

# In From the Cold

John O'Brennan  
15 37 0 Tumblr0

*Ireland through European Eyes: Western Europe, the EEC and Ireland 1945-73*, edited by Mervyn O'Driscoll, Dermot Keogh and Jérôme aan de Wiel, Cork University Press, 500 pp, £39, ISBN: 978-1859184646

On July 1st, 2013 the European Union (EU) welcomed its twenty-eighth member state, Croatia. The addition of the small Balkan state meant that fully three-quarters of the member states of the Union were now “enlargement” states, in addition to the “founding Six” member states of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Croatia’s accession may well constitute the first element of the final stage of the expansion of this unique experiment in international relations and transnational governance: southeastern (western Balkan) accessions over the next decade would add to previous rounds which progressively took the “European project” west (1973), south (1980s), north (1995) and east (2004 and 2007).

This dramatic landscape of geographic and geopolitical expansion was set in motion with the Irish application for membership of the European Communities which was lodged on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1961, under Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome. In itself the application for membership constituted both an admission of defeat and a plea for a sustainable future. The defeat referenced Ireland’s exclusion from the postwar economic recovery which by 1959 was rapidly becoming an “economic miracle” in the Six while Ireland continued to experience low growth, high unemployment and sustained large-scale emigration. But Ireland’s path to membership of the European “club” was far from straightforward and provided many twists and turns before accession was finally achieved on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973.

The European project of the postwar era was, as this book asserts, truly pioneering. The European Union was - and remains - at one and the same time, both a *sui generis* form of political community and a historically significant experiment in self-limiting transnational and cross-border governance. A community born out of the ashes of 1945 has endured through an unprecedented structure of shared sovereignty, mutual reciprocity and seemingly ever-deepening interdependence. Despite almost permanent tensions between the national level and the supranational institutions set up to manage this collective interdependence, and despite the extraordinary challenges posed most recently by the “great recession” after 2008, the EU endures as the great laboratory for re-engineering contemporary international relations. Its normative impulses continually demonstrate that community is possible at the international level, even if subject to setbacks and political qualification at regular intervals.

For small states like Ireland, relatively new to the international scene, the emerging activity in and policy outputs from the new dispensation in Brussels could not be ignored, not even by a political class that had shamefully squandered the potential gains brought by the achievement of independence from the United Kingdom. The sense of drift in the 1950s was of such staggering proportions, and left Ireland in such a precarious position that, by 1959 the influential *Foreign Affairs* magazine in the United States was asking whether the Irish nation would survive at all. The immiseration of Ireland stood in increasingly uncomfortable contrast to the rapid prosperity being engineered via economic recovery across much of the continent, and especially in the six states that came together to found the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Irish elites – along with their

counterparts in the United Kingdom - initially appeared indifferent to the dramatic developments “on the continent” but the emerging gaps in levels of development and wealth left this position increasingly exposed. It was only with the dramatic change in direction set in train by Seán Lemass and TK Whittaker in 1959 that a new trajectory for Ireland became possible. That trajectory placed Ireland firmly within - at least in normative terms - the evolving European architecture.

This book brings a razor-sharp focus to the external perceptions of Ireland in other European capitals in the two to three decades prior to accession. The analysis is a welcome counter to the dominant tendency within academia, which has tended to exclusively analyse the Irish experience of European integration through purely Irish eyes rather than through the perceptions, prejudices, and national interests of other European states, large and small. The existing body of scholarship provides valuable insider accounts of the Irish road to Europe, but these accounts largely fail to provide significant insight into the perspectives, voices and minds of those making the crucial decisions on Ireland’s admission. In addressing this important lacuna the authors make a significant contribution to our understanding of the Irish experience of “Europe”, drawing not just on the official and diplomatic archives of Ireland and of the “Six” but on the EEC institutional archives (Council and Commission) too. They sketch an impressively broad canvass in seeking to interrogate and tease out the missing parts of the Irish European experience prior to and during the path to membership between 1961 and 1972.

All three authors have contributed significantly to advancing the understanding of Irish foreign policy and Ireland’s historical role in Europe. Dermot Keogh is emeritus professor of history and emeritus professor of European integration studies at UCC. He holds a good claim to have been a pioneer of the study of the emerging European integration process in Ireland, having completed a doctorate at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence and then introduced the EEC into the teaching curriculum at UCC. His colleague Mervyn O’ Driscoll lectures in the school of history at UCC and has made an appreciable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between Ireland and Germany and of the early role of the EU institutions. Jérôme aan de Wiel also lectures in modern history at UCC and has published on Ireland and the Catholic Church and on Ireland’s strategic significance in geopolitics.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Ireland’s potential membership of the European Communities was, of course, heavily bound up with the application of the United Kingdom and whether and how that application could be pursued successfully against French objections in particular. For much of the period Ireland struggled to achieve any meaningful successes in the effort to create sufficient distance from the UK internationally. The validating and sometimes valorising anti-British discourse on which Irish nationalism relied looked rather specious, set against the statistical evidence of our overwhelming economic dependence on the UK: this was an asymmetrical relationship like no other in Europe.

When Europeans could be persuaded to pay attention to Ireland they observed a poor, backward close relation of Mother England, and a state which was still almost totally dependent for its economic livelihood on London. The economic statistics fully bear this out: In 1958, 56.3 per cent of Ireland’s imports came from the United Kingdom and 77 per cent of exports went there. Even as late as 1964 the EEC absorbed only 11 per cent of Ireland’s total exports. The Irish pound was aligned with the pound sterling and the majority of the Irish banks’ currency reserves were located in London. A provincial and overwhelmingly agriculture-dominated economy “continued to function as it had since 1921: providing the basic foodstuffs for the British urban-industrial economy”. It would be an uphill battle to persuade “the Six” of the merits of including such a poor, underdeveloped state as a full member of the club. This was the challenge taken on by an array of civil servants, politicians and

diplomats in July 1961 when the membership application was tabled. Three rounds of negotiations would follow (1961-63, 1967 and 1970-72) in which the task of reorienting the Irish economy and politics into a more open and cosmopolitan direction was accompanied by an intensive diplomatic effort to present Ireland as a “returning European”.

Ireland’s ties to continental Europe were many and varied and Irish negotiators were not slow to exploit the emotional value pertaining to these ties in the accession negotiations. Many “old friendships” were rediscovered and subsequently reappropriated and reauthenticated for the express purpose, on the Irish side, of deployment in the battle for hearts and minds as membership decisions loomed. The Department of External Affairs employed a deliberate strategy of framing Ireland’s relationship with the EEC as a return to Europe, a Europe it was implied, that Ireland had been involuntarily locked out of for hundreds of years by virtue of its colonial subjugation by the United Kingdom. The strategy revolved around “identity framing”, a form of cultural self-identification by Irish elites with the cultural and historical experiences of “the Six”. This form of discursive framing functioned both to place Ireland firmly within the West European camp and to close out any possibility of exclusion from the nascent community. The primary historical referent was of course the role of the Irish Celtic Church in spreading Christianity on the continent from about the sixth century onwards. In Germany the settlement of the Rhineland and southern Germany by Celtic peoples left a considerable legacy, including placenames such as Bonn, Mainz and Trier. The early Hiberno-Scottish or Celtic Church acted as an especially important link between Ireland and Germany. Irish missionary activity was especially evident in the Rhineland and the south after the fall of the Roman Empire. St Columbanus and St Killian evangelised the region and approximately twenty saints of medieval Germany were credited with Irish origins. The Irish Benedictine order founded a group of monasteries and churches in southern Germany known as *Schottenklöster* (Gaelic monasteries). Close and enduring links developed with Aachen, Baden, Cologne, Konstanz, Nuremberg, and Regensburg among other sites. The founding of Irish Colleges at Paris (1578) and Leuven, Belgium (1607) as well as Douai (1603) and Salamanca (1592) among others, further bolstered the ecclesiastical and intellectual links with the continent. Writing in the late nineteenth century, the renowned German church historian “Alphons” Bellesheim asserted that “Ireland shone like the beacon of religion and learning for the whole of Europe”.

Successive chapters of the book demonstrate how these patterns of association, contact and interdependence created positive feelings towards the Irish and probably helped perpetuate the image of the “island of saints and scholars”. In O’ Driscoll’s view they “afforded Ireland an important basis for bridge-building with modern Germany following the achievement of independence and served as a means to cultivate German sentiment that Ireland was an intrinsic part of Christendom which laid the basis for a common European cultural and Christian space in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”. In the context of the campaign for membership this constituted a potent cultural weapon in the armoury of Irish elites, one that “could not be dismissed by Germans”. An excellent example (among many) of this kind of rhetorical approach can be found in Lemass’s expansive speech to the Council and Commission on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1962 when the Taoiseach asserted that Ireland was deeply European and that its people “had always tended to look to Europe for inspiration, guidance and encouragement”. The success of the strategy is evident in the remarks of Pierre Werner, prime minister of Luxembourg on the eve of Irish entry into the Community, who remarked that “membership of this ancient country is bringing Eire closer to the continent, which in former ages has been influenced so deeply by the Christian thought of apostles and saints from the Green island”.

There is an interesting comparison to be made here with the 1990s and the applications for membership made to the European Union by the countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE), “liberated” from authoritarian rule by the fall of the Berlin Wall. For Czech, Hungarian and Polish

elites, the attainment of an EU membership perspective was of central importance to their efforts to consolidate their fragile polities within the European arena. These elites, including famous dissident intellectuals such as Vaclav Havel, used a similar rhetorical framing device - the "return to Europe" as they made their claims for EU membership. Explicitly referencing the core values of European integration, the claims asserted a natural right to be restored to the "European family" and to the values and processes, it was asserted, which they had involuntarily been excluded from after the Second World War. In the early 2000s Ireland's strong support for eastern enlargement was readily apparent. That support rested on any number of rational calculations about the economic opportunities to be exploited from CEE membership. But it also emerged out of an undoubted normative view that Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were as entitled to "return to Europe" as Ireland had been in 1973.

Ireland's membership of the EU has seen justified praise heaped on the diplomatic service for its professionalism and capacity to deliver within the supranational environment. If indeed Ireland has "punched above its weight" in the European Union it is precisely because Irish diplomats "learned to play the European game" better than most of their colleagues in Brussels. From an early stage they demonstrated a capacity for informal engagement with their peers (social as much as political) and a willingness to empathise with the positions of colleagues in the Council. Irish presidencies of the Council garnered significant praise both for the capacity to listen and effectively mediate between disputed positions. The presidency of the Council is one of the key institutional actors in the EU negotiating arena and is expected to take a leadership role, act as a broker in situations of institutional or policy disputes and generally guide the integration process forward in its period in office. More importantly, where there exists profound disagreement between the member states on some issues, the presidency is able to use its brokerage role to argue for sometimes innovative solutions that it could design and pursue. Irish presidencies of the Council have garnered unvarnished praise over the years, in particular for the capacity of Irish officials to mediate between disputed positions.

But this book points to early patterns of diplomatic activity that were anything but assured. In particular the aide-memoire circulated to capitals of the Six on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961 represented an own goal of near crippling proportions. The note was meant to set out the Irish position on accession but it constituted a major strategic error in conceding Ireland's total dependence on the British government's decision to join the EEC. It also revealed that Ireland was a developing country which would have considerable difficulty complying with the obligations attaching to the *acquis communautaire*. To make matters worse, in Bonn a senior Irish diplomat told the German foreign office in very explicit terms that it was "fear of losing the British market that drove his government to also ask for entry into the EEC". Compounding this admission he added that he realised that Ireland's non-membership of Nato along with the territorial dispute about Northern Ireland would also create difficulties. Inexplicably, he further added that the minister for external affairs, Frank Aitken, was much more in favour of association (considered by some as a form of "purgatory") than membership. Another strategic error can be found in the failure to apply for membership of the ECSC (Ireland only applied in January 1963) and Euratom (May 1967). The net effect of these admissions and errors was to hand evidence to opponents of enlargement that Ireland was unsuited to membership and should not be accepted into the club. The French, in particular, were apt to use such diplomatic failures as evidence of a lack of political will on the part of Dublin to fully appreciate the substantive nature of commitments required for membership of the communities.

Ireland's somewhat idiosyncratic posture toward the emerging Europe was especially evident in the questions raised about its neutrality and attitudes to Nato. While Irish neutrality had been copper-fastened by the experience of the Second World War, the architecture of European security had evolved very considerably, especially through the institution of Nato in 1949. In short, Ireland was an

outlier in security and defence matters and questions were raised in all three bouts of accession negotiations about its bona fides in the security sector. Some member states insisted that prospective EEC member states had to join Nato (despite the fact that the treaties made no mention of any link and Article 237 certainly did not mention it). This issue was played out in the shadow of the deepening Cold War and the threat represented to western Europe by the Soviet Union. Ireland's attempt to remain a "free rider" on the back of the US security guarantee to Europe (Article 5 of Nato) led to occasional convulsions within the accession negotiations and required Jack Lynch, Paddy Hillery and other leading politicians to issue periodic assurances that Ireland's political commitment to the EEC included not being neutral on issues of fundamental security. Or as Lemass frequently put it Ireland was "not ideologically neutral". Indeed in a speech to the Solicitors' Apprentices Debating Society at the Four Courts in December 1960 Lemass went so far as to state that Ireland would assist the Western democracies in an apocalyptic war between East and West in the last resort. In the end this extended routine of rhetorical torture proved academic as the prevailing view within the Council by 1972 was that a commitment to support the (rather ambiguous) aim of European unity was sufficient.

There is an assumption in much of the literature on EU enlargement that the bar has been raised with each successive accession negotiation and that "negotiating your way in" has become much more difficult over time. After all, the EU's *acquis communautaire* (which has to be transposed into and implemented in domestic law) has grown from a few thousand pages in the 1960s to more than 180,000 today. There is no doubt that later applicants have faced much more challenging hurdles in order to get over the line. But ultimately enlargement decisions have always revolved around the political judgment of core actors inside the Union. In 1978, for example, the Commission issued a negative recommendation on a possible Greek accession on the grounds that the Greek economy was deemed unfit to compete in the EEC market. This was rejected by the Council, which argued that the Greek "return to Europe" (more precisely to the democratic fold) justified overriding the narrow cost-benefit analysis performed by the Commission. In the context of the first enlargement *Ireland through European Eyes* provides a mass of evidence concerning the specific economic hurdles encountered by Ireland and by the other three applicant states. But ultimately the decision taken to enlarge rested on a political judgment on the part of the Six. The more French officials pointed at Britain's economic problems as the decisive impediment to entry the more it became clear that the objection was in fact a political one.

Ireland's quest to join the EEC was challenging, polarising and protracted, encompassing as it did three separate bouts of negotiations. Coming from a small state on the periphery of the continent Irish negotiators were aware of the underlying asymmetry in bargaining power between themselves and representatives of the Six. All the power ostensibly lay with the EEC member states in that they could make significant demands of the applicant states while holding an ultimate veto over the accession of individual applicants. But it is also important to remember that the accession negotiations were genuine negotiations: they did not take the form of a "take it or leave it" offer from inside to outside states. Irish negotiators were able to make their case on individual issues and - where necessary and agreeable - they could bargain for transition periods to ease the pain of entry for given economic sectors. On some issues negotiations were successful, on others less so or not at all.

The important point is that EU accessions have from the outset been more negotiations between the "us" and "future us" than the "us" and the "them", to frame it in the way Commission insider Sir Graham Avery did in the 1990s. Even in the context of de Gaulle's rejections of British claims, the actual negotiations conducted reveal that the asymmetrical model was (and is) misleading: there was significant "wiggle room" for all applicant states to make their case and achieve accommodation on domestically difficult issues (a tradition that has continued right up to the present in the enlargement architecture). It seems ironic now, however, that most of the negotiating blood spent by the Irish in the

final set of negotiations was on fishing. A transition period was successfully negotiated which meant that a full opening of Irish waters would not take place for ten years after accession. But subsequent to accession the fishing sector was quickly overtaken by agriculture as Ireland's primary interest in the EU arena. Needless to say the experience of engaging in extended negotiations with future partners also helped to socialise Irish actors into the bargaining culture of the Council and thus constituted a valuable preparation for engaging with the day-to-day processes of the European integration process once membership was attained. On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1972 Lynch and Hillery signed the historic accession treaty in Brussels. This was followed, on May 10th, 1972, by a referendum when 83 per cent of the electorate voted Yes to membership.

The enlargement of such a complex and multifaceted international entity as the EU entails an important institutional dimension. Enlargement both arises out of specific forms of institutionalised cooperation and subsequently produces a reconfiguration of the norms and practices which structure that cooperation. Indeed enlargement can only be understood as a process governed both by the formal/legal rules laid down in the treaties and the customary enlargement practice which develops out of institutional and inter-state bargaining. It is something of a puzzle as to why the intra- and inter-institutional bargaining which enlargement provokes has been so neglected within studies of EU expansion. An equally compelling and welcome contribution of this book therefore lies in its sophisticated treatment of the institutional management of the first enlargement. A pivotal chapter by Jérôme aan de Wiel examines the different mechanisms used by the Council and the Commission to engage with Ireland and manage the different modalities of the accession process. De Wiel demonstrates that during the first enlargement the only institutional actor that counted in the division of labour was the Council. Decisions were taken by the Six after bilateral and multilateral bargaining on different sectoral and political issues; they acted as archetypal "gatekeepers" and they controlled admission. They defined *la règle du jeu*.

The European Commission, in contrast, played the role of mere facilitator within this state-dominated environment. As the agent of the member states it was delegated tasks to help facilitate solutions to the collective action problems associated with enlargement. What is more the Commission on view in this book is rather hesitant and conservative on accession issues; it takes its leads from deliberations in the Council and proves unwilling to take purposive independent positions. As the "guardian of the treaties" it "tended to defend itself rather than accommodate the applicant countries and their problems". Walter Hallstein and Jean Rey, in particular stand out as excessively cautious and ungenerous in their approach to enlargement. It was felt that the inclusion of new member states would disrupt the development of the existing community (especially after the "Empty Chair" crisis of 1965 paralysed decision-making) and this in turn would provoke unnecessary disputes between the Six. All of this stands in marked contrast to the proactive Commission of later enlargement rounds which, although in formal treaty-defined terms it remained subservient to the Council, in practice emerged as the de facto leader of the accession process and more often than not acted as cheerleader for the applicant states..

The analysis of institutional politics is complimented by a focus on the role of specific individuals within the enlargement process. One of the most interesting sub-fields of research within EU political science is that of so-called "political entrepreneurship", the idea that change is driven forward by highly motivated individuals within the EU institutions who are able to marshal ideas and mobilise actors toward a specific set of policy outcomes. The founding fathers of the Union, Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet, Altiero Spinelli, Robert Schuman, and Alcide de Gaspari are all readily identified as the principal actors of the early era. Subsequently individuals like Jacques Delors, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand helped kickstart a moribund integration process in the 1980s. Angela Merkel remains the standout political figure of the contemporary period, if indeed her integration credentials

seem dubious enough. If we apply the lenses of “political entrepreneurship” to enlargement a similar pattern emerges: one of “drivers” and “brakemen” whose discourse and actions prove strongly material to accession outcomes and where individuals readily impacted on negotiations.

In the Irish (and British case) Charles de Gaulle emerges as the obvious and consistent brakeman or obstacle to accession throughout the 1960s. On first glance he seems an unlikely obstacle to Irish membership. He had a long-standing personal interest in Ireland and was considered a Hibernophile – his great-grandmother on his mother’s side was a MacCartan from Ireland – and he had been influenced by two books written by relatives: his grandmother’s biography of Daniel O’Connell and his uncle’s study of nineteenth century Celts. As an extremely small and underdeveloped economy Ireland did not pose any particular problems to France as a potential member (although the size of its agricultural sector was of concern in the shadow of a prospective agreement on a Common Agriculture Policy). More importantly Ireland’s emergence from the shadow of the United Kingdom constituted it as the “right” kind of applicant state to de Gaulle’s mind: wedded to the idea of the national rather than the supranational as the preferred organising principal of EEC business. The problem for Ireland was that de Gaulle’s ingrained opposition to UK entry to the Community left Dublin completely hostage to London’s fate and thus with no possibility of access while De Gaulle remained in office. It was only de Gaulle’s unexpected decision to resign (following the loss of a referendum on a package of government reforms) in April 1969 which revitalised Irish hopes of accession.

It may seem surprising to some but Jean Monnet, the outstanding founding figure of the European integration process proved an unexpected obstacle at a critical point in the negotiations. Monnet headed the influential Action Committee for the United States of Europe (ACUSE), also known as the Jean Monnet Committee and, although pro-enlargement, caused real difficulties for Dublin by arguing in 1969 that “Negotiations with four at the same time means certain failure. You have to finish negotiations with the United Kingdom.” But de Gaulle’s truculence and Monnet’s caution were matched by the quiet activism and support offered Ireland by a range of actors, both at national level and within the Commission and Council. Ireland’s best friend during the turbulent 1960s was the Netherlands. Joseph Luns, who served as Dutch foreign minister from 1956 to 1971, was consistently critical of the Gaullist vision of a *Europe des Patries*. He was also an important ally of Ireland at crucial stages of the accession negotiations. Italian foreign minister Aldo Moro also demonstrated consistent sympathy for Ireland and was a supportive presence in the final negotiations in 1970. Similarly leading Luxembourg politician Gaston Thorn “played a disproportionate role in helping bring Ireland into the EEC”.

On the Irish side the ‘accession charge’ was led by a formidable group of actors. Seán Lemass and TK Whittaker undoubtedly shaped the future by acting decisively to reorient Ireland’s economy in a more outward direction, referencing the EEC as a crucial part of Ireland’s future developmental trajectory. The “Ireland 2.0” they launched with *Economic Development* in 1959 could not have succeeded without substantial engagement with the European Communities. Jack Lynch also emerges as both highly capable and pragmatic in his approach to Community membership, and especially so in the face of French recalcitrance. Sean Morrissey, appointed to lead the negotiations for membership in 1970, was a shrewd choice. He had served as head of mission in Brussels from 1966 until February 1970. But it is Paddy Hillery who as minister for external affairs (which became foreign affairs only in 1972) emerges as perhaps the most significant accession “driver” on the Irish side. Wily and capable of innovative thinking, he directed the final negotiations with energy and no little guile. The genuine respect for him across Europe was then reflected in the decision to appoint him Ireland’s first European Commissioner (vice-president with responsibility for social affairs). Neither should we underestimate the impact of civil society actors like the Irish Council of the European Movement

(ICEM), which was founded in January 1954 and proved extremely effective in shaping the perceptions of the Six at critical junctures during the accession negotiations.

In 1973, Ireland was a poor country on the periphery of Europe. It had high levels of unemployment and emigration. The level of income for those working averaged at €38 a week, which represented just over half of the then EEC average. The attainment of Irish membership of the Communities constituted perhaps the most critical development in the life of the independent state and it helped to refashion Ireland in myriad ways across a spectrum of economic, political and social issues. But the events of 1969-1973 in particular also invite speculation about alternative outcomes. What would have happened if De Gaulle had not resigned in April 1969? After all, he had been re-elected only one year previously. We have to assume that he would have continued to oppose British (and therefore Irish) entry into the EEC. Given the way the oil crisis of 1973 (and subsequent years) impacted the Community, and the extraordinary dip in growth and confidence which lasted through the rest of the decade one would have to think that accession could not have taken place in the 1970s. Ireland's accession fate would then have been as much in the hands of Margaret Thatcher as the French and one has to wonder what kind of outcome could have materialised from such a situation. It is highly likely that remaining outside the European integration process, Ireland would have remained unhappily economically shackled to the UK for much longer. It would also surely have slowed the pace of social change in Ireland (equal pay, the position of women, gay rights).

Given the prominent role played by Angela Merkel's government in Ireland's austerity nightmare after 2008 it might seem ironic to note Ireland's considerable humanitarian assistance to Germany immediately after the Second World War. In the summer of 1945 the Irish government earmarked £3 million for postwar relief to all of Western Europe with a very sizeable proportion allocated to Germany. Irish charitable donations to Germany were in fact the highest per capita for any country. During December 1947 alone the Irish people donated nearly two million dollars' worth of food and clothing. This generosity drew many expressions of gratitude from across German society. Evidently the memory of that charitable giving has faded from view in Berlin.

Ireland's participation in the European integration process has clearly coincided with a multi-vectored transformation of the country: from an economy dominated by agriculture and manufacturing to one associated with high-tech, knowledge-intensive services; from an inward-looking society to one which has (for better or worse) embraced globalisation in its variegated forms; and from a polity where sovereignty was fully exercised from Dublin to one where the EU now plays a significant role in Irish foreign policy. This important book provides us with a much richer understanding of the challenges faced by Ireland in preparing for and negotiating membership of the EU than any previously published work. It reminds us of the serious difficulties encountered in re-constituting the economy and of the sustained efforts needed to persuade European interlocutors of the merits of Ireland's application. It deserves to be read by a wide audience.

1/10/2014

15 37 0 Tumblr0