí a chuireann síneadh ama leis an tréimhse díolúine do chuideachtaí áirithe ó dhá thacar ráitis airgeadais a ullmhú, bunaithe ar an bhfaisnéis airgeadais chéanna ach de réir dhá chaighdeán dhifriúla cuntasaíochta.

I mí Eanáir 2017, bunaíodh an **Coimisiún um Dhíobhálacha Pearsanta**. D'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún a chéad tuarascáil i mí na Nollag agus déantar roinnt moltaí ar ghlacadh le cur chuige caighdeánaithe a aithnítear go hidirnáisiúnta i leith diagnóisiú, cóireáil agus tuairisciú cleachtóirí ar ghortuithe fíocháin bhog.

I mí an Mháta 2017, comhdhlútháíodh na **Rialacháin um Cheadanna Fostaíochta** i dtacar rialachán amháin a dhéanann níos sothuigthe agus inúsáidte iad. Cuireadh na hathbhreithnithe ar na liostaí gairme le haghaidh ceadanna fostaíochta, a dhéantar faoi dhó sa bláthain, i gcrích de réir an sceidil. Athraíodh na rialacháin chun tiománaithe feithiclí earraí tromá a bhaint den liosta neamh-incháilithe.

Tá **caidreamh tionsclaíoch seasmhach** fós ina ghné de gheilleagar na hÉireann agus fáiltítear roimh an laghdú in 2017 ar na laethanta a cailleadh de bharr aighnis thionsclaíocha, ó 71,647 in 2016 go 50,191 lá cailte in 2017. Sa chomhthéacs sin, lean seirbhísí an Choimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre agus na Cúirte Oibreachais ar aghaidh ag cur sásraí fóntha ar fáil le haghaidh réitigh aighnis agus casaoide ar fud na bhfiontar.

I mí an Mheithimh 2017, toghadh Éire mar chomhalta Titulaire de **Chomhlacht Rialaithe na hEagraíochta Idirnáisiúnta Saothair** don tréimhse ó 2017 go 2020. Is é seo an chéad uair a toghadh Éire ar shuiochán Titulaire (ceann ag a bhfuil cearta labhartha agus vótála) ó chuamar isteach san Eagraíocht in 1923. Ba í an Eagraíocht seo an chéad chomhlacht idirnáisiúnta a ndeachamar isteach ann i ndiaidh neamhspleáchas a bhaint amach.

In 2017, thug **an tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta** faoi 8,876 cigireacht san áit oibre agus 1,058 fiosrú, 9,934 san iomlán. Chuir sé 395 seiceáil faireachas margaidh ar tháirgí ceimiceacha i margadh na hÉireann i gcrích, agus aimsíodh gur sháraigh cúig cinn na rialacha agus baineadh den mhargadh iad. Uirlis ar líne saor in aisce de chuid an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta (ÚSS) is ea **BeSMART**, atá deartha chun cuidiú le húninéirí/bainisteoirí gnóthas beag measúnuithe riosca agus ráitis sábháilteachta a ullmhú dá n-áit oibre. Mhéadaigh lucht úsáidte BeSMART 8,496 in 2017, go 46,972 san iomlán.

In 2017, cuireadh clár **Roghnaigh Sábháilteachta** an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta ar fáil do beagnach 25,000 scoláire iar-bhunscoile agus breisoideachais. Eisíodh an tríú tuarascáil ón g**Coimisiún um Pá Íseal** i mí lúil 2017 agus moladh ann, le faomhadh an Rialtais, go méadófaí an t-íospá náisiúnta go €9.55 in aghaidh na huaire le teacht i bhfeidhm ón 1 Eanáir 2018.

Ráiteas Straitéise 2016–2019

Sprioc 1:

Fiontraíocht agus fostáiocht ardchaighdeáin a chruthú agus a chothú

Ceannaireacht a thabhairt maidir le fiontraíocht agus fostáiocht ardchaighdeáin a chruthú agus a chothú i réigiún uile na tíre ach tacú le bonn láidir fiontraíochta dúchais, le hinfheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach a mhealladh agus le cultúr láidir fiontraíoch

Fás faoi Thionchar Easpórtálacha a Spreagadh

Mar a tharla sna blianta imithe tharainn, cuireadh béim ar leith ar thionscnaimh chun tacaíocht a thabhairt do chruthú post faoi thionchar easpórtálacha i spriocanna ghníomhaireachtaí na Roinne. I measc siúd bhí bearta chun díolacháin agus easpórtálacha cuideachtaí Éireannacha a fhás; infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach a fhorbairt agus a leabú a thuilleadh; comhoibriú idir cuideachtaí Éireannacha agus cinn faoi úinéireacht eachtrach a mhéadú; agus tacú le fiontraíocht agus gnóthais nuathionscanta.

Tugann an Roinn tacaíocht dhíreach do ghnóthaí agus fiontralithe trína gníomhaireachtaí, GFT Éireann le haghaidh infheistíocht isteach, Fiontraíocht Éireann do ghnólachtaí dúchasacha agus infheisteoirí iasachta i réimsí acmhainní nádúrtha, 31 Oifig Fontair Áitiúil agus trí Fhondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann do thaighdeoirí.

Cruthú Post ar an Iomlán

Shocraigh an Clár do Rialtas Comhpháirtíochta (Bealtaine 2016) sprioc 200,000 post breise faoi 2020, 135,000 taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath san áireamh, i dteannta laghdú ar an ráta náisiúnta difhostaíochta go 6%.

Sa bliain go dtí an ceathrú ráithe de 2017, cruthaíodh 66,500 post. Bhí 345,000 duine níos mó ag obair sa cheathrú ráithe de 2017 ná mar a bhí in 2012, nuair a seoladh an chéad Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist. Tháinig laghdú ar an difhostaíocht ó os cionn 15% go luath in 2012 go 5.9% i mí Aibreáin 2018.

Feidhmíocht Chiantchuideachtaí na nGníomhaireachtaí Fiontraíochta

Tugann an Roinn faoi shuirbhéanna blantúla ar chiantchuideachtaí de chuid na ngníomhaireachtaí forbartha fiontraíochta (Fiontraíocht Éireann, an Ghníomhaireacht Forbartha Tionscail agus Údarás na Gaeltachta) chun taighde bunaithe ar fhianaise a sholáthar chun bonn eolais a chur faoi bheartas fiontraíochta.

Suirbhé Fostaíochta Blantúil ar Chiantchuideachtaí na nGníomhaireachtaí Forbartha Fiontraíochta

Tá an t-áireamh seo ar fhostaíochta i thart ar 8,000 chiantchuideachta de chuid na ngníomhaireachtaí forbartha fiontraíochta ag soláthar tacar sonrai saibhir ó 1972 i leith. Rianaíonn sé fostáiocht bhuan lánaimseartha chomh maith le fostáiocht pháirtaimseartha, shealadach, gnóthachain agus caillteanas chomhlána agus athrú glan. Tugtar miondealú ar na táscairí sin de réir réigiún, earnálacha fiontraíochta agus úinéireachta. Is iad príomhthorthaí an tSuirbhé Bhliantúil Fostaíochta, 2017:

- B'ionann an fhostaíocht iomlán (idir lánaimseartha agus pháirtaimseartha) agus 428,031, méadú 5.2% ó 2016 i leith
- Mhéadaigh festaíocht bhuan lánaimseartha 5.4% go 379,810
- Laghdaigh gnóthachain chomhlána sna poist bhuana lánaimseartha 6% go 33,963 ó 2016 i leith
- Bhí caillteanas chomhlána sna poist bhuana lánaimseartha ag 14,594, an leibhéal is ísle le deich mbliana anuas
- Laghdaigh athrú glan sna poist bhuana lánaimseartha 6.9% ó 2016 go 19,363

An Suirbhé Bliantúil Gnó ar Thionchar Eacnamaíoch Chliantchuideachtaí na nGníomhaireachtaí Forbartha Fiontraíochta

Tugann an suirbhé bliantúil seo ar chliantchuideachtaí gníomhaireachta ina bhfuil deichniúr fostaithe nó níos mó (thart ar 4,000 cuideachta) sonraí faoi easpórtálacha, díolacháin agus caiteachas díreach ina n-ionláine i ngeilleagar na hÉireann agus breisluach i gcliantghnólachtaí gníomhaireachta. Tugtar miondealú de réir earnáil ghnó, réigiún agus úinéireachta. Ba iad na príomhfhigiúirí le haghaidh 2016, an bhliain is deireanaí a ndearnadh suirbhé uirthi:

- B'ionann díolacháin iomlána agus €221.6bn in 2016, méadú 9.3% ó 2015 i leith
- B'ionann easpórtálacha iomlána agus €195bn, méadú 9.1% ó 2015 i leith
- Mhéadaigh breisluach go €74.3bn in 2016 ó €67.2bn in 2015
- Mhéadaigh caiteachas díreach i ngeilleagar na hÉireann (Párolla, Ábhair Éireannacha agus Seirbhísí Éireannacha) 5.3% go €43bn in 2016.

Fiontraíocht Éireann

Feidhmíonn Fiontraíocht Éireann mar Ghníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne agus tá sí freagrach as forbairt agus fás fiontar Éireannach i margáí domhanda. Oibríonn Fiontraíocht Éireann i gcomhpháirtíocht le fiontair Éireannacha d'fhoinn cuidiú leo tosú, scálú, nuáil agus díolacháin easpórtála a ghnóthú ar mhargaí domhanda. Gach bliain, bíonn Fiontraíocht Éireann ag oibriú le thart ar 5,000 cuideachta trí líonra comhairleoírí margaidh agus earnála bunaithe i ndeich n-oifig náisiúnta agus 33 oifig idirnáisiúnta. Ar an mbonn sin, cothaíonn an gníomhaireacht fás inbhuanaithe geilleagrách, forbairt réigiúnach agus cruthú post.

Bliain an-láidir ab ea 2017 le haghaidh cruthú post i measc chliaint Fiontraíocht Éireann, agus cruthaíodh 19,332 post nua. Bhí an fhostaíocht cliant is airde in 2017 ó bunaíodh an gníomhaireacht, an cruthú post glan is airde ó bunaíodh an gníomhaireacht agus an líon is ísle caillteanas post ó 1998 i leith.

Tá 209,338 duine fostaithe anois i gcuideachtaí a dtacaíonn Fiontraíocht Éireann leo. Is ionann sin agus méadú glan 10,309 post do 2017, ag cur caillteanas post san áireamh. D'ainneoin an dúshláin agus na héiginnteachta de bharr an Bhreatimeachta, lean cuideachtaí Éireannacha ar aghaidh ag buachan díolachán ar fud na cruinne a thacaigh leis an gcruthú láidir post sin ar fud réigiún na hÉireann.

Scaipeadh cruthú post go cothrom ar fud na tíre, agus bhí méadú ar líon na bpost i ngach contae. Bhí dhá thrian (64%) de na poist nua a cruthaíodh taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath. Bhí an leibhéal méadaithe is mó (7%) san larthar, sa Lár-iarthar agus san larthuaisceart in 2017.

Fás leanúnach timpeallacht fiontraíochta le haghaidh gnólachtaí nua-thionscanta is cúis le feidhmíocht láidir na ngnóthaí Éireannacha dar le Fiontraíocht Éireann, i dteannta fás láidir post san Fhoirgníocht (méadú 8%), Innealtóireacht (méadú 8%), Eolaíochtaí Beatha (méadú 8%), Teicneolaíocht Dhigiteach (méadú 6%), Leictreonaic (méadú 6%), Bia (méadú 4%) agus earnálacha TFC (méadú 5%).

I mí Eanáir 2017, seoladh straitéis nua Fhiontraíocht Éireann, *Build Scale, Expand Reach 2017–2020*, inar díródh na spriocanna ar:

- Cabhrú le claint 60,000 post nua a chruthú faoi 2020 agus an leibhéal post is airde dá raibh ann riagh a chothú;
- Easpórtálacha bliantúla na gcliantchuideachtaí a mhéadú €5bn go €26bn in aghaidh na bliana;
- Nuálaíocht a spreagadh i bhfiontair na hÉireann chun caiteachas ar thaighde agus forbairt a mhéadú 50% go €1.25bn in aghaidh na bliana;
- An leibhéal caiteachais a dhéanann cliantchuideachtaí i ngeilleagar na hÉireann a mhéadú €4bn go €27bn in aghaidh na bliana faoi 2020.

Chun tacú leis sin, tá Fiontraíocht Éireann ag cur sceidil fhairsinge i bhfeidhm le haghaidh misin trádála agus imeachtaí a dhíritear ar dheiseanna domhanda agus earnála, a fhorbraíonn saineolas agus líonraí inmhargaíd tuilleadh, a chuireann béis níos mó ar dheiseanna nua earnála a shainaithint agus a spreagann éileamh ar thárgí agus seirbhísí Éireannacha trí fheachtais mhargaíochta idirnáisiúnta.

Oibríonn an Roinn leis na gníomhaireachtaí chun luach ar airgead a chinntíú chomh maith leis an leas is fearr is féidir a bhaint as tionchar geilleagrach na dtacaíochtaí a chuireann Fiontraíocht Éireann agus GFT Éireann ar fáil trí breithmheas geilleagrach fóntha agus modheolaíocht costais is tairbhe. In 2017, chuir an Roinn tú le hathbhreithniú ar na príomhpharaiméadair agus cuirfear an obair sin i gcrích go luath in 2018.

Tá mionsonraí faoi fhreagairt straitéisearch Fhiontraíocht Éireann don Bhreatimeacht faoi Sprioc 3.

GFT Éireann

Léirigh tortaí GFT Éireann in 2017 gur sháraigh an Ghníomhaireacht na spriocanna cruthaithe post a leagtar amach ina straitéis reatha “Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015–2019”. Ó 2015 i leith, tá an Ghníomhaireacht ag obair i dtreo chuspóirí na straitéis sin, lena n-áirítéar 80,000 post nua agus 900 infheistíocht nua a chruthú. Bhí an fhostaíocht infheistíochta díri eachtraí iomlán in Éirinn ag deireadh 2017 ag 210,443, a d’fhág gur bhain an Ghníomhaireacht a sprioc post glan de 209,000 post amach cheana féin.

Tá an GFT ag leanúint ar aghaidh ag obair i dtreo cuspóirí eile a leagtar amach ina straitéis cúig bliana a bhaint amach, go háirithe an leibhéal infheistíochta a ardú idir 30% agus 40% i ngach réigiún taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath faoi 2019. Rinneadh dul chun cinn láidir ina leith sin in 2017, agus cruthaíodh 45% de na poist le tacáíocht GFT Éireann lasmuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath agus bhí méadú glan ar phoist i ngach réigiún in Éirinn. Tá an GFT, de bhun an Chláir Maoine Réigiúnaigh, ag forbairt réitigh chuí mhaoine in ionaid shainithe réigiúnacha chun infheistíocht eachtrach a mhealladh isteach. Áirítéar leis sin naoi saoráid tosaigh nua a thógáil ar fud na tíre. Soláthraíodh foirgnimh cheana féin i Sligeach, Caisleán an Bharraigh agus Trá Lí agus tá foirgnimh eile le cur i gcrích as seo go ceann dhá bhliaín i nDún Dealgan, Gaillimh, Luimneach, Ceatharlach, Port Láirge agus Baile Átha Luain.

Ar an iomlán, d’éisigh go maith le GFT Éireann in 2017, agus chruthaigh a chliantchuideachtaí 19,851 post. Is le cliantchuideachtaí de chuid an GFT atá 12% d’fhostaíocht phríobháideach sa Stát anois nó thart ar phost amháin as gach cúig phost san earnáil phríobháideach.

Tá mionsonraí faoi fhreagairt straitéisearch GFT Éireann don Bhreatimeacht faoi Sprioc 3.

Rochtain ar Airgeadas

An Scéim um Ráthaíocht Creidmheasa d'Fhiontair Bheaga agus Mheánmhéide

Tugadh an Scéim um Ráthaíocht Creidmheasa isteach in 2012, agus soláthraíonn sí ráthaíocht Stáit 75%¹ tríd an ROIÑN GNÓ, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta d'iasachtóirí creidiúnaithe maidir le hiasachtaí incháilithe nó Bannaí Feidhmíochta do Mhicrifhontair agus Fiontair Bheaga agus Mheánmhéide (FBManna) inmharthana.

Is é cuspóir na Scéime iasachtú breise le FBManna a chur chun cinn, ach níl sí in ainm a bheith ann in ionad iasachtú traidisiúnta. Ar an dóigh sin, cuirtear ar a gcumas do FBManna cuntas teiste dearfach leis an lasachtóir a chruthú d'fhonn filleadh ar shaoráidí caighdeánacha tráchtála creidmheasa i ndiaidh tamaill. Fágann sé freisin go bhfuil FBManna Éireannacha in ann dul in iomaíocht le hiomaitheoirí eile trádála a bhíonn in ann ráthaíocht a fháil ina dtír féin. In 2017, ceadaíodh 129 saoráid a raibh luach €19.72 orthu agus as ar cruthaíodh 561 post agus as ar cothaíodh 146 post a bhí ann cheana féin.

Rinneadh Ionstraimí Reachtúla in 2017 chun Scéim nua um Ráthaíocht Creidmheasa agus Scéim Frithráthaíochta nua a chur i bhfeidhm, de réir athruithe reachtúla san Acht um Ráthaíocht Chreidmheasa (Leasú), 2016 mar a achtaíodh i mí Feabhra 2016.

An Scéim um Ráthaíocht Creidmheasa, 2017

Áirítear sna hathchóirithe a cuireadh i bhfeidhm sa scéim nua um ráthaíocht creidmheasa leibhéal na ráthaíochta a mhéadú ó 75% go 80%, an teorainn phunainne do gach banc a ardú ó 10% go 13%, agus raon na soláthróirí airgeadais agus na dtáirgí airgeadais a chlúdaítear (léasú, airgeadas sócmhainne agus sonraisc san áireamh) a leathnú. Cuireadh tús le plé le soláthróirí airgeadais in 2017 chun comhaontuithe dlí a chur i bhfeidhm a bheidh mar bhonn agus taca ag an Scéim nua, atá le seoladh in 2018.

An Scéim Frithráthaíochta

Forálann an Scéim Frithráthaíochta don Aire riosca a roinnt le Corparáid Baincéireachta Straitéiseach na hÉireann ionas go mbeidh an Chorparáid in ann maoiniú ón Aontas Eorpach a fháil agus a tharraingt anuas do FBManna na hÉireann, a léiríonn rogha eile atá ar fáil chun cúnamh airgeadais a tabhairt do FBManna.

Ciste Iasachta do Mhicrifhontair

Bunaíodh Micrea-Airgeadas Éireann chun tacú le hiasachtaí le micrifhontair in earnáil na FBManna; seoladh é an 1 Deireadh Fómhair 2012. Tá an tionscnamh seo thírithe ar mhicrifhontair nuathionscanta, ar fhiontair sheanbhunaithe agus ar fhiontair atá i mbun fáis ar fud na n-earnálacha tionscail ar fad agus a bhfuil suas le deichniúr á bhfostú acu. Baineann na hiasachtaí le suimeanna idir €2,000 agus €25,000 agus is féidir iad a chaitheamh ar ghnó nuathionscanta agus ar chostais leathnaithe agus caipiteal oibre. In 2017 cheadaigh Micrea-Airgeadas Éireann maoiniú €5.5m do 400 gnó beag ar fud na tíre, rud a thacaigh le 1,141 post a chruthú nó a chothú.

Baineadh an líon ba mhó iarratas amach don bhliain, agus d'ainneoin go raibh na rátaí faofa i dtéarmaí céatadáin beagánín níos lú in 2017 (43% i gcomparáid le 44% in 2016), mhéadaigh líon agus luach na n-iasachtaí a faomhadh i gcomparáid leis an mbliaín roimhe.

Tharla cuid mhór den fheidhmíocht sin mar gheall ar fhás leanúnach i bhfeasacht brandaí de bharr réimse leathan caidrimh phoiblí, imeachtaí agus margáiochta, idir dhigiteach agus thraigheasúnta, i rith na bliana. Tugadh próiseas bainistíochta ábhar claint feabhsaithe isteach i rith na bliana a thacaigh leis sin.

¹Iocann an Stát an Ráthaíocht leis an iasachtóir ar an iarmhéid príomha amuigh gan aisghabháil as Saoráid Scéime sa chás ina loiceann an tiasachtaí aisíocaíochtaí maidir leis an tSaoráid Scéime a dhéanamh.

Oifigí Fiontair Áitiúla

Is éard atá sa 31 Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil ná ‘siopa céad staid’ le haghaidh comhairle agus treorach, cúnamh airgeadais agus tacaíochtaí eile do dhaoine ar mian leo a ngnólacht féin a thosú nó a fhás.

Is féidir leis na hOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla cúnamh deontais díreach a chur ar fáil do mhicrifhiontair (deichniúr fostaithe nó níos lú) in earnáil na déantúsaíochta nó seirbhísí a thrádáltear go hidirnáisiúnta a bhfuil sé d’acmhainn acu, le himeacht ama, forbairt ina n-aonán láidre easpórtála. I gcás duine ar bith ar mian leo a ngnólacht féin a thosú nó a fhás, seans go mbeadh na hOifigí in ann tacaíocht ‘bhog’ a chur ar fáil i bhfoirm oiliúna nó meantóireachta. Ina theannta sin, cuireann na hOifigí seirbhís treorach ar fáil i ndáil le tacaíochtaí ábhartha eile stáit atá ar fáil d’earnáil na micrifhiontar agus FBManna, mar shampla: na Coimisinéirí Ioncaim, an Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí, Micreá-Airgeadas Éireann, Scéim na nDearbhán le haghaidh Trádáil ar Líne, LEADER, agus Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna.

Ó bunaíodh iad in 2014, lean na hOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla ag tacú le feidhmíocht ardleibhéil i measc a gcliant ina réimsí seirbhísí. I mbeagán focal, i rith 2017:

- Cruthaigh claint na nOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla 7,135 post nuá lánimseartha agus páirtaimseartha (comhlán) san iomlán.
- Má chuirtear caillteanais i bpunann cliantchuideachtaí san áireamh, bhí méadú glan 3,760 post (lánimseartha agus páirtaimseartha) ann.
- Bhí 7,182 cliantchuideachta, le fostáocht 37,485 duine (lánimseartha agus páirtaimseartha) san iomlán, ag baint le punann na nOifigí in 2017.

Ba é an rud a bhí i gcroílár chruthú na bpost sin ná raon tacaíochtaí forbartha a chur ar fáil a bhí dírithe ar chumas agus feidhmíocht cuideachta a chothú in earnáil na micrifhiontar:

- In 2017, d’íoc na hOifigí cúnamh airgeadais díreach le 1,179 togra gnó ar bhain luach €17.8m leis. Díobh siúd, ba dheontais phrímeála do chuideachtaí nuathionscanta iad 469 ceann díobh dar luach €6.4m.

I dteannta an chúnaimh airgeadais dhírigh, thacaigh na hOifigí le cohórt níos leithne fiontraithe agus gnótháí beaga in 2017 le tacaíochtaí boga eile:

- Oiliúint faoi Do Ghnó Féin a Chur ar Bun – 3,755 rannpháirtí ar 280 clár
- 1,891 clár oiliúna forbartha gnó eile le 30,373 rannpháirtí
- Tacaíocht mheantóireachta shaincheaptha duine le duine a chur ar fáil do 8,393 rannpháirtí
- Cuireadh 367 duine ar aghaidh chuitg Micreá-Airgeadas Éireann (178 iarratas ar dheontas faofa) a thacaigh le 347 post a chruthú.
- Scéim na nDearbhán le haghaidh Trádáil ar Líne de chuid na Roinne Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithé ar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil inar ghlac 1,188 gnó páirt, a thacaigh le 356 post a chruthú.

Toradh an-dearfach ar infheistíocht agus tacaíocht na nOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla is ea go bhfuil roinnt cliantchuideachtaí de chuid na nOifigí imithe ar aghaidh go punann Fhiontraíocht Éireann. I rith 2017, chuaigh 89 cliantchuideachta de chuid na nOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla ar aghaidh chuitg Fhiontraíocht Éireann. Tá na claint sin i measc na gcuideachtaí is fearr feidhmíochta i bpunann cliant na nOifigí (ní léirítéar a bhfeidhmíocht in aschur 2017 thusa toisc gur aistríodh go Fhiontraíocht Éireann iad).

Tá mionsonraí faoi thacaíochtaí na nOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla faoi Sprioc 3.

Cumarsáid na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla

Chuir na hOifigí Fontair Áitiúla roinnt imeachtaí bolscaireachta ar bun go náisiúnta i rith na bliana, ina measc:

- Puball Taispeántais ag an gComórtas Náisiúnta Treabhdóireachta;
- Gradaim Fiontraíochta na Scoláirí;
- An tSeachtain Fiontraíochta Áitiúil;
- Na Gradaim Náisiúnta Fiontraíochta.
- Fiontraíocht Náisiúnta na mBan

Tá na himeachtaí sin lárnach i Straitéis Cumarsáide Náisiúnta na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla chun a chur ar shúile an phobail go bhfuil na hOifigí ar láimh chun tacú le gnólachtaí nua-thionscanta, fás gnó agus cruthú post ar an leibhéal áitiúil.

Fiontraí Óg na hÉireann le Tacaíocht ó na hOifigí Fontair Áitiúla

Ghlac 1,471 fionraí óg idir 18 agus 35 bliana d'aois páirt sa chomórtas 'Fiontraí Óg na hÉireann' in 2017. Bhí os cionn 57,000 iarratas ar an gcomórtas ó thosaigh an clár in 2014.

Is é aidhm an tionscnaimh, a bhfuil ciste infheistíochta €2 mhilliún aige san iomlán, tacú le cultúr na fiontraíochta i measc daoine óga in Éirinn, an fhiontraíocht a chothú mar rogha ghairme, agus daoine óga na hÉireann a spreagadh chun gnólachtaí nua a bhunú a chruthóidh tuilleadh post.

Na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnacha do Phoist

Tá na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnacha do Phoist ríthábhachtach chun uaillmhian an Rialtais a bhaint amach, is é sin 200,000 post breise a chruthú faoi 2020, a mbeadh 135,000 díobh taobh amuigh de réigiún Bhaile Átha Cliath. Léirigh sonráí ón bPríomh-Oifig Staidrimh méadú 53,500 duine i bhfostaíocht ar fud an Stáit sa blhlain go dtí an dara ráithe de 2017, agus go raibh 84% de na daoine nuafhostaithe sa tréimhse sin lonnaithe taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath. Bhí méadú ar líon na ndaoine fostaithe i ngach réigiún sa tréimhse sin freisin.

Táthar ag tógáil ar an bhfuinneamh agus an cur chuige comhoibríoch sin a treisíodh trí na Coistí Réigiúnacha Forfheidhmithe chun na Pleananna Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnacha do Phoist a athnuachan le haghaidh 2018–2020.

Chun fás réigiúnach a spreagadh tuilleadh go 2020, d'fhógair an Roinn Ciste Forbartha Fontair Réigiúnaigh iomaíoch in 2017 a mbeidh €60 milliún ag dul leis agus a riarsaigh Fiontraíocht Éireann. Dhaingnigh 21 tionscadal ar fud na réigiún ar fad suas le €30.5 milliún sa chéad ghairm. Eiseofar an dara gairm i mí Aibreáin 2018.

Rannpháirteachas le Pobal na nGnólachtaí Beaga

Cuireann Grúpa Comhairleach na Roinne um Ghnólachtaí Beaga ardán ar fáil do rannpháirtíocht struchtúrtha idir úinéirí Gnótháí Beaga agus an tAire Stáit d'Fhostaíocht agus Gnó Beag. Ghlac Pat Breen TD, an tAire Stáit d'Fhostaíocht agus Gnó Beag leis an ról mar Chathaoirleach in 2016. Tháinig an Grúpa Comhairleach le chéile ceithre huaire in 2017, le clár oibre leathan ar ábhar ar nós Costas Árachais, an Rialacháin Ghinearálta maidir le Cosaint Sonrai, aighneachtaí roimh an gCáináisnéis, an Breatimeacht agus an Tástáil FBManna.

Is é an Gníomh um Ghnólachtaí Beaga don Eoraip príomhthionscnamh beartais an AE chun tacaíocht a thabhairt d'fhontair bheaga agus mheánmhéis (FBManna). Is é atá ann ná sraith bearta beartais bunaithe ar dheich bpriónsabal treorach. Tuairiscíodh i dTuarascáil 2017 Choimisiún an Aontais Eorpaisigh go raibh Éire os cionn nó go maith os cionn mheán an AE in ocht gcinn de réimsí an Ghnímh um Ghnólachtaí Beaga don Eoraip:

- fiontraíocht
- ‘dara seans’
- riarachán freagrúil
- státhabhair agus soláthar poiblí
- rochtain ar airgeadas
- an margadh aonair
- scileanna agus nuálaíocht
- idirnáisiúnú

D'fhorbair an Roinn an Tástáil FBManna in Éirinn in 2017. Is cuid lárnach de threoirínte an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh maidir le Rialál níos Fearr í an Tástáil FBManna ó 2009 i leith. Is é cuspóir na Tástála FBManna a iarraidh ar lucht déanta beartas smaoineamh faoin tionchar diúltach a bheadh ag aon reacthaíocht nó rialachán nua a d'fhéadfadh ualach a chruthú do FBManna. Go minic, bíonn easpa eolais, ama nó saineolais ag FBManna chun dul i ngleic le rialacha riaracháin. Dá bharr sin, bíonn éifeacht mhíréireach ag rialáil i dtéarmaí costas comhlíonta agus ualach riaracháin ar FBManna.

Is iad príomhphointí na Tástála FBManna in Éirinn:

- Díolúintí
- Athrú/solúbthacht sna spriocdhátaí
- Simpliú ar chur i bhfeidhm rialachán

Ar leibhéal na hEorpa, bhí ionadaithe na Roinne ina gcomhaltaí gníomhacha de Líonra Toscairí na FBManna. In 2017, tionóladh trí chruinniu de chuid Líonra Toscairí na FBManna. Ina theannta sin, bhíothas ranannpháirtreach go gníomhach i bPáirtí Oibre an OECD ar FBManna agus Fiontraíocht. Cothaíodh caidreamh trí ról gníomhach na Roinne sa dá pháirtí, as ar eascraig comhoibrithe féidearthádon todhchaí.

An Ráiteas Beartais Náisiúnta Fiontraíochta

Seoladh an chéad Ráiteas Beartais Náisiúnta riamh i dtaca leis an bhFiontraíocht i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2014 agus leagtar amach ann cuspóirí straitéiseacha an Rialtais mar éascaitheoir in éiceachóras fiontraíochta na hÉireann. Cumhdaítear sé phríomhghhné a théann i gcion ar fhiontraithe agus ar ghnólachtaí nuathionscanta. Tugann sé le fios freisin an treo a rachaidh beartas sna blianta atá amach romhainn.

1. Cultúr, caipiteal daonna agus oideachas;
2. Timpeallacht agus tacaíochtaí gnó;
3. Nuálaíocht;
4. Rochtain ar airgeadas;
5. Líonraí agus meantóireacht; agus
6. Rochtain ar mhargáil.

Leathbhealach trí thréimhse an Ráitis, rinneadh an tAthbhreithniú Lárhéarma a fhorbairt agus a eagrú in 2017. Ina theannta sin, éilítear i nGníomh 45 den Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017 go ndéanfaí athbhreithniú lárhéarma ar an Ráiteas Beartais Náisiúnta Fiontraíochta.

Chuir an Roinn, tríd an Aonad Fiontraíochta agus Beartas Gnóthaí Beaga, Téarmaí Tagartha i dtoll a chéile, chomh maith le tuairiscí mionsonraithe ar dhul chun cinn agus pléchéapéisí, a scaipeadh ar pháirtithe leasmhara. Eagraíodh cruinnithe ansin agus cuireadh i dtrí ghrúpa iad: oideachas, comhlachtaí stáit agus fiontraithe le comhlachtaí ionadaíocha lena mbaineann. Reáchtáladh na cruinnithe sin idir mí na Bealtaine agus mí an Mheithimh 2017. Bhí aiseolas breise againn ó ranannpháirtithe an naoú timthriall den chlár fiontraíochta do mhná “Going for Growth” agus ó Bhord Alumni EY Fionraí na Blíana.

Eagraíodh glaoch ar thairiscintí in 2017 le haghaidh Pacáiste Sonraí Cruthaithe Gnó, a bhuaigh Visonnet. Rinneadh anailís, cíoradh agus beachtú ar shonraí ón Oifig um Chlárú Cuideachtaí chun fiontraíocht a thomhas agus bailíodh na sonraí agus staitisticí seo a leanas ar chuideachtaí nua-thionscanta nua:

- Uimhreacha ráithiúla le haghaidh cuideachtaí nua-thionscanta nua lena n-áirítear miondealú ar Shuíomh (Contae), Tionscal, Próifíl Inscne an Stiúrthóra, Próifíl Aoise an Stiúrthóra agus Stiúrthóir Céaduaire.
- Sonraí nua faoi líon an chruthaithe gnó ón 1 Eanáir 2015 go dtí an 1 Eanáir 2017, agus ansin miondealú ar na cuideachtaí nua-thionscanta nua gach ráithe ón 1 Márt 2017 go deireadh 2017.
- Rátaí marthana cuideachtaí a tosaíodh in 2012–2015 agus saolré cuideachtaí nua-thionscanta atá os cionn trí bliana d'aois.

Leanaimid ar aghaidh i mbun monatóireachta ar dhul chun cinn le hais príomhtháscairí feidhmíochta agus ag obair i gcomhar le compháirtithe i bhfiontar chun an uaillmhan a bhaint amach. Lean an Roinn i mbun léarscáiliú chun an raon tacaíochtaí atá ar fáil d'fhiontraithe a shainaithint. Liostaítear sa cháipéis na tacaíochtaí Stáit agus tacaíochtaí nach ón Stát iad atá ann d'fhiontraithe agus is uirlis áisiúil é don lucht déanta beartas. Déantar an péire a nuashonrú go rialta. Tá sonraí agus torthaí ó na cleachtaí sin agus ó Phacáiste Sonraí Cruthaithe Gnó san Athbhreithniú Lárhéarma.

Maidir leis seo, in 2017 chonacthas dul chun cinn leanúnach leis na táscairí idirnáisiúnta dá leithéid i réimsí na fiontraíochta agus nuálaíochta, mar shampla:

- In Innéacs Fiontraíochta Domhanda GEDI (2018), d'ardaigh Éire go dtí an t-ochtú háit ar domhan, suas ón naoú háit an bhliain roimhe sin agus an 18ú háit in 2014.
- Bhí Éire sa sé háit as 63 thír i mbliainiris lomaíochais Dhomhanda IMD (2017).
- Sa tuarascáil Doing Business Report 2018 de chuid an Bhainc Dhomhanda, bhí Éire san ochtú háit as 137 thír sa rangú ‘Gní a Thosú’.
- Tá Éire fós sa dara háit do nuálaithe de réir an Scórchláir Eorpaigh Nuálaíochta (2017).

Idir-Thrádáil Éireann

Tá Idir-Thrádáil Éireann ar cheann de na sé Chomhlacht Forfheidhmithe Thuaidh/Theas arna mbunú le Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta in 1998. Bíonn sé i mbun raon leathan de chláir tacaíochta gnó chun cabhrú le FBManá ar dhá thaobh na teorann dul sa tóir ar dheiseanna gnó sa dlínse eile.

Tugann an Comhlacht punann spriocdhírithe de chláir chun cabhrú le gnóthaí buntáiste iomaíoch a fhorbairt i réimsí fiorthábhachtacha na hEolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Nuálaíochta, agus Díolachán agus Margaíochta, iad ar fad bunaithe ar thaighde fianaise-bhunaithe geilleagrach agus gnó. Tá éileamh leanúnach fós ar sheirbhísí Idir-thrádáil Éireann ar dhá thaobh na teorann nach bhfuil á gcomhlíonadh.

I measc ghníomhaíochtaí Idir-Thrádáil Éireann in 2017 bhí:

- Deiseanna agus acmhainní airgeadais a chur ar fáil do thionscail Aistrithe Teicneolaíochta Thuaidh/Theas chun tárgí nuálacha agus seirbhísí nua a fhorbairt lena mbeifear in ann easpórtálacha a fhás;
- Réimsí nua comhoibrithe idir gnólachtaí sa Tuaisceart agus sa Deisceart a bhreithniú;
- Deiseanna díolachán agus margáíochta a thabhairt do ghnólachtaí le go mbeidh siad in ann margáí nua trastearann a aimsiú; agus
- Rochtain a chur ar fáil do FBManá ar mhargadh soláthair phoiblí €12 bhilliún uile-Éireann.

Príomhthorthaí Idir-Thrádáil Éireann in 2017:

- Bhí cruthú post ag 1,301 i gcomparáid le sprioc 1,100 don bhliain;

- Bhí cuideachtaí nuálacha céaduaire ag 82 i gcomparáid le sprioc 56; agus
- Bhí easpórtálaithe céaduaire ag 102, os cionn dhá oiread na sprice.

Bronnadh bainistíocht tionscadail mhór ar Idir-Thrádáil Éireann faoi Chlár INTERREG an Aontais Eorpaigh freisin. Mar chuid den tionscadal nua sin déanfaidh Idir-Thrádáil Éireann bainistíochta ar shraith éagsúil de thionscnaimh a chabhróidh le cuideachtaí a saineolas Taighde agus Nuálaíochta féin a forbairt, thar imeacht cúig bliana. Cuirfidh an tionscnamh nua seo, a seoladh in 2017, leis an raon clár atá ag an gcomhlacht faoi láthair do FBManna.

Tá mionsonraí faoi thacaíochtaí Idir-Thrádáil Éireann faoi Sprioc 3.

An tÚdarás um Chaighdeán Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Is é an tÚdarás um Chaighdeán Náisiúnta na hÉireann an Ghníomhaireacht Stáit atá freagrach as caighdeánú, measúnú ar chomhréireacht agus tomhas.

Tá sé mar aidhm ag an Údarás feabhas a chur ar fheidhmíocht gnóthaí in Éirinn agus tomholtóirí a chosaint ach caighdeán a forbairt, uirlísí tomhais a úsáidtear i dtrádáil a scrúdú, agus iniúchóireacht a dhéanamh agus deimhnithe a eisiúint maidir le caighdeán a chur i bhfeidhm ar earraí, seirbhísí agus tomhais.

Cuireann an tÚdarás na comhpháirteanna ar fáil d'Éirinn a theastaíonn le haghaidh bonneagar trádála éifeachtach inar féidir tárgí agus seirbhísí a forbairt agus brath orthu go náisiúnta agus ar fud na cruinne. Cuireann an bonneagar sin go dearfach freisin le 'tairiscint' na hÉireann atá in ann tionchar a imirt ar chinntí faoi infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach, ina mbraitheann eagraíochtaí ar bhonneagar forbartha caighdeán agus measúnaithe ar chomhréireacht chun a gcuspóirí a bhaint amach, ar nós earnáil na bhfeistí leighis.

Cuireann an tÚdarás seirbhísí ar fáil don tionscal agus don phobal trína fheidhmeanna Deimhnithe, Caighdeán agus Agrément (próisis agus tárgí tógála). Tá sé freagrach freisin as na feidhmeanna Dlí agus Méadreolaíochta Náisiúnta, a chinntíonn cruinneas na dtomhas agus na n-uirlísí tomhais ar fad a úsáidtear le haghaidh trádála agus cuspóirí eile.

D'fhoilsigh an tÚdarás 1,490 caighdeán i rith 2017, lena n-áirítear ceithre chaighdeán nua Éireannacha ar nós an chaighdeán leasaithe um Pirít Imoibríoch agus an Chóid Cleachtais leasaithe le haghaidh Sclátra agus Tíre. Tá líon iomlán na gcaighdeán atá ar fáil i gcatalóg an Údaráis ag breis agus 23,000 anois.

Cheannaigh eagraíochtaí Éireannacha 6,819 caighdeán in 2017, agus d'íoslódáil úsáideoirí Éireannacha níos mó ná 123,500 caighdeán, 15,500 in institiúidí tríú leibhéal ina measc.

Sháraigh líon na n-úsáideoirí cláraithe nua le 'Your Standards, Your Say', tairseach na Gníomhaireachta, an sprioc 12% ag 15% (+323).

Cuireann an tÚdarás réimse leathan seirbhísí deimhnithe ar fáil chun a chur ar chumas thionscal na hÉireann cáilíocht, éifeachtúlacht agus suíomh earraí ar an margadh a fheabhsú. D'eisigh sé 309 deimhniú nua do 123 eagraíochta i gcaighdeán a bhaineann le sármhaitheas gnó le haghaidh scéimeanna Cáilíochta, Comhshaoil, Sláinte agus Sármhaitheasa trí Dhaoine.

Bhí teagmháil rialta ag an Údarás le tionscal in 2017, le 16 sheó bóthair ISO 9001 agus 14001 saor in aisce. D'fhreastail beagnach 1,000 toscaire, ó ghnóthaí agus eagraíochtaí éagsúla, ar na seimineáir sin.

Rinne an tÚdarás ceiliúradh ar a 20ú bliain in 2017 agus leathbhealach trína straitéis ceithre bliana do 2016–2020, tá an tÚdarás ar an mbóthar ceart chun a chuid cuspóirí a bhaint amach, trí dhearbhú a thabhairt don phobal agus an bonneagar agus na seirbhísí a theastaíonn a thabhairt do chuideachtaí Éireannacha agus infheistíochta dírí eachtraí chun go bhfásfaidh siad agus go mbeidh siad iomaíoch as seo go ceann i bhfad.

An Fóram Comhairliúcháin Miondíola

Oibríonn beagnach duine as gach seachtar atá fostaithe in Éirinn san earnáil mhiondíola agus mhórdhíola: tá sé fós ar an bhfostóir is mó san earnáil phríobháideach sa tír. Tríd an bhFóram Comhairliúcháin Miondíola, spreagann an Roinn ionadaithe Miondíola le hoibriú le chéile agus le comhlachtaí poiblí, chun an earnáil a forbairt tuilleadh. Tionóladh trí chruinniú de chuid an Fhóraim in 2017, a dhírig ar na príomhábhair imní a bhaineann leis an mBreatimeacht, Trádáil ar Líne, Athnuachan Láir Bailte, agus Scileanna. Mar chathaoirleach an Fhóraim, bhí an tAire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ag plé leis an earnáil go leanúnach i rith 2017.

Áiríodh le buaicphointí an Fhóraim Comhairliúcháin Miondíola i rith 2017 ceardlann ar thionchair an Bhreatimeachta i mí na Samhna, agus gur roghnaíodh an Miondíol mar cheann de na trí earnáil i staidéar píolótach Roinne ar thionchair an Bhreatimeachta ar leibhéal gnólachtaí. In 2017, bhí an Roinn ag oibriú freisin le Fiontraíocht Éireann ar chlár píolótach a forbairt chun tacú le miondíoltóirí chun cumais trádála ar líne a mhéadú. Dhírigh grúpa oibre Scileanna an Fhóraim ar oiliúint a bhaineann go sonrach le miondíol a thabhairt isteach i réimsí Digiteacha, an Bhreatimeachta, agus Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta.

An Fóram Dearaidh Náisiúnta

Ar nós taighde agus forbartha nó feidhmeanna nua teicneolaíochta, tá nuálaíocht dearaidh ina difréalaí gnó tábhachtach agus ina foinse d'iomaíochas idirnáisiúnta. Ba thionscnamh rathúil a mhaoinigh an Roinn an Year of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) a raibh d'aidhm leis infheictheacht a thabhairt do ghnólachtaí dinimiciúla dearaidh na hÉireann, tacú leo agus iad ag trádáil i margá eachtracha agus poist a chruthú sa bhaile i ndeireadh na dála. Ag tógáil ar an mbéim beartais ar dhearadh, leagtar amach sa Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017 roinnt gníomhartha le haghaidh forbairt leanúnach earnáil dearaidh na hÉireann agus chun an cion a dhéanann sí don earnáil cheardaíochta agus dearaidh trí chéile a mhéadú oiread agus is féidir. Áiríodh leis sin Fóram Dearaidh Náisiúnta a bhunú ina dtabharfaí na páirtithe ábhartha ar fad le chéile.

I mí na Bealtaine 2017, bunaíodh Fóram Dearaidh Náisiúnta, a bhfuil d'aidhm leis cumas agus clú na hÉireann mar fhoinse nuálaíocht dearaidh a spreagadh. Tugann an Fóram Dearaidh Náisiúnta na páirtithe leasmhara ábhartha ar fad le chéile, lena n-áirítear gnóthaí, gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais, coláistí tríú leibhéal, cleachtóirí dearaidh agus eagraíochtaí dearaidh, ag soláthar ardáin le haghaidh ranpháirtíochta struchtúrtha atá thíos ar an gclár oibre dearaidh a chur chun cinn.

Is é príomhchuspóir an Fhóraim ceisteanna tábhachtacha ábhartha a phlé, ag féachaint le gníomhartha praiticiúla a d'fhéadfadh an rialtas (náisiúnta nó áitiúil), nó lucht an tionscail féin, a dhéanamh a shainaitheach chun tacú leis an earnáil dearaidh. Tá an tAire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta mar chathaoirleach air.

Sprioc 2:

Cur chuige uile-Rialtais maidir le fiontraíocht agus fostáiocht a chur chun cinn

Ceannaireacht a thabhairt maidir le cur chuige uile-Rialtais i leith an timpeallacht is iomaíche a forbairt le haghaidh infheistíochta, tárgiúlachta agus fás inbhuanaithe ar phoist

An Plean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017

Is tionscnamh uile-Rialtais é an Plean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist ina mbíonn Ranna agus gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais ag obair chun tacú le cruthú post san earnáil fiontar. Stiúrann an Roinn forbairt an Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist thar ceann an Rialtais, agus í ag obair go dlúth le Ranna Rialtais eile agus le gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais.

Seoladh an séú Plean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist i mí Feabhra 2017. Bhí 164 gníomh ann, thar Ranna agus gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais, agus é d'aidhm leis cabhrú le 45,000 post breise a chruthú in 2017. Sa bhliain go dtí an ceathrú ráithe de 2017, cruthaíodh 66,500 post. Léiríonn torthaí na dtréániarrachtaí sin ó 2012 i leith chun poist a chruthú go bhfuil ag éirí leis an bpróiseas seo. Bhí 345,000 duine níos mó ag obair sa cheathrú ráithe de 2017 ná mar a bhí in 2012 nuair a seoladh an chéad Phlean. Tháinig laghdú ar an difhostaíocht ó os cionn 15% go luath in 2012 go 5.9% i mí Aibreáin 2018.

Tá an Plean Gníomhaíochta ar cheann de na príomhuirílsí beartais a úsáideann an Rialtas chun spriocanna an Chláir do Rialtas Comhpháirtíochta le haghaidh 2020 a chomhlíonadh. Áirítear leo 200,000 breise duine ag obair, lena n-áirítear 135,000 sna réigiúin; difhostaíocht réigiúnach laistigh de 1% den mheán náisiúnta; agus an ráta difhostaíochta náisiúnta a laghdú go 6%. Bhí na spriocanna straitéiseacha seo mar bhonn agus taca ag an bPlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017:

- 200,000 post breise a chruthú faoi 2020, lena n-áirítear 135,000 taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath;
- Réigiúin láidre iomaíocha a chruthú chun fostáiocht réigiúnach a spreagadh;
- Trádáil agus infheistíocht a fhás i margáí reatha agus éagsúlú i margáí nua;
- Fás go mbeimid inár gceannaire nuálaíochta domhanda chun comhdhéanamh ár n-easpórtálacha a fhás agus a éagsúlú;
- Rangú mar cheann de na cúig thír is iomaíche a bhaint amach;
- Tárgiúlacht a spreagadh i ngach earnáil den gheilleagar; agus
- Tallann d'ardchaighdeán a forbairt agus a mhealladh.

Don Roinn, ba iad na príomhréimsí ar a raibh Plean 2017 dírithe:

- Freagairt don Breatimeacht
- Infheistíocht Dhíreach Eachtrach a Mhealladh, Díolacháin agus Easpórtálacha a Fhás
- Airgeadas le haghaidh Fáis a Chinntíú
- Fás Réigiúnach a Spreagadh
- Scileanna a Sheachadadh do Gheilleagar atá ag Fás
- Nuálaíocht a Chur Chun Cinn

Fiontraíocht 2025 – Straitéis Náisiúnta Fiontraíochta na hÉireann: Athnuaithe

Cé nár foilsíodh Fiontraíocht 2025, straitéis náisiúnta fiontraíochta na hÉireann, ach i mí na Samhna 2015, tá go leor athraithe sa domhan mór ó shin. I rith 2017, tugadh faoi anailís chun an straitéis a athbhreithniú chun a chinntíú go bhfuil sí fós fónta mar fhreagairt d'athruithe suntasacha domhanda le deireanaí. Go háirithe, an Breatimeacht, beartais atá ag teacht chun cinn i Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá,

forbairtí cánach idirnáisiúnta, agus an dul chun cinn gan srian i dteicneolaíochtaí suaiteacha. Tá aird ag an Athbhreithniú freisin ar leo Chaileacht fhéideartha laistigh dár mbunús fiontar – lena n-áirítear comhchruinnithe in earnálacha agus margáí easpórtála áirithe, agus i margáí foinse le haghaidh infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach.

Léirítear san anailís a rinneadh ar chur i bhfeidhm an 56 gníomh straitéisearch a leagtar amach i bhFiontraíocht 2025 go bhfuil dul chun cinn maith le feiceáil i ngach cás seachas péire. I líon beag cásanna, tá an dul chun cinn níos moille ná mar a theastaíonn agus sainaithníodh bacainní don dul chun cinn. I dtéarmaí méadrachta, léirítear san anailís go bhfuil fostáiocht agus easpórtálacha níos fearr ná mar a bhíothas ag súil leis, agus go bhfuil na fiontar a fhaigheann tacaíocht gníomhaireachta i bhfad chun tosaigh ar na réamh-mheastachán fáis. Cé go n-aithnítear go bhfuil forbairtí dá leithéid dearfach, tarraigíonn luas agus leibhéal an fháis dúshláin thábhachtacha beartais anuas freisin i dtéarmaí srianta ar chumas. Is ábhar imní í ár bhfeidhmíocht in iomaíochas foriomlán, dul chun cinn i dtaca le hinfeistíocht fiontar i scileanna agus leibhéil infheistíochta i dtaighde, forbairt agus nuálaíocht, ón Stát agus ó fhiontair. Cuireadh anailís i gcrích i rith 2017 ar threochtaí domhanda agus impleachtaí don fhiontar, chomh maith le hathbhreithniú cuimsitheach ar fheidhmíocht fiontar. Chuir na hanailísí sin bonn eolais faoi athruithe ar bhéim ár mbeartais. Bunaíodh Gasra na nOifigeach Sinsearach chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar na tortaí agus cuireadh comhairliúcháin le cumainn ábhartha tionscail i gcrích i rith na bliana.

Meastar go bhfoilseofar Fiontraíocht 2025: Athnuaithe i mí an Mhárta 2018.

Scileanna a Sheachadadh do Gheilleagar atá ag Fás

Ar cheann de na príomhthosaíochtaí don Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017 bhí a chinntíú go mbeadh na scileanna agus an bonn tallainne atá riachtanach ar fáil chun freastal ar riachtanais geilleagair atá ag fás. Chuir Pleán 2017 leis an dul chun cinn mór agus leis na leasuithe a rinneadh ón gcéad Phlean Gníomhaíochta in 2012. Díródh ann ar bhreathnú ar dheiseanna nua a eascraíonn as digitíú an gheilleagair agus na sochaí. Bhí sé d'aidhm leis dul chun cinn a bhaint amach ar ghníomhartha agus moltaí na Straitéis Náisiúnta Scileanna, 2025. Bhí raon beart ann chun cuardaitheoirí poist a ath-sciliú agus a uas-sciliú le Springboard; níos mó printíseachtaí a sholáthar; naisc níos láidre a chothú ag leibhéal réigiúnach idir fostóirí agus an earnáil oideachais agus oiliúna trí na Fóram Réigiúnacha um Scileanna; agus dul i ngleic le ganntanais scileanna in earnálacha ar leith ar nós teicneolaíochta faisnéise agus cumarsáide.

Scileanna TFC

I ndeireadh 2017, chuir an Gasra Saineolaithe ar Riachtanais ó thaobh Scileanna de sa Todhchaí, a bhfuil a Rúnaíocht bunaithe sa Roinn, túis leis an Réamhaisnéis Éilimh ar Scileanna TFC a athnuachan, réamhaisnéis ar tugadh faoi in 2013. Úsáideadh é sin mar phríomh-ionchur bunaithe ar fhianaise i bhforbairt an phlean a tháinig i gcomharbachta ar Phlean Gníomhaíochta Scileanna TFC, 2014–2018. Féachfar sa Phlean nua leis an éileamh réamh-mheasta a mheatseáil trí bhearta soláthair chun a chinntíú go leanann an earnáil Teicneolaíochta ar aghaidh ag fás agus, i bhfianaise chomh forleathan agus atá TFC ag éirí in earnálacha eile, sa gheilleagar ar fad trí chéile.

Díródh sa réamhaisnéis, a cuireadh i gcrích sa chéad ráithe de 2018, ar a bhunú céan t-éileamh a bheidh ar Scileanna TFC ardleibhéil ar leibhéil 6/7 agus 8+ de réir an Chreata Náisiúnta Cálíochtaí sa tréimhse ó 2017 go 2022, san earnáil leathan TFC agus thar earnálacha eile an gheilleagair. Chomh maith leis an réamhaisnéis sin a chur isteach sa leagan nua den Phlean Gníomhaíochta Scileanna TFC, tá an Roinn sa Chomh-Rúnaíocht do Ghrúpa Stiúrtha an Phlean Gníomhaíochta Scileanna TFC Ardleibhéil leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna. Tá an grúpa sin freagrach as an bplean reatha a chur i bhfeidhm agus as an gceann nua a fhorbairt.

Aghaidh a thabhairt ar na riachtanais scileanna atá ag eascairt as na himpleachtaí trádála a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann de dheasca an Bhreatimeachta

I ndeireadh 2017, chuir an Gasra Saineolaithe ar Riachtanais ó thaobh Scileanna de sa Todhchaí tús freisin le staidéar a phiosraíonn na riachtanais scileanna atá ag eascairt as impleachtaí féideartha trádála an Bhreatimeachta. Díríodh sa staidéar sin, a cuireadh i gcrích sa chéad ráithe de 2018, ar a bhunú an bhfuil fiontair bunaithe in Éirinn sách cumasach ó thaobh scileanna agus inniúlachta de chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar impleachtaí féideartha trádála an Bhreatimeachta agus a thionchar a fhriothaireamh. Bunaithe ar rannpháirtíocht chuimsitheach, trasearnála le bonn fiontar na hÉireann, fiosraíodh dhá thacar sainscileanna trádála gaolmhara sa staidéar:

- Na scileanna sin a bhaineann le trádáil a éagsúlú go margáí nua, nó trádáil a leathnú i margáí reatha (e.g. bainistíocht idirnáisiúnta, díolacháin, margáíocht, dearadh agus forbairt, teangacha iasachta, feasacht chultúrtha), agus
- Na scileanna sin a bhaineann le trádáil a éascú thar theorainneacha idirnáisiúnta (e.g. lóistíocht, bainistíocht an tslabhra soláthair, imréiteach custam).

Ag eascairt as an mbonn fianaise sin, moltar sa staidéar sraith idirghabhálacha a bhaineann le scileanna, a bhfuil d'aidhm leo cur leis an mbonn scileanna a bhaineann le trádáil a fhorbairt in Éirinn, agus a hinrochtaineacht d'fhiontair, ar bhealach a chabhróidh le fiontair bunaithe in Éirinn oibriú i dtimpeallacht trádála a d'fhéadfadh a bheith níos casta agus níos ilchineálaí i ndiaidh an Bhreatimeachta.

Iomaíochas

Is tosaíocht ard don Roinn é a chinntíú go sainaithnítear saincheisteanna iomaíochais tábhachtacha na fiontraíochta agus go dtugtar tús áite do ghníomhú ina leith ar fud chóras an rialtais. Is é ár dtosaíocht sa Bheartas Fiontraíochta go mbeadh Éire i measc na gcúig thír is iomaíche faoi 2020. Tugann an Roinn faoi thaighde, anailís agus ról na rúnaíochta don Chomhairle Náisiúnta iomaíochais.

Tuairiscíonn an Chomhairle don Taoiseach agus don Rialtas, trí an Aire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ar shaincheisteanna iomaíochais tábhachtacha atá ann do gheilleagar na hÉireann agus tairgeann moltaí ar ghníomhartha beartais a bhfuil gá leo chun seasamh iomaíoch na hÉireann a fheabhsú.

D'fhoilsigh an Chomhairle na tuarascálacha seo a leanas i rith 2017:

Na Costais a Bhaineann le Gnó a Dhéanamh in Éirinn 2017

Leagtar síos sa tuarascáil seo slat tomhais do na príomhchostais ghnó agus sainaithnítear réimsí ina bhfuil costais fiontraíochta na hÉireann as cor leis na costais i dtíortha eile. Díritear ar chostais a chinntear anseo in Éirinn den chuid is mó, cuir i gcás saothar, maoin, fuinneamh, dramhaíl, uisce, cumarsáid agus seirbhísí gnó, agus curtuar san áireamh leibhéal praghsanna agus athruithe sna leibhéil sin.

Tá costas sách ard ag baint le hÉirinn mar shuíomh fós. Léirítear an t-ardú ar réadmhaoin tráchtála agus chónaithe, agus an méadú ollmhór ar chíos cónaithe a mbeidh tionchar gan amhras aige ar éilimh thuarastail, a mhéadóidh an costas maireachtála agus a dhéanfaidh dochar don iomaíochas. Tarraingítear aird ar na costais arda a bhaineann le réimse seirbhísí gnó (postas/cúiréireacht, seirbhísí dlí agus taighde margaidh) agus seirbhísí a bhaineann leis an earnáil foirgníochta (ailtireacht agus innealtóireacht).

Tá rátaí úis níos airde fós ag gnólachtaí Éireannacha ar iasachtaí suas go €1 mhilliún ná mar atá ag a n-iomaitheoirí thar lear. Cé go bhfuil costais saothair in aghaidh na huaire níos daoire in Éirinn ná sa Ríocht Aontaithe agus i limistéar an Euro, bhí an fás ar chostas saothair faoi bhun mheáin an Aontais Eorpaigh agus limistéar an Euro sna cúig bliana go 2016.

Scórchárta Iomaíochais na hÉireann 2017

Is measúnú é seo ar fheidhmíocht iomaíochais na hÉireann maidir le réimse comhpháirtithe dlúthá trádála agus tíortha iomaíocha, ina n-úsáidtear na sonraí is nuaí agus is inchomparáide go hidirnáisiúnta atá ar fáil. Chuir airgeadas poiblí feabhsaithe, fás sa táirgiúlacht, fás sna heaspórtálacha agus an margadh saothair le feidhmíocht iomaíochais fheabhsaithe na hÉireann sa rangú domhanda (an séú háit i mBliainiris Iomaíochais Dhomhanda IMD). Lean earnálacha easpórtála an gheilleagair ar aghaidh go láidir agus tá go leor de láidreachtaí traidisiúnta na hÉireann (réimeas cánach iomaíoch, lucht saothair óg ardoilte agus timpeallacht ina dtacaítear leis an ngató) fós ann.

Is é an príomhbáhar imní don Chomhairle go bhfanann Éire ard sa rangú i ngeilleagar atá ag fás go tapa, ina bhfuil lánfhostaíocht beagnach agus ina bhfuil bagairtí lena n-áirítear an Breatimeacht, athrú seans ar bheartas trádála agus cánachais Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá, agus éiginnteacht an fháis dhomhanda. Áirítear leis na dúshláin ár mbonn cúng easpórtála, an bhearna táirgiúlachta idir na gnólachtaí is táirgiúla agus an chuid eile den bhonn fiontar atá ag titim chun deiridh, a chinntíú go bhfuil fiontaí na hÉireann ar thús cadhnaíochta i ngníomhaíochta teicneolaíochta agus nuálaíochta, agus a chinntíú nach bhfuil borradh rómhór faoin ngeilleagar agus é ag tabhaint aghaidh ar na bearnaí bonneagair.

Dúshlán Iomaíochais na hÉireann 2017

Sainaithnítear sa tuarascáil seo na freagairtí beartais a theastaíonn chun an ceann is fearr a fháil ar na príomhdhúshláin iomaíochais atá os comhair na hearnála gnó faoin dá théama leathana seo a leanas:

Téama 1 – Cinntíú go bhfuil fás inbhuanaithe:

1. Inbhuanaitheacht Mhaicreacnamaíoch a Sholáthar
2. Bonneagar a Chuireann le Táirgiúlacht a Sholáthar
3. Inbhuanaitheacht Chomhshaoil agus aistriú go geilleagar ísealcharbóin
4. Tallann a Thógáil agus a Chothú

Téama 2 – Borradh in iomaíochas fiontar a chruthú:

5. Iomaíochas Costais a Choinneáil
6. Fás Táirgiúlachta a Chothú
7. Cumas Nuálaíochta a Thógáil
8. Bonn Easpórtála na hÉireann a Fheabhsú agus a Éagsúlú

Bhí an Roinn i dteaghmháil le Ranna Rialtais eile chun gníomhartha fiúntacha a forbairt a thuilleadh chun tacú le hiomaíochas sa Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2018.

Feidhmíocht Táirgiúlachta na hÉireann a Thagarmharcáil, 2004-2014

Tá feidhmíocht táirgiúlachta na hÉireann sách láidir agus os cionn mheán limistéar an Euro agus na leibhéil sa Ríocht Aontaithe. Ach bíonn tionchar mór ag athruithe i gcomhdhéanamh na fostáiochta agus tionchar na hinfheistíochta dírí eachtraí ar aschur ar fheidhmíocht na hÉireann.

Ceileann bonn cúng na bhfiontar in earnálacha ard-bhreislúacha (go háirithe Cóbaisíochta agus TFC) na hearnálacha nach bhfuil ag feidhmiú chomh maith sin ar bhealach, agus feabhsaíonn sé leibhéil táirgiúlachta na hÉireann. Mar gheall ar bhonn cúng na n-earnálacha a spreagann táirgiúlacht, tá Éire i mbaol mar gheall ar shuaitheadh agus tarraigtear aird ar an deis táirgiúlacht a fheabhsú ar leibhéil earnála agus gnólachtaí. Tá fiontaí agus cuideachtaí nua-thionscanta, trádáil, rochtain ar airgeadas, scileanna agus bonneagar a éascú riachtanach chun táirgiúlacht agus iomaíochas a fheabhsú.

lomaíochas a Thagarmharcáil, Éire agus an Ríocht Aontaithe, 2017

Soláthraíonn na dúshláin a chruthaíonn an Breatimeacht nach bhfacthas riamh cheana spreagadh mór chun ár bhfeidhmíocht iomaíochais a fheabhsú. Léirítear i rangaithe iomaíochais idirnáisiúnta:

- Tá Éire sa 18ú háit agus an Ríocht Aontaithe sa 7ú háit as 190 geilleagar de réir Ease of Doing Business an Bhainc Dhomhanda.
 - Tá Éire sa 23ú háit agus an Ríocht Aontaithe sa 7ú háit as 138 tír de réir Thuarascáil an Fhóraim Eacnamaíoch Dhomhanda um Iomaíochas Domhanda.
 - Tá Éire sa 7ú háit agus an Ríocht Aontaithe sa 18ú háit as 61 tír de réir thomhas IMD ar iomaíochas.

I gcomparáid leis an Ríocht Aontaithe, braitear go bhfuil feidhmíocht chosúil ag Éirinn i ranguithe iomaíochais idirnáisiúnta i leith: cáilíocht na n-institiúidí; feidhmíocht na n-earnálacha Sláinte agus Bunoideachais; cáilíocht an ardoideachais agus na hoiliúna; agus éifeachtúlacht na margáil táirge. I gcomparáid le hÉirinn, chomh maith lena margadh níos mó, tá ranguithe níos airde ag an Ríocht Aontaithe i leith: bonneagar; forbairt an mhargaídhe airgeadais; éifeachtúlacht an mhargaídhe saothair; forbairt teicneolaíochta; nuálaíocht; agus sofaistíciúlacht an ghnó.

Cé go bhfáiltítear roimh fheidhmíocht na hÉireann ar phríomhshonraí maicreacnamaíocha reatha, feabhsaíonn sé sin scór iomaíochais na hÉireann trí chéile, a dhéanann áibhéal ar ár seasamh iomaíochais i ndáiríre. Measann an Chomhairle go bhfuil gá le hinbhuanaitheacht airgeadais a chaomhnú, infheistíocht a mhéadú i mbonneagar agus tallann, iomaíochas costais a cothú, agus nuálaíocht agus táirgíúlacht a spreagadh i ngach earnáil gheilleagrach.

Bonneagair Gheilleagracha

Tá infhaighteacht bonneagar den chéad scoth (fuinneamh, teileachumarsáid, iompar, dramhaíl agus uisce) agus na seirbhísí gaolmhara, ar phraghas iomaíoch, ríthábhachtach chun tacú le fás geilleagrach agus forbairt fiontar.

Sainaithníonn an Roinn na gníomhaíochtaí tosaíochta infheistíochta agus beartais a gcaithfear aghaidh a thabhairt orthu chun tacú le fás gníomhaíocht fiontar agus cruthú post, agus déanann sí a dícheall na gníomhaíochtaí sin a chur chun feidhme. Déanann sí monatóireacht agus athbhreithniú ar riachtanais bhonneagair an bhoinn fiontar san am i láthair agus sa todhchaí, le béim ar leith ar na hearnálacha a bhíonn i mbun trádála go hidirnáisiúnta.

I rith 2017 chuir an Roinn béis ar na príomhcheisteanna agus ar na príomhthosaíochtaí d'úsáideoirí gnó i ngach réimse den bhonneagar, agus í ag tarraingt ar anailís a rinne an Rannóg um Beartas Straitéiseach. D'oibrigh an Roinn go dlúth leis an Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithéar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil chun a Scéim Tacaíochta d'Fhuinneamh In-athnuaithe a phorbairt. Caithfidh anailís ar bhonneagar bonn eolais a chur faoi phorbairt Éire 2040, Creat Náisiúnta Pleanála na hÉireann, atá á stiúradh ag an Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil. Úsáideadh anailís na Roinne, i dteannta na n-aidhmeanna straitéiseacha fiontraíochta a leagtar amach i bhFiontraíocht 2025, mar bhonn d'aighneacht na Roinne Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta don phróiseas comhairliúcháin agus a ranpháirtíocht i rith 2017.

Chomh maith leis sin, bhí an Roinn i dteagmháil leanúnach leis an earnáil phoiblí agus leis an earnáil phríobháideach chun tacaíocht a thabhairt do bhearta beartais chun infhaighteacht agus cáilíocht an bhonneagair gheilleograigh a fheabhsú d'fhoinn tacú le forbairt agus fás fiontar.

Cánachas

Éascaíonn cinnteacht, seasmhacht agus intuarthacht i mbeartas cánachais cinnteoireacht fiontar, íoslaghdaíonn siad costais ghnó agus tacaíonn siad le fás fiontar. Bunaithe ar chúrsáí fiontraíochta,

chomhordaigh an Roinn aighneacht roimh an gCáinainsnéis do 2016 i gcomhar le gníomhaireachtaí éagsúla: GFT Éireann, Fiontraíocht Éireann agus Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann. Ba é an cuspóir príomhúil a bhí leis an aighneacht a chinntíú go leanann Cáinainsnéis 2018 ag tacú le fointair, go háirithe ionchais easpórtála gnólachtaí agus tarraingteach na hÉireann mar áit d'infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach agus chun daoine le tallann a mhealladh agus a choinneáil. Leagadh amach san aighneacht roimh an gCáinainsnéis roinnt príomphrionsabal a bhaineann le hiomaíochas coibhneasta go hidirnáisiúnta, cinnteacht, cóir agus simplíocht agus inbhuanaitheacht. Rinneadh moltaí san aighneacht maidir le réimeas cáin chorparáide na hÉireann, an córas cánach pearsanta, cabhrú le FBManna ullmhú don Bhreatimeacht, luach saothair a sholáthar do riosca fiontraíochta, nuálaíocht a spreagadh, agus a bheith iomaíoch fós don infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach.

Coinníonn an Roinn mionteagasc faire freisin ar fhorbairtí cánach idirnáisiúnta agus bíonn sí ag plé le gnólachtaí trí na gníomhaireachtaí forbartha fiontraíochta chun fanacht ar an eolas faoi impleachtaí féideartha agus chun bonn eolais a chur faoi thosaíochtaí náisiúnta.

Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe

In 2015, ghlac 193 Ballstát sna Náisiúin Aontaithe, Éire ina measc, leis na Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe. Cuimsíonn na spriocanna sin riachtanais shóisialta, gheilleagracha agus chomhshaoil le haghaidh todhchaí inbhuanaithe.

I rith 2017, thosaigh an Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe ar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil ag ullmhú an chéad Phlean Náisiúnta Cuir i bhFeidhm d'Éirinn le haghaidh na Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe. Leagfar amach sa phlean an chaoi a gcuirfear na spriocanna i bhfeidhm in Éirinn agus tabharfar breac-chuntas ar shocruithe le haghaidh comhordú idir-roinne, rannpháirtíochta le páirtithe leasmhara agus tuairisciú tréimhsíúil ar dhul chun cinn.

Beidh an Roinn seo freagrach as cuid de na Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe a chur i bhfeidhm faoin bplean; tá an Plean Náisiúnta don Fhreagracht Shóisialta Chorparáideach agus an Fóram Páirtithe Leasmhara lena mbaineann ina sampla de sin. Tá monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar a chur i bhfeidhm ina phríomhthosaíocht don Roinn.

Freagracht Shóisialta Chorparáideach

Seoladh an dara Plean Náisiúnta don Fhreagracht Shóisialta Chorparáideach in Éirinn, "Towards Responsible Business", an 26 Meitheamh 2017. Bunaíodh Fóram Páirtithe Leasmhara na Freagrachta Sóisialta Corparáidí, atá á stíúradh ag fiontair le Rúnaíocht ón Roinn, chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na gníomhartha sa dara Plean.

Sa dara Plean Náisiúnta, is é uaillmhian an Rialtais Láirionad Feabhas a dhéanamh d'Éirinn le haghaidh cleachtas gnó freagrach agus inbhuanaithe trí ghlacadh leis an dea-chleachtais sa fhreagracht shóisialta chorparáideach ag croí gnóthaí agus eagraíochtaí.



Aithnítear an fhreagracht shóisialta chorparáideach mar ghné thábhachtach den iomaíochas in go leor gnóthaí. Nuair a leabaíonn gnóthaí an fhreagracht shóisialta chorparáideach agus cleachtais fhreagracha gnó ina straitéis gnó, feabhsaítear a n-inbhuanaitheacht, clú, iomaíochas costas agus a gcumas tallann a mhealladh agus a choinneáil; ag an am céanna cothaítear comhtháthú sóisialta agus cosnaítear an comhshaoil.

I mí an Mheithimh 2018, cuirfidh an Fóram tuarascáil faoi dhul chun cinn na chéad bhliana, "CSR Check", i láthair ag cruinniú Bricfeasta Príomhoifigigh Feidhmiúcháin/Ceannairí.

Athrú Aeráide

Chuir an Roinn anailís agus ionchur beartais ar fáil don Phlean Náisiúnta Maolúcháin agus don Chreat Náisiúnta Oiriúnaithe agus d'ábhar eile a bhaineann le spriocanna agus beartas maidir le hathrú aeráide agus chinntigh sí go gcuirfí tionchair ar iomaíochas san áireamh i roghanna beartais.

Tábhacht Straitéiseach na Lárionad Sonraí do Bheartas Fiontraíochta na hÉireann

I mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2017, chomhaontaigh an Rialtas Creat Beartais Straitéiseach treisithe le haghaidh forbairt leanúnach na lárionad sonraí in Éirinn. Tá cúpla snáithe comhlántach i gceist sa chur chuige straitéiseach sin atá á stiúradh ag Ranna eile, lena n-áirítear Creat Forbartha Beartais an Fhuinnimh In-athnuaithe, leasuithe ar an Acht um Pleanál agus Forbairt (bonneagar straitéiseach) agus athbhreithniú breithiúnach ar thionscadail mhóra bonneagair.

Chun cur leis an gcreat straitéiseach sin, chuir an Roinn túis le Ráiteas Rialtais a forbairt ar Ról na Lárionad Sonraí i Straitéis Fiontraíochta na hÉireann. Is é an cuspóir foriomlán cur chuige faoi stiúir pleán a spreagadh i leith infheistíochtaí i lárionaid sonraí chun acmhainn régiún a fhíorú, poist d'ardchaigheáin a chruthú, uaillmhian na hÉireann a spreagadh sa gheilleagar digiteach mar shuíomh roghnaithe d'infheistíocht agus ceapach síl le haghaidh fiontraíocht teicneolaíochta, agus ag ciintiú freisin go gcoinnítear costais mhíbhuntáiste fhéideartha chomh híseal agus is féidir. Cuirfear an ráiteas náisiúnta beartais i gcrích faoi láir 2018.

Suirbhéanna Eolaíochta

Táirgeann an Roinn staitisticí oifigiúla ar thaighde agus forbairt sna hearnálacha Rialtais agus Ardoideachais.

Buiséad Taighde agus Forbartha

Tuairiscítear sa Bhuiséad Taighde agus Forbartha 2016/2017 ar mhaoiniú iomlán an Rialtais do thaighde agus forbairt in Éirinn (leithdháiltí buiséid Rialtais le haghaidh taighde agus forbartha/GBARD), caiteachas iomlán ar thaighde agus forbairt a dhéantar go hinmheánach in earnáil an Rialtais (caiteachas rialtais ar thaighde agus forbairt/GOVERD) agus caiteachas iomlán ar thaighde agus forbairt a dhéantar go hinmheánach in Éirinn (caiteachas intíre comhlán ar thaighde agus forbairt/GERD). Tugtar miondealú freisin sa tuarascáil seo ar phearsanra agus caiteachas taighde de réir réimsí taighde agus forbartha agus de réir cineálacha taighde. Ba iad na príomhfhigiúirí le haghaidh 2016/2017:

- B'ionann GBARD in 2016 agus €718.9m, laghdú 2.4% ar 2015. Laghdaigh GBARD mar chéatadán den olltárgeacht náisiúnta go 0.32% in 2016 ó 0.36% in 2015.
- Bhí GBARD mar chéatadán den olltárgeacht intíre ag 0.28% in 2015, faoi bhun mheáin an OECD agus an Aontais Eorpaigh, 0.54% agus 0.52% faoi seach.
- Mhéadaigh GERD (suim an chaiteachais Rialtais, Gnó agus Ardoideachais) go €3.24bn in 2016, suas ó €3.13bn in 2015. Bhí GERD mar chéatadán den olltárgeacht ag 1.43% in 2016, síos ó 1.52% in 2015. Mar chéatadán den olltárgeacht intíre, bhí GERD na hÉireann ag 1.2%, i gcomparáid le meáin an OECD agus an Aontais Eorpaigh, 2.38% agus 1.96% faoi seach.
- B'ionann GOVERD agus €98m in 2016, síos beagánín ó €101m in 2015. Bhí GOVERD mar chéatadán den olltárgeacht náisiúnta ag 0.04% in 2016, laghdú ó 2015.

Suirbhé ar Thaighde agus Forbairt san Earnáil Ardoideachais

Is suirbhé débhliantúil é seo ina dtugtar sonraí faoin gcaiteachas inmheánach iomlán ar thaighde agus forbairt agus ar phearsanra taighde san earnáil ardoideachais. Tá miondealú ar fáil freisin ar phearsanra taighde agus ar chaiteachas ar thaighde agus forbairt de réir réimsí taighde agus forbartha agus de réir cineálacha taighde.

Ba iad na príomhfhigiúirí le haghaidh 2014/2015:

- B'ionann an caiteachas iomlán ar thaighde agus forbairt san earnáil ardoideachais in 2014 agus €730.1m
- Laghdaigh HERD (taighde agus forbairt ardoideachais) mar chéatadán den olltáirgeacht náisiúnta ó 0.51% in 2008 go 0.45% in 2014.
- Mhéadaigh lón iomlán na dtaighdeoirí coibhéisí lánaimseartha 6% go 12,836 in 2014.
- Chaith Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh an tsuim ba mhó (€122m) ar thaighde agus forbairt sa tir in 2014, le Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath ina diaidh ag €119m, an Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath ag €117m, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh ag €96m agus Ollscoil Luimnigh ag €80m. Chaith na cúig institiúid sin in éindí beagnach trí cheathrú den HERD in 2014.
- Mhéadaigh céatadán an HERD a mhaoinigh an tionscal ó 3.3% in 2012 go 4.4% in 2014.

Staitisticí an Phainéil Rialaithe

Foilsítear Staitisticí an Phainéil Rialaithe (Dashboard Statistics) ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne gach mí. Tiomsaítear sonraí iontu ón Roinn, an Ard-Oifig Staidrimh, ONS agus foinsí seachtracha eile a bhaineann le táscairí luatha ar athrú a théann i bhfeidhm ar bheartas fiontraíochta.

Sprioc 3:

A bheith ag obair go huallmhianach lenár gcomhpháirtithe AE agus idirnáisiúnta

A bheith ag obair go huallmhianach ar fud an Rialtais lenár gcomhpháirtithe AE agus idirnáisiúnta chun dul chun cinn a dhéanamh i bhfóram AE agus idirnáisiúnta, thar raon leathan leasanna, lena n-áirítear freagairt d'impléachtaí an Breatimeachta

Rannpháirtíocht ag Leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh

Lean an Roinn dár rannpháirtíocht ag leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh chun torthaí a bhaint amach ó thaobh beartas náisiúnta agus AE de a thacaíonn lenár gclár oibre maidir le fiontair, iomaíochas agus nuálaíocht. Tá ról ceannais agus comhordúcháin ag an Roinn sa Chomhairle lomaíochais agus sa Chomhairle um Ghnóthaí Eachtracha (Trádála). In 2017, aistríodh an fhreagracht as comhordú na Comhairle um Fhostaíocht, Beartas Sóisialta, Sláinte agus Gnóthaí Tomholtóra chuig an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí.

I rith 2017, rinne an tAire Mitchell O'Connor, an Tánaiste Fitzgerald, an tAire Breen agus an tAire Halligan ionadaíocht do leas na hÉireann ag Comhairlí lomaíochais agus Trádála faoi seach.

Reáchtáladh trí chruinníú Fhoirmiúla agus dhá chruinníú Neamhfhoirmiúla de chuid na gComhairlí lomaíochais, mar aon le trí chruinníú Fhoirmiúla agus dhá chruinníú Neamhfhoirmiúla de chuid na Comhairle Trádála i rith 2017 faoi Uachtaráinacht Mhálta agus Uachtaráinacht na hEastóine.

Ar na saincheisteanna a chuir an Chomhairle lomaíochais chun cinn in 2017, bhí Straitéis an Mhargaidh Aonair Dhigitigh: Comhar i gCosaint Tomholtóirí agus Geobhlocáil, Straitéis an Mhargaidh Aonair do Sheirbhísí: Tairseach Aonair Dhigiteach, réimeas feabhsaithe Fógra don Treoir maidir le Seirbhísí agus Tástáil Comhréireachta chun Seirbhísí Gairmiúla a Rialáil.

Áiríodh le saincheisteanna a ndearna an Chomhairle Trádála dul chun cinn orthu i rith 2017: idirbheartaíocht leanúnach trádála le Meicsiceo agus an Cómhargadh Theas (Mercosur); an Chomhpháirtíocht Gheilleagrasch idir an tAontas Eorpach agus an tSeapán a chur i gcrích i ndiaidh comhaontú polaitiúil a socráodh i mí lúil; glacadh le modheolaíocht nua an AE in aghaidh dumpála; Comhaontuithe Saorthrádála an AE a chur i bhfeidhm; agus ullmhúcháin do Chomhdháil Airí na hEagraíochta Domhanda Trádála, a tionóladh i mí na Nollag.

I dteannta ionadaíocht a dhéanamh ar leasa na Roinne agus na hÉireann ag an gComhairle, cuireadh príomhleasa AE na Roinne chun cinn freisin ar leibhéal tras-Rialtais de bhun Ghasra na nOifigeach Sinsearach AE sa Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Grúpa Idir-roinne nuabhunaithe ar Ghnóthaí AE agus an Breatimeacht, chomh maith le rannpháirtíocht dhéthaobhach le Ballstáit a raibh an meon céanna acu agus leis an gCoimisiún.

Réimeas Státhabhrach an Aontais Eorpaigh

Ba thosaíocht de chuid na Roinne Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta arís in 2017 é go gcloíí leis na rialacha i dtaca le Státhabhair. Lean an Roinn uirthi, mar Phointe Teagmhála Náisiúnta do bheartas uileghabhálach Státhabhrach, ag scaipeadh eolais ar fud Ranna Rialtais agus ghníomhaireachtaí fiontraíochta na Roinne.

Ina theannta sin, mar phointe idirchaidrimh do gach cumarsáid a eisítear chuig Ard-Stiúrthóireacht na hIomaíochta agus uaithi, chomhordaigh an Roinn seasamh na hÉireann i dtaca le Státhabhair i rith 2017.

Is iad cuspóirí an tionscnaimh um Nuachóiriú Státhabhrach de chuid an AE fás a chothú i margadh inmheánach treisithe, dinimiciúil agus iomaíoch, forfheidhmiú a dhíriú ar na cásanna is mó a théann i gcion ar an margadh inmheánach agus rialacha i dtaca le Státhabhair a shruthlíníú, ina measc luas cinnteoireachta Ard-Stiúrthóireacht na hlomaíochta.

B'athchóiriú tábhachtach sa phróiseas nuachóirithe an soiléiriú ón gCoimisiún ar choincheap na Státhabhrach agus díolúine a thabhairt do Státhabhair ó rialú roimhe seo trí Rialachán Ginearálta na Blocthíolúine. Tá ról ríthábhachtach ag Rialachán Ginearálta na Blocthíolúine chun rialacha faoi Státhabhair a shimplí agus a shoiléiriú, maorlathas a mhaolú agus ligean d'infheistíochtaí dul ar aghaidh chomh tapa agus is féidir. Cuireann sé sin ar chumas an Choimisiún freisin a rialú ar Státhabhair a dhíriú ar na cásanna is saofa.

An Breatimeacht

Bunaíodh Aonad tiomnaithe an Bhreatimeachta go deireanach in 2016 chun comhordú bheartas agus fhreagairt oibríochta na Roinne don Bhreatimeacht a stiúradh, lena n-áirítear ár gcur chuige i leith idirbheartaíochta san AE agus caidreamh déthaobhach leis an Ríocht Aontaithe.

Chun a chinntíú go raibh cur chuige comhsheasmhach agus comhordaithe i leith an Bhreatimeachta ngach réimse den Roinn in 2017, bhainistigh agus thacaigh Aonad an Bhreatimeachta leis an méid seo a leanas:

- sé chruinniú den Ghrúpa Comhordaithe ar an mBreatimeacht, a raibh an tAire mar chathaoirleach air agus ina raibh Príomhoifigigh Feidhmiúcháin GFT Éireann agus Fiontraíocht Éireann, agus oifigigh ábhartha fiontraíochta, Margaidh Aonair agus trádála ón Roinn chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm ár bhfreagartha do na forbairtí a tháinig chun cinn go náisiúnta, sa Ríocht Aontaithe agus san Aontas Eorpach;
- sé chruinniú de Ghasra na nOifigeach Sinsearach Tras-rannóige sa Roinn le haghaidh an Bhreatimeachta, faoi chathaoirleacht an Ard-Rúnaí, an Dr Orlaigh Quinn, ina bhfuil oifigigh shinsearacha i réimsí beartais ábhartha na Roinne.

I mí na Samhna 2017, d'fhoilsigh an Roinn “Building Stronger Business: Responding to Brexit by competing, innovating and trading”. Tugtar achoimre sa pháipéar ar thionchair an Bhreatimeachta ar réimsí beartais tábhachtacha laistigh den Roinn agus tugtar achoimre ar na bearta beartais agus oibríochta atá ar bun agus atá á mbeartú ag an Roinn agus ag a Gníomhaireachtaí chun freagairt don Bhreatimeacht, lena n-áirítear na tacaíochtaí atá ar fáil do chuídeachtaí chun cabhrú leo ullmhú don Bhreatimeacht. Déantar cur síos ann freisin ar an gclár taighde atá idir lámha, lena n-áirítear roinnt tionscadail taighde a choimisiúnaigh an Roinn in 2017 chun cabhrú le tuiscint a fhorbairt ar impleachtaí féideartha an Bhreatimeachta d'Éirinn do chúrsaí fiontar, tomholtóirí agus caidreamh trádála. Cruthóidh na staidéir sin bonn fianaise chun bonn eolais a chur faoi sheasamh beartais na hÉireann mar chuid den idirbheartaíocht níos leithne ar chaidreamh na Ríochta Aontaithe amach anseo leis an Aontas Eorpach agus bearta maolaithe breise chun freagairt don Bhreatimeacht.

Mar chuid den chlár taighde sin, cuireadh túis le staidéar mór a fhiosróidh na himpleachtaí straitéisearcha d'Éirinn ag eascairt as athruithe i gcaidreamh trádála na Ríochta Aontaithe agus an Aontas Eorpach i mí an Mheithimh 2017. Cruthóidh an staidéar sin bonn fianaise ar shaincheisteanna tábhachtacha trádála agus infheistíochta chun bonn eolais a chur faoi sheasamh na hÉireann mar chuid den idirbheartaíocht níos leithne ar chaidreamh na Ríochta Aontaithe amach anseo leis an Aontas Eorpach agus cuirfidh sé bonn eolais faoi fhorbairt na mbeart maolaithe earnála.

Ghlac Airí agus oifigigh na Roinne páirt i gCoiste Comh-Aireachta ar an mBreatimeacht, sa Ghrúpa Idir-Rannach ar an Aontas Eorpach agus an Breatimeacht, agus ar an réimse Grúpaí Oibre Breatimeachta a bhfuil de chúram orthu tionchar agus impleachtaí an Bhreatimeachta a shainaithint, chomh maith le bearta maolaithe ar fud na n-earnálacha ag féachaint le rioscaí a laghdú oiread agus is féidir agus deiseanna a mhéadú oiread agus is féidir.

Tá rannpháirtíocht le páirtithe leasmhara ina cholún tábhachtach i bhfreagairt intíre an Rialtais don Bhreatimeacht. Bhí plé trí chruinnithe duine le duine agus trí fhóraim reatha a bhaineann le fiontraíocht agus nuálaíocht ina ngné mhór d'ullmhúcháin na Roinne don Bhreatimeacht in 2017.

Chun plé rialta agus cuimsitheach a éascú agus a spreagadh le fointair, bhunaigh an Roinn Fóram Fiontraíochta ar an mBreatimeacht agus Dúshláin Dhomhanda in 2017. Tá 13 ionadaí ó ghrúpaí fiontraíochta sa chomholtas agus tá an tAire ina cathaoirleach ar an bhFóram, a raibh cúig chruinníú aige in 2017. Tugann an Fóram sin deis don Roinn taighde atá ag teacht chun cinn agus cuir chuige beartais a roinnt leis an earnáil fiontraíochta agus aiseolas a fháil ar thograí. Tugann sé ardán freisin d'fhontair a dtáighde agus aiseolas ó chuideachtaí a roinnt leis an Roinn agus chun ábhair imní a tharraingt anuas, aird a tharraingt ar dheisceanna, agus freagairtí beartais a mholadh.

Ina theannta sin, bhunaigh an Roinn Grúpa Oibre Trádála agus Infheistíochta. I measc bhaill an Ghrúpa tá Rúnaithe Cúnta ó Roinn an Taoisigh, an Roinn Airgeadais, an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe, an Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála, an Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara, an Roinn lompair, Turasóireachta agus Spóirt, agus na Coimisinéirí loncaim. Tugann an Grúpa seo, a tháinig le chéile deich n-uaire in 2017, fóram chun impleachtaí ar bheartas trádála agus infheistíochta a eascraíonn as an mBreatimeacht a phlé, agus deis chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar sheasamh féideartha na hÉireann ar shaincheisteanna tábhachtacha beartais.

Reáchtáil an Roinn dhá imeacht mhóra rannpháirtíochta le páirtithe leasmhara seachtracha freisin (Plé le Páirtithe Leasmhara Earnála) chun ionchur a fháil ó réimse rannpháirtithe. Úsáideadh na haischuir ó na himeachtaí sin go díreach i bpróiseas Idirphlé Saoránach Uile-Oileáin an Rialtais. Tionóladh na himeachtaí i gCora Droma Rúisc (i mí Eanáir, nuair a tugadh aghaidh ar an réimse iomlán de shaincheisteanna fointair) agus i mBaile Átha Cliath (i gcomhar leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna i mí lúil, nuair a rinneadh machnamh ar impleachtaí scileanna an Bhreatimeachta).

Chomh maith leis sin, bhí Airí agus oifigigh páirteach i rannpháirtíochta chuimsitheach dhéthaobhach lena gcomhghleacaithe san Aontas Eorpach. Bhí rannpháirtíochta ar bun freisin idir an Roinn/na hairí agus Coimisinéirí AE, Airí ón Ríocht Aontaithe agus a gcomhairí i mBallstáit eile agus Príomh-Idirbheartaí an Choimisiún don Bhreatimeacht, Michel Barnier.

Freagairt Státhabhrach an Bhreatimeachta – Grúpa Oibre

Mar chuid den fhreagairt do chinneadh na Ríochta Aontaithe an tAontas Eorpach a fhágáil, i mí na Samhna 2017 chas an Tánaiste ag an am leis an gCoimisinéir Vestager. Toradh amháin a bhí ar an gcuinníú sin ab ea bunú Grúpa Oibre ar Státhabhair, ina bhfuil ionadaithe ó Ard-Stiúrthóireacht na hlomaíochta, an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, Fiontraíocht Éireann agus an Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara. Is é cuspóir an Ghrúpa raon feidhme scéimeanna a mheas agus iad a cheapadh chun tacú le fointair a bhfuil tionchar ag an mBreatimeacht orthu, de réir rialacha na Státhabhrach. Tá an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ag stiúradh thoscaireacht na hÉireann.

An Scéim um Theacht i gCabhair agus Athstruchtúrú

D'fhaomh Ard-Stiúrthóireacht na hlomaíochta scéim um Theacht i gCabhair agus Athstruchtúrú i mí na Samhna 2017. Faoin scéim sin, is féidir le Fiontraíocht Éireann tacaíocht athstruchtúraithe a thairiscint d'fhontair bheaga agus mheánmhéide (FBManna) atá i gcuachás mór airgeadais agus a bhfuiltear cinnte nach mór go rachaidís as gnó go hiomlán murach idirghabháil an Stáit.

Cé nach meastar go mbeidh ar an Stát cúnamh teachta i gcabhair/athstruchtúraithe a thabhairt do chuideachtaí, i bhfianaise na dtacaíochtaí atá ar fáil cheana féin agus iad siúd atá á bhforbairt (i.e. Scéim lasachta an Bhreatimeachta agus an scéim iasachta infheistíochta bheartaithe níos fadtéarmaí do ghnóthaí, chomh maith le tacaíocht Fiontraíocht Éireann agus ó Oifigí Fiontar Áitiúla agus Idir-Thrádáil Éireann), meastar go mbeadh sé ciallmhar bearta teagmhasacha a chur i bhfeidhm ionas gur féidir linn freagairt do tapa do chuínsí a athraíonn de réir mar is gá.

Freagairt Straitéiseach Fiontraíocht Éireann don Bhreatimeacht

Léirítear i Straitéis 2017–2020 de chuid Fiontraíocht Éireann an fhreagairt straitéiseach don Bhreatimeacht, a bhfuil d'aidhm léi teacht aniar níos fearr a fhás i gcuideachtaí Éireannacha trí scála a thógáil agus réimse a leathnú. Chun tacú lena Straitéis, chuir an Roinn airgead breise caipítil ar fáil in 2017, a chuir ar chumas Fiontraíocht Éireann tionscnaimh éagsúla a chur i bhfeidhm agus cur lena tacaíochtaí chun go spreagfaí feabhsuite ar tháirgiúlacht, nuálaíocht, cumas bainistíochta agus scileanna ceannaireachta, agus chun tógáil ar uaillmhian na mbainisteoír breathnú ar mhargaí eile ar fud na cruinne. Áiríodh le foráil pá státhiste Fiontraíocht Éireann le haghaidh 2017 airgead reatha breise chun cabhrú le 39 post breise a earcú chun tacú le Straitéis an Bhreatimeachta.

Mar chuid de fhreagairt straitéiseach Fiontraíocht Éireann don Bhreatimeacht, cuireadh cúpla tionscnamh nua i bhfeidhm i rith 2017, lena n-áirítear:

- Feabhra: Seoladh an feachtas ‘Global Ambition’ chun níos mó cuideachtaí a chur ag easpórtáil agus cuideachtaí a spreagadh le dul isteach i limistéar an Euro;
- Mártá: Seoladh ‘Brexit Scorecard’ do FBManna, ardán nua idirghníomhach ar líne a bhfuil gach cuideachta Éireannach in ann a úsáid chun féinmheasúnú a dhéanamh ar a nochtadh don Bhreatimeacht faoi shé cholún gnó.
- Mártá: Tugadh isteach deontas €5k ‘Be Prepared’ freisin a thacaíonn le costais claint FBM chun pleán a ullmhú chun rioscaí a mhaolú agus deiseanna a thapú a eascraíonn as an mBreatimeacht;
- Aibreán: Seoladh feachtas nua cumarsáide ‘Prepare for Brexit’ chun aird a tharraingt ar an ngníomh a chaithfidh cuideachtaí a dhéanamh;
- Bealtaine: Seoladh Straitéis nua do Limistéar an Euro chun easpórtálacha chuit Limistéar an Euro a mhéadú 50%;
- Meitheamh: Cuireadh na seónna bóthair ‘Prepare for Brexit’ ar fáil ar fud na tíre chun é a phlé le cuideachtaí;
- Meán Fómhair: Seoladh Seachtain Idirnáisiúnta na Margaí, ina raibh Limistéar an Bhreatimeachta, agus an feachtas #Irish Advantage a dhíreoidh ar cheannaitheoirí i Limistéar an Euro chun nuálaíocht Éireannach a cheannach in earnálacha tábhachtacha a bhfuil tionchar ag an mBreatimeacht orthu;
- Samhain: Seoladh ciste mear ‘Agile Innovation Fund’ ag a bhfuil iarratas ar líne cuíchóirithe chun teacht thapa a thabhairt do chuideachtaí ar mhaoiniú nuálaíochta.

I rith 2017, d'eagraigh Fiontraíocht Éireann os cionn 140 imeacht cur chun cinn trádála freisin chun cabhrú le claint a margáí sa Ríocht Aontaithe a chothú agus a fhás agus chun margáí nua a aimsiú lasmuigh den Ríocht Aontaithe.

Freagairt Straitéiseach GFT Éireann don Bhreatimeacht

Bhí an GFT ag díriú go mór ar an mBreatimeacht le hacmhainní méadaithe, straitéisí nua margáiochta agus imeachtaí ar bun chun aird a tharraingt ar chomh hoiriúnach is a bheadh Éire do chuideachtaí a dteastaíonn uathu rochtain ar mhargadh an Aontais Eorpaigh a choinneáil sa todhchaí.

Bhí rannpháirtíocht shuntasach lena chliant ag baint le straitéis Breatimeachta an GFT – go deimhin, thosaigh an GFT ag plé le claint ar an mBreatimeacht roimh an reifreann agus géaraíodh ar an bplé sin i ndiaidh thoradh mhí an Mheithimh 2016.

Bhí imeachtaí móra Breatimeachta ag GFT Éireann freisin i suíomhanna tábhachtacha, lena n-áirítear Londain, Nua-Eabhrac agus Hong Cong, agus ghlac sé páirt i gcomhdhálacha agus imeachtaí a bhain leis an mBreatimeacht ar fud na cruinne. Tacaíodh leis sin le feachtas idirnáisiúnta an-éifeachtach sna meáin, a dhíríonn ar infheisteoirí idirnáisiúnta agus a tharraingíonn aird ar na buntáistí a bhaineann le lonnú nó le leathnú in Éirinn.

D'athraigh an GFT a lorg domhanda agus anois tá ceithre chríoch oifigiúla ann, in áit trí cinn, agus caitear leis an Ríocht Aontaithe mar mhargadh ann féin. Tá an GFT ag féachaint freisin le deiseanna nua óna spriocmhargaí neamhthraigisiúnta a thapú. Áirítear leo sin Aontas na nÉimíríochtaí Arabacha, an Tuirc agus an Afraic Theas. Leanfaidh an GFT ar aghaidh ag díriú freisin ar a chaidreamh a fhás san Eoraip agus i dtíortha ar nós na Síne, na hIndia, na Córó Theas, Shingeapór agus na hAstráile.

Cé go bhfuil dúshlán ag baint leis cinnte, cruthaíonn imeacht na Ríochta Aontaithe roinnt deiseanna don infheistíocht dhíreach eachtrach in Éirinn – cé go mbraithfidh na deiseanna ar thoradh deiridh na hidirbheartaíochta idir an tAontas Eorpach agus an Ríocht Aontaithe.

Áirítear lenár láidreachtaí chun infheistíocht a bhaineann leis an mBreatimeacht a mhealladh ár rochtain leanúnach ar mhargadh an Aontais Eorpáigh, seasmhacht pholaitiúil, gheilleagrach agus rialála i gcomparáid le go leor iomaitheoirí, guth i mbeartas AE agus fóramh rialála, beartas poiblí comhsheasmhach maidir le hinfeistíocht dhíreach eachtrach agus chomh gar is atáimid don Ríocht Aontaithe agus na náisc atá againn léi.

Tá na riachtanais is práinní a bhaineann leis an mBreatimeacht ag cuideachtaí in earnáil na seirbhísí airgeadais, agus cheana féin bhuaigh Éire, d'ainneoin iomaíocht mhór, infheistíochaí ó chuideachtaí ceannródaíocha na hearnála sin (ar nós JP Morgan, Bank of America, Barclays, Legal and General, Chaucer agus Almac).

Tacaíochtaí Breatimeachta na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla

Tá tacáiochtaí Breatimeachta tríd an 31 Oifig Fontair Áitiúil ar fud na tíre dírithe ar fhaisnéis agus feasacht, éagsúlú margaidh, iomaíochas méadaithe, agus nuálaíocht a chur chun cinn ionas gur féidir le cliantchuideachtaí na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla dul i ggleic níos fearr leis na dúshláin a eascraíonn as an mBreatimeacht chomh maith le haon deis a eascraíonn as a fhiosrú. Chomh maith leis an mBreatimeacht, meantóireacht lena mbaineann agus oiliúint, chuir na hOifigí Fontair Áitiúla tionscnaimh a bhaineann go sonrach leis an mBreatimeacht ar fáil le haghaidh micrifhiontar, lena n-áirítear:

- D'eagraigh na hOifigí Fontair Áitiúla os cionn 30 imeacht eolais faoin mBreatimeacht a bhí dírithe ar chliaint lárnacha agus neamhlárnacha.
Spreag na hOifigí a gclaint freisin le páirt a ghlacadh i seo bóthair Breatimeachta Fhiontraíocht Éireann, a raibh sraith imeachtaí réigiúnacha mar chuid de chun tacú le claint ullmhú agus pleánáil don Bhreatimeacht.
- Ciste lomaíoch na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla le haghaidh Micrifhiontar Nuálacha: – spreag an tionscnamh nua iomaíoch seo claint na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla chun páirt a ghlacadh i nuálaíocht chun Táirge, Próiseas nó Margaí Nua a fhobairt. Faomhadh infheistíocht €25,000 an ceann do 63 micrifhiontar, arbh ionann é agus infheistíocht €1,575,000 san ionmlán.
- Thug Deontais Cúnaimh Theicniúil don Mhicr-Easpórtáil i sraith deontas na nOifigí Fontair Áitiúla spreagadh do chliaint na nOifigí deiseanna nua margaidh a fhiosrú agus a fhobairt. Faomhadh cúnamh do 279 cliant faoin mbeart seo, arbh ionann é agus infheistíocht €505,400 san ionmlán.
- D'fhobair na hOifigí Fontair Áitiúla tairiscint Lean4Micro le haghaidh claint micrifhiontar. Leithdháileadh €845k d'Oifigí Fontair Áitiúla in 2017, a sholáthair 179 cliant rannpháirteach sa chlár.

Tacaíochtaí Breatimeachta Idir-Thrádáil Éireann

Toisc go bhféadfadh an Breatimeacht tionchar mór a imirt ar na FBManne ar thug Idir-Thrádáil Éireann cúnamh dóibh, sholáthair an Roinn seo maoiniú breise don chomhlacht in 2017 chun tabhairt faoi fheachtas nua feasachta faoin mBreatimeacht don FBManne. Soláthraítear ann réimse tacáiochtaí saincheaptha, lena n-áirítear dearbháin 'Start to Plan' don Bhreatimeacht, dar luach €2,000, chun a

chur ar chumas cuideachtaí sainchomhairle a fháil ar cheisteanna ar nós pleanáil airgeadra, taraifí agus custam, ceanglais rialála agus saincheisteanna cánach. D'fhreastail os cionn 1,500 cuideachta ar imeachtaí feasachta faoin mBreatimeacht a d'eagraigh Idir-Thrádáil Éireann i suíomhanna éagsúla ar fud an oileáin i rith 2017. San iomlán, bhí Seirbhís Chomhairleach an Bhreatimeachta ag plé go díreach le hos cionn 2,350 FBM ar fud an oileáin trí na gnéithe éagsúla den tseirbhís in 2017.

Chuir an Roinn maoiniú sonrach ar fáil d'Idir-Thrádáil Éireann freisin chun taighde a éascú ar impleachtaí an Bhreatimeachta ar thrádáil Trastean. Cuireadh an chéad tionscadal taighde díobh siúd, a rinne anailís ar thionchar rátaí nua taraife ar réimse earnálacha tárgí a thrádáltear idir an dá dhílse, i gcrích i mí an Mheithimh 2017.

Bearta Maolaithe an Bhreatimeachta le haghaidh FBManna

Scéim lasachta an Bhreatimeachta

Dhaingnigh an Tánaiste agus an tAire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta mar a bhí, Frances Fitzgerald TD, i gcompháirtíocht leis an Aire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara, Michael Creed TD, maoiniú Cáináisnéise don scéim nua, Scéim lasachta an Bhreatimeachta, a chuirfidh maoiniú inacmhainne ar fáil do ghnóthaí Éireannacha incháilithe ag a bhfuil suas le 499 fostáí agus a bhfuil tionchar ag an mBreatimeacht orthu faoi láthair nó a mbeidh amach anseo. Bainfidh an scéim, trí ráthaíochtaí Stáit agus AE in éindí, leas as suas le €300 milliún iasachtaí d'fhontair Éireannacha incháilithe ag an uasráta úis 4%. Cosnóidh an scéim €23 milliún ar an Státhiste (€14 mhilliún ón Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta agus €9 milliún ó Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara). Tá an scéim ar oscailt do chliaint Gníomhaireachtaí Stáit agus do ghnóthaí nach bhfuil aon bhaint acu le Gníomhaireachtaí Stáit. Beidh an t-airgeadas níos éasca le teacht air, beidh praghas níos iomaíche air, agus beidh téarmaí níos fabhraí ag baint leis ná an méid atá ar fáil faoi láthair sa mhargadh.

Cuirfidh Corparáid Baincéireachta Straitéiseach na hÉireann an scéim nua i bhfeidhm, trí iasachtóirí tráchtála chun caipiteal oibre atá ag teastáil go géar a chur i ngnóthaí Éireannacha.

Scéim lasachta Infheistíochta Níos Fadtéarmaí

Le haghaidh réitigh níos fadtéarmaí, chuir an Roinn, i dteannta na Roinne Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara agus na Roinne Airgeadais, túis le hobair ar thograí beartais a phiosrú le haghaidh Scéim lasachta Infheistíochta níos fadtéarmaí chun tacú le gnóthaí infheistiú go straitéiseach le haghaidh timpeallachta i ndiaidh an Bhreatimeachta.

Mol Comhairleach d'Airgeadas Gnó

Cuireadh túis freisin in 2017 le Mol Comhairleach d'Airgeadas Gnó a forbairt a thacódh le pleanáil airgeadais agus le riachtanais ghinearálta maoinithe FBManna. Cabhróidh an Mol beartaithe le gnóthaí ciuntí airgeadais níos eoláí a dhéanamh, ag tógáil ar thacaíochtaí reatha atá ar fáil ó chomhlachtaí ar nós Fhiontraíocht Éireann agus na nOifigí Fiontair Áitiúla. Is tairiscint ar líne a bheidh ann go príomha, a chuirfidh faisnéis chaighdeánaithe agus uirlisí ar fáil, agus a fheidhmeoidh mar threoir chuig tacaíochtaí agus acmhainní iomchuí Rialtais. Ina theannta sin, choimisiúnaigh an Roinn dhá shuirbhé ar gnóthaí ar thionchar an Bhreatimeachta agus leibhéal ullmhúcháin in 2017, ionas gur féidir a chinneadh céard é an bealach is fearr le tacú le gnólachtaí dúshláin an Bhreatimeachta a shárú.

Comhaontuithe Trádála agus Misin Trádála

In 2017, d'oibrigh Éire le Coimisiún an AE agus le Ballstáit eile chun roinnt comhaontuithe trádála a thabhairt chun críche go rathúil. Tháinig an Comhaontú Cuimsitheach Eacnamaíoch agus Trádála le Ceanada i bhfeidhm go sealadach ón 21 Meán Fómhair 2017. Ciallaíonn sé sin gur féidir le cuideachtaí Éireannacha tairbhe a bhaint as forálacha an Chomhaontaithe Chuimsithigh, lena n-áirítear deireadh a

chur le taraifí ar bheagnach gach easpórtáil thábhachtach, rochtain ar mhargadh soláthair Cheanada, bacainní rialála a scaoileadh agus rialacha níos tréadearcaí faoi rochtain ar an margadh. Bainfidh gnóthaí agus tomholtóirí na hÉireann leas as toisc gur cuireadh deireadh le hos cionn 98% de na taraifí. Beidh iompórtálacha níos saoire dá bharr agus ár n-easpórtálacha níos iomaíche. Cuirfidh an Comhaontú Cuimsitheach deiseanna nua ar fáil do ghnóthaí agus do lucht gairmiúil na hÉireann chun oibriú i gCeanada agus seirbhísí a sholáthar ann.

B'fhorbairt thábhachtach eile é cur i gcrích na hidirbheartaíochta ar Chomhaontú um Chomhpháirtíocht Eacnamaíoch an Aontais Eorpaigh leis an tSeapáin ar an 8 Nollaig. Is éacht shuntasach é an comhaontú trádála uaillmhianach sin don Aontas agus don tSeapáin, a bhfuil níos mó ná an tríu cuid d'olttáirgeacht intíre an domhain acu in éindí. Mar aon leis an gComhaontú Cuimsitheach Eacnamaíoch agus Trádála, cruthóidh sé deiseanna nua agus spleodracha d'easpórtálacha agus cuideachtaí na hÉireann thar réimse earnálacha, lena n-áirítear an earnáil agráibhia, ina mbeidh tairbhí faoi leith mar gheall ar rochtain ar mhargaí nua le haghaidh tárgí déiríochta agus mairteola.

Bhí an Roinn páirteach go gníomhach i ndeiseanna nua a chuireann na Comhaontuite Trádála AE i láthair a chur chun cinn. I mí Mheán Fómhair, stiúir an t-iar-Thánaiste Frances Fitzgerald misean mór trádála agus infheistíochta go Singeapór agus an tSeapáin le 60 cliantchuideachta de chuid Fhiontraíocht Éireann. Ba dheis luachmhar é sin chun aird a tharraingt ar thábhacht na rochtana ar mhargaí nua agus an éagsúlaithe i gcomhthéacs an Bhreatimeachta, agus chun na tairbhí do chuideachtaí Éireannacha mar gheall ar shocruithe nua trádála idir an tAontas Eorpach agus an dá thír a chur chun cinn.

Ní raibh sa mhisean sin ach píosa amháin de chlár cuimsitheach imeachtaí trádála idirnáisiúnta a d'eagraigh Fhiontraíocht Éireann in 2017, a thug deis do chuideachtaí Éireannacha bualaí le ceannaitheoirí ionchais agus líonrú le lucht tionchair tábhachtach i dtíortha ar fud na cruinne. San iomlán, eagraíodh 57 imeacht a dhíriugh ar thrádáil idirnáisiúnta i rith na bliana.

Lean an Roinn ag obair leis an gCoimisiún agus le Ballstáit lena chinntíú go gcuirfear chun cinn agus go slánófar leas na hÉireann san idirbheartaíocht trádála leanúnach ag an AE, ar nós na hidirbheartaíochta le Meicsiceo agus an Cómhargadh Theas (Mercosur); reachtaíocht nua AE um chosaint trádála; agus ar cheisteanna a bhaineann le hinfeistíocht.

Mhargadh Aonair an Aontais Eorpaigh i Seirbhísí

I mí Eanáir 2017, sheol an Coimisiún Eorpach a Phacáiste Seirbhísí, ina bhfuil tionscnaimh réalaíocha a fhéachann le comhtháthú Mhargadh Aonair an Aontais Eorpaigh i Seirbhísí a threisiú. Áirítear sa phacáiste sin moltaí le haghaidh Ríomhchárta Seirbhísí Eorpach nua, a mbeadh d'aidhm leis soláthar seirbhísí trasteorann a éascú níos mó sna hearnálacha foirgníochta agus seirbhísí gnó. Áirítear freisin sa phacáiste moltaí leis an nós imeachta chun fógra a thabhairt laistigh den Treoir um Sheirbhísí a fheabhsú, agus é de chuspóir aige a chinntíú go mbeadh aon srianta nua ar sholáthar seirbhísí, atá á moladh le cur isteach i ndlíthe náisiúnta Ballstát, ag teacht le prionsabail saorghluaiseachta an Mhargaidh Aonair.

Thug an Roinn faoi chomhairliúchán poiblí ar na moltaí sin in 2017 agus rinne sí ionadaíocht do leas na hÉireann in idirbheartaíocht Chomhairle an AE. Pléadh an Treoir um Fhógraí sa Chomhairle i mí na Bealtaine 2017, nuair a comhaontaíodh Cur Chuige Ginearálta na Comhairle. Tá idirbheartaíocht faoin Ríomhchárta fós ar bun.

I mí na Bealtaine 2017, sheol an Coimisiún Eorpach an Pacáiste um Chomhlíonadh an Mhargaidh Aonair freisin. Áiríodh ann togra le haghaidh Uirlis Faisnéise an Mhargaidh Aonair. Tá sé d'aidhm léi sin cumhactaí bailithe faisnéise níos fearr a thabhairt don Choimisiún ó ghníomhaithe margaidh ar leith nuair atá cásanna faoi reachtaíocht an Mhargaidh Aonair a fheidhmiú go mícheart á bhfiosrú. Tá an togra sin á bhreith go mion ag Páirtithe Oibre na Comhairle agus Parlaimint na hEorpa.

I dteannta páirt a ghlacadh in idirbheartaíocht faoi na tograí nua reachtaíochta sin, lean an Roinn uirthi lena cuid compháirtíochta ag leibhéal an AE leis an gCoimisiún Eorpach agus le Ballstáit eile; lean sí uirthi freisin de bheith ag déanamh ionadaíocht ar Éirinn sna Grúpaí Oibre cuí AE agus ar Choistí a bhíonn ag plé le saincheisteanna an Mhargaidh Aonair.

Lean an Roinn uirthi chomh maith de bheith ag riart chóras SOLVIT agus an Chórais Faisnéise faoin Margadh Inmheánach; thug sí freagairt do chásanna SOLVIT agus d'ardaigh sí feasacht ar na huirlisí riarracháin sin i measc gnóthas agus saoránach.

In 2017 freisin, chuir an Roinn tionscnamh i gcrích arbh é ab fheidhm leis feidhmiúlacht Phointe Aonair Teagmhála na hÉireann a fheabhsú, ar suíomh idirlín é a éilítear ar gach Ballstát a fheidhmiú de bhun Threoir an AE um Sheirbhísí.

I mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2017, reáchtáil an Roinn cruinniú de Bhord Eagarthóireachta ‘Your Europe’ i mBaile Átha Cliath; ní raibh ann ach an ceathrú huair a reáchtáladh an cruinniú sin lasmuigh den Bhruiséil. Thug an tAire Helen McEntee TD, an tAire Gnóthaí Eorpacha, an t-aitheasc oscailte don chruinniú, ag a raibh ionadaithe ó os cion 27 thír sa Limistéar Eorpach Eacnamaíoch.

An Margadh Aonair Digiteach

Aithnítear i Ráiteas Straitéis 2016–2019 de chuid na Roinne go bhfuil dúshláin agus deiseanna suntasacha le haghaidh go leor gnóthaí mar gheall ar éabhlóid an mhargaidh dhigitigh, a d'athraigh agus a athróidh i gcónai an chaoi a dtugtar faoi ghnó go hidirnáisiúnta. Aithnítear sa Straitéis go gcaithfidh Éire tógáil ar ár láidreachtaí in earnálacha áirithe, mar shampla, an earnáil TFC, chun na deiseanna sna réimsí sin a thapú.

Tugtar tiomantas do thacaíocht a thabhairt do thionscnaimh uaillmhianacha chun an Margadh Aonair, seirbhísí go háirithe, agus an Margadh Aonair Digiteach a dhoimhniú, i réimsí beartais a bhfuil an Roinn freagrach astu, agus tacaíocht a thabhairt do phríomhshchruthú an iomaíochais i réimsí eile beartais. Chomh maith leis sin, leanfaidh an Roinn ar aghaidh ag iarraidh éifeachtúlachtaí agus seirbhísí feabhsaithe do chustaiméirí a bhaint amach trí bhéim leanúnach ar dheiseanna digiteacha.

Foilsíodh Straitéis AE an Mhargaidh Aonair Dhigitigh i mí na Bealtaine 2015 atá bunaithe thart ar 16 thionscnamh a thacaíonn le trí phríomhcholún: rochtain a shimplíú do thomhaltóirí agus gnóthaí; an timpeallacht a mhúnlú ionas go mbeidh rath ar líonraí agus seirbhísí digiteacha; agus acmhainn fáis an gheilleagair dhigitigh a mhéadú oiread agus is féidir.

Tá bearta reachtúla agus neamhreachtúla ann chun dul i ngleic leis na 16 thionscnamh sin. Amhail deireadh 2017, foilsíodh 24 togra reachtúil ó rialacha teileachumarsáide, craolachán, cosaint tomhaltóirí, príobháideachas sonraí, cibearshlándáil go dtí an ríomh-Ríaltas, a bhfuil d'aidhm leo bacáinní a bhriseadh do shaoránaigh, tomhaltóirí agus FBManá atá i mbun gnó agus ag úsáid seirbhísí ar líne.

Foilsíodh an t-athbhreithniú lárthéarma ar an Margadh Aonair Digiteach i mí na Bealtaine 2017 agus tuairiscíodh ann go ndearnadh dul chun cinn maith agus gur thángthas ar chomhaontú faoi go leor de na tograí sin.

Tugadh breac-chuntas freisin san athbhreithniú lárthéarma ar réimsí eile ina gcaithfidh an tAontas Eorpach níos mó a dhéanamh chun timpeallacht dhigiteach chóir, oscailte agus shlán a chinntí. Áirítear ina measc siúd:

- rialacha a shoiléiriú maidir le gluaiseacht trasteorann sonraí neamhphearsanta bunaithe ar phrionsabail ar nós saorghluaiseacht sonraí (Saorghluaiseacht Sonrai);
- tionscnamh a ullmhú chun rochtain ar shonraí a mhaoinítear go poiblí agus a n-athúsáid a fheabhsú;
- dul i ngleic le cibearshlándáil;

- athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar chleachtais trádála ardáin go gnó agus timpeallacht ghnó chóir agus a fháiltíonn roimh nuálaíocht a chinntí; agus
- oibriú le hardáin chun a chinntí gur féidir ábhar neamhdhleathach ar líne a thuairisciú go héasca agus a bhaint go héifeachtach.

Cuimsíonn saincheisteanna a bhaineann leis an nGeilleagar Digiteach agus Margadh Aonair Digiteach an AE cláir oibre idir-Roinne agus tras-Roinne araon. Sa Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta tá Aonaid freagrach as dearcaí inmhéánacha ar na saincheisteanna sin a bhfuil freagracht beartais orainn ina leith a thiomsú agus a mheas ionas gur féidir comhleanúnachas beartais laistigh den Roinn a chinntí. Baineann siad sin go príomha le beartas cóipchirt agus tomholtóirí agus iomaíochais.

I ndiaidh an tAire Stáit do Thrádáil, Fostaíocht, Gnó, Margadh Aonair Digiteach an AE agus Cosaint Sonraí a cheapadh i mí an Mheithimh 2017, ghlac an Roinn freagracht as ceannaireacht an Choiste Idir-rannaigh ar an Margadh Aonair Digiteach. Bhíodh Roinn an Taoisigh ag stiúradh an ghrúpa tras-Rialtais seo ar an Margadh Aonair Digiteach, atá freagracht as iarracht uile-Rialtais a stiúradh maidir le leas na hÉireann sa Mhargadh Aonair Digiteach a chur chun cinn agus a chosaint. Bhí an tAire ina cathaoirleach ar an gCoiste Idir-rannaigh ar an Margadh Aonair Digiteach i mí Mheán Fómhair 2017. D'óstáil an Roinn an Coiste i mí na Samhna 2017, tráth a raibh sí ina cathaoirleach air, agus ar tugadh aghaidh ar théama na hiontaobh, atá ina réamhriachtanas tábhachtach don aistriú digiteach meastar. Thug an Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaíthe ar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil agus Oifig Phríomh-Oifigeach Faisnéise an Rialtais aghaidh ar an gCibearshlándáil agus an ríomh-Rialtas faoi seach.

Tá tíortha ceannródaíocha i gcúrsaí digiteacha sa ghrúpa Digital 9 (D9), is é sin Éire agus stáit Nordacha, Benelux agus Bhaltacha bunaithe ar shuíomh na dtíortha in Innéacs Digiteach agus Sochaí an Aontais Eorpaigh. Díritear ann ar mhaoirsiú straitéisearch a sholáthar ar an bhfeidhmiú is fearr de bheartas digiteach agus ar ghníomhú mar fhóram le dea-chleachtas a mhalartú. Stiúir an tAire Stáit do Thrádáil, Fostaíocht, Gnó, Margadh Aonair Digiteach an AE agus Cosaint Sonraí toscaireacht na hÉireann go dtí D9 a bhí ar siúl sa tSualainn i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2017. D'fhreastail Airí ó bhallaístáit AE eile an D9 ar an gcrúinniú. Pléadh saincheisteanna éagsúla sa chruinniú, lena n-áirítear dúshlán Shochaí Dhigiteach an lae inniu, Todhchaí na hOibre, ardáin ar líne agus togra an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh maidir le Saorghluaiseacht Sonraí.

Thug an tAire Stáit breac-chuntas go bhfuil an rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach sa Mhargadh Aonair Digiteach ag cumasú Gheilleagar Digiteach na hÉireann agus go soláthraíonn grúpa an D9 fóram tábhachtach trínar féidir dea-chleachtas agus eolas ballstát atá ar aon intinn a roinnt go héifeachtach. Thug an tAire tiomantas go n-óstálfai cruinniú de chuid ghrúpa an D9 i mí na Bealtaine 2018 chun tuilleadh béime a chur ar thiomantas na hÉireann don chlár oibre digiteach.

Roimh an D9, bhí an tAire Stáit ina chathaoirleach ar Chruinniú Comhcháime Gnó faoi Ardáin ar Líne an D9 le roinnt cuideachtaí a roghnaigh IBEC óna gCoiste Beartais Dhigitigh an 11 Deireadh Fómhair 2017. Thug an rannpháirtíocht spriocdhírithe sin le páirtithe leasmhara deis do ghnóthaí na fadhbanna agus bacáinní atá os a gcomhair a phlé agus an méid a chaithfear a dhéanamh chun an ceann is fearr a fháil ar an bacáinní sin agus timpeallacht fhoirfe ghnó a chruthú sa todhchaí. Cuiréadh an t-aiseolas a bailíodh ón gCruinniú Comhcháime sin in iúl ag cruinniú an D9 i Stócolm. Tabharfar faoi thuilleadh rannpháirtíochta le cumainn trádála, IBEC agus AmCham ina measc, in 2018 chun dul chun cinn a dhéanamh ar chlár oibre digiteach na hÉireann agus an Margadh Aonair Digiteach.

Déanann an Roinn ionadaíocht d'Éirinn ar Choiste Geilleagair Dhigitigh OECD.

Tacaíocht a Thabhairt do Chlár INTERREG AE

Tá Clár INTERREG ar cheann de 60 clár maoinithe trasteorann san AE. Clúdaíonn sé na sé chontae cois teorann in Éirinn, Tuaisceart Éireann ina ionmláine agus cuid d'iarthar na hAlban.

Don bhabhta reatha de INTERREG (le bheith ar siúl ó 2017 go 2022), tá snáithe Taighde agus Nuálaíochta, a dhéanann an Roinn cómhaoiniú air, in éineacht lenár gcomhionann i dTuaisceart Éireann.

Tá €71m san ionmlán ar fáil mar mhaoliniú don tsraith ar Thaighde agus Nuálaíochta (ón AE agus ó Rialtais Náisiúnta) don tréimhse suas go 2022. Is riachtnas é go gcaithfidh formhór na gníomhaíochtaí tionscadail a bheith lonnaithe i dTuaisceart Éireann, sna sé chontae cois teorann sa Phoblacht agus in iarthyar na hAlban.

Tá dhá ghné ar leith laistigh den snáithe Taighde agus Nuálaíochta: tionscnamh chun lón na FBMana a dhéanann taighde trasteorann agus gníomhaíochtaí nuálaíochta (€18) faoina gcuirfear raon gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil dóibh; agus tionscnamh níos taighde-bhunaithe chun leibhéal an ghnó trasteorann, taighde ábhartha do thionscal agus acmhainn nuálaíochta a mhéadú laistigh d'earnáil na Sláinte agus Eolaíochtaí Beatha agus earnáil an Fhuinnimh In-athnuaithe (€53m).

Beidh ról lárnach ag institiúidí tríú leibhéal laistigh de limistéar geografach, lena n-áirítear na trí Institiúid Teicneolaíochta sna contaetha cois teorann. Baineann a chomhionann de 514 bliain PhD i mbun taighde leis an obair thar shaolré an Chláir agus tá cuideachtaí roghnaithe ó na hearnálacha ábhartha páirteach ann freisin, trína bhforbróidh siad saineolas feabhsaithe, go háirithe i bhforbairt táirgí nó próiseas nua.

Tá dhá ghné an Chláir ar bun anois agus seoladh tionscadail ar leith i rith 2017.

EPSO/An Seimeastar Eorpach

Go dtí mí Mheán Fómhair 2017, chomhordaigh an Roinn obair na snáitheanna Fostaíochta agus Beartais Shóisialta de Chomhairle EPSCO an AE. Chuir Éire le hobair dhá chruiinní Comhairle fhoirmiúla agus cruinní Comhairle neamhfhoirmiúil amháin faoi Uachtaráinacht Mhálta sna chéad sé mhí de 2017. Chomhordaigh an Roinn cruinní Comhairle neamhfhoirmiúil amháin faoi Uachtaráinacht na hEastóine i mí Iúil. I mí Mheán Fómhair 2017, aistríodh an fhreagracht as comhordú cruinnithe eile na Comhairle chuig an Roinn Gnótháí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí.

Colún Eorpach ar Chearta Sóisialta

D'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún Eorpach a thograí le haghaidh Colún Eorpach ar Chearta Sóisialta i mí Aibreán, i ndiaidh an próiseas comhairliúcháin a chur i gcrích leis na Ballstáit ar fad. Mhol an Coimisiún go dtabharfaí isteach an Colún Eorpach ar Chearta Sóisialta mar Fhorógra Idirinstiúideach trí Pharlaímint na hEorpa agus an Chomhairle. Chomhordaigh an Roinn seasamh na hÉireann, a raibh baint ag 12 Roinn eile leis, trí na coistí éagsúla AE agus Comhairlí EPSCO go dtí mí Mheán Fómhair 2017. I mí Mheán Fómhair, aistríodh an fhreagracht as comhordú fhreagairt na hÉireann chun dul chun cinn a dhéanamh ar an gColún Eorpach ar Chearta Sóisialta chuig an Roinn Gnótháí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí.

An tAonad Rialála Gnó

Lean an tAonad Rialála Gnó de bheith rannphárteach i ngrúpaí éagsúla idirnáisiúnta amhail Ardán REFIT an Aontais Eorpaigh, ag féachaint ar chumas rialála, Grúpa Oibre um Rialáil Níos Fearn na Comhairle Eorpaí, agus Coiste um Beartas Rialála na hEagraíochta um Chomhar agus Fhorbairt Eacnamaíochta (OECD).

Tionscnamh na nGeilleagar Beag Sárfhorbartha

Is ionann Tionscnamh na nGeilleagar Beag Sárfhorbartha agus grúpa seacht dtír (an Danmhairg, an Fhionlainn, Éire, Iosrael, an Nua-Shéalaínn, Singeapór agus an Eilvéis) a thugann le chéile oifigigh agus saineolaithe chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar cheisteanna beartais comhleasa ina mbíonn tionchar ag dearcadh na tíre mar gheilleagar beag sárfhorbartha ar roghanna beartais.

Bhí cruinniú bliantúil na bPríomhoifigeach ar siúl i Heilsincí in 2017 agus áiríodh i dToscaireacht na hÉireann, á stiúradh ag an Ard-Rúnaí, an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, feidhmeannaigh shinsearacha ón an Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála, agus Oifig Phríomhchomhairleoí Eolaíochta an Rialtais. B'ionadaithe sinsearacha ó aireachtaí a dtíortha iad na toscairí (lena n-áirítear Oifigí na bPríomh-Airí, na nAireachtaí Gnó, Airgeadais, Ardoideachais agus Eolaíochta, agus Aireachtaí Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála), gníomhaireachtaí bainteacha de réir mar ba chuí, agus oifigí na bPríomhchomhairleoí Eolaíochta.

Rinneadh an OECD cur i láthair ag seisiún iomlánach ar tháirgíúlacht agus iomaíochas. Áiríodh le cuir i láthair eile ó na comhaltaí agus na réimsí plé olltiomsú sonraí a úsáid chun bonn eolais a chur faoi dhéanamh beartas, todhchaí na hoibre, inniúlachtaí don saol oibre a fhaightear in Ardoideachas a sheasfaidh an aimsir a chruthú, castacht gheilleagrach, digitíu, trúchtálú taighde phoiblí, slabhraí luacha domhanda agus beartas trádála.

An Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Saothair

Stiúrann an Roinn rannpháirtíochta na hÉireann san Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Saothair. I mí an Mheithimh, toghadh Éire mar chomhalta Titulaire de Chomhlacht Rialaithe na hEagraíochta Idirnáisiúnta Saothair don tréimhse ó 2017 go 2020. Is é seo an chéad uair a toghadh Éire ar shuiochán Titulaire (ceann ag a bhfuil cearta labhartha agus vótála) ó chuamar isteach san Egraíocht in 1923. Chun ullmhú seasaimh náisiúnta ar chlár oibre an Chomhlachta Rialaithe a éascú, bhunaigh an Roinn Grúpa Idir-rannach a thug Ranna ag a bhfuil freaghracht beartais as clár oibre forleathan an Chomhlachta Rialaithe le chéile.

Tá rannpháirtíochas na gCompháirtithe Sóisialta ina phríomhghnáe d'obair an Ghrúpa, a léiríonn gur eagraíocht thríthaobhach í an Eagraíocht Idirnáisiúnta Saothair. Chomh maith le páirt a ghlaicadh i gcruiinnithe an Chomhlachta Rialaithe i mí an Mhárta agus i mí na Samhna, stiúr an Roinn toscaireacht thríthaobhach go dtí an Chomhdháil Idirnáisiúnta Saothair i mí an Mheithimh.

Clár Méadreolaíochta na hEorpa don Taighde

In 2017, ghlac Saotharlann Náisiúnta Méadreolaíochta an Údarás um Chaighdeán Náisiúnta na hÉireann páirt i roinnt tionscadail taighde sa Chlár Méadreolaíochta Eorpach um Nuálaíoch agus Thaighde (EMPIR), lena n-áirítear:

- Tionscadal Eura-Thermal EMPIR
- Tionscadal Rianaithe Tomhais Cálíochta Cumhachta (Bealaí inrianaithe le haghaidh tomhais cálíochta cumhachta leictrí)
- Tionscadal HUMEA a bhfuil de chuspóir leis cumais tomhais agus taighde a fhorbairt nó a leathnú in institiúidí méadreolaíochta náisiúnta agus institiúidí ainmnithe sna tíortha rannpháirtíochta éiritheacha i réimse na dtomhas bogthaise.
- MetAmmi: "Metrology for additively manufactured medical implants".

In 2017, d'óstáil an tÚdarás comholtas Thionól Ginearálta IQNET, an líonra is mó ar domhan de chomhlachtaí náisiúnta deimhnithe, chun a chinntíu gur féidir le hÉirinn agus gnóthaí Éireannacha aitheantas agus rochtain ar an margadh níos forleithne a bhaint amach.

Sprioc 4:

Éire a chur chun cinn mar cheannródaí nuálaíochta domhanda

Ceannaireacht a thabhairt maidir le huallmhian uile-Rialtais Éire a chur chun cinn mar cheannródaí nuálaíochta domhanda, córas iomaioch idirnáisiúnta taighde a thiomáint, bonn fiontraíochta nuálach a chruthú agus sochaí níos fearr a thógáil

Nuálaíocht 2020

Leagtar amach i Nuálaíocht 2020, ár straitéis náisiúnta taighde agus forbartha, eolaíochta agus teicneolaíochta, físean maidir le hÉirinn a bheith ina ceannaire nuálaíochta domhanda.

Is é an aidhm ann ná córas taighde agus nuálaíochta iomaioch idirnáisiúnta a chruthú, a spreagfaidh geilleagar inbhuanaithe le go gcruthófar sochaí níos fearr. Is cuid thábhachtach den fhís sin tacáiocht a thabhairt do shár-eolaíochta, tallann a chothú agus tionchar a imirt.

Tá cur i bhfeidhm Nuálaíocht 2020 á spreagadh ag Grúpa Cur Chun Feidhme an Rialtais faoi chathaoirleacht na Roinne agus ina bhfuil Príomhchomhairleoir Eolaíochta an Rialtais, gníomhaireachtaí maoinithe taighde agus Ranna Rialtais ábhartha eile rannpháirteach.

Tháinig an Grúpa Cur Chun Feidhme le chéile trí huaire in 2017. Tugadh an dara tuarascáil ar dhul chun cinn Nuálaíocht 2020 agus a chur i bhfeidhm don Rialtas agus foilsíodh í i mí na Nollag 2017. Rinneadh dul chun cinn le Nuálaíocht 2020 leis na gníomhartha seo in 2017:

- Fógraíodh cúig Lárionad Taighde nua le Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann (tá 17 nlonad Taighde ag an bhFondúireachtanois);
- Clár nua Dochtúireachta agus Máistreachta trí Thaighde chun maoiniú a sholáthar do 150 iontrálaí nua i ndisciplíní a thagann leis an bhfiontar;
- Forbairt leanúnach thiomantas na hÉireann d'Eagraíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta Taighde, mar is léir ó:
 - Comholtacht i dtionscnamh na Réadlainne Eorpaí sa Leathsféar Theas;
 - Comholtacht na hÉireann in LOFAR a chur i gcrích, an lónra teileascóip raidió atá ar fud na hEorpa;
 - Comholtacht iomlán in ELIXIR a thugann acmhainní eolaíocht bheatha le chéile as fud fad na hEorpa;
- Bhuaigh Éire €475 milliún de mhaoiniú iomaioch faoi Fís 2020, an Clár Creatá AE do Thaighde agus Forbairt;
- Seoladh Ionad Teicneolaíochta nua idir Fiontraíocht Éireann agus GFT Éireann i bpróiseáil feola – tionscnamh faoi stiúir an tionscail chun ‘ionad ilfhreastail’ a chruthú le haghaidh taighde agus teicneolaíochta próiseála feola;
- Scéim an Bhosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán) a achtú chun a chur ar chumas FBManá cáiliú do ráta níos ísle cán chorparáide;
- Seoladh seacht dtionscadal Taighde Nuálaíochta do Ghnólachtaí Beaga (SBIR) de chuid Fhiontraíocht Éireann, a thug aghaidh ar dhúshláin ar nós dumpáil mhídhleathach, claiseanna blocáilte i limistéir i mbaol mór tulite, réitigh fhios an bhealaigh, agus a chur ar cumas daoine níos sine fanacht ina n-áit chónaithé féin;
- Cuireadh trí Thairseach Teicneolaíochta nua de chuid Fhiontraíocht Éireann leis an lónra tairseacha a chuireann réitigh teicneolaíochta ar fáil do thionscal na hÉireann gar dá riachtanais margaidh;
- Seoladh an tríú céim de Thionscnamh um Aistriú Teicneolaíochta a Neartú faoi Aistriú Eolais Éireann a chuirfidh leis an gcumas laistigh den chóras aistrithe eolais agus a chothaíonn acmhainn chun tacú le próiseas tráchtálaithe an taighde;
- Seoladh Lárionad Léargas Margaidh agus Taighde Tomholtóirí úrscothach, comhtháite do thaighde agraibhia Éireannach;

- Seoladh na Gradaim Laureate do thraigde ceannródaíoch i ngach disciplín i ndiaidh leibhéal iardhochtúireachta;
- Cuireadh taighde i bhfeidhm a bhaineann le moltaí a tháinig ó athbhreithniú an Údarás Ardoideachais ar mholtáí comhionannas inscne.

Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann

I rith 2017, lean Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann uirthi ag glacadh ról tábhachtach maidir le tacú le físeán Rialtais i ndáil le hÉirinn a bheith ar thús cadhnaíochta domhanda ó thaobh na Nuálaíochta de (ina Ceannródaí Nuálaíochta Domhanda), mar a ndéantar breac-chuntas air i straitéis na hÉireann um thraigde agus forbairt, eolaíocht agus teicneolaíocht – Nuálaíocht 2020 – mar aon le roinnt gníomhartha sa Phlean Gníomhaíochta do Phoist, 2017 agus straitéisí náisiúnta eile a chur i bhfeidhm.

I rith 2017, lean Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann ag díriú ar thacú le timpeallacht chomhoibritheach taighde d'ardchaighdeán agus é mar aidhm aici Éire a bhunú mar ionad a mbeadh cáil air i ndáil le taighde eolaíoch den scoth a bhaineann leis an ngeilleagar. In 2017, sainaithníodh Éire san 11ú háit i rangú eolaíochta domhanda le haghaidh cháilíocht fhioriomlán an taighde, agus í i measc na ndeich dtír ab fhéarr ar feadh tamaill in 2016–2017. Bhí Éire sa dara háit ar domhan don Nanaitheicneolaíocht, sa dara háit d'Eolaíocht Ainmhithe agus Déirí, sa dara háit don Imdhíoneolaíocht, sa cheathrú háit don Talmhaíocht, sa cheathrú háit don Mhatamaitic, sa chúigiú háit d'Eolaíocht Ábhar agus sa séú háit don Cheimic.

Gníomhaíochtaí sna Cláir

Sa bliain 2017, baineadh éachtaí suntasacha amach ar fud gach réimse de ghníomhaíochta Phondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann. Faomhadh 366 gradam nua in 2017 thar 30 clár ar luach €212 milliún. B'fhiú €173 milliún na híocaíochtaí le comhlacthaí agus eagraíochtaí taighde in 2017.

I measc na bpriomhréimsí dul chun cinn in 2017 bhí:

- Shínigh an chéad 12 Lárionad Taighde faoi Phondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann comhaontuithe taighde chomhoibríoch le hos cionn 300 compháirtí tionscail, a léiríonn tiomantais charnacha ó chuideachtaí dar luach os cionn €120 milliún agus bhuaigh siad €132 milliún ó réimse gníomhaireachtaí idirnáisiúnta maoinithe.
- Seoladh ceithre Lárionad Taighde nua de chuid Phondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann: Confirm, FutureNeuro, BEACON agus I-FORM le hinfeistíocht €74 milliún ón bhFondúireacht agus maioniú tionscail €40 milliún. Tabharfaidh na Lárionaid Taighde nua sin aghaidh ar réimsí tábhachtacha agus réimsí atá ag teacht chun cinn sa gheilleagar, lena n-áirítear ard-deantúsaíocht bhreisithe agus chliste, galair néareolaíochta agus an bithgheilleagar.
- Lean an Phondúireacht ar aghaidh ag tacú le taighdeoirí i dtús a ngairme trí chláir éagsúla, lena n-áirítear Deontas Taighde do Phríomhthaighdeoirí Tosaigh, an Dámhachtain Forbartha Gairme agus clár Cheannairí Taighde na Todhchaí.
- Infheistíodh os cionn €40 milliún i 34 tionscadal taighde den scoth a mbeidh tionchar acu faoi Chláir Príomhthaighdeoirí na Fondúireachta. Fuair sé cinn de na tionscadail taighde cómhaoiniú €3 mhilliún ó Teagasc, Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Éireann, Foras na Mara agus an Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil.
- Comhthionscnamh arna chómhaoiniú ag Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann agus Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft na Gearmáine, chun Lárionad Tionscadal Fraunhofer a chruthú le haghaidh Córás Bhithanailíseachá Leabaithe in Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath.
- Maoiníodh trí dhámhachtain do Chomhalaíocht Taighde Ollscoile an Royal Society faoi Scéim Compháirtíochta Phondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann agus an Royal Society.

- Bronnadh trí ghradam faoin ngairm is deireanaí ar mhaoiniú faoi Chomhpháirtíocht Fhondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann agus BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council), a d'fhág líon na ndámhachtainí maoinithe ag 14 cinn agus €6.7 milliún.
- Chomhaontaigh an Fhondúireacht comhaontú comhpháirtíochta nua le Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) na Ríochta Aontaithe. Tacaíonn an comhaontú le comhthionscadail taighde agus forbartha teicneolaíochta i réimsí innealtóireachta, TFC, eolaíochtaí matamaiticiúla, fisice, ceimice agus eolaíocht ábhar. Tógann sé sin ar an gcaidreamh reatha leis an Ríocht Aontaithe, ina bhfuil comhaontuithe comhoibríocha leis an Royal Society, Wellcome agus an BBSRC.
- Maoiníodh 50% d'fhoilseacháin na hÉireann inar luadh paitinní go hiomlán nó i bpáirt le cistí Fhondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann, a léiríonn go bhfuil an taighde a mhaoiníonn an Fhondúireacht riachtanach don phróiseas tráchtálaithe.
- Leagann an Fhondúireacht luach ar chomhpháirtíochtaí, agus faoi dheireadh 2017 bhronn sí 18 gComhpháirtíocht Straitéiseach leis an tionscal (lena n-áirítear náoi ndámhachtain i gcomhar le Pfizer) agus 16 dhámhachtain le Lárionaid Taighde Spokes na Fondúireachta.

Feasacht STEM (Eolaíocht, Teicneolaíocht, Innealtóireacht, Mata)

Thionóil Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann roinnt tionscnaimh feasachta STEM in 2017. Tá an Fhondúireacht ag obair leis an gcraoltóir náisiúnta, RTÉ, agus le comhpháirtithe eile trína clár Discover, chun aistriú ó bhonn ar thuairisciú agus cláir eolaíochta a spreagadh, go háirithe cinn a tharraingíonn aird ar scéalta Éireannacha a bhaineann le STEM thar na hardáin meán ar fad. Tríd an gcomhpháirtíocht idir an Fhondúireacht agus RTÉ, craoladh trí chlár faisnéise aon uaire, cúig shraith theilifíse agus trí shraith theilifíse do pháistí a bhaineann le céasair eolaíochta. Díríodh níos mó ar an eolaíocht sna meáin chraolta, agus craoladh cúpla clár a maoiníodh go neamhspleách, lena n-áirítear cláir faisnéise, gnéchláir don ghréasán agus tuairisciú nuachta méadaithe ó chomhfhreagraí eolaíochta RTÉ.

Bhí an tSeachtain Eolaíochta ar siúl an 12–19 Samhain agus eagraíodh os cionn 1,200 imeacht ar fud na tíre, ina raibh 315,000 duine rannpháirteach. Bhí 12 fhéile i measc na n-imeachtaí sin sna háiteanna seo a leanas: An Cabhán/Muineachán, Sligeach, Maigh Eo, Gaillimh, Luimneach, Ciarraí, Corcaigh, Port Láirge, Ceatharlach, Tiobraid Árann agus Lár na Tíre. Bhí Féile Bia agus Feirmeoireachta Teagasc ar siúl i mBaile Átha Cliath, an Mhí, Ceatharlach, Gaillimh, Corcaigh agus Loch Garman. Chomhordaigh Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann cúpla imeacht lena n-áirítear ‘Scintillating Science with Dara O’Brien’ ar díoladh gach ticéad dó sa Cheoláras Náisiúnta agus Lá Oscailte i rith na Seachtaine Eolaíochta san Ionad Comhdhála, Baile Átha Cliath, ar díoladh gach ticéad dó freisin.

Chuathas i bhfeidhm ar dhéimeagrafaic nua ar bhealaí nuálacha, lena n-áirítear an clár teilifíse ‘Weather Live’ a chuir Met Éireann i láthair agus a craoladh ar RTÉ Bealach a hAon, imeachtaí idirghníomhacha i Scoil Aisteoireachta an Gaiety agus neart eile. Chuir Seachtain Eolaíochta na bliana seo túis leis an bhfeachtas #StopAndAsk freisin, a raibh d'aidhm leis a chur ar chumas na sochaí ciall a bhaint as an domhan mórrhimpeall orthu agus comhráite a éascú idir an pobal mór agus an pobal eolaíochta in Éirinn. Bhí ionchur suntasach ó thaighdeoirí a fuair maoiniú ó Fhondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann agus comhpháirtithe tionscail a ghlac páirt in Imeachtaí na Seachtaine Eolaíochta ar fud na tíre. Bronnadh 44 dámhachtain trí chlár Discover na Fondúireachta ar bhain infheistíocht €2.8 milliún ar an iomlán leo, a thacaíonn le hoideachas agus rannpháirtíocht phobal na hÉireann in STEM.

Beartú Tosaíochtaí Taighde

Ghlac an Rialtas le Beartú Tosaíochtaí Taighde in 2012 mar phríomhphrionsabal a threoraíonn infheistíocht phoiblí i dtaighde chun tacú leis an earnáil fiontraíochta. Ailíníonn sé infheistíocht phoiblí le réimsí de dheiseanna straitéiseacha margaidh d'fhiontair bunaithe in Éirinn. Baineann an timthriall reatha don Bheartú Tosaíochtaí Taighde leis an tréimhse cúig bliana 2013–2017. Thug Nuálaíocht 2020 tiomantas go ndéanfaí athbhreithniú ar na réimsí tosaíochta chun a chinntí go bhfuil siad fós bailí agus iad a leasú, más gá, i bhfianaise cúinsí athraithe. Is é an cuspóir na réimsí tosaíochta a fhorbairt chun a chinntí go bhfuil Éire in áit mhaith chun leas a bhaint as na deiseanna domhanda anois agus amach anseo, ach freagairt do mhórthreochtaí ar fud na cruinne agus dúshláin dhomhanda atá ag athrú gheilleagar an domhain agus sheasamh na hÉireann ann. In 2017, cuireadh trí staidéar i gcrích a thugann bonn fianaise don chéad timthriall eile den Bheartú Tosaíochtaí Taighde don tréimhse ó 2018 go 2023. Is iad seo a leanas na staidéir sin:

- Measúnú ar Dheiseanna an Mhargaidh Dhomhanda chun réimsí straitéiseacha ó thaobh deiseanna tráchtála a shainaithint i margáí domhanda d'fhiontair bunaithe in Éirinn.
- Cleachtadh maidir le Todhchaí Theicneolaíochta chun teicneolaíochtaí a mheasúnú a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ríthábhachtach d'fhorbairt gheilleagrach agus shóisialta na hÉireann.
- Measúnú ar an tsraith reatha de Bheartú Tosaíochtaí Taighde.

Tionóladh Fóram Comhairliúcháin i mí na Samhna 2017 ag a bhfuarthas dearthaí páirtithe leasmhara ón earnáil acadúil, fiontair agus phoiblí. Cuireadh an tuarascáil deiridh ina leagtar amach na tosaíochtaí leasaithe faoi bhráid an Rialtais agus foilseofar í sa chéad ráithe de 2018.

Ciste Nuálaíochta na dTeicneolaíochtaí Suaiteacha

Chinn an Rialtas go gcuirfeadh an réimse tosaíochta taighde leasaithe bonn eolais faoi Chiste Nuálaíochta na dTeicneolaíochtaí Suaiteacha nua a fógraíodh i gcomhthéacs an Phlean Forbartha Náisiúnta faoi Éire 2040 - An Tionscadal. Deimhníonn sé sin bunú Ciste €500 milliún bunaithe ar dhúshlán a chuirfear i bhfeidhm tríd an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta agus a gníomhaireachtaí, i gcomhar le Ranna agus gníomhaireachtaí Rialtais eile.

Beidh an Ciste sin iomaíoch agus bunaithe ar dhúshlán agus déanfar infheistíocht i dtaighde, forbairt agus úsáid teicneolaíochtaí suaiteacha agus a bhfeidhmeanna ar bhonn tráchtála chun poist na todhchaí a chruthú: spreagfaidh sé comhoibriú idir bonn taighde úrscothach na hÉireann agus an tionscal chomh maith le fiontair a éascú chun dul san iomaíocht go díreach le haghaidh maoiniú chun tacú le forbairt agus glacadh na dteicneolaíochtaí sin. Cabhróidh an Ciste le hÉirinn a chur chun cinn mar Cheannródaí Nuálaíochta Domhanda.

Caiteachas Caipítil ar Thaighde, Forbairt agus Nuálaíocht – Athbhreithniú

I mí lúil 2017, d'fhoilsigh an Roinn athbhreithniú ar Chaiteachas Caipítil na Roinne ar Thaighde, Forbairt agus Nuálaíocht. Cuireann an tuarascáil leis an athbhreithniú níos leithne a rinne an Rialtas ar Chaiteachas in 2017. Mionsonraítear caiteachas na Roinne san athbhreithniú óna cuspóirí go hionchuir, aschuir, torthá agus tionchair ó 2000 go 2016.

Léirítear san athbhreithniú go mbíonn rátaí inmharthana níos airde ag gnólachtaí nuálacha agus an cumas maireachtáil fiú i gcás suaitheadh. Cabhraíonn nuálaíocht le meascán tárgí nó seirbhísí a fhorbairt freisin agus méadaíonn sí an cumas chun idirnáisiúnú. As claint Fhiontraíocht Éireann, léirigh gnólachtaí nuálacha athléimneacht níos airde agus fás san phostaíochta, easpórtálacha agus breislúach. Cé go ndearnadh dul chun cinn i gCóras Náisiúnta Nuálaíochta na hÉireann a fhorbairt, sainaithnítear san athbhreithniú dúshlán a gcaithfear aghaidh a thabhairt orthu go leanúnach chun tionchar an mhaoinithe sa chóras a fheabhsú. Áirítear ina measc siúd: bonn na ngnólachtaí nuálacha a leathnú; an scála infheistíocha a dhoimhniú; na tacáiochtaí atá ar fáil a leathnú; agus tacú le cuideachtaí chun a meascán tárgí agus margaidh a éagsúlú, atá riachtanach i gcomhthéacs an Bhreatimeachta agus gnólachtaí atá ag brath an iomarca ar mhargadh aonair faoi láthair.

Mol Nuálaíochta Sláinte Éireann

Is comhthionscnamh é Mol Nuálaíochta Sláinte Éireann idir an Roinn agus an Roinn Sláinte. Is é aidhm an tionscnaimh comhoibriú idir an tseirbhís sláinte agus an earnáil fiontraíochta a chur chun cinn agus go ndéanfaí forbairt agus tráchtálú ar theicneolaíochtaí, tárgí agus seirbhísí nua cúram sláinte. Tá saineolaí neamhspleách ón tionscal i mbun cathaoirleachta ar Ghrúpa Maoirseachta, a bunaíodh chun treoir straitéiseach fhioriomlán a sholáthar do Mhol Nuálaíochta Sláinte Éireann, le comhchathaoirligh ón Roinn agus an Roinn Sláinte. Tá ionadaithe sinsearacha ó na gníomhaireachtaí forbartha fiontraíocha, Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhise Sláinte agus an Bord um Thaighde Sláinte sa ghrúpa freisin. Tháinig an Grúpa Maoirseachta le chéile sé huaire in 2017.

I ngairm 2016–2017 (oscaithe agus dírithe) lorgaíodh tograí tionscadail ó chuideachtaí nó ó eintitis a d'fhéadfadh a dtárgí nó seirbhísí nuálacha tionchar mór a imirt ar chúram sláinte. Lorgaíodh freisin coincheapa agus smaointe ó dhaoine aonair nó foirne a bhfuil baint acu le seachadadh cúram sláinte. Lorgaíodh sa ghairm oscailte freisin aon nuálaíochtaí chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar riachtanais cúram sláinte. I gcomhréir leis an Tionscnamh um Aosú Cliste, bhain an ghairm spriocdhírithe ar Chúram a Fheabhsú do Dhaoine Breac-aosta sa Chóras Sláinte. Ina theannta sin, feidhmíonn an Mol beartas 'Dorais Oscailte' taobh amuigh den phróiseas foirmiúil gairme. In 2017, thacaigh an Mol go gníomhach le 37 tionscadal – 22 ó chuideachtaí agus 15 smaoineamh nó coincheap nuálacha ón gcóras cúram sláinte. Tá an Mol ag tabhairt faoi na tionscadail sin i 13 shuálmh dhifriúla chliniciúla, ó Ospidéil, go Grúpa Cúram Pobail Fheidhmeannacht na Seirbhise Sláinte, go Cógaslanna.

I rith 2017, bunaíodh Grúpa Comhairleach Páirtithe Leasmhara, a bhfuil ionadaí ó Fheidhmeannacht na Seirbhise Sláinte mar chathaoirleach air agus ina bhfuil ionadaithe ón tseirbhís sláinte, an tionscal agus grúpaí othar. Gníomhaíonn an Grúpa mar fhóram idir an tionscal, seirbhísí sláinte, othair agus an Mol chun tortháil feabhsaithe othar a bhaint amach, agus éifeachtúlachtaí agus éifeachtacht i soláthar cúram sláinte a éascóidh fás geilleagach. Tá sé d'aidhm freisin ag an nGrúpa ionchur straitéiseach a thabhairt don Ghrúpa Maoirseachta ionas go mbeidh an Mol ag cur tionscadail chun cinn i réimsí gníomhaíochta a bhaineann le riachtanais na seirbhise cúram sláinte agus an mhargaidh cúram sláinte dhomhanda. Tháinig an Grúpa Comhairleach Páirtithe Leasmhara le chéile faoi dhó in 2017.

An Straitéis Náisiúnta Mhuirí

Chuir an Roinn agus a gníomhaireachtaí, Fiontraíocht Éireann, GFT Éireann agus Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann le cur i bhfeidhm 'Feidhm a Bhaint as Saibreas Ár nAigéin', an straitéis náisiúnta mhuirí.

Glacann an Roinn páirt sa Ghrúpa tras-Rialtais Comhordaithe Mhuirí faoi chathaoirleacht an Aire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara. Ghlac a gníomhaireachtaí páirt sa ghrúpa idirgníomhaireachta arbh é a gcúram comhairle a thabhairt don Ghrúpa Comhordaithe Mhuirí maidir le feidhmiú na Foirne Forbartha Muirí, a bunaíodh faoi scáth Oifig Forbartha Muirí na hÉireann. Oibríonn an Fhoireann Forbartha Muirí go dlúth le gníomhaireachtaí forbartha na Roinne chun leas a bhaint as deiseanna fiontraíochta san earnáil mhuirí.

D'eagraigh an Roinn, i bpáirt le sé chomhlacht phoiblí eile, ceardlann arís ar théama an Aigéin Dhigitigh, mar chuid de SeaFest 2017, an fhéile náisiúnta mhuirí a bhíonn ar siúl i nGaillimh gach Meitheamh. D'fhereastail 380 toscaire ar an gceardlann, le méadú suntasach ar líon na dtoscairí tionscail in 2017.

Clár Réime um Thaighde agus Nuálaíocht an AE – Fís 2020

Lean Éire den fheidhmíocht iontach a bhí aici i bhFís 2020, Clár Réime um Thaighde agus Nuálaíocht an Aontais Eorpaigh. Bhuaigh Éire €475 milliún do mhaoiniú iomaíoch AE ón gclár don tréimhse 2014 go Meán Fómhair 2017. Fuair Institiúidí Ardoideachais €254 milliún de sin, nó 53.4% den iomlán.

Bhuaigh cuideachtaí €161 milliún, nó 34%, le €98.6 milliún de sin ag dul go dtí FB Manna. Stiúrann Fiontraíocht Éireann Lónra Fís 2020 na hÉireann, ina bhfuil Pointí Teagmhála Náisiúnta agus Toscairí Náisiúnta ó ghníomhaireachtaí éagsúla taighde agus tionscail agus ranna rialtais.

Is faoin Roinn atá cathaoirleacht an Ghrúpa Ardleibhél Tras-Rialtais ar Fís 2020 a bhfuil sé de chúram aige cur i bhfeidhm na straitéise náisiúnta do Fís 2020 a chomhordú agus a spreagadh. Tugann na tortaí seo le fios go bhfuil Éire ar an mbóthar chun an sprioc náisiúnta a leagadh amach sa straitéis a bhaint amach, is é sin €1.25 billiún de mhaoiniú AE a fháil le linn thréimhse an chláir.

Chomhaontaigh an Chomhairle Aireachta Thuaidh Theas sprioc dhúshlánach de €175m tarraingthe anuas le haghaidh comhoibriú thuaidh theas i gclár Fís 2020. Cinntíodh €65m go dtí seo agus d'ainneoin éiginnteacht faoin mBreatimeacht, tá an sprioc iomlán fós indéanta. I rith 2017, thug Idir-Thrádáil Éireann faoi shuirbhé ar rannpháirtithe féideartha faoin acmhainn a bhaineann le compháirtíochtaí trastearann faoi Fís 2020 agus forbróidh sé réimse tacaíochtaí bunaithe ar thorthaí an tsuirbhé. Áirítear ina measc siúd oiliúint shaincheaptha le haghaidh iarratais maoinithe Fís 2020, am cosanta do léachtóirí/taighdeoirí agus sraith imeachtaí spriocdhírithe.

Mar ullmhúchán don idirbheartaíocht ar an naoú Clár Creata le haghaidh Taighde agus Nuálaíochta (FP9) a thiocfaidh i gcomharbacht ar Fís 2020, d'fhoilsigh an Roinn a dearcthaí tosaigh ar an gclár nua i mí Mheán Fómhair 2017. Molann Éire gur cheart do FP9 glacadh leis an sprioc uaillmhianach den Aontas Eorpach a bhunú mar an ceannaire domhanda i nginiúint eolais nua trí thaighde eolaíoch agus an t-eolas sin a chur i bhfeidhm trí réitigh nuálacha ar dhúshlán mhóra sa tsochaí agus sa gheilleagar.

Leagtar amach sa cháipéis seasamh tosaigh na hÉireann ar FP9 agus cuireadh i dtoll a chéile í i ndiaidh comhairliúcháin le páirtithe leasmhara náisiúnta, ranna rialtais agus gníomhaireachtaí.

Comhairle Náisiúnta Iomaíochais an Aontais Eorpaigh

D'fhreastail an Roinn ar dhá Chomhairle Iomaíochais (Taighde) fhoirmiúla agus ar dhá cheann neamhfoirmiúla agus ghlac sí páirt san obair ullmhúcháin as ar eascraigheadh dhá thacar de Chonclúidí Comhairle a bhain le:

- An timpeallacht monatóireachta agus tuairiscithe ar Thaighde agus Nuálaíochta a chuichóiriú; agus
- Ón measúnú eatramhach ar Fís 2020 i dtreo an naoú Clár Creata

An Limistéar Taighde Eorpach

Is limistéar aontaithe taighde é an Limistéar Taighde Eorpach atá oscailte don domhan bunaithe ar mhargadh inmhéanach an AE, ina mbíonn taighdeoirí, eolas eolaíochta agus teicneolaíochta ag gluaiseacht go héasca. Leis an Limistéar Taighde Eorpach neartaíonn an tAontas Eorpach a bhoinn eolaíochta agus teicneolaíochta, a iomaíochas agus a acmhainn chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar dhúshlán mhóra in éindí.

Sainaithnítear i dTreochláir an Limistéir Taighde Eorpaigh, 2015–2020, roinnt tosaíochtaí tábhachtacha cuir i bhfeidhm ar dócha go mbeidh an tionchar is mó acu ar chórais eolaíochta, taighde agus nuálaíochta na hEorpa.

Bunaithe ar na tiomantais a leagadh amach i Nuálaíocht 2020, leagtar amach i dTreochláir Éireannach an Limistéir Taighde Eorpaigh raon gníomhartha a dhéanfaidh Éire lena rannpháirtíochta sa Limistéar agus sé thosaíocht an Limistéir a dhoimhniú.

Eagraíochtaí Taighde Idirnáisiúnta

Lean an Roinn ar aghaidh ag treisiú rannpháirtíochta na hÉireann i gcomhoibrithe taighde idirnáisiúnta trína comholtas in I-LOFAR a chur i gcrích agus túis a chur le plé chun dul isteach sa Réadlann

Eorpach sa Leathsfear Theas. Is í an réadlann an eagraíocht réalteolaíochta idir-rialtais is tábhachtaí san Eoraip agus an réadlann réalteolaíochta is táirgiúla ar domhan. Tugadh túis áite do chomholtas sa Réadlann Eorpach sa Leathsfear Theas in áit CERN le haghaidh 2018 mar gheall ar an bpobal mór bunaithe de thaighdeoirí réalteolaíochta in Éirinn. Tá an réalteolaíocht ina réimse gníomhach taighde i ngach ollscoil agus i gcuid de na hinstiúidí teicneolaíochta. Leanfar leis an idirbheartaíocht faoi Chomhaontú Comhlachais na Éireann sa Réadlann Eorpach sa Leathsfear Theas in 2018.

Chuaigh Éire isteach sa Teileascóp LOFAR (Eagar Ísealmhinicíochta) Idirnáisiúnta (ILT) in 2017. Is gréasán de theileascóip raidió é an ILT atá scaipthe timpeall na hEorpa agus iad nasctha le chéile chun feidhmiú mar oll-teileascóp aontaithe. Is uirlis cheannródaíoch í seo ar fud na cruinne, agus an teileascóp raidió is mó ar domhan. Thug an Roinn, trína gníomhaireacht Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann, deontas €1.4 milliún i mí Eanáir 2016 do chostas caipitiúil an teileascóip raidió I-LOFAR.

Tá cuibhreannas uile-Éireann d'Ollscoileanna agus Institiúidí Teicneolaíochta sa chuibhreannas I-LOFAR. Chas an tAire Halligan an teileascóp in aice leis an teileascóp Leviatan stairiúil i gCaisleán Bhiorra, Co. Uíbh Fhailí ar siúl go hofigiúil i mí Iúil 2017.

Is ball anois í Éire de na hocht nEagraíocht Taighde Idirnáisiúnta – Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa, an tSaotharlann Eorpach um Bitheolaíocht Mhólíneach, an Chomhdháil Eorpach um Bitheolaíocht Mhólíneach, Eureka, COST, CECAM agus ELIXIR agus LOFAR. Tugann comholtas in eagraíochtaí taighde idirnáisiúnta dá leithéid deis do thaighdeoirí agus do nuálaithe na hÉireann agus is fianaise fheiceáilach í ar thiomantas na hÉireann d'fhorbairt a loirg idirnáisiúnta nuálaíochta, taighde agus forbartha.

EURAXESS agus Creidiúnú Institiúidí Taighde

Forálann Treoir an AE maidir le Taighdeoirí Tríú Tír do nós imeachta mear chun taighdeoirí a ligean isteach ó lasmuigh den Limistéar Eorpach Eacnamaíoch ar feadh tréimhse suas go cúig bliana chun taighde a dhéanamh in eagraíochtaí atá creidiúnaithe faoin scéim. Tá an Roinn freagrach as an bpróiseas iarratais do na heagraíochtaí a lorgaíonn creidiúnú mar institiúidí taighde a bhainistiú. Fuair an Roinn deich n-iarratas nua agus trí iarratas athnuachana in 2017. Faoi láthair tá 59 eagraíocht creidiúnaithe faoin scéim.

Maoíníonn an Roinn freisin oifig EURAXESS, a óstálann Cumann Ollscoileanna Éireann, a phróiseáil ann an t-iarratas do chomhaontuithe óstála ó na tíortha aonair. In 2017, phróiseáil EURAXESS 439 comhaontú óstála nua ó thaighdeoirí i 58 thír éagsúil.

Comhpháirtíocht Taighde agus Forbartha SAM agus na hÉireann

Is toradh í Comhpháirtíocht Taighde agus Forbartha SAM agus na hÉireann ar phróiseas na síochána agus tá rialtais SAM, na hÉireann agus Thuaisceart Éireann rannpháirteach ann agus iad ag obair le chéile chun dul chun cinn na heolaíochta a chothú ach deontais taighde a dhámhachtain ar bhonn iomaíoch. Ar na réimsí ar tugadh maoiniú dóibh tá sláinte, teileachumarsáid, fuinneamh, nanaitheicneolaíochta, braiteoirí, talmhaíocht agus comhoibriú ag leibhéal na Lárionad Taighde aonair.

Déanann Grúpa Stiúrtha atá faoi chomhchathaoirleacht na dtrí dhlínse an comhoibriú a stiúradh sna trí riarrachán agus tá tacaíocht rúnaíochta aige ó Idir-Thrádáil Éireann. Thionól na Stáit Aontaithe cruinniu de chuid an Ghrúpa Stiúrtha i mí an Mhárta 2017.

Suas go 2017, bhí 40 tionscadal rathúil faoin gcomhpháirtíocht sin, lena n-áirítear an chéad Deontas Clár Fondúireachta do Thionscnamh Taighde na hInstitiúide Bia agus Talmhaíochta i Roinn Talmhaíochta na Stát Aontaithe.

Teagmhálacha an Aire

Thug an Roinn tacaíocht do thoscaireacht Aire go dtí an Bhrasaíl chun aird a tharraingt ar chompháirtíochtaí taighde agus nuálaíochta leis an saol acadúil agus le fointair. Thacaigh an Roinn le hAirí ina gcruiinnithe le toscaireachtaí eachtracha freisin.

Fiontraíocht Éireann, Infheistíocht agus Gníomhaíocht Nuálaíochta

Tá Fiontraíocht Éireann freagrach as tacú le forbairt cuideachtaí déantúsaíochta agus seirbhísí a thrádáiltear go hidirnáisiúnta. Cuireann sí tacaíochtaí Taighde agus Forbartha ar fáil do chuideachtaí chun teicneolaíochtaí agus próisis nua a fhorbairt a chruthóidh poist agus a mhéadóidh easpórtálacha. Déanann Fiontraíocht Éireann é sin de bhun trí phríomhghníomhaíochta:

- Acmhainn reatha Taighde agus Forbartha ionchuideachta a threisiú
- Dlús a chur faoi chomhoibriú méadaithe idir an tionscal agus lucht acadúil
- Tráchtálú

Acmhainn Reatha Taighde agus Forbartha Ionchuideachta a Threisiú

De bhun tacaíocht a chur ar fáil do Thaighde, Forbairt agus Nuálaíochta, aithníonn an Stát cliseadh sa mhargadh sa mhéid is nach ndéanann cuideachtaí (FBManna go háirithe) dóthain infheistíochta i dtaighde agus forbairt nó sa chás go ndéanann siad infheistíocht ach nach mbíonn na tionscadail sách mór ná uaillmhanach. Is é ról Fiontraíocht Éireann ina leith sin an baol a bhaint as taighde, forbairt agus nuálaíocht den chineál sin ionas go bhforbródh cuideachtaí tárgí agus seirbhísí nua agus feabhsaithe.

Ionad Teicneolaíochta do Thaighde Déantúsaíochta Éireannach

Oscláodh an tlonad Teicneolaíochta do Thaighde Déantúsaíochta Éireannach go hoifigiúil i mí na Bealtaine 2017. Soláthraíonn Taighde Déantúsaíochta Éireannach, a mhaoinítear faoi Chlár Ionaid Teicneolaíochta Fiontraíocht Éireann/na Gníomhaireachta Forbartha Tionscail, réitigh taighde agus saineolas agus oiliúint don earnáil déantúsaíochta in Éirinn.

Cruthóidh infheistíocht tosaigh Stáit €15 mhilliún maioniú suntasach breise príobháideach agus poiblí don taighde, chun ionad scála idirnáisiúnta a chruthú d'Éirinn i dTaighde Déantúsaíochta Feidhmeach a spreagfaidh an tionscal. Is é fír an Taighde Déantúsaíochta Éireannaigh cabhrú le ceannaire domhanda a dhéanamh d'Éirinn in ardoibríochtaí déantúsaíochta le haghaidh FBManna agus cuideachtaí easpórtála dúchasacha agus corporáidí ilnáisiúnta atá lonnaithe in Éirinn.

Tugann an tlonad nua tionscail trasearnála agus compháirtithe acadúla le chéile chun dul chun cinn mór a fhorbairt i dteicneolaíochtaí atá ag teacht chun cinn ar nós teicneolaíochtaí tárgiúlachta, róbataic chomhoibríoch, idirlíon tionsclaíoch na n-earraí agus déantúsaíocht bhrefisithe.

Nuálaíochtaí Comhoibritheacha

In 2017, fuair an lín is mó riabh de thionscadail chomhoibritheacha (1,078) idir cuideachtaí agus Institiúidí Ardoideachais tacaíocht Fiontraíocht Éireann.

Bhí tionscadail éagsúla i gceist leo, ó thionscadail bheaga €5k do Dhearnáin Nuálaíochta, go tionscadail Tionscail Tairsí Teicneolaíochta, go tionscadail mhóra amhail Compháirtíochtaí Nuálaíochta, agus €300k mar an meán acu. Tugann na tionscadail seo deiseanna tráchtála nua do chuideachtaí, spáráiltear airgead agus méadaíonn siad ar chumas nuálaíochta.

Mac-chuideachtaí Gnóthaí Nuathionscanta Ardacmhainne: Cruthaíodh 15 Ghnó Nuathionscanta Ardacmhainne de bharr tortaí taighde ón gcóras Ardoideachais in 2017. Is Gnóthaí Nuathionscanta Ardacmhainne ardteicneolaíochta iad seo, agus go minic is cuideachtaí óga

suaiteacha iad agus cumas láidir iontu iad féin a chur chun cinn, díolacháin easpórtála a ghnóthú agus cur leis an bhfás ar fhostaíocht in Éirinn.

Rath Fís 2020: Tá Fiontraíocht Éireann chun tosaigh inár rannpháirtíocht náisiúnta in Fís 2020, clár maoinithe Nuálaíochta agus Taighde na hEorpa. Ó seoladh é in 2014, bronnadh €475 milliún d'infheistíocht neamhrialtais taighde, forbartha agus nuálaíochta ar chuideachtaí Éireannacha agus ar thaighdeoirí ardleibhéal (€139 milliún in 2017). Chomh maith leis an maoiniú sin, tugann Fís 2020 nascacht le comhpháirtithe ceannródaíochta agus eolas a chabhróidh le hathruithe a dhéanamh ar feidhmíocht níos fadtéarmaí cuideachtaí.

Ionstraim FBM: In 2017, de bharr obair Fhiontraíocht Éireann ag cabhrú le FBManna teacht ar Ionstraim FBM Fís 2020 is í Éire an tír is éifeachtúlaíanois maidir le maoiniú a fháil ón gCoimisiún Eorpach do thograí Fís 2020. In 2017, bhuaigh ocht gcuideachta os cionn €16 mhilliún agus bhuaigh roinnt FBManna níos mó ná €2m an ceann.

Big Ideas: D'óstáil Fiontraíocht Éireann an t-imeacht 'Big Ideas' in 2017. Is ardán é an t-imeacht seo do Ghnóthais Nuathionscanta ón gcóras taighde Éireannach, chun a nuálaíochtaí a chur i láthair infheisteoirí agus a smaointe móra a iompú isteach ina bhfiontair inbhuanaithe.

An Earnáil Spáis: Trí chomholtas na hÉireann i nGníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa, fuair 18 gcuideachta Éireannacha, ceithre chuideachta iontrála nua ina measc, €12 mhilliún i gconarthaí leis an nGníomhaireacht in 2017 le tacaíocht Fhiontraíocht Éireann. Dhaingnigh tionscal taighde na hÉireann €1.4 milliún eile i gconarthaí; dá bhrí sin b'fhiú €13.4 milliún luach iomlán na gconarthaí le Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa in Éirinn in 2017.

Shínigh Fiontraíocht Éireann Comhaontú Fhaire na Cruinne le Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa chun rochtain a thabhairt d'Éirinn, den chéad uair riamh, ar shonraí Fhaire na Cruinne gar d'fhíoram. Cabhróidh rochtain ar shonraí gar d'fhíoram le taighde a spreagadh, agus tacóidh sí le feidhmeanna tráchtála agus seirbhísí a thrádáiltear go hidirnáisiúnta a forbairt. Ina theannta sin, cuirfidh sí bonn eolais faoi bheartas náisiúnta.

Cuireann **Taighde Nuálaíochta do Ghnólachtaí Beaga (SBIR)** ar chumas comhlachtaí na hearnála poiblí aghaidh a thabhairt ar dhúshláin ach teagmháil a dhéanamh le gnóthaí chun taighde agus forbairt réitigh nuálacha a fháil. Tá sé d'aidhm ag SBIR Éireann, a riarrann Fiontraíocht Éireann, nuálaíocht a spreagadh i ngach cuid d'Earnáil Phoiblí na hÉireann trí rannpháirtíocht fhóntha le cuideachtaí a phléann go mór le teicneolaíocht.

Seoladh gairm nua SBIR i ndeireadh 2017, agus dá bharr faomhadh 11 Dúshlán ó réimse leathan Údarás Chonarthacha, lena n-áirítear Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí, an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe, agus Comhairlí Áitiúla lena n-áirítear an Clár, Luimneach agus Cathair Chorcaí.

Is é **Aistriú Eolais Éireann** an oifig náisiúnta a chuidíonn le gnólachtaí leas a bhaint as rochtain ar shaineolas agus teicneolaíocht Éireannach ach a chinntí gur féidir nascadh agus tabhairt faoi taighde a mhaoinítear go poiblí in Éirinn go héasca. Cabhraíonn an rannpháirtíocht sin le nuálaíocht, tráchtálú taighde, cruthú fostáíochta agus rath geilleagrach a chur chun cinn. In 2017, thug painéal idirnáisiúnta de shaineolaithe ar aistriú eolais faoi athbhreithniú ar an dul chun cinn a rinne Aistriú Eolais Éireann sna chéad trí bliana dá fheidhmiú (2013–2016). Tugadh aitheantas san athbhreithniú don dul chun cinn a rinne sé ó bunaíodh cúpla bliain roimhe sin é.

Gradaim Tionchair Aistriú Eolais Éireann: I mí Aibreáin 2017, cheiliúir gradaim Aistriú Eolais Éireann éachtaí gairmithe aistrithe eolais atá ag obair in Institiúidí Ardoideachais Éireannacha agus eagraíochtaí taighde a fhagheann maoiniú poiblí. I mí Mheán Fómhair 2017, bhí a chomhdháil bhliantúil ag Aistriú Eolais Éireann, ar ar fhreastail os cionn 200 duine (thart ar a leath díobh ón tionscal) chun tráchtálú agus comhoibriú taighde a phlé. Seoladh uirlis idirghníomhach ar líne 'Find

R&D Funding' ag an gcomhdháil, a chuireann eolas ar fáil d'eagraíochtaí a mbeadh spéis acu tabhairt faoi thaighde agus forbairt ar na foinsí éagsúla maoinithe, dreasachtaí agus tacaíochtaí eile atá ar fáil do ghníomhaíocht taighde agus forbartha in Éirinn.

Clár Maoinithe TTSI3: Cuireadh tús i mí Eanáir 2017 leis an tríú céim den Tionscnamh um Neartú Aistrithe Teicneolaíochta de chuid Fiontraíocht Éireann. Tá an clár cúig bliana €34.5 milliún, a bhainistíonn Aistriú Eolais Éireann, ag cothú cumais agus acmhainne chun tacú le haistriú eolais agus tráchtálú taighde in eagraíochtaí taighde Éireannacha.

An Clár Taighde in Institiúidí Tríú Leibhéal

Tacaíonn an Clár le soláthar bonneagair do thaighde den chéad scoth (foirgnimh, saotharlanna agus trealamh den chuid is nua-aimseartha) agus cuidíonn sé le caipiteal daonna a fhorbairt freisin trí chláir PhD Struchtúrtha/Teicneolaíochtaí atá ag Teacht Chun Cinn ar fud institiúidí ardoideachais na hÉireann. Aistríodh freagracht as an gclár chuig an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ón Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta in 2010. Tá an clár fós á riart ag an Údarás Ardoideachais thar ceann na Roinne.

Le Sraith 5, a tionscnaíodh in 2011, bronnadh maoiniú ar 33 tionscadal ar leith, arbh fhiú €277 milliún é de mhaoliniú ón Státhiste móide maoiniú meaitseála breise €58 milliún. Cuireadh na ceithre thionscadal deiridh as an 33 tionscadal a tosaíodh faoi Shraith 5 i gcrích i rith 2017.

Bhí infheistíocht an Chláir Taighde in Institiúidí Tríú Leibhéal agus i gcaipiteal daonna mar thacaíocht leanúnach dár n-institiúidí tríú leibhéal chun straitéisí taighde a mhúnlú agus a chur i bhfeidhm chun cabhrú leo mais chriticiúil agus acmhainneacht den chéad scoth ar bhonn domhanda a bhaint amach i bpriomhréimsí taighde. Sholáthair Sraith 5 breis is 62,000m² d'achar taighde nua/athchóirithe, breis is 5,700 stáisiún oibre taighde agus breis is 330 mac léinn PhD faoi dheireadh an chláir.

Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa

Ó chuaigh Éire isteach i nGníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa in 1975, tá tionscail agus grúpaí taighde Éireannacha ag croílár mhisin spáis na hEorpa, iad ag tarraingt clú orthu féin mar sholáthróirí teicneolaíochtaí nuálacha a bhíonn in úsáid i gclár spáis na hEorpa.

Tugann comholtas sa Gníomhaireacht rochtain do ghnóthaí agus taighdeoirí Éireannacha ar eagraíocht forbartha teicneolaíochtaí ar fíu €5 bhilliún sa bhliain í nach bhfuil a leithéid le fáil áit ar bith seachas NASA, mar aon le rochtain fheabhsaithe ar chliaint spáis institiúideacha Eorpacha agus Dhomhanda, ar phríomhchonraitheoirí agus ar shlabhraí soláthair teicneolaíochta. In 2017, d'infheistigh Éire €17.8 milliún ina comholtas i nGníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa agus rinneadh infheistíocht fhorlóngtach €1m eile ag deireadh na bliana.

I rith 2017, fuair 18 gcuideachta conarthaí ón nGníomhaireacht; ba chonraitheoirí céaduaire leis an nGníomhaireacht iad ceithre cinn díobh sin. B'fhiú €12 mhilliún na conarthaí tionscail a shocraigh an Gníomhaireacht in Éirinn in 2017. Dhaingnigh tionscal taighde na hÉireann €1.4 milliún eile i gconarthaí; dá bhrí sin b'fhiú €13.4 milliún luach iomlán na gconarthaí le Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa in Éirinn in 2017, a léiríonn dul chun cinn na hÉireann san earnáil seo atá ag forbairt.

Tá méadú tagtha ar líon iomlán na bpost i gcuideachtaí a bhíonn ag plé leis an nGníomhaireacht ó 1,300 in 2008 go breis is 2,000 in 2017 agus táthar ag tuar go mbeidh níos mó ná 5,000 duine fostaithe iontu faoi 2020. Léiriú é an leibhéal ard fáis sin san fhostaíochtaí ar na comhiarrachtaí atá á ndéanamh ag an Rialtais chun infheistiú go suntasach i dTaighde agus Forbairt, ag Fiontraíocht Éireann agus GFT Éireann agus iad ag obair le lucht na dtionscal, agus ag an nGníomhaireacht féin chun acmhainn nuálaíochtaí na dtionscal Éireannach a aistriú i dtáirgí, córais agus seirbhísí do chlár spáis na hEorpa agus don mhargadh domhanda spáis.

Tá cuideachtaí, eolaithe agus taighdeoirí Éireannacha ag leanúint orthu chun deiseanna suimiúla atá ag teacht chun cinn trí Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa a lorg. I rith misean trádála chun na Gníomhaireachta i mí Aibreán 2017, fógraíodh conarthaí le cuideachtaí Éireannacha:

- D'fhógair Enbio conradh dar luach €650,000 chun ardbhratú dromchla a fhorbairt agus a dhéanamh do Neosat, an chéad ghlúin eile d'ardáin satailíte le haghaidh misin teileachumarsáide;
- Bhuaigh Innalabs conradh €980,000 chun Aonad Tomhais Ráta cáilithe a fhorbairt don spás. Úsáidfear é sin d'Fhocórás Rialaithe Fithisithe agus Airde satailíte i réimse misin spáis; agus
- Dhaingnigh Pilot Phontonics conradh €335,000 chun fochórais cumarsáide léasair a fhorbairt le húsáid i réimse satailíte ardchumarsáide.

I mí na Bealtaine 2017, d'éirigh le hiarratas an Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, i gcomhar le hOllscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste, ar chlár 'Fly Your Satellite' de chuid Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa. Tugann sé sin an deis d'Éirinn Satailít a fhorbairt agus a sheoladh den chéad uair. Meastar go seolfar an tsatailít seo ón Stáisiún Spáis Idirnáisiúnta in 2019. Is tionscadal oideachais é seo go príomha, chun rannpháirtithe a ullmhú do ghairm san earnáil spáis. Is deis thábhachtach é freisin do thionscal spáis na hÉireann, a bheidh rannpháirteach sa tionscadal, chun a theicneolaíochtaí a cháiliú don spás.

D'fhreastail Ard-Stiúrthóir na Gníomhaireachta, Jan Wörner, ar shearmanas clabhsúir Shamhradh an Spáis, Clár an Staidéir Spáis, i Halla Contae Chorcaí i mí Lúnasa 2017. D'óstáil Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Chorcaí an clár rathúil naoi seachtaine sin. Agus é in Éirinn, thug an tArd-Stiúrthóir Wörner cuairt freisin ar Ionad Réitigh Spáis Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa in Éirinn in Institiúid Náisiúnta Tyndall agus bhuaile sé le bunaitheoirí Thalman Health, cuideachta Éireannach a fhobraíonn monatóirí teocheata.

I mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2017, shínigh Fiontraíocht Éireann Socrú Comhoibríoch Teicniúil le Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa. Tabharfaidh an Socrú sin níos mó rochtana ná riamh don stát ar fhaisnéis fhaire na cruinne gar d'fhíor-am ó Chlár Copernicus. Is féidir na sonraí a úsáid le haghaidh taighde agus forbairt tráchtála agus chun bonn eolais a chur faoi bheartais. Beidh an Mol náisiúnta le haghaidh Shonraí Fhaire na Cruinne in Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh.

I mí na Samhna 2017, d'fhógair an Roinn gur roghnaigh Coimisiún an AE Ollscoil Mhá Nuad chun Copernicus Relay agus Acadamh Copernicus a óstáil le haghaidh Chlár Spáis Fhaire na Cruinne de chuid an Aontais Eorpaithe, Copernicus. Oibreoidh an dá bhunaíocht chun feasacht, tuiscint agus úsáid Chlár Fhaire na Cruinne de chuid an Aontais Eorpaithe, Copernicus, a fheabhsú.

Forbairtí ar Bheartas Spáis an Aontais Eorpaithe

Ag Comhairle Iomaíochais an Spáis i mí na Bealtaine 2017, faoi Uachtaráinacht Mhálta, reáchtáil an Chomhairle díospóireacht ar an Straitéis Spáis don Eoraip a comhaontaíodh in 2016 a chur i bhfeidhm, agus ghlac sí leis na Conclúidí Comhairle ina leagtar amach réimsí tosaíochta na Straitéise. Tugadh aitheantas sna conclúidí don tábhacht a bhaineann le caidreamh comhordaithe agus comhlántach atreisithe idir an tAontas Eorpach agus Gníomhaireacht Spáis na hEorpa, agus leagadh béim ar an ngá atá le comhtháthú an Spáis sa ghnáthshaol a mhéadú oiread agus is féidir.

D'fhreastail Ballstáit ar an gCruinníú Airí Spáis Neamhfhoirmiúil freisin, a d'óstáil Uachtaráinacht na hEastóine i mí na Samhna 2017. Fiosraíodh Clár Fhaire na Cruinne de chuid an Aontais Eorpaithe, Copernicus, ag an gcruinníú sin. Ag oscailt an chruinnithe, dúirt Coimisiún an AE go bhfuil Clár Copernicus ag sárú a spriocanna. Agus iad ag malartú dearctaí, tharraing Airí aird ar ról Copernicus in aghaidh a thabhairt ar athrú aeráide agus dul i ngleic le ceisteanna slándála agus imirce, i dteannta ról an Chláir chun fiontraíocht a chothú.

Ag an gComhairle lomaíochais an 1 Nollaig, a raibh Urve Palo, Aire Fiontraíochta agus Teicneolaíocht Faisnéise na hEastóine, mar chathaoirleach uirthi, ghlac Airí leis na Conclúidí Comhairle ar an meastóireacht Lárhéarma ar Chlár Copernicus, Clár Fhaire na Cruinne de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh, agus phléigh siad todhchaí Chláir Spáis an Aontais Eorpaigh.

Ba é conclúid an athbhreithnithe Lárhéarma go bhfuil Clár Copernicus ar an mbóthar ceart trí chéile, ag baint na gcuspóirí amach, agus go bhfuil na cuspóirí fós ábhartha do riachtanais úsáideoirí agus tosaíochtaí polaitiúla an Aontais Eorpaigh faoi láthair. D'fháiltigh an Chomhairle roimh an gcur chuige i leith leanúint leis an slabhra sonraí a thógáil chun saothrú tráchtala féideartha FBManna a éascú. Agus Clár Spáis an Aontais Eorpaigh á bplé, Copernicus, Galileo agus Clár Loingseoir eachta Satailte an Aontais ina measc, tharraing Airí aird ar an ngá atá le Clár dul in oiriúint d'fhorbairtí agus dúshláin dhomhanda. D'aithin Airí freisin ról na gClár chun iomaíochas Ballstát a fheabhsú, in earnáil spáis na hEorpa agus go domhanda.

Institiúid Náisiúnta Tyndall

Is í Institiúid Náisiúnta Tyndall an t-ionad taighde is mó in Éirinn le speisialtóireacht i gcrua-earraí agus córais Teicneolaíochta Faisnéise agus Cumarsáide (TFC). Is Institiúid Náisiúnta í Tyndall, a fheidhmíonn go hidirnáisiúnta chun taighde agus forbairt agus nuálaíocht a éascú agus a chumasú in Éirinn, agus tá bonneagar taighde náisiúnta uathúil aici.

Tá an earnáil TFC, ina bhfuil speisialtóireacht ag Tyndall, thar a bheith tábhachtach don gheilleagar domhanda, le láimhdeachas sa bhreis ar \$3 thrilliún sa bhliain. Tugann sí bonn teicneolaíochta ar a mbraitheann formhór na n-earnálacha déantúsaíochta d'fheabhsuithe ar a dtáirgíúlacht, agus ar a mbraitheann na seirbhísí ar fad (cúram sláinte, bainistiú fuinnimh, iompar, bainistiú timpeallachta) d'éifeachtúlacht agus soláthar a fheabhsú. Is é tionscal TFC na hÉireann an earnáil déantúsaíochta is mó sa tir agus tá acmhainn ann leibhéal agus cáiliocht a thionchair gheilleagraigh a méadú.

De réir comhaontú foirmiúil le Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, tá an tAire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta tiomanta do chroímhaoiniú a sholáthar chun tacú le hoibríochtaí laethúla Institiúid Tyndall. D'úsáid Tyndall an croídheontas €4.5 milliún seo a thug an Roinn in 2017 chun buiséad iomlán taighde de €36 milliún a ghiniúint. Áiríodh air sin:

- Maoiniú díreach €6 mhilliún do thionscal.
- Ioncam thart ar €7 milliún a gineadh ó chláir taighde AE (FP7 agus Fís 2020).
- Ioncam thart ar €23m a fuarthas ó chláir iomaíocha taighde (Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann, Fiontraíocht Éireann agus maoinitheoirí eile).

Ar na torthaí ar an maoiniú taighde seo in 2017 bhí:

- Rannpháirtíocht leanúnach le clár Fís 2020. Maoiníodh 57 tionscadal go dtí seo, dar luach €420 milliún san iomlán. Chomhordaigh an Institiúid féin ocht gcinn de na tionscadail sin. Is é an luach díreach iomlán do Tyndall €30 milliún, agus bronnadh €16 mhilliún ar thionscal na hÉireann.
- Bronnadh trí phríomhthionscadal móra Eorpacha bonneagair, a tharraingíonn anuas €23 milliún i maoiniú AE, le luach díreach €7 milliún do Tyndall.
- Naoi dtionscadal nua Compháirtíocht Nuálaíochta de chuid Fiontraíocht Éireann leis an tionscal.
- Rinneadh 26 nochtadh aireagáin agus comhdaíodh sé phaitinn (agus tá ceithre cinn ar feitheamh).
- Breis is 270 foilseachán a ndearnadh athbhreithniú piaraí orthu in irisí tábhachtacha idirnáisiúnta.
- Aontaíodh 11 cheadúnas/rogha/sannachán tráchtala le tionscal (agus tá a thuilleadh á bplé).

Cóipcheart

Rinneadh dul chun cinn i rith na bliana ar shaincheisteanna cóipchirt a chur chun cinn in Éirinn agus ag leibhéal an AE. I rith 2017, leanadh leis an dréachtú ar an mBille Cóipchirt agus Forálacha Eile i nDlí na Maoine Intleachtaí. Dearadh an Bille seo chun roinnt moltaí sa tuarascáil "Modernising Copyright" a chur chun cinn. D'fhoilsigh an Coiste um Athbhreithniú ar Chóipcheart an tuarascáil sin go deireanach in 2013.

Ag leibhéal an AE, d'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún Eorpach tograí le dlí cóipchirt an AE a nuachóiriú i mí na Nollag 2015 agus mí Mheán Fómhair 2016. Dearadh na tograí chun ligean do rochtain níos leithne ar líne ar shaothair chóipchirt d'úsáideoirí agus tomhaltóirí ar fud an AE. Ghlac Parlaimint an AE agus Comhairle an AE leis na tograí seo go foirmiúil in 2017:

- Rialachán (AE) 2017/1128 ó Pharlamint na hEorpa agus ón gComhairle an 14 Meitheamh 2017 maidir le hinaistritheacht traseorann na seirbhísí ábhair ar líne sa mhargadh inmheánach. Cuireann an rialachán seo ar chumas tomhaltóirí rochtain a fháil ar a seirbhísí ábhair ar líne, e.g. Netflix, RTÉ Player, agus iad ag taisteach go sealadach san Aontas Eorpach mar a dhéanfaidís sa bhaile. Tiocfaidh an Rialachán maidir le hinaistritheacht i bhfeidhm i mBallstáit an AE an 1 Aibreán 2018.
- Treoir (2017/1564/AE) agus Rialachán (2017/1563/AE) chun Conradh Marrakech (comhaontú idirnáisiúnta cóipchirt) a chur i bhfeidhm chun rochtain ar shaothair fhoilsithe a éascú do dhaoine atá dall, faoi lagamharc, nó faoi mhíchumas cló ar shlí eile. Is é cuspóir an Chonartha rochtain a fheabhsú ar leabhair agus foilseacháin eile i bhformáidí ar nós braille, téacs mórchlo agus closleabhar do dhaoine faoi lagamharc ar fud an domhain agus malartú traseorann cóipeanna dá leithéid a cheadú idir an tAontas Eorpach agus tríú páirtithe atá ina bpáirtithe de Conradh Marrakech. Ghlac Parlaimint na hEorpa agus an Chomhairle leis an Treoir agus an Rialachán go foirmiúil i mí Mheán Fómhair 2017. An 17 Nollaig 2017, chuir an Roinn tú le comhairliúchán poiblí ar an Treoir a thrasuíomh i ndlí na hÉireann. Is é an spriodháta chun an Treoir a thrasuíomh i ndlí na hÉireann an 11 Deireadh Fómhair 2018. Tiocfaidh an Rialachán i bhfeidhm go huathoibríoch 12 mhí i ndiaidh an dáta foilsithe.
- I rith 2017, bhí an Roinn páirteach in anailís a dhéanamh ar na tograí agus idirbheartaíocht le Páirtí Oibre na Comhairle AE ar thogra an Choiomisiún Eorpáigh le haghaidh Treorach maidir le Cóipcheart sa Mhargadh Aonair Digiteach (COM(2016) 593 deiridh). Tá sé i gceist leis an Treoir bheartaithe eisceachtaí cóipchirt a chomhchuibhiú i réimsí taighde, oideachais agus caomhnaithe chultúrtha, agus feabhsóidh sí seasamh úinéirí cirt chun idirbheartaíocht a dhéanamh agus luach saothair a fháil as saothrú a n-ábhair ar líne. Tá an Roinn ranpháirteach go gníomhach le páirtithe leasmhara ar bhonn leanúnach chun bonn eolais a chur faoi sheasamh idirbheartaíocha na hÉireann ar na tograí éagsúla sa Treoir.

Reachtaíocht Phríomha a Cuireadh i bhFeidhm i Réimse na Maoine Intleachtúla

Níor cuireadh aon reachtaíocht nua cóipchirt i bhfeidhm in 2017.

An tAcht um Bosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán), 2017

Tháinig an tAcht um Bosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán), 2017 i bhfeidhm an 19 Bealtaine 2017. Tugadh an reachtaíocht seo isteach mar fhreagairt do bhearta faoiseamh cánach an bhosca forbartha eolais a tugadh isteach faoin Acht Airgeadais, 2015 a d'fhoráil do ráta níos ísle cáin chorparáide ar bhrabús ar shócmhainní maoine intleachtúla a eascraíonn as taighde agus forbairt.

Forálann an Bosca Forbartha Eolais do ráta cáin chorparáide 6.25% atá iníoctha ar bhrabús dá leithéid a thagann chun cinn agus a bhaineann le trí chineál Sócmhainní Maoine Intleachtaí: paitinní fadtéarmacha, bogearraí faoi chóipcheart agus aireagáin atá úrnua, neamhfholasach agus

úsáideach. Tá an chatagóir dheireanach sin dírithe go sonrach ar chuideachtaí beaga agus tá srianta áirithe ar bhrabús agus láimhdeachas.

Faoi Acht um Bosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán), 2017, is féidir le fiontair bheaga agus mheánmhéis cur isteach ar Dheimhniú an Bhosca Forbartha Eolais ón gCeannasaí Paitinní, Deartháí agus Trádmharcanna. Beidh an Deimhniú sin ina chuid de na critéir incháilithe a leagtar amach sa reachtaíocht cánach faoin mBosca Forbartha Eolais do FBManna ar mian leo tairbhe a bhaint as an ráta níos ísle cáin chorparáide.

Leasaíonn an reachtaíocht Acht na bPaitinní, 1992 freisin, ionas gur féidir imscrúdú substainteach a dhéanamh ar phaitinní fadtéarmacha a chinnteoidh go gcomhlíonann na paitinní sin na critéir chun cáiliú don Bhosca Forbartha Eolais.

Reachtaíocht Thánaisteach a Cuireadh i bhFeidhm i Réimse na Maoine Intleachtúla

Theastaigh cúpla lonstraim Reachtúil chun tacú leis an Acht um Bosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán) 2017, a chur i bhfeidhm, eadhon:

- I.R. Uimh. 204 de 2017 – an tOrdú fán Acht um Bosca Forbartha Eolais (Deimhniú Aireagán), 2017 (Tosach Feidhme), 2017 – ceaptar an 19 Bealtaine 2017 mar an dáta ar tháinig an tAcht i bhfeidhm.
- I.R. Uimh. 205 de 2017 – na Rialacha um Paitinní, Trádmharcanna agus Dearáí (Táillí) (Leasú), 2017, ina dtugtar breac-chuntas ar na táillí riachtanacha nuair atá tuarascáil chuardaigh agus tuairim i scríbhinn á iarraidh faoi Alt 29 d'Acht na bPaitinní, 1992, chomh maith leis na táillí as tuarascáil chuardaigh a iarraidh faoi Alt 66 d'Acht na bPaitinní, 1992.
- IR Uimh. 206 de 2017 – na Rialacha um Paitinní (Leasú), 2017 – lena leasaíttear na Rialacha um Paitinní, 1992, ina dtugtar breac-chuntas ar athruithe nós imeachta ar an bpróiseas paitinne i ndiaidh imscrúdú substainteach ar iarratais ar phaitinní Éireannacha a thabhairt isteach an athuair. Foráiltear freisin do bhreadhnuithe tríú páirtí don Cheannasaí maidir le hinphaitinneacht iarratas.

Níor foilsíodh aon reachtaíocht nua faoi thrádmharcanna in 2017.

Caighdeánú

In 2017 thug an tÚdarás um Chaighdeáin Náisiúnta na hÉireann faoi obair nua caighdeánaithe i réimsí tábhachtacha atá ag teacht chun cinn, Róbataic, Déantúsaíocht Bhreisithe agus Blocshlabhra ina measc.

Sprioc 5:

Tacú le fostáiocht ardchaighdeáin, réiteach díospóidí agus sábháilteacht sa timpeallacht oibre

Fostaíocht ardchaighdeáin, caidreamh dearfach san áit oibre, sásraí réitigh díospóidí a feidhmíonn go maith, timpeallacht oibre shábháilte agus éabhlóid an phá iosta a chur chun cinn

Cearta Fostaíochta

I gClár an Rialtais i mí na Bealtaine 2016 tá tiomantas dul i ngleic le fadhbanna a chothaíonn an méadú ar ócáidiú fostáiochta agus na rialacháin maidir le hobair neamhbhuan a neartú.

Chomh maith leis an gcomhairliúchán poiblí sin ar an tiomantas sin i gClár an Rialtais, thug an Roinn faoi phróiseas cuimsitheach idirphlé le ICTU agus IBEC chun cabhrú le freagairt beartais a fhorbairt agus a bheachtú. D'fhaomh an Rialtas túis áite a thabhairt do dhréachtú tograí reachtaíochta a bhaineann leis an tiomantas sin i gClár an Rialtais an 2 Bealtaine 2017.

I ndiaidh na feidhmeanna a aistriú i mí Mheán Fómhair 2017, aistríodh freagracht beartais as an togra reachtaíochta sin chuig an Aire Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí. Foilsíodh an Bille Fostaíochta (Forálacha Ilghnéitheacha), 2017 an 7 Nollaig 2017.

An Coimisiún um Pá Íseal

Thíolaic an Coimisiún um Pá Íseal, a bunaíodh leis an Acht um Pá Íosta Náisiúnta (An Coimisiún um Pá Íseal), 2015, an tríú tuarascáil uaidh i mí Iúil 2017.

Ghlac an Rialtas lena mholadh an pá fosta a mhéadú go €9.55 in aghaidh na huaire agus tiocfaidh sé i bhfeidhm ar an 1 Eanáir 2018.

I ndiaidh chinneadh an Rialtais feidhmeanna áirithe a bhaineann le cearta fostáiochta a aistriú, aistríodh an fhreagracht as an gCoimisiún um Pá Íseal chuig an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí le héifeacht ón 1 Meán Fómhair 2017.

Tuarascáil Duffy-Cahill/Fiosrúchán Clerys

Cuireadh túis le roinnt gníomhartha mar chuid de fhreagairt an Rialtais do dhúnadh Clerys. Mar chuid de seo bhí grinnscrúdú Duffy-Cahill ar cosaintí dlí d'fhostaithe.

Tugann tuarascáil Duffy-Cahill anailís chuimsitheach ar na forálacha ábhartha den dlí fostáiochta agus cuideachta. Tugtar inti roinnt moltaí maidir leis an dlí a leasú, a bhaineann go príomha le leasuithe ar an dlí fostáiochta. Thug an Roinn faoi Chomhairliúchán Poiblí ar an tuarascáil tar éis a foilsithe i mí Aibreáin 2016.

Iarradh ar an nGrúpa Athbhreithnithe Dhlí na gCuideachtaí athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe de dhlí na gcuideachtaí. Rinneadh an méid sin le síul le moltaí a thabhairt faoi bhealaí ina bhféadfaí dlí na gcuideachtaí a leasú chun cosaintí níos fearr a chinntí d'fhostaithe agus do chreidiúnaithe neamhurrainthe. Thuairiscigh Grúpa Athbhreithnithe Dhlí na gCuideachtaí don Aire i mí an Mheithimh 2017. An 13 Iúil 2017, d'fhoilsigh an Tánaiste agus an tAire Fiontraíochta agus Nuálaíochta, Frances Fitzgerald TD, tuarascáil Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe Dhlí na gCuideachtaí ar chosaint fostaithe agus creidiúnaithe neamhurrainthe. Tá obair ar bun go fóill chun freagairt beartais nó reachtaíochta, mar is iomchuí, do na ceisteanna casta lena mbaineann a fhorbairt.

Maidir le gnéithe faoi dhlí na fostáiochta i dTuarascáil Duffy-Cahill, i ndiaidh an fhreagracht as cearta agus beartais fostáiochta a aistriú chuig an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí an 1 Meán Fómhair 2017, is faoin Roinn sin a bheidh sé aon leasú i réimse an dlí fostáiochta a lorg.

Ar leithligh uaidh sin, lorg oifigigh údaraithe de chuid an Aire ón gCoimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre faisinéis ó roinnt páirtithe maidir leis na hiomarcaíochtaí comhchoiteanna a tharla sa chuideachta thrádála arbh í fostáí na foirne in Clerys í nuair a dúnadh é. Baineann obair na n-oifigeach údaraithe le cur i bhfeidhm an Achta um Chaomhnú Fostaíochta, 1977 i ndáil leis na hiomarcaíochtaí comhchoiteanna ábhartha. Rinne dhá cheann de na páirtithe agóid dhlíthiúil. Rialaigh an Ardchúirt i bhfabhar an Choimisiúin um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre an 25 Deireadh Fómhair 2016. Rinneadh achomharc agus táthar chun an cás a éisteacht sa Chúirt Achomhairc.

Cód Cleachtais ar Oibriú Níos Faide

Shínigh an tAire Breen Cód Cleachtais nua ar Oibriú Níos Faide ina dhlí i mí na Nollag 2017. Forbraíodh an Cód, a d'éascaigh an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre, i gcomhar leis na comhpháirtithe sóisialta, IBEC agus ICTU, chomh maith leis an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe agus an Coimisiún um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas.

D'eascair forbairt an Chód ó mholadh Tuarascála ó Ghrúpa Idir-Rannach a bunaíodh in 2016 chun féachaint ar bheartas maidir le haois scoir san earnáil phoiblí agus san earnáil phríobháideach.

Leagtar amach sa Chód treoir agus dea-chleachtas d'fhostóirí, fostaithe agus a n-ionadaithe le leanúint sa phlé idir fostóirí agus fostaithe ag teacht i dtreo an scoir. Breithnítear freisin an cheist a bhaineann le freagairt iarratas chun oibriú i ndiaidh na haoise scoir reatha san fhostaíocht lena mbaineann.

Tháinig an fhorbairt sin chun cinn mar gheall ar an gcomhthéacs dearfach a bhaineann le daoine atá ag maireachtáil níos faide agus níos sláintiúla. Tacóidh an Cód le fostóirí agus fostaithe san earnáil phríobháideach a theacht ar shocruithe a fheileann do gach duine faoi aoiseanna scoir.

Ceadanna Fostaíochta

Tacaíonn córas ceadanna fostaíochta an Stáit le hÉirinn mar shuíomh infheistíochta trí chur ar chumas fiontar teacht ar thallann eachtrach a theastaíonn. Is é a chuspóir leathan an soláthar scileanna in Éirinn a fhordónadh sa mheántearma ach cead a thabhairt do na fiontair sin saoránaigh as tíortha nach bhfuil sa Limistéar Eorpach Eacnamaíoch a earcú sa chás ina bhfuil sainscileanna nó saineolas ag na saoránaigh sin nach bhfuil ar fáil sa Limistéar Eorpach Eacnamaíoch agus ina rachaidh a leithéid d'earcaíocht chun tairbhe d'fhorbairt gheilleagrach nó shóisialta an Stáit. Léirigh treochtaí i lón na n-iarratas ar cheadanna fostaíochta a fuarthas in 2017 an fás láidir atá fós ag teacht ar ghníomhaíocht gheilleagrach.

Leagtar réimeas na gceadanna fostaíochta amach de bhun struchtúir liosta gairmeacha chun túis áite a thabhairt do scileanna áirithe, go háirithe sa chás go bhfuil ganntanas nó easnamh scileanna sonracha láithreach sa mhargadh saothair de bharr fhás tapa na hearnála nó forbairt teicneolaíochta. Aithníonn na liostaí gairmeacha scileanna critíúla atá gann ar láimh amháin, agus scileanna a bhfuil soláthar maith ann díobh cheana féin sa mhargadh saothar áitiúil ar an láimh eile. Déantar iad a athbhreithniú ar bhonn débhliantúil, ionas go mbeadh treoshuíomh na himirce geilleagraí ag teacht go docht le riachtanais bheachta an mhargaidh saothair.

I rith 2017, comhdhlútháíodh na Rialacháin maidir le Ceadanna Fostaíochta chun go mbeidís níos éasca le húsáid. Cuimsíodh athruithe ar na liostaí chun dul in oiriúint do riachtanais reatha scileanna i ndiaidh an phróisis sceidealaithe athbhreithnithe sa chomhdhlúthú sin.

Tugadh faoi na hathbhreithnithe débhliantúla ar na liostaí in 2017 i dtimpeallacht atá ag éirí níos casta i gcónaí. Agus an Stát ag teacht i dtreo lánfostaíochta, tá an t-éileamh ar an lucht saothair ag fás, agus bhí tionchar aige sin ar an gcineál éilimh a chuirtear ar an gcóras imirce geilleagraí. I bhfianaise na gcúinsí athraithe sin, d'iarr an tAire ar oifigigh tabhairt faoi athbhreithniú ar threo foriomlán an chórais imirce geilleagraí chun a chinntiú go bhfuil sé ábhartha fós agus ag freagairt mar is ceart d'fhorbairtí sa mhargadh saothair.

Ina theannta sin, tugadh faoi Athbhreithniú ar Luach Saothair in 2017, inar fiosraíodh na híostairseacha bliantúla luach saothair le haghaidh ceadanna fostáiochta. Cuirfidh an t-athbhreithniú sin leis an athbhreithniú uileghabhálach beartaithe ar an gcóras ceadanna fostáiochta atá le tarlú sa chéad leath de 2018.

Chun tacú le cuspóir na Roinne chun seirbhís do ghnóthaí a fheabhsú, socraíodh go láidir in 2017 an Córas Ar Líne do Cheadanna Fostaíochta, a seoladh i mí Mheán Fómhair 2016, mar an modh roghnaithe chun iarratais a chur isteach ar cheadanna fostáiochta. Tugtar saoráid intuigthe atá éasca le húsáid leis chun iarratais ar cheadanna a chur isteach ar líne, chomh maith leis na cáipéisí tacaíochta, agus tá seirbhís shlán ar líne ann chun táillí a íoc. Thacaigh an córas le hiarratais a phróiseáil níos tapa toisc nach gá d'iarratasóirí na foirmeacha iarratais a lónadh de láimh níos mó agus go laghdaítear dá bharr earráidí agus iarratais dhiúltaithe. Tá os cionn 95% de na hiarratais ar chead fostáiochta a fhaightear á gcur isteach ar líne faoi láthair.

Beartaítéar níos mó feabhsuithe a dhéanamh ar an tseirbhís chun go mbeadh na foirmeacha iarratais breise lena mbaineann ar fáil le cur isteach ar líne. Tá obair ar bun ionas gur féidir iarratais ar athbhreithnithe ar chinntí diúltaithe agus iarratais ar litreacha tacaíochta Stampa 4 a chur isteach ar líne.

Ó 2015 go 2017, tá ardú beagnach 48% tagtha ar an éileamh ar cheadúnais fostáiochta. Mhéadaigh líon na n-iarratas ar cheadanna fostáiochta i rith 2017 17% i gcomparáid le 2016. Eisíodh 11,354 cead fostáiochta san iomlán in 2017, suas 21% ar 2016.

Is léir rath an chórais ceadanna fostáiochta maidir le freastal ar ghanntanais scileanna agus éifeachtúlacht fheabhsaithe riarrachán in 2017 ó na staitisticí seo a leanas:

- próiseáladh 21% níos mó ceadanna le hais 2016;
- bhain 37% de na ceadanna uile a eisíodh in 2017 le Ceadanna Fostaíochta le haghaidh Scileanna Criticiúla, an cead fostáiochta a ceapadh le díriú ar ghanntanas scileanna;
- Ba do ghairmithe TFC a eisíodh 30% de na ceadanna fostáiochta a eisíodh.

Bliain	Iarratais ar glacadh leo	Iomlán Eisithe	Iomlán Diúltaithe	Iomlán Tarraingthe Siar	Le próiseáil
2017	13,333	11,354	1,516	320	1,300
2016	11,317	9,383	1,651	207	1,238
2015	9,021	7,265	906	167	1,134

Nóta faoin tábla: Luadh líon na n-iarratas a fuarhas seachas líon na n-iarratas ar glacadh leo sna tuarascálacha bliantúla roimhe seo. Bhíodh iarratais ar diúltáiodh dóibh ina dhiaidh sin mar nach raibh siad críochnaithe san fhigiúr ‘iarratais a fuarhas’. Tá an Córas ar Líne do Cheadanna Fostaíochta tar éis deireadh a chur le hiarratais neamhchríochnaithe nach mó, mar sin úsáidtear an teideal “iarratais ar glacadh leo” sa tábla thusa toisc go bhfuil sé níos cruinne.

An Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre

Tá an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre freagrach as seirbhísí a sholáthar lena n-áirítear seirbhísí réitigh luaith, eadrána, comhréitigh, éascaíochta agus comhairleacha, agus as breithniú ar ghearáin a bhaineann le fostáiochta agus comhionannas.

Déanann an Coimisiún monatóireacht ar choinníollacha fostáiochta d’fhoinn a chinntíú go bhfuiltear ag cloí le reachtaíocht um chearta fostáiochta agus go bhfuiltear á forfheidhmiú, agus cuireann sé le feasacht ar chearta agus oibleagáidí fostáiochta. Próiseálann an Coimisiún iarratais freisin ó

għniomhaireachta fostiċċa chomh maith le ceadūnais faoi reachtaíocht a rialálann cosaint daoine óga i bhfostaíocht.

In 2017, fuair an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre 14,001 gearán sonrach a bhain le reachtaíocht fostiċċa agus comhionannais. Chomh maith leis sin, an bhliain chéanna lagħdaigh an Coimisiún go suntasach ualach cásanna breithnithe ar chearta fostiċċa agus gearáin comhionannais a fuarhas le hoidhreacht nuair a bunaíodh an Coimisiún an 1 Deireadh Fómhair 2015. Amhail deireadh 2017 bhí siad sin lagħdaithe go díreach faoi bhun 300 cás.

I rith na bliana, l'éirigh an Coimisiún feidhmíocht láidir, agus phróiseáil sé 92% de na gearán a cuireadh faoi bhráid na seirbhísí Breithnithe faoi cheann sé mhí. Phléigh an Coimisiún le 24% níos mó éisteachtaí in 2017 ná in 2016. Thug an tSeirbhís Cigireachta faoi 4,747 cigireacht ar áiteanna oibre, agus aisghabhadh €1.77 milliún de thuarastal neamħiċċa dá mbarr i rith 2017. Bhí an tSeirbhís Comhréitigh ina cathaoirleach ar 2,200 comhdháil agus éascú comhréitigh i ndáil le haighnis chomhchoiteanna i rith 2017. Phléigh an tSeirbhís Eadrána le díreach faoi bhun 600 eadráin ar an nguthán agus duine le duine, agus chuir an tSeirbhís Chomhairleach tús le hidirghabbálacha i ndíreach faoi bhun 70 tarchur cáis nua i rith 2017.

I mí an Mheithimh 2017, seoladh Oifig Seirbhísí Réigiúnach Shligħ de chuid an Choiṁisiúin ina soláthraítar réimse iomlán seirbhísí an Choiṁisiúin, lena n-áirítar comhréiteach, eadráin, breithniú agus cigireacht. Ba é sin an chéad chéim don Choiṁisiúin atá chun a réimse iomlán seirbhísí a leathnú ar fud na n-oifigí réigiúnacha ar fad chun a chinntiú go bhfuil na seirbhísí a sholáthraítar i mBaile Átha Cliath ar fáil ar fud na tíre. Meastar go dtarlóidh sé i gCorcaigh anois, agus ansin in oifigí Shionainne agus Cheatharlach.

An Chúirt Oibreachais

Ó achtaíodh an tAcht um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre, 2015, is í an Chúirt Oibreachais anois an comhlacht aċċomhairc aonair a phléann le gach aċċomhaarc faoin reachtaíocht um chearta fostiċċa. Déanann sí é sin chomh maith lena ról bunaidh mar Chúirt rogha dheiridh chun aighnis caidrimh thionsclaíoch a réiteach. In 2017 fuair an Chúirt Oibreachais 1,093 ábhar arna dtarchur, arbh ionann sin agus méadú 2.5% ar líon na n-ábhar arna dtarchur (1,121) a rinneadh in 2016. Ba é an mheántréimhse chun éisteachtaí na Cúirte Oibreachais a sceidealú i mBaile Átha Cliath in 2017 13 seachtaine ó dháta an aċċomhairc nó tarchuir. Taobh amuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath, ba é 16 seachtaine ó dháta an aċċomhairc nó tarchuir an mheántréimhse in 2017.

Orduithe um Fhostaíocht Earnála

An 19 Deireadh Fómhair 2017, rinne an tAire Pat Breen TD an chéad Ordú um Fhostaíocht Earnála faoin gcreat reachtaíocha nua a cuireadh i bhfeidhm faoin Acht Caidrimh Thionscail (Leasú), 2015. Socraitear na hiosteidlíochtaí reachtúla pá, pinsin agus pá brooiteachta san Ordú Aireachta sin le haghaidh ceardaithe, oibrithe foirgníochta agus printíseach atá fostaithe san earnáil foirgníochta.

Thug an tOrdú éifeacht dhlíthiúil do théarmaí molta ón gCúirt Oibreachais ar għlak an tAire leis i mí lúil 2017. Tháinig na téarmaí agus coinniollacha leasaithe don earnáil foirgníochta i bhfeidhm ó dháta sínithe an Orduithe, i.e. an 19 Deireadh Fómhair 2017, agus tá siad i bhfeidhm ar beagnach 50,000 oibrí san earnáil sin.

Fuair an tAire moladh ón gCúirt Oibreachais freisin an 20 Nollaig 2017 le haghaidh Ordú um Fhostaíocht Earnála d'Earnáil Chonarthach Sheirbhísí Foirgníochta na hInnealtóireachta Meicniúla. Għlak an tAire leis an moladh sin agus thug éifeacht dhlíthiúil dó trí Ordú Aireachta an 6 Márta 2018. Tá téarmaí an Ordaithe i bhfeidhm ar 10,000 oibrí oilte san earnáil, lena n-áirítar pluiméirí, oirtheoirí píopaí agus tāthairí.

Orduithe Rialaithe Fostaíochta

Shínigh an tAire Breen Ordú Rialaithe Fostaíochta don Earnáil Slándála an 30 Bealtaine 2017. Tá an tOrdú i bhfeidhm ar oibrithé slándála a fhostaíonn gnólacht slándála chun seirbhís slándála a sholáthar do chliaint chonartha an ghnólachta sin. Foráltear ann do mhéaduithe pá an 1 Meitheamh 2017, an 1 Meitheamh 2018 agus an 1 Meitheamh 2019. Foráltear freisin san Ordú do théarmaí festaíochta eile, lena n-áirítear pá breoiteachta, san earnáil.

Grúpa Oibre ar Struchtúir Caidrimh Thionsclaíoch don Gharda Síochána

I mí Mheán Fómhair 2017, rinne an Rialtas machnamh ar an tuarascáil ar struchtúir caidrimh thionsclaíoch don Gharda Síochána. Léiríodh sa Tuarascáil cur i gcrích Chéim I d'obair an ghrúpa a bunaíodh chun maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar an bpróiseas seo agus comhairle a chur ar an Rialtas maidir leis na hathruithe reachtúla agus eile a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ag teastáil. Ionadaíocht ar an nGrúpa Tionóladh an Grúpa Oibre faoi chathaoirleach neamhspleáach, John Murphy, iar-Ard-Rúnaí na Roinne seo agus bhí ionadaithe air ó Ranna Rialtais ábhartha, bainistíocht an Gharda Síochána agus an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre.

Ag an am céanna, d'fhaomh an Rialtas cinn bille an Bhille Caidrimh Thionscail (Leasú), 2018. Tá sé i gceist reachtaíocht Caidrimh Thionscail a leasú leis an mBille ionas gur féidir le cumainn ionadaíochta Gardaí leas a bhaint as seirbhísí an Choimisiúin um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre agus na Cúirte Oibreachais.

Cuireadh tú le Céim II d'obair an ghrúpa i mí na Samhna 2017, lena mbaineann oibriú go dlúth le Ranna ábhartha, bainistíocht an Gharda Síochána, cumainn ionadaíochta Gardaí agus an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre/an Chúirt Oibreachais chun socruthe réitigh aighneas inmheánach iomchuí a chur i bhfeidhm sa Gharda Síochána sula dtugtar cead leas a bhaint as forais Caidrimh Thionsclaíoch an Stáit. Déanfaidh an grúpa machnamh freisin ar impleachtaí acmhainne a eascróidh as cead a thabhairt do chumainn Gardaí leas a bhaint as seirbhísí an Choimisiúin um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre agus na Cúirte Oibreachais.

Tá an Bille a leasóidh an reachtaíocht Caidrimh Thionscail á dhréachtú mar chuid d'obair Chéim II leis an ngrúpa, ag féachaint leis an mBille a fhoilsíú sa chéad chuid de 2018 agus é a achtú faoi dheireadh na bliana.

Timpeallacht Caidrimh Thionsclaíoch

Bhí laghdú ar líon na laethanta a cailleadh de bharr aighnis thionsclaíocha in 2017 i gcomparáid le figiúirí 2016.

- Cailleadh 50,191 lá de bharr stailceanna in 2017 nuair nár cailleadh ach 71,647 in 2016.
- Cailleadh 37,915 lá in 2017 mar gheall ar aighnis i mBus Éireann agus Iarnród Éireann.
- Cailleadh formhór na laethanta eile mar gheall ar ghníomhaíocht Tiománaithe Craenacha agus an t-aighneas in TESCO.

An Beartas Sábháilteachta, Sláinte agus Ceimiceán

Is sásra idirbheartaíochta é an tAonad um Beartas Sábháilteachta, Sláinte agus Ceimiceán idir an Roinn agus an tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta. Tá sé freagrach, i gcomhar leis an Údarás, as beartas a fhoirmliú agus a forbairt ar leibhéal náisiúnta, AE agus idirnáisiúnta i dtaca le sláinte agus sábháilteachta cheirde agus déantúsaíocht agus úsáid ceimiceán i dtionscal na hÉireann.

Léiríodh i dtaighde go bhfuil dea-chíall ghnó le dea-chleachtas sláinte agus sábháilteachta. Cuidíonn sé le hiomaíochas, feabhsaíonn sé an caidreamh le hoibrithe, agus ba chóir do gach fiontar rathúil túis

áite a thabhairt dó. Tá gnóthaí rathúla in Éirinn, idir dhúchasach agus ilnáisiúnta, ag cur an deachleachtais sa tsláinte agus sa tsábhálteacht ag croílár a straitéise fiontraíochtaanois.

Is é príomhaidhm an bheartais rialála maidir le sláinte agus sábhálteacht cheirde agus ceimiceáin tacáiocht a thabhairt do leabú na sláinte agus na sábhálteachta ceirde mar chuid lárnach de ghnó a dhéanamh i ngach áit oibre in Éirinn agus a chinntíu gur ann do thimpeallacht ina gcosnaítear sábhálteacht agus sláinte na n-oibrithe, ina dtacaítear leis an iomaíochas, agus ina gcinntítear nach mbeidh drochthionchar ag na ceimiceáin a dhéantar agus a úsáidtear mar chuid riachtanach de thionscal na hÉireann ar shláinte an duine ná ar an gcomhshaol.

Príomhról de chuid an Aonaid um Beartas Sábhálteachta, Sláinte agus Ceimiceán is ea a chinntíu go bhfuil dóthain acmhainní ag an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábhálteachta, ó thaobh reachtaíochta, foirne agus airgeadais, chun a chur ar a chumas a fheidhmeanna reachtúla a chomhlíonadh i leith Sláinte agus Sábhálteachta Cheirde, Rialáil Ceimiceán, Faireachas Margaidh agus Creidiúnú agus a chinntíu go gcomhlíonann an tÚdarás an réimse caighdeáin rialachais atá i bhfeidhm ar Ghníomhaireachtaí Stáit, lena n-áirítear beartas an Rialais ar chúrsaí foirne buiséadaithe.

An Córás Rialála Ceimiceán

Is casta an córas rialála ceimiceán mar atá leagtha amach i Rialachán an AE amhail REACH – na Rialachán um Chlárú, Meastóireacht, Údarú agus Srian ar Cheimiceán agus na Rialachán um Aicmiú, Lipéadú agus Pacáistiú nó “CLP” – agus teastaíonn obair leanúnach ina leith ar leibhéal AE maidir lena chur chun feidhme, a athbhreithniú agus a leasú. Bíonn an Roinn, le saintacaíocht ón Údarás, ag freastal ar na héilimh sin.

Lean Deasca Cabhrach REACH agus CLP, á bhfeidhmiú ag an Údarás ó 2007, dá n-iarrachtaí a dhíriú ar chomhairle agus tacaíocht a thabhairt don tionscal in 2017. D'oibrigh an tÚdarás lena chinntíu go mbeadh cláraithe ullmhaithe i gceart agus go mbeadh tacaíocht mhaith acu ag druidim i dtreo spriocdháta cláraithe do Rialachán an AE maidir le REACH an 31 Bealtaine 2018.

Leasaigh an tÚdarás, le toiliú an Aire Breen, a Chód Cleachtas le haghaidh na Rialachán um Shábhálteachta, Sláinte agus Leas ag an Obair (Oibreáin Bhitheolaíocha), 2013 (I.R. Uimh. 572 de 2013). Rinneadh é sin go príomha chun rangú víreas Zika a athrú ó oibreán bitheolaíoch Ghrúpa 3 go hoibreán bitheolaíoch Ghrúpa 2.

D'oibrigh an Roinn agus an tÚdarás go dlúth le chéile in 2017 chun an tacaíocht a chuireann an tÚdarás ar fáil do chuideachtaí Éireannacha a mhéadú oiread agus ab fhéidir chun cloí leis na hoibleagáidí rialála Ceimiceán reatha.

Ina theannta sin, thosaigh an Roinn agus an tÚdarás ag oibriú ar ábhar imní a shainaithint maidir le rialáil agus úsáid ceimiceán i dtionscal na hÉireann mar gheall ar an mBreatimeacht.

Seirbhísí Creidiúnaithe

Is é cuspóir an Chreidiúnaithe a chinntíu go mbeidh an acmhainn theicniúil ag comhlachtaí measúnaithe comhréireachta (e.g. saotharlanna, comhlachtaí cigireachta nó deimhniúcháin) chun a ndualgais a chomhlíonadh. Tá creidiúnú ag fáil breis aitheantaí mar uirlis thábhachtach agus phraiticiúil chun cuspóirí a bhaint amach i raon réimsí beartais atá ag méadú.

Is cuid den Údarás anois é Bord Náisiúnta na hÉireann um Chreidiúnú, an comhlacht náisiúnta atá freagrach as saotharlanna, comhlachtaí deimhniúcháin agus comhlachtaí cigireachta a chreidiúnú.

In 2017, sholáthair an Bord clár leanúnach creidiúnaithe don tionscal agus dhaingnigh sé a chóras bainistithe caidrimh claint nua. D'fhorbair sé struchtúr nua praghsála freisin bunaithe ar an gcostas a bhíonn ar a sheirbhísí éagsúla creidiúnaithe a sholáthar.

Bhí níos mó spéise ag comhlachtaí dá dtugtar fógra sa Ríocht Aontaithe i seirbhísí an Bhoird a úsáid mar gheall ar an mBreatimeacht. D'oibrigh an Roinn go dlúth leis an mBord i rith 2017 chun na

dúshlán agus deiseanna a bhaineann leis an mBreatimeacht a shainaithint, agus chun sásraí foirmiúla a chur i bhfeidhm chun dul i ngleic le hiarratais ó Chomhlachtaí dá dtugtar Fógra a dteastaíonn uathu athlonnú ón Ríocht Aontaithe go hÉirinn.

Ina theannta sin, chinnigh an Roinn acmhainní breise don Bhord in 2017 chun cabhrú leis a ról a chomhlíonadh – in 2018, glacfaidh an Bord le ról an chomhlachta náisiúnta creidiúnaithe i ndáil leis an Rialachán Ginearálta maidir le Cosaint Sonrai.

An Earnáil Foirgníochta

Tá an Roinn ina comhalta den **Choiste Comhairleach Compháirtíochta do Shábháilteachta Foirgníochta** a fheidhmíonn mar fhóram sainchomhairliúcháin agus comhairleach do Bhord an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta. Sainaithníonn an Coiste ceisteanna tábhachtacha a bhaineann le cúrsaí sábháilteachta agus sláinte a fheabhsú san earnáil foirgníochta agus cuireann in ord tosaíochta iad. Forbraíonn sé clár gníomhaíochta náisiúnta chun gníomhartha na n-eagraíochtaí ionadaíochta ábhartha a chur chun cinn agus a chomhordú. Tagann comhaltaí eile an Choiste ón Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta, Cónaidhm Thionscal na Foirgníochta, Comhdháil na gCeardchumann, Gníomhaireacht Bainistíochta Rialtais Áitiúil, comhlachtaí gairmiúla a bhaineann leis an tionscal foirgníochta agus comhlachtaí ionadaíochta ceirde do shláinte agus sábháilteachta.

Tá an Roinn ina comhalta freisin de **Ghrúpa Maoirseachta Páirtithe Leasmhara SOLAS** a bhunaigh SOLAS (an tÚdarás Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna) chun tabhaint faoi athbhreithniú ar oibriú agus todhchaí na scéimeanna oiliúna, creidiúnaithe agus measúnaithe san earnáil foirgníochta.

An Earnáil Feirmeoireachta

Is í an fheirmeoireacht fós an earnáil ina mbíonn an ráta is airde timpistí agus básanna. Agus aird acu air sin, d'óstáil an tAire Pat Breen TD i gcomhar lena chomhghleacaí an tAire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Michael Creed TD, cruinníu comhchéime ina raibh na príompháirtithe leasmhara ar fad ón earnáil talmhaíochta. Ina measc bhí ionadaithe ó eagraíochtaí ionadaíochta feirmeoireachta, conraitheoirí talmhaíochta, soláthróirí oiliúna, cuideachtaí árachais, grúpaí tréidliachta agus eagraíochtaí Stáit agus grúpaí eile a oibríonn ar son sábháilteachta ar an bhfeirm. larradh ar na ranpháirtithe ar fad teacht ar ais le tograí le haghaidh gníomhartha spriocdhírithe náisiúnta a bhféadfaí tabhaint fúthu. Tógfar ar an obair sin in 2018.

Foghrúpa an Chreata d'Áit Oibre Shláintiúil

Is comhthionscnamh é seo idir an Roinn Sláinte agus an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta atá ar bun faoin gclár Éire Shláintiúil. Is é Éire Shláintiúil an Creat Náisiúnta chun sláinte agus folláine mhuintir na hÉireann a fheabhsú. Tá an Foghrúpa Áit Oibre ag díriú ar **Creat d'Áit Oibre Shláintiúil** a forbairt a d'fhéadfaí a úsáid mar acmhainn phraigíúil i ngach áit oibre.

Faoi scáth an Fhoghrúpa, tugadh faoi phróiseas cuimsitheach comhairliúcháin thar réimse eagraíochtaí san earnáil phríobháideach agus san earnáil phoiblí in 2017. Tá na dearctaí a fuarthas sa phróiseas comhairliúcháin, lena n-áirítear an suirbhé ar líne agus an fhianaise ó thaighde atá ar bun, le bonn eolais a chur faoi ábhar an Chreata deiridh.

Chomh maith le páirt a ghlaicadh san Fhoghrúpa, thug an Roinn síolchiste tacaíochta chun cabhrú le Cúrsa larchéime san Fholláine san Áit Oibre a bhunú le hOllscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh.

Grúpa Náisiúnta Trasearnála ‘Connecting for Life’

Tá an Grúpa seo á stiúradh ag an Roinn Sláinte. Is é ‘Connecting for Life’ an straitéis náisiúnta chun féinmharú a laghdú idir 2015 agus 2020. Tagann comhaltaí an Ghrúpa ó réimse leathan Ranna Rialtais, lena n-áirítear an Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, agus Gníomhaireachtaí ar nós an

Údaráis Sláinte agus Sábháilteacht, Fheidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, TUSLA agus na hOifige Náisiúnta um Fhéinmharú a Chosc, chomh maith le réimse eagraíochtaí eile atá páirteach i meabhairshláinte dhearfach a chur chun cinn.

Tá an Grúpa ag maoirsiú cur i bhfeidhm tiomantas a bhaineann le freagrachtaí chomhaltaí an Ghrúpa mar a leagtar amach i bplean cuir i bhfeidhm ‘Connecting for Life’. Shainaithin an Roinn seo roinnt tionscnamh a bhaineann leis an áit oibre chun strus a bhaineann leis an obair a laghdú etc. mar chuid de phlean foriomlán ‘Connecting for Life’.

Sábháilteacht agus Sláinte san Áit Oibre – Tionscnamh BeSMART

Uirlis ar líne saor in aisce de chuid an Údaráis Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta is ea BeSMART, a dearadh chun cabhrú le húinéirí/bainisteoirí gnóthas beag measúnuithe riosca agus ráitis sábháilteachta a ullmhú dá n-áit oibre. Léiríonn figíúirí 2017 go bhfuil fás ag teacht i gcónaí ar an líon gnótháí a úsáideann uirlis BeSMART. In 2017, bhain beagnach 8,500 úsáideoir breise úsáid as BeSMART. Cabhraíonn an uirlis seo, atá ar fáilanois do bhrefis agus 270 cineál gnó, le comhlíonadh, agus sábhálann gnóthais am agus airgead ó thaobh a n-oibleagáidí dlíthiúla faoin Acht um Shábháilteacht, Sláinte agus Leas ag an Obair, 2005 a chomhlíonadh.

In 2017, d'oibrigh an Roinn leis an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta chun Clár Foghlama Frithpháirtí a óstáil ina raibh toscaireacht ardleibhéil ón gCoimisiún Eorpach agus Ballstáit AE eile. Ba é aidhm an imeachta deiseanna foghlama frithpháirtí idir Ballstáit an Aontais Eorpais a éascú agus a spreagadh. Díríodh ar BeSMART ag an imeacht agus chuir sé ar chumas an Údaráis a léiriú an chaoi a gcabhraíonn sé le húinéirí/bainisteoirí gnótháí beaga measúnuithe riosca agus ráitis sábháilteachta a ullmhú. Cabhraíonn sé sin ansin leis an seans go dtarlóidh timpiste san áit oibre a laghdú, agus ar deireadh sábhálann sé am agus airgead do ghnóthaí. Tá níos mó eolais le fáil ar www.besmart.ie.

Timpistí agus Básanna san Áit Oibre

In 2017, tháinig méadú ar líon na mbásanna san áit oibre a tuairiscíodh don Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta ó 46 in 2016 go 47. Bhí sé sin faoi bhun an 56 bás a tharla in 2015. Mar a bhí in 2016, bhí an líon ab airde básanna fós in earnáil ardriosca na talmhaíochta (24) agus tuairiscíodh 3 bhás breise san áit oibre in 2017. Thit líon na mbásanna san earnáil tógála go 6 in 2017, síos ó 9 in 2016.

Mar a bhí sna blianta roimhe sin, agus ar aon dul leis an gcur chuige bunaithe ar riosca i leith leithdháileadh acmhainní, dhírig an tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta a ghníomhaíochtaí cigireachta ar na hearnálacha ardriosca sin. Rinneadh é sin i dteannta feachtas spriocdhírithe náisiúnta chun eolas a scaipeadh faoi chúrsaí sábháilteachta agus an tsábháilteacht a chur chun cinn. Reáchtáladh iad sa dá earnáil ardriosca de bhun maoliniú breise a cuireadh ar fáil don Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta i rith 2017.

Sprioc 6:

Creat dlí agus rialála ardfheidhmíochta do ghnó agus do thomhaltóirí a chinntiú

A chinntiú go n-éascaíonn ár rialáil gnó infheistíocht agus forbairt gnó, iomaiochas sa mhargadh agus ardchaighdeáin i dtaca le cosaint tomhaltóirí agus rialáil chorparáideach, agus go dtugann sí buntáiste iomaiochais d'Éirinn sa mhargadh domhanda

Dlí na gCuideachtaí, Iomaiochas agus Cosaint Tomhaltóirí

I rith 2017, thógamar ar an obair a rinneadh roimhe sin chuncreat dhlí na gcuideachtaí atá seasmhach, trédhearcach agus nua-aimseartha a fhorbairt in Éirinn. Leanamar orainn ag forbairt agus ag múnlú freagairtí nua do dhúshláin nua agus atá ag teacht chun cinn i ndlí na gcuideachtaí, iomaiochas agus beartas tomhaltóirí ar leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh agus náisiúnta. Díritear go háirithe ar chomhoibriú le páirtithe leasmhara, oifigí agus gníomhaireachtaí na Roinne agus Ranna Rialtais eile chun na torthaí is fearr a bhaint amach de réir ár sprice ardleibhéal.

Togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le conarthaí tomhaltóirí i ndáil le hábhar digiteach a sholáthar

Foilsíodh togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le conarthaí tomhaltóirí i ndáil le hábhar digiteach a sholáthar an 9 Nollaig 2015. Tá sé d'aidhm ag an togra cur le feidhmiú ceart an Mhargaidh Inmheánaigh agus ag an am céanna leibhéal ard cosanta a sholáthar do thomhaltóirí trí cheanglais áirithe a cheapadh d'ábhar ar nós chomhréireacht an ábhair dhigitigh leis an gconradh agus an leigheas atá ar fáil do thomhaltóirí mura dtagann an t-ábhar digiteach le conradh nó mura gcuirtear ábhar digiteach ar fáil. Thángthas ar chomhaontú ag an gComhairle um Cheartas agus um Ghnóthaí Baile i mí an Mheithimh 2016 ar bhunphrionsabail áirithe an togra agus ar roinnt treoirlinte polaitiúla le haghaidh obair air amach anseo. I ndiaidh dianphlé ar an togra sa chéad leath de 2017, chuir Uachtaráinacht Mhálta téacs an togra le haghaidh cur chuige ginearálta faoi bhráid na Comhairle um Cheartas agus um Ghnóthaí Baile an 8–9 Meitheamh 2017. D'fhaomh an Chomhairle an cur chuige ginearálta, cé gur chuir roinnt toscairí in iúl ina ráitis go raibh siad amhrasach faoin téacs agus taifeadadh é sin i miontuairiscí na Comhairle. An 21 Samhain 2017, vótáil Parlaimint na hEorpa ar an dréacht-tuarascáil ar an togra ó na coistí IMCO agus JURI. Reáchtáladh cruinnithe idirphlé thrípháirtigh faoin togra idir Uachtaráinacht na hEastóine, an Coimisiún Eorpach agus Parlaimint na hEorpa an 5 agus an 12 Nollaig 2017, agus curfear túis leis in athuair in 2018 faoi Uachtaráinacht na Bulgáire.

Togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le conarthaí tomhaltóirí i ndáil le díol earraí ar líne agus ar bhealaí cianda eile

Foilsíodh togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le conarthaí tomhaltóirí i ndáil le díol earraí ar líne agus ar bhealaí cianda eile an 9 Nollaig 2015 i dteannta togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le conarthaí tomhaltóirí i ndáil le hábhar digiteach a sholáthar. Tá sé d'aidhm ag an togra cur le feidhmiú ceart an Mhargaidh Inmheánaigh agus ag an am céanna leibhéal ard cosanta a sholáthar do thomhaltóirí trí cheanglais áirithe a cheapadh do chonarthaí i ndáil le díol earraí ar líne agus ar bhealaí cianda eile. Baineann na ceanglais le hábhar ar nós chomhréireacht na n-earraí leis an gconradh agus an leigheas atá ar fáil do thomhaltóirí mura dtagann earra le conradh. Cé go raibh sé i gceist ag an gCoimisiún go ndéanfaí an togra i ndáil le hábhar digiteach agus an togra i ndáil le díol a phlé in éineacht lena chéile, bhí formhór na mBallstát den tuairim nár cheart rialacha maidir le díol earraí ar líne a dheighilt ó na rialacha ginearálta maidir le díol earraí mar atá sa Treoir um Dhíolacháin don

Tomhaltóir (Treoir 1999/44/CE) a bhí á measúnú mar chuid d'athbhreithniú oiriúnachta REFIT ar roinnt Treoracha maidir le cosaint tomhaltóirí a thosaigh i mí Eanáir 2016 agus a cuireadh i gcrích i mí na Bealtaine 2017. Thacaigh an t-athbhreithniú leis an ngá atá le tacar amháin rialacha do dhíolacháin ar líne agus as líne, conclúid ar thacaigh na Ballstátí sa Ghrúpa Oibre leis. Cé go raibh an Coimisiún ar son raon feidhme an togra maidir le díolacháin ar líne a leasú sa Chomhairle chun é a leathnú go gach conradh díolacháin tomhaltóirí, bhí formhór na mBallstát ar son togra nua reacthaíochta agus measúnú tionchair nua a chur isteach. D'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún togra leasaithe a chuimsigh gach conartha díolacháin tomhaltóirí an 31 Deireadh Fómhair 2017. Seachas gur leathnaíodh a raon feidhme go gach conradh díolacháin tomhaltóirí, bhí an méid a bhí ann cosúil leis an gcéad togra maidir le díolacháin ar líne. D'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún cáipéis oibre freisin ar thionchar rialacha comhchuibhithe go hiomlán ar chonarthaí díolacháin tomhaltóirí chun cur leis an measúnú tionchair a ullmhaíodh don togra maidir le díolacháin ar líne. Scaipeadh an togra leasaithe ar pharlaimintí náisiúnta go luath i mí na Samhna le haghaidh seiceálacha coimhdeachta agus comhreireachta. Bhí cruinnithe an pháirtí oibre ar an togra leasaithe ar siúl an 27 Samhain agus an 19–20 Nollaig 2017 agus leanfar leo in 2018.

Togra le haghaidh Rialachán maidir le comhar idir údaráis náisiúnta atá freagrach as dlíthe um chosaint tomhaltóirí a fhorfheidhmiú

Faoi láthair, comhchuibhíonn Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 2006/2004 maidir le comhar ar mhaith le cosaint tomhaltóirí an creat comhair idir údaráis náisiúnta inniuála i mBallstátí an Aontais Eorpaigh i ndáil lena ngníomhartha forfheidhmithe. Cuimsíonn an Rialachán sin réimse 18 dTreoir agus Rialachán ón Aontas Eorpach a bhaineann le acquis dlí tomhaltóirí agus margáiochta an Aontais. Chuir Coimisiún an AE athbhreithniú ar an Rialachán i gcrích agus, mar chuid dá thionscnamh don Mhargadh Aonair Digiteach, d'eisigh sé togra le haghaidh Rialachán leasaithe i mí na Bealtaine 2016. Is é cuspóir ginearálta an togra sásraí le haghaidh comhair ar mhaith le cosaint tomhaltóirí a fhorbairt atá nua-aimseartha, eífeachtúil agus eífeachtach, sásraí a laghdóidh aimhleas tomhaltóirí a easraíonn as sárú trastearann agus forleathan dhlí tomhaltóirí an Aontais. Áirítear leis sin go háirithe cásanna a laghdú ina dtarlaíonn sárú tábhachtach trastearann agus forleathan ach nach mbraithear é nó nach dtugtar aghaidh air mar is ceart trí chreat an chomhair ar mhaith le cosaint tomhaltóirí, agus a chinntí go mbaineann údaráis cosanta tomhaltóirí torthaí cosúla amach mar gheall ar na míchealchais chéanna.

Foilsíodh an Rialachán (mar a chomhaontaigh Parlaimint na hEorpa, Comhairle an AE agus Coimisiún an AE é) san Iris Oifigiúil an 27 Nollaig 2017. Tá dhá bhliain ag Ballstát, ón dáta foilsithe, chun an Rialachán a chur i bhfeidhm.

Togra le haghaidh Rialachán maidir le haghaidh ar thabhairt ar an ngeobhlocáil agus ar chineálacha eile idirdhealaithe atá bunaithe ar náisiúntacht, áit chónaithe nó áit bhunaithe custaiméirí

Is é cuspóir ginearálta an togra seo rochtain níos fearr a thabhairt do chustaiméirí (idir thomhaltóirí agus ghnótháí) ar earraí agus seirbhísí sa Mhargadh Aonair ach idirdhealú díreach agus neamhdhíreach trádálaithe a chosc, a scarann an margadh go saorga bunaithe ar áit chónaithe custaiméirí (ar a dtugtar 'geobhlocáil'). Bónn difríochtaí dá leithéid sa chaoi a gcaitear le custaiméirí atá ag ceannach ar líne, ach freisin nuair a thaistealaíonn siad go Ballstátí eile chun earraí nó seirbhísí a cheannach. Sainítear cásanna sonracha sa togra nuair nach féidir údar a thabhairt do gheobhlocáil nó cineálacha eile idirdhealaithe bunaithe ar náisiúntacht, áit chónaithe nó suíomh. Cuireann an togra cosc freisin ar rochtain a bhlocáil ar shuíomhanna gréasáin agus ar athróódú uathoibríoch a úsáid gan cead a fháil ón gcuistaiméir roimh ré. Cé gur féidir le trádálaithe glacadh fós le pé bealach íocaíochta a shonraíonn siad féin, tá foráil shonrach sa togra do neamh-idirdhealú laistigh de na bealaí íocaíochta sin. Ní bheidh idirbhearta ina gceannaíonn gnó earraí nó seirbhísí le hathdhíol san áireamh áfach ionas go mbeidh trádálaithe in ann a gcorais dálte a bhunú de réir dhlí iomaíochais na hEorpa. Ní chuireann an togra iallach ar thrádálaithe díol le custaiméir.

Thángthas ar chomhaontú ag idirphlé trípháirteach idir Uachtaráinacht na hEastóine, an Coimisiún Eorpach agus Parlaimint na hEorpa an 21 Samhain 2017. Beidh an Rialachán infheidhme naoi mí i ndiaidh é a fhoilsiú in Iris Oifigiúil an Aontais Eorpaigh (a tharla an 2 Márta 2018).

Togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le húdaráis iomaíochais na mBallstát a chumhachtú ionas go mbeidh siad ina bhforfheidhmithe níos éifeachtaí

An 22 Mártá 2017, d'fhoilsigh Coimisiún an AE togra le haghaidh Treoir maidir le húdaráis iomaíochais na mBallstát a chumhachtú ionas go mbeidh siad ina bhforfheidhmithe níos éifeachtaí agus chun a chinntí go bhfeidhmíonn an margadh inmheánach mar is ceart. Is iad aidhmeanna lúaité na Treorach molta a chinntí go bhfuil urlísí éifeachtacha fiosraithe, cinnteoireachta agus forfheidhmithe ag údaráis náisiúnta iomaíochais; go bhfuil siad in ann fineálacha éifeachtacha bactha a ghearradh; go bhfuil clár dea-cheaptha trúcaire i bhfeidhm acu a éascaíonn iarratas a dhéanamh ar thrúcaire i gcúpla dlínsé; agus go bhfuil dóthain acmhainní acu agus gur féidir leo rialacha iomaíochais an Aontais Eorpaigh a chur i bhfeidhm go neamhspleách. Cuireadh túis le hidirbheartaíocht ar an togra i nGrúpa Oibre na Comhairle ar lomaíochas i láir 2017 agus leanfar léi in 2018.

Comhairliúchán Poiblí ar Athdhíol Ticéad

D'fhoilsigh an tAire Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (ag an am) Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD páipéar comhairliúcháin ar athdhíol ticéad le haghaidh imeachtaí siamsaíochta agus spóirt an 20 Eanáir 2017, i dtéannta an Aire lompair, Turasóireachta agus Spóirt agus an Aire Stáit Turasóireachta agus Spóirt (ag an am). Foilsíodh an 24 freagra ar an gcomhairliúchán ar shuíomh na Roinne an 9 Bealtaine 2017. Tháinig freagraí ó chomhlachtaí spóirt, tionscnórí imeachtaí, comhlachtaí tomholtóirí, soláthróirí seirbhísí ticéad príomhúla, margáí ticéad tánaisteacha, ionadaithe poiblí agus ó dhaoine eile nach iad. Reáchtáil oifigigh ón Roinn plé leantach ina dhiaidh sin leis na príomhpháirtithe leasmhara ag féachaint le measúnú a dhéanamh ar roghanna féideartha a mbeadh d'aidhm leo cabhrú lena chinntí go n-oibreodh margáí ticéad níos fearr do thomholtóirí. Bhí na hoifigigh ag plé le húdaráis i mBallstáit an Aontais Eorpaigh agus i mBallstáit Chomhlachas Saorthrádála na hEorpa freisin faoi reachtaíocht ar athdhíol ticéad ag féachaint le measúnú a dhéanamh ar a dtaití ar reachtaíocht dá leithéid agus ar éifeachtacht na reachtaíochta.

An Bille um Shainmharcáil (Leasú), 2016

Cuireadh túis leis an mBille a chur trí Thithe an Oireachtais in 2017, agus cuireadh Céim an Choiste i gcrích i nDáil Éireann i mí an Mheithimh 2017. Cuirfear túis an athuair ar mhachnamh ar an mBille in 2018.

An tAcht lomaíochta (Leasú), 2017

Achtaíodh an Bille lomaíochta (Leasú), 2016 an 7 Meitheamh 2017 agus tháinig sé i bhfeidhm an 7 Meán Fómhair 2017. Thosaigh sé mar Bhille Comhalta Phríobháidigh de chuid Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre. Tugann an tAcht díolúine ó alt 4 den Acht lomaíochta, 2002, do thrí chatagóir d'oibrithre féinfehostaithe (aisteoirí guthaithe, saor-iriseoirí agus ceoltóirí seisiúin) a chuireann ar a gcumas, go héifeachtach, margáí a dhéanamh in éindí. Leagtar amach freisin san Acht próiseas iarratais do Cheardchumann aitheanta ar bith chun díolúine a iarraidh ón Aire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta ón Acht d'oibrithre féinfehostaithe eile fad is go gcomhlíontar coinníollacha áirithe.

Grúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí

Is é Grúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí an grúpa sainchomhairleoirí a bhfuil de chúram orthu comhairle a chur ar an Aire faoi chúrsaí dhíli na gcuideachtaí. Chinn an tAire clár oibre an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe do 2016 go 2018 i gcomhar leis an nGrúpa féin. Tá obair an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe

ag dul ar aghaidh trí na seisiúin iomlánacha agus naoi bhfochoiste. Cuireann an tAonad um Fhorbairt an Dlí Cuideachtaí agus an AE an rúnaíocht ar fáil.

Chuir an Grúpa Athbhreithnithe roinnt míreanna ar a chlár oibre i gcrích in 2017:

- Rinne an Fochoiste um Scaireanna agus Scairchaipiteal athbhreithniú ar na forálacha in Acht na gCuideachtaí, 2014 maidir le scaireanna agus scairchaipiteal agus ghlac an Grúpa Athbhreithnithe leis an tuarascáil a d'eisigh siad (Moltaí Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí maidir le scaireanna agus scairchaipiteal in Acht na gCuideachtaí, 2014).
- An 13 Meitheamh, glacadh le tuarascáil Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí ar chosaint fostaithe agus creidiúnaithe neamhurraithe ag cruinniú iomlánach an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe. Moltar tograí le haghaidh athrú reachtach sa Tuarascáil agus cé nach leigheas iomlán é ar gach rud, d'fhéadfaí aghaidh a thabhairt ar chuid de na deacrachtaí a bhíonn ag fostaithe agus creidiúnaithe neamhurraithe i gcás dócmhainneacht cuideachta, agus trédhearcacht agus cuntasacht a fheabhsú.
- Rinne an Fochoiste um Rialachas Corparáideach athbhreithniú ar na forálacha in Acht na gCuideachtaí, 2014 maidir le rialachas corparáideach agus ghlac an Grúpa Athbhreithnithe leis an tuarascáil a d'eisigh siad (Moltaí Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí maidir le Rialachas Corparáideach in Acht na gCuideachtaí, 2014) ag cruinniú iomlánach an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe an 30 Samhain. Comhlíonann an tuarascáil sin tiomantas a tugadh sa tsraith beart a d'fhogair an Rialtas agus a bhfuil d'aidhm léi rialachas corparáideach a fheabhsú, trédhearcacht a mhéadú agus freagairt na hÉireann do choireacht an bhóna bháin a threisiú.

Cuirtear tuarascálacha Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe an Dlí Cuideachtaí faoi bhráid an Aire agus foilsítear na tuarascálacha ar www.clrg.org. Tá an Roinn i mbun machnaimh ar thuarascálacha an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe agus déanfaidh sí moltaí don Aire ar an bhfreagairt beartais nó reachtach, mar is iomchuí.

Tá an Grúpa Athbhreithnithe ag tabhairt faoi athbhreithniú ar dhlí na gcuideachtaí a fhorfheidhmiú, atá á chur chun cinn ag fochoiste Comhlíonta agus Forfheidhmithe an ghrúpa. Tá béim láidir ar dhócmhainneacht i gClár Oibre an Ghrúpa Athbhreithnithe le haghaidh 2016–2018, agus tá machnamh ar na cúrsáil sin fós ar bun. Tháinig fochoiste na Dócmhainneachta Corparáidí le chéile chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar an togra AE reatha le haghaidh Treoir maidir le dócmhainneacht (imeachtaí dara seans) chomh maith le machnamh ar Dhlí Eiseamláireach UNCITRAL maidir le Dócmhainneacht Trasteorann.

Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasáiocht), 2017

Trasúinn Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasáiocht), 2017 Treoir 2013/34/AE ón AE ina dhlí Éireannach. Méadaíonn sé na tairseacha do chuideachtaí a chailíonn mar chuideachtaí beaga, a shimplíonn an tuairisciú airgeadais do chuideachtaí beaga agus a thugann isteach catagóir nua cuideachta ar a dtugtar micreachuideachta. I gcás na micreachuideachtaí sin, laghdaítear na hoibleagáidí maidir le tuairisciú airgeadais. Tugann an tAcht ceanglais nua tuairiscithe isteach freisin do chuideachtaí atá gníomhach i dtionscaill eastóscacha agus ceanglaítear ar roinnt cuideachtaí neamhtheoranta, cistí agus cuideachtaí infheistíochta ráitis airgeadais a chomhdú go poiblí.

Achtú Acht na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017

Cuireann Acht na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017 síneadh ama leis an tréimhse díolúine do chuideachtaí áirithe ó dhá thacar ráitis airgeadais a ullmhú, bunaithe ar an bhfaisnéis airgeadais chéanna ach de réir dhá chaighdeán dhifriúla cuntasaíochta, US GAAP agus IFRS. Síneann an tAcht an tsaoráid go dtí an 31 Nollaig 2030.

Bille na gCuideachtaí (Iniúchtaí Reachtúla), 2017

Foilsíodh Bille na gCuideachtaí (Iniúchtaí Reachtúla), 2017 an 6 Samhain 2017. Tugann an Bille tuilleadh éifeachta do rialacha an Aontais Eorpaigh a trasuíodh den chéad uair in 2016 trí bhíthin I.R. Uimh. 312 de 2016. Go háirithe, baineann sé leas as roghanna nach raibh ar fáil i gcomhthéacs reachtáiochta tánaistí agus tugtar isteach roinnt athruithe praiticiúla ar iompar maoirseachta ar iniúchadh in Éirinn. Tá an Bille ar cheann de ghníomhartha na Roinne i bpacáiste Beart an Rialtais chun creat corporáideach, geilleagrach agus rialála na hÉireann a fheabhsú. Cuireadh an Dara Céim i gcrích dó sa Dáil an 24 Eanáir 2018 agus leanfar le machnamh air i rith na bliana.

Athbhreithniú ar na hAchtanna um Chumainn Tionscail agus Soláthair

Mar chuid den athbhreithniú ar na Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1893 go 2014, agus é d'aidhm leis tacáiocht bhereise a thabhairt do Chomharchumainn in Éirinn, reáchtáil an Roinn comhairliúchán poiblí ar an athchóiriú beartaithe reachtaíochta idir an 1 Samhain 2016 agus an 31 Eanáir 2017. Tá freagairt a fuarthas de bhun an chomhairliúcháin sin á mbreith. Is é cuspóir an athbhreithnithe an reachtaíocht atá ann a chomhdhlúthú agus a nuachóiriú chun creat reachtach do chomharchumainn a bheadh oiriúnach don raon éagsúil gnóthas atá ag oibriú na comharshamhla in Éirinn a chinntiú.

An Mheitheal um Chostas Árachais

Bhunaigh an Roinn Airgeadais an Mheitheal um Chostas Árachais, faoi chathaoirleacht an Aire Stáit le freagacht as Seirbhísí Airgeadais ag an am, i ndeireadh mhí Iúil 2016 chun athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar imthosca a imríonn tionchar ar chostas méadaithe mótarárachais le súil le bearta láithreacha agus fadtéarmacha a shainaithínt chun dul i ngleic leis na costais mhéadaithe sin. Ghlac oifigigh ón Roinn Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta agus ón mBord Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta páirt sa Mheitheal um Chostas Árachais. Foilsíodh Tuarascáil ar Chostas Mótarárachais na Meitheile um Chostas Árachais go luath i mí Eanáir 2017. Déantar roinnt moltaí tábhachtacha sa Tuarascáil, lena n-áirítear go mbunófaí Coimisiún um Dhíobhálacha Pearsanta faoi shainchúram an Aire Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta.

I ndiaidh Tuarascáil ar Chostas Mótarárachais na Meitheile um Chostas Árachais a fhoilsiú, rinne an Mheitheal machnamh ar cheist an árachais fostóra agus dliteanais phoiblí agus chuir sí tuarascáil i dtoll a chéile. Foilsíodh Tuarascáil ar Chostas Árachas Fostóra agus Dliteanais Phoiblí na Meitheile um Chostas Árachais go luath i mí Eanáir 2018. Ag an am céanna leis an rannpháirtíocht sa Mheitheal, rinne an Roinn dul chun cinn ar roinnt moltaí a chur i bhfeidhm, a raibh sí freagach astu go príomha, ó Thuarascáil ar Chostas Mótarárachais na Meitheile um Chostas Árachais.

An Bord Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta

Bunaíodh an Bord Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta in 2003 ar mhaithe le tomholtóirí agus gnólachtaí araon, ach a réiteofaí éilimh i ndáil le díobháil phearsanta níos tapúla agus a laghdófaí na costais a bhaineann le dlíthíocht. Tar éis dó a bheith ar an bhfód le deich mbliana, reáchtáladh próiseas comhairliúcháin in 2014 i dtaca le feidhmiú na nAchtanna um Bord Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta agus rinneadh scrídú ar na haighneachtaí a fuarthas. I mí an Mheithimh 2017, d'fhaomh an Rialtas Scéim Ghinearálta an Bhille um Bord Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta (Leasú), 2018. Tá an Roinn ag oibriú le hOifig na nDréachtóirí Parlaiminte chun an Bille a dhréachtú.

Is é aidhm an Bhille cur tuilleadh le ról an Bhoird Measúnaithe Díobhálacha Pearsanta laistigh de thimpeallacht na n-éileamh ar dhíobhálacha pearsanta chun sochair tomholtóirí, árachóirí, gnó agus na sochaí go ginearálta ach socrú éileamh ar dhíobhálacha pearsanta atá níos tapa, níos fearr agus níos éifeachtúla ó thaobh costais de a bhaint amach. Tabharfar aird sa reachtáiocht bheartaithe ar mholtáí ábhartha i dTuarascáil ar Mhótarárachas na Meitheile um Chostas Árachais.

An Coimisiún um Dhíobhálacha Pearsanta

Bhí bunú an Choimisiúin um Dhíobhálacha Pearsanta ar cheann de na príomh-mholtaí sa Tuarascáil ar Chostas Mótarárachais na Meitheal um Chostas Árachais. I mí Eanáir 2017, bunaíodh an Coimisiún um Dhíobhálacha Pearsanta, faoi chathaoirleacht an Bhreithimh Nicholas Kearns. D'fhoilsigh an Coimisiún a chéad tuarascáil an 7 Nollaig 2017 agus déantar roinnt moltaí ar ghlacadh le cur chuige caighdeánaithe a aithnítear go hidrnáisiúnta i leith diagnóisiú, cóireáil agus tuairisciú cleachtóirí ar ghortuithe fiocháin bhog atá cumasach agus oilte i gceart. Tá dul chun cinn á dhéanamh ar an obair don dara céim d'obair an Choimisiúin, a dhíreoidh ar thagarmharcáil a dhéanamh ar dhámhachtainí diobhálacha pearsanta mhótarárachas na hÉireann leo siúd i ndlínsí eile.

Taking Care of Business

Reáchtáil an tAonad Rialála Gnó, i gcomhar leis an Údarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta, imeacht 'Taking Care of Business' i gCaisleán Bhaile Átha Cliath i mí na Samhna 2017 ina bhféadfadh beagnach 500 ball den phobal gnó – FBMan, cuideachtaí nuathionscanta agus fiontraithe ina measc – labhairt duine le duine le 30 gníomhaireacht, oifig agus seirbhís stáit chun comhairle a fháil agus foghlaim faoin gcúnamh atá ar fáil. Thacaigh roinnt comhlacthaí ionadaíochta ón earnáil phríobháideach leis an imeacht freisin. D'fhreastail beagnach 2,500 duine ar an tsraithimeachtaí seo ar fud na tíre ó 2013 i leith.

Lean an tAonad Rialála Gnó de bheith rannpháirteach freisin i ngrúpaí éagsúla idrnáisiúnta amhail Ardán REFIT an Aontais Eorpaigh, ag féachaint ar chumas rialála, Grúpa Oibre um lomaíochas agus Fás (Rialáil Níos Fearr) na Comhairle Eorpaí, Stiúrthóirí agus Saineolaithe na Rialála Níos Fearr, an Lónra Rialála Níos Fearr agus Coiste um Beartas Rialála na hEagraíochta um Chomhar agus Fhorbairt Eacnamaíochta (OECD).

Trádáil Rialáilte a Éascú

Féachann an Roinn le heaspórtálacha a chur chun cinn agus a fhás, agus ag an am céanna a chinntí go gcomhlíonn Éire go hiomlán a hoibleagáidí idrnáisiúnta mar bhallstát de na Náisiúin Aontaithe agus den Aontas Eorpach chun tacú le rialú airm dhomhanda, neamhleathadh arm adhmhillte agus cearta an duine. Reáchtálann an Roinn réimeas rialaithe agus ceadúnaíthe trádála de réir reachtaíochta náisiúnta agus AE. Is cuid thábhachta é an réimeas sin den chreat rialaithe gnó do chuideachtaí a thrádálann go hidrnáisiúnta as Éirinn. Cabhraíonn réimeas inchreidte agus éifeachtúil le buntáiste iomaíochais a thabhairt d'Éirinn sa mhargadh domhanda.

Déanann an Roinn ionadaíocht d'Éirinn ag fóram AE agus idrnáisiúnta eile ag a bhfuil freagracht as rialuithe trádála agus cuireann sí go gníomhach le reachtaíochta ábhartha a nuashonrú, idir náisiúnta agus Eorpach.

Riar an Roinn thart ar 700 ceadúnas easpórtála (arbh fhiú a luach iomlán agus níos mó ná €3 bhilliún) in 2017 le haghaidh earraí dé-úsáide (earraí ag a bhfuil úsáid shibhialta ach a d'fhéadfaí a úsáid mar earraí míleata freisin) agus earraí Míleata. Cuireann an Roinn trádbhaic arm agus smachtbhannáí trádála na Náisiún Aontaithe agus an Aontas Eorpaigh i bhfeidhm freisin agus d'achtaigh sí 22 ionstraim Reachtúil nua chun éifeacht a thabhairt do na rialuithe sin.

Cuireann an Roinn ceanglais ceadúnaíthe an Aontas Eorpaigh i bhfeidhm maidir le hiompórtálacha iarainn agus cruach ó thríú tíortha. In 2017, eisíodh 1,100 ceadúnas dá leithéid.

Foilsíonn an Roinn staitisticí ar cheadúnais a eisíodh ar a suíomh gréasáin gach sé mhí. Foilsítear tuarascáil níos cuimsithí agus mionsonraithe ar ghníomhaíocht ceadúnaíthe go bliantúil.

An tAcht um Chonarthaí Foirgníochta, 2013 – rialáil íocaíochtaí faoi chonarthaí foirgníochta agus teidlíocht reachtúil i leith breithiúnais

Tháinig an tAcht um Chonarthaí Foirgníochta, 2013 i bhfeidhm do chonarthaí áirithe foirgníochta ar tugadh fúthu tar éis an 25 Lúil 2016 (I.R. Uimh. 165 de 2016). Caithfidh na páirtithe i gconradh ábhartha foirgníochta cloí le téarmaí na reachtaíochta agus ní féidir leo diúltú don reachtaíocht. Tá conarthaí áirithe díolmhaite ón reachtaíocht: conradh nach mó a luach ná €10,000; conradh Comhpháirtíochta Príobháidí Poiblí; conradh fostáíochta; agus conradh um áit chónaithe nach mó ná 200 méadar cearnach sa chás go bhfuil ceann de na páirtithe ina chónai ann nó go bhfuil sé i gceist aige cónaí ann.

Is é cuspóir an Acharta íocaíochtaí a rialú, go háirithe uainiú na n-íocaíochtaí, faoi chonradh foirgníochta a chuimsítear faoin reachtaíocht. Cuirtear cosaintí nua íocaíochta ar fáil d'fhochonraitheoirí i dtionscal na foirgníochta a measadh a bheith leochaileach sa timthriall íocaíochta sa tionscal sin. Tugann an tAcht seo, den chéad uair riamh in Éirinn, ceart reachtúil nua do pháirtí le conradh foirgníochta aighneas faoi íocaíocht a chur ar aghaidh le haghaidh breithiúnais. Tá sé i gceist leis an Acht go dtabharfar breithiúnais chun críche laistigh de 28 lá ón lá a gcuirtear an t-aighneas faoi bhráid an Bhréithneora de ghnáth.

I rith 2017, rinne Cathaoirleach Phainéal Breithiúnais na gConarthaí Foirgníochta, an Dr Nael G. Bunni, an chéad cheapachán faoin Acht nuair a ceapadh Breithneoir ón bPainéal Breithneoirí a cheap an tAire d'aighneas íocaíochta.

Chuir an Dr Bunni a Thuarascáil Bhliantúil ar an gcéad bhliain d'fheidhmiú na reachtaíochta faoi bhráid an Aire Stáit Pat Breen TD i mí Lúnasa 2017. Léirítear sa Tuarascáil gur beag aighneas íocaíochta ar theastaigh breithiúnas ina leith sa chéad bhliain den Acht. Léirítear staid reatha an fháis shuntasáigh san earnáil foirgníochta mar chuid den chúis a bhfuil leibhéal íseal aighnis ann faoi láthair faoi íocaíochtaí.

Méadreolaíocht Náisiúnta

Bhí an t-éileamh ar sheirbhísí calabraithe seasmhach le haghaidh 2017, agus eisíodh díreach os cionn 4,500 deimhniú calabraithe i rith na bliana.

Méadreolaíocht Dhílíthiúil

In 2017 thug cigirí méadreolaíochta dlílíthiúla cuairt ar 3,550 áitreabh agus rinne siad cigireacht ar 14,752 urlis. Cé go bhfuil leibhéal ard comhlíonta le feiceáil sa tionscal, eisíodh 852 rabhadh mar gheall ar neamhchomhlíonadh. Ionchúisíodh próiseálaí iasc ionnaithe i nDún na nGall, as ar eascarr fineáil €45,000 agus téarma príosúnachta sé mhí a cuireadh ar fionraí.

Deimhniú Feistis Leighis

Lean an tÚdarás um Chaighdeán Náisiúnta na hÉireann ag forbairt a sheirbhísí chuig an gcaighdeán idirnáisiúnta is airde agus fuair sé ‘Údarú’ tosaigh i mí an Mheithimh 2017 mar Eagraíocht Iniuichóireachta le haghaidh Clár Iniuichóireachta Aonair d’Fheistí Leighis. Is é príomhchuspóir an Údarás a chinntí go bhfuil rochtain i gconaí ag tionscal na hÉireann ar an Údarás agus ar chomhlacht deimhnithe a aithnítear go hidirnáisiúnta chun feistí leighis a chur ar mhargaí na hEorpa agus idirnáisiúnta.

Sprioc 7:

Infheistiú inár bhfoireann agus an leas is fearr a bhaint as ár gcuid acmhainní

Infheistiú inár bhfoireann agus tacú leo chun an acmhainn aonair agus chomhchoiteann a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, ardchaighdeán rialachais chorparáidigh a chinntíú agus an leas is fearr a bhaint as ár gcuid acmhainní ar fad chun ár Straitéis, ár Misean agus ár Spriocanna a bhaint amach

In 2017, lean an tAonad Acmhainní Daonna d'fheabhas a chur ar chumas seachadta ár bhfoirne, lenár rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach i bPlean Athnuachana na Státseirbhíse agus an tionscnamh inmheánach againn Dóigheanna Úra Oibre.

Athnuachan na Státseirbhíse

Reáchtáladh sraith Fóraim Rannpháirtíochta Foirne le haghaidh gach gráid chun tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na saincheisteanna a imríonn tionchar ar a rannpháirtíocht i ndiaidh thorthaí an tSuirbhé ar Rannpháirtíocht Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse ó 2015. Ón bpróiseas sin, cuireadh tuarascáil aiseolais i dtoll a chéile agus forbraíodh Plean Gnímh. Leagtar amach sa Phlean Gnímh tionscnaimh shonracha a bhfuil d'aidhm leo aghaidh a thabhairt ar na saincheisteanna a tarraigíodh anuas. Bunaíodh cúig Fhoghrúpa um Dhóigheanna Úra Oibre de réir na bpríomhthéamaí a d'eascair as an aiseolas agus spreagfaidh siadsan an Plean Gnímh.

Ghlac an Roinn páirt sna Gradaim Nuálaíochta agus Feabhas sa Státseirbhís agus cé nár bhuaigh aon cheann d'ainmniúcháin na Roinn gradam, cuireadh ceithre thionscadal ar an ngearrliosta. Ba iad sin:

- Mol Nuálaíochta Sláinte Éireann;
- Clár Gnóthais Srianta agus Dícháillithe Stiúrthóirí Cuideachta;
- Tionscadal Aistrithe Cuideachta na hOifige um Chlárú Cuideachtaí;
- Clár Athchóirithe na gCaidreamh san Áit Oibre.

Maidir leis an Suirbhé ar Rannpháirtíochta Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse in 2017, mhéadaigh ráta freagartha na Roinne go 64% ó 46%. Tá anailís á déanamh ar na torthaí agus cuirfear túis le gníomhartha in 2018 chun freagairt do na torthaí.

Dóigheanna Úra Oibre

Lean an Grúpa Stiúrtha um Dhóigheanna Úra Oibre d'fheidhmiú mar phointe fócais do rannpháirtíochta foirne agus lean dá chlár oibre féin don bhliain. Rinne an grúpa dul chun cinn ar thionscadail sna cúig fhoghrúpa a bhreathnaigh ar:

1. soghluaiasteach agus forbairt gairme;
2. luach saothair agus aitheantas;
3. scileanna;
4. cumarsáid;
5. Cleachtas Oibre Nuálacha.

Tugadh isteach ríomhoibriú níos fearr le ríomh-Cheisteanna Parlaiminte, ríomh-Aighneachtaí agus feistis rochtana thíos.

Daoine agus Cumas

I margadh saothair dúshlánach agus leachtach, d'oibrigh an Roinn go dlúth leis an tSeirbhís um Cheapachán Phoiblí agus le soláthraithe oiliúna chun baill foirne a earcú agus folúntais thábhachtacha a líonadh agus ár bhfoireann oibre a fhorbairt agus a neartú. Tá líon suntasach foirne ag oibriú ar thascanna nua de bharr an líon suaite sa Státseirbhís agus sa mhargadh saothair tríd is tríd. Tá an Roinn ag oibriú chun é sin a bhainistiú trína próiseas Pleanála don Lón Lucht Oibre.

Thug an Roinn faoi shraith rannpháirtíochtaí trína hOifigí agus Rannóga chun tuiscint chothrom le dáta a ghabháil ar na tosaíochtaí straitéiseacha agus na ceanglais a leag siad sin ar an lucht saothair. De bhun na rannpháirtíochta sin, forbraíodh Plean don Lón Lucht Oibre trí bliana (ó 2017 go 2019) a chuirfidh comhlachtaí lárnacha ar an eolas faoi cheanglais na Roinne agus a dhíreoidh ar idirghabhálacha agus tacaíochtaí Acmhainní Daonna chun bearnaí scileanna a dhúnadh agus ár lucht oibre a threisiú, de réir ár ndéimeagrafaice sonraí.

Iniúchóireacht Inmheánach

Bunaithe ar chaighdeáin a nglactar leo go hidirnáisiúnta agus ar ghlac an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe leo ar son na Státseirbhíse in 2012, thug Aonad Fheidhm na hIniúchóireachta Inmheánaí dearbhú agus comhairle don Ard-Rúnaí in 2017 maidir le próisis agus nósanna imeachta inmheánacha airgeadais agus eile na Roinne.

Teicneolaíocht a úsáid chun éifeachtúlachtaí a bhaint amach agus seirbhís do chustaiméirí a fheabhsú

Chuir an Roinn tionscnaimh i gcrích chun éifeachtúlacht a fheabhsú ach glacadh le seirbhísí comhroinnte lárnacha le haghaidh roinnt feidhmithe atá ar fáil ar fud an Rialtais, lena n-áirítear na córais bainistíocha párolla agus taistil agus cothabhála. Rinne sí athruithe suntasacha freisin ar na teicneolaíochtaí a úsáideann sí chun an leas is fearr is féidir a bhaint as forbairtí eile i gcórais agus i seirbhísí comhroinnte.

Tugadh isteach córais nua freisin chun an leas is fearr is féidir a bhaint as an acmhainn a bhaineann le hobair chomhoibríoch agus shoghluaise. Cé nár tugadh isteach aon chórais mhóra nua a fheiceann custaiméirí i rith na bliana, rinneadh feabhsuithe ar sheirbhísí reatha de réir a chéile. Cuireadh seirbhís nua ar líne i bhfeidhm chun maoirseacht chlár an Phlean Gníomhaíochta Réigiúnaigh do Phoist a chuichóiriú, a fhágfaidh go bhfuil sé níos éasca d'ionadaithe réigiúnacha tuairisceáin a chur faoi bhráid na Roinne.

Rialachas Corparáideach

Creat Rialachais, Aibreán 2016 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Governance-Framework.html>

Foilsíodh Creat Rialachais na Roinne i mí Aibreáin 2016 ina leagtar amach nósanna imeachta, próisis agus prionsabail rialachais atá mar bhonn faoi obair na Roinne Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta.

Forbraíodh é i gcomhréir leis an gCaighdeán Rialachais Chorparáidigh don Státseirbhís mar chuid de Phlean Athnuachana na Státseirbhíse, 2014.

Ráiteas Straitéise 2016–2019 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Who-We-Are/Statement-of-Strategy/>

Baineann Ráiteas Straitéise na Roinne leis an tréimhse ó 2016 go 2019.

Sa Ráiteas Straitéise tugtar achoimre ar straitéis na Roinne agus tugtar cuntas ar ár Misean agus ár spriocanna straitéiseacha. Leagtar amach ann, go hachomair, an comhthéacs reatha atá os comhair amach dár bpáirtithe leasmhara agus don Roinn, agus sonraítear na tiomantais atá tugtha againn maidir lenár spriocanna straitéiseacha a bhaint amach.

Saoráil Faisnéise <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Who-We-Are/Corporate-Information/>

Leis an Acht um Shaoráil Faisnéise, 2014, dearbhaítear ceart de bhaill phobail rochtain a fháil ar fhaisnéis oifigiúil chomh fada agus is féidir i gcomhréir leis an leas poiblí agus le ceart príobháideachais an duine.

Foilsíodh an Scéim Foilseachán um Shaoráil Faisnéise de chuid na Roinne i mí Aibreán 2016 i gcomhréir le hAlt 8 den Acht um Shaoráil Faisnéise, 2014. Leagtar amach sa Scéim faisnéis, faoi shé cheannteideal, chun cabhrú leis an bpobal ina dtuiscant ar an Roinn agus ar a feidhmeanna. In 2017 fuair an Roinn 260 larratas um Shaoráil Faisnéise agus próiseáladh iad i gcomhréir le forálacha an Achta um Shaoráil Faisnéise, 2014.

An tAcht um Nochtadh Cosanta, 2014

<https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2014/14/gle/enacted/a1414i.pdf>

I gcomhréir leis an Acht um Nochtadh Cosanta, 2014, tá beartas i bhfeidhm don fhoireann ag an Roinn i ndáil le Nochtadh Cosanta. De réir mar is gó faoi Alt 22 den Acht um Nochtadh Cosanta, 2014, tá tuarascáil bhliantúil ina leagtar amach líon an nochta chosanta a fuarthas agus tá an gníomh a rinneadh ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne laistigh de shé mhí de dheireadh na bliana.

An tAcht um Brústocaireacht a Rialáil, 2015

<https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2015/5/gle/enacted/a515i.pdf>

Ceapadh an tAcht um Brústocaireacht chun faisnéis a thabhairt don phobal faoi cé atá i mbun brústocaireachta, cé leis agus céard faoi. Foilsítear liosta d'Oifigigh Phoiblí Ainmnithe na Roinne faoin Acht seo ar ár suíomh gréasáin.

An tAcht um Íoc Pras Cuntas, 1997 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/Late-Payments/Prompt-Payment-Returns/>

Foilsíonn an Roinn tuairisci feidhmíochta íocaíochta gach ráithe ar a suíomh gréasáin don Roinn agus do na comhlachtaí faoina cúram.

An tAcht fá Choimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas, 2014

I gcomhréir lenár n-oibleagáidí faoin Acht seo, tá an Roinn tiomanta dá beartais, nósanna imeachta agus seirbhísí i gcoitinne ina réimsí gnó a phromhadh chun a chinntí go gcomhlíonaimid ár riachtanais i réimse chearta an duine agus comhionannais.

An Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre <https://www.workplacerelations.ie/ga/>

Is comhlacht neamhspleách é an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre a bunaíodh de réir dlí chun gearán maidir le hidirdhealú a fhiosrú nó chun idirghabháil a dhéanamh ina leith. Cuimsítear an Coimisiún faoin gCoinbhinsiún Eorpach um Chearta an Duine.

Idirdhealú is ea nuair nach gcaitear chomh fabhrach céanna le duine amháin seachas duine eile. Cumhdaítear íospairt faoin reachtaíocht freisin.

Freagracht Shóisialta Chorparáideach <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Business-Sectoral-Initiatives/Corporate-Social-Responsibility/>

Is í an Roinn seo an Roinn tosaigh maidir le Freagracht Shóisialta Chorparáideach – an coincheap ina ndéanann gnóthais agus eagraíochtaí eile a bhfreagrachtaí sóisialta agus comhshaoil a cheangal lena bhfeidhmiúcháin ghnó, agus go ndéantar cinntí gnó le haird ar na saincheisteanna inbhuanaitheachta níos forleithne.

Straitéis Náisiúnta na mBan agus na gCailíní

http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/National_Strategy_for_Women_and_Girls_2017-2020

Déantar ionadaíocht don Roinn ar Choiste Straitéiseach Straitéis Náisiúnta na mBan agus na gCailíní, 2017–2020. Bíonn sí rannpháirteach sna cruinnithe coiste ráithiúla agus bailíonn agus tiomsáonn sí nuashonruithe ar Ghníomhartha dá réir a bhaineann leis an Roinn. Cuireann an Roinn le gníomhartha coitinne, ar nós saineolas inmheánach i ngníomhaíochtaí príomhshruthaithe inscne a fhorbairt agus machnamh a dhéanamh ar thionchar inscne ar fhorbairt straitéisí nua.

Tá gníomhartha sonracha freisin ag an Roinn faoin straitéis, lena n-áirítear an ceanglas go dtabharfaí poiblíocht agus spreagadh do rannpháirtíocht ban i gcuideachtaí nuathionscanta, agus go dtabharfaí poiblíocht agus tacaíocht do ghradaim agus imeachtaí fiontraíochta a bhaineann go sonrach le mná amháin trí Fhiontraíocht Éireann agus na hOifigí Fointair Áitiúla. Tá an Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre freagrach as feasacht a mhéadú i measc fostóirí agus ban ar chearta festaíochta agus sásraí leighis.

An Straitéis Náisiúnta um Chuimsíú Daoine faoi Míchumas

<http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/WP15000115>

Foilsíodh an Straitéis Náisiúnta um Chuimsíú Daoine faoi Míchumas, 2017–2021 i rith 2017. Glactar le cur chuige uile-Rialtais sa Straitéis i leith saol daoine atá faoi mhíchumas a fheabhsú go praiticiúil agus sna deiseanna is fearr is féidir a chruthú do dhaoine atá faoi mhíchumas chun go mbainfidh siad a lánhumas amach.

Tá ionadaíocht ag an Roinn ar an Straitéis Náisiúnta um Chuimsíú Daoine faoi Míchumas, 2017–2021 agus ar an Straitéis Chuimsitheach Fostaíochta do Dhaoine Faoi Mhíchumas 2015–2024 agus cuirimid gníomhartha an dá Straitéis chun cinn.

Ina theannta sin, ghlac an Roinn páirt sa Ghrúpa a stiúir an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí a d'fhoilsigh 'Make Work Pay Report, 2017'. Sainaithníodh sa tuarascáil sin na bacainní atá ann do dhaoine faoi mhíchumas agus iad ag iarraidh páirt a ghlacadh san áit oibre (nó filleadh uirthi) agus tugadh aghaidh ar na bacainní.

Nuálaíocht 2020 <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Innovation-2020.html>

Leis an straitéis trasrialtais do thaighde agus forbairt, eolaíocht agus teicneolaíocht, aithnítear tábhacht an chothromais inscne i dtaighde.

Luaitear sa straitéis go bhfuil deis anseo in Éirinn ár gcáil idirnáisiúnta don chomhionannas inscne a fhorbairt le rannpháirtíocht níos mó ban i ngníomhaíochtaí taighde agus nuálaíochta, agus leagtar amach gníomhartha chun dul i ngleic le saincheisteanna inscne maidir le dul chun cinn gairmiúil sa taighde agus sa nuálaíocht.

Reachtaíocht Ábhartha Eile

Anuas ar an méid sin thusa, feidhmíonn an Roinn laistigh den dlí festaíochta agus de reachtaíocht ábhartha eile lena ndéantar iarracht cearta an duine agus comhionannas a chinntí i measc nithe eile, amhail:

Acht Rialaithe na Státseirbhíse, an tAcht um Bainistíocht na Seirbhíse Poiblí, an tAcht um Shaoire agus Sochar Atharthachta, an tAcht um Chomhionannas Fostaíochta, an tAcht um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre, an tAcht um Chosaint Sonraí, an tAcht um Fhostaithe (Faisnéis agus Comhchomhairle a Sholáthar), an tAcht um Shábháilteacht, Sláinte agus Leas ag an Obair, an tAcht um Chosaint Mháithreachais, an tAcht um Shaoire Cúramóra, an tAcht um Eagrú Ama Oibre, an tAcht um Dhífhostú Éagórach.

Aguisín 1

Billí a foilsíodh nó a achtaíodh in 2017

- An tAcht lomaíochta (Leasú), 2017
- Billé na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017
- Billé na gCuideachtaí (Iniúchtaí Reachtúla), 2017
- Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasaiocht), 2017 (Uimh. 9 de 2017)
- Acht na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017 (Uimh. 13 de 2017)
- An tAcht um Méadreolaíocht Dlí (Uirlísí Tomhais), 2017, a achtaíodh an 28 Samhain 2017

Aguisín 2

Ionstraimí Reachtúla a rinneadh in 2017

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| I.R. Uimh. 5 de 2017 | Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (lompar Earraí Contúirteacha de Bhóthar agus Usáid Brú-Threalamh Iniompair) (Leasú), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 6 de 2017 | An tOrdú Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmligeann), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 43 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Caingne i leith Damáistí as Sáruithe ar an Dlí lomaíochta), 2017. |
| I.R. Uimh. 67 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Iniúchóirí Tríú Tíortha agus Comhionannas Eintiteas Iniúchóireachta, Idirthréimhse agus Táillí) (Leasú), 2017. |
| I.R. Uimh. 68 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Leordhóthanacht Údarás Inniúil Tríú Tíortha Áirithe Maidir le Páipéir Iomchuí Iniúchóireachta a Aistriú), 2017. |
| I.R. Uimh. 69 de 2017 | Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (Comhoiriúnacht Leictreamaighnéadach) (Leasú), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 75 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianacha i leith na hIaráine), 2017. |
| I.R. Uimh. 90 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianacha i leith Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 91 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianacha i leith Phoblacht na hAfraice Láir), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 92 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianacha i leith Dhaon-Phoblacht Dhaonlathach na Córíe), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 93 de 2017 | Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianacha i leith na Siria), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 127 de 2017 | Na Rialacháin um Acht na gCuideachtaí, 2014 (Alt 1313), 2017 |
| I.R. Uimh. 163 de 2017 | Rialacháin na gCara-Chumann agus na gCumann Tionscail agus Soláthair (Fógra faoi Achainí chun Scrúdaitheoir a Cheapadh ar Chumann Tionscail agus Soláthair) (Foirm), 2017 |

- I.R. Uimh. 164 de 2017 Rialacháin na gCara-Chumann agus na gCumann Tionscail agus Soláthair (Fógra faoi Achainí chun Scrúdaitheoir a Cheapadh ar Chumann Tionscail agus Soláthair) (Táille), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 176 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Sábháilteacht Bréagán) (Leasú), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 230 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Trealamh agus Córás Chosanta lena úsáid in Atmaisféir a d'fhéadfadh a bheith Pléascach), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 231 de 2017 An tOrdú Rialaithe Fostaíochta (Comhchoiste Oibreachais an Tionscail Slándála), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 232 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Ardaitheoirí agus Comhpháirteanna Sábháilteachta le haghaidh Ardaitheoirí), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 233 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Brú-Threalamh), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 246 de 2017 An tOrdú um Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasáiocht), 2017 (Tosach Feidhme), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 250 de 2017 An tOrdú um Acht na gCuideachtaí (Cuntasáiocht), 2017 (Tosach Feidhme) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 253 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na Siria) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 254 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Phoblacht na hAfraice Láir) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 255 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na hIaráine) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 256 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Dhaon-Phoblacht Dhaonlathach na Cóiré) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 257 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Phoblacht Ghuine-Bhissau), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 258 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na Túinéise), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 259 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na Súdáine Theas), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 260 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá na Súdáine), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 261 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na hIaráine) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 262 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 263 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na Siombáibe), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 268 de 2017 Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (Aistrithe Táirgí a bhaineann le Cosaint Iaistigh den Chomhphobal) (Leasú), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 282 de 2017 Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (lompar Earraí Contúirteacha de Bhóthar agus Usáid Brú-Threalamh Iniompair) (Leasú) (Uimh. 2), 2017

- I.R. Uimh. 305 de 2017 An tOrdú um Acht na gCuideachtaí (Leasú), 2017 (Tosach Feidhme), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 360 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Nochtadh Faisnéis Neamhairgeadais agus Ilchineálacha i ngrúpaí agus i ngatóthais mhóra áirithe), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 361 de 2017 An tOrdú um Ghnóthaí Saothair agus Dlí an tSaothair (Riarachán Roinne agus Feidhmeanna Aire a Aistriú), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 362 de 2017 An tOrdú Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmligeann) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 363 de 2017 An tOrdú Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmligeann) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 364 de 2017 An tOrdú Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Ainm na Roinne agus Teideal an Aire a Athrú), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 455 de 2017 An tOrdú um Fhostaíocht Earnála (Earnáil na Tionsclaíochta), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 513 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Phoblacht na hAfraice Láir) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 514 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Phoblacht Dhaonlathach an Chongó), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 515 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na hlaráine) (Uimh. 4), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 516 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith na Siria) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 518 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srianachá i leith Dhaon-Phoblacht Dhaonlathach na Córíe) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 555 de 2017 Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (Iompar Earraí Contúirteacha de Bhóthar agus Úsáid Brú-Threalamh Iniompair) (Leasú) (Uimh. 3), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 567 de 2017 Rialacháin na gComhphobal Eorpach (Rannóirí Aerasóil) (Leasú), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 569 de 2017 An tOrdú Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmligean), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 570 de 2017 An tOrdú Gnó, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmligean) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 578 de 2017 Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Sábháilteacht Bréagán) (Leasú) (Uimh. 2), 2017
- I.R. Uimh. 600 de 2017 An tOrdú um an Acht Caidrimh Thionscail, 1990 (Cód Cleachtais ar Oibriú Níos Faide) (Dearbhú), 2017



An Roinn Gnó,
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