



Practical Information Note

INFORMAL MEETING OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTERS

BALLINA, Co Mayo

Dates

5 – 6 July 2026



Contents

Introduction	3
Deadlines.....	3
Location and Venues.....	3
Ballina, Co. Mayo	3
St Mary’s Secondary School.....	4
Foxford Woollen Mills.....	5
Mount Falcon Hotel	5
Programme	6
Sunday 5 July.....	6
Monday 6 July	6
Tuesday 7 July	6
Interpretation	7
Delegation Size.....	7
Registration and Accreditation	8
Types of Accreditations.....	8
Opening and Closing Dates of the Accreditation Platform	9
Instructions for the Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO).....	9
Delegation Liaison Officers (DLOs).....	9
Diplomatic Clearances	10
Delegation Flight Arrivals and Departures.....	10
Entering Ireland.....	11
Transportation of Delegates	11
Accommodation.....	11
Hotels.....	12
Security	12
Media	13
Video Footage and Photographs.....	13
Social Media.....	13
General Information	13
Irish EU Presidency Sustainability Policy.....	15



Introduction

The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union looks forward to welcoming you to Ballina for the Informal Meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers on 5 – 6 July 2026. We are pleased to share this Practical Information Note (PIN) to assist delegations in preparing for the meeting.

Please note that the information contained in this PIN may be subject to change. Updated information, including any updates to the meeting programme, practical arrangements or meeting documentation, will be shared through the online Accreditation Platform. Registered delegation members will receive email notifications when updated material is shared on the Accreditation Platform. Additional support will be provided throughout your visit to Ireland by your assigned Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO) who will be in contact no later than two working days before the meeting.

For queries about the accreditation process, please contact EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie

For queries about the meeting programme and content, please contact IEPRES2026dsp@welfare.ie

Deadlines

Date	What you need to do	Where to go
From 2 nd June to 6 th June	Appoint a Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO) to gain access to the Accreditation Portal	Send the DAO's details to EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie
From 6 th June to 21 June	Register your delegation members	Via the Accreditation Portal
21st June	Deadline for registration of delegation members	Via the Accreditation Portal
5 th - 6 th July	Informal meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers	Saint Mary's Secondary School Ballina (Slí Ectra, Ballina, Co. Mayo F26 YXC7)

Location and Venues

Ballina, Co. Mayo

The informal meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers will take place in Ballina, in County Mayo on Ireland's west coast. Ballina, on the River Moy, is famed for salmon fishing and heritage trails. The county is a haven for walkers and cyclists, with routes ranging from gentle greenways to multi-day treks.





St Mary's Secondary School

The working sessions will be hosted in [Saint Mary's Secondary School Ballina](#). St. Mary's is an all-girls Secondary School, situated on Convent Hill, overlooking the town of Ballina. Opened in 2022, it fits with the Irish EU Presidency's sustainability policy to use public buildings where possible, the building is solar-powered.



The meeting venue includes:

- A plenary room (format Head of Delegation and a maximum of two delegates)
- A delegates' lounge and listening room
- Bilateral meeting rooms. To reserve a bilateral meeting room in advance, please email EUPresidency.bilaterals@dfa.ie. To reserve a bilateral meeting room on the day of the meeting, please inform your Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO).
- A media accreditation centre (located in Social Welfare Offices, Government Buildings, Brooke St., Ballina, Co Mayo, [F26 T864](#))
- A media centre and press conference facility located at Saint Mary's Secondary School



Foxford Woollen Mills

A cultural visit to [Foxford Woollen Mills](#), Providence Rd, Foxford, Co. Mayo, will take place on Sunday 5 July. Established in 1892, Foxford Woollen Mills is one of Ireland's oldest working mills. Recognising the need for employment and education in the area, Mother Agnes, a sister of charity nun, partnered with the Congested Districts Board to create a sustainable business that would provide jobs and support local families. As well as tours of this historical social enterprise, this will be the venue for a reception celebrating local ingredients and a traditional Irish music show.



Mount Falcon Hotel

The official reception and dinner will be hosted in [Mount Falcon Hotel](#) on Monday 6 July. Mount Falcon is located on the west bank of the River Moy in County Mayo. This Victorian Gothic manor house is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2026.





Programme

This preliminary programme is subject to change, and all timings remain provisional. The final programme with confirmed timings will be shared with registered delegation members via the Accreditation Platform in advance of the meeting.

Sunday 5 July

Sunday, 5 July		Arrivals via Ireland West / Shannon / Dublin Airports – Delegations will be collected from all airports and brought to Ballina
	18:30	Transfer from hotels to Foxford Woollen Mills
	19:00 – 21:30	Cultural visit and reception at Foxford Woollen Mills

Monday 6 July

	07:45- 08:30	Departures from Hotels to Meeting Venue
Monday, 6 July	08:00 – 09:00	Arrivals and Greetings at Meeting Venue
	09:00 – 10:30	Working Session (1a) Addressing and preventing poverty across the lifecycle
	10:30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
	10:45 – 13:00	Working Session (1b) Effective Enforcement in a Changing World of Work - supervisory system for employment, labour inspection and the protection of workers.
	13.00 – 13:15	Family Photo
	13:15 – 14:30	Lunch
	14:30 – 16:45	Working Session (2) Addressing the disability employment gap for a more inclusive and competitive EU
	16:45 – 17:15	Press Conference
	17:00 – 17:30	Transfers from Meeting Venue to Hotels
		19:00 – 21:30

Tuesday 7 July

Tuesday, 7 July	A.M. / P.M.	Departures to Ireland West / Shannon / Dublin Airports
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Interpretation

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation, DG SCIC, will provide simultaneous interpretation via interpretation booths.

The language regime for the informal Meeting will be 6/5, **from English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Irish into English, French, German, Spanish and Italian** in the working sessions. The language regime for the official Presidency press conference will be 2/2 (English and Irish). Simultaneous interpretation will not be provided at the welcome reception and dinner, during the cultural visit, or at lunch, which will be conducted through English.

Please note that interpretation will not be provided during breaks, between sessions, for bilateral meetings, or for individual Heads of Delegations' media opportunities.

To facilitate interpretation of interventions, you are welcome to send any relevant meeting documentation such as speeches or speaking points to EUPresidency.interpretation@dfa.ie one week before the date of the meeting, including "Informal Meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers" and your country's name in the title of your email.

Please note that should your Head of Delegation be accompanied by a personal interpreter; they must be registered as part of the official delegation in order to have access to the meeting venue.

If a delegation indicates its intention to make an intervention in a language which is not available in the language regime provided, and a member of that delegation in the room repeats the comments made in a language which is covered, interpretation will be provided.

If a delegation chooses to make an intervention in a language which is not provided by the language regime and which is not known to members of the interpretation team, but provides a written translation, it is possible to read the text out in the booth. This does not constitute simultaneous interpreting and does not guarantee accuracy regarding what is said in the room.

Delegation Size

Delegations can enrol the Head of Delegation plus a maximum of two (2) delegates (HoD +2).

Personal interpreters, official photographers, press officers and other categories of participant requiring access to the meeting venue must be accredited as members of the delegation. Please email EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie to request that a position on your delegation be designated for these roles, if required. If your Head of Delegation will be accompanied by a personal protection officer, please email EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie to request an additional position on the delegation for this officer.

Please note that the Embassy of an EU Member State in Ireland may apply separately for an EU Presidency accreditation badge, in the name of the Ambassador or another nominated member of diplomatic staff. The holder of this EU Presidency accreditation badge will be permitted access to the meeting venue for the informal Ministerial meeting and, when accompanied by a DFAT Protocol team member and airport personnel, to the airport for the purpose of greeting/bidding farewell to the visiting Head of Delegation (to the maximum of one (1) Embassy representative per delegation).



Therefore, EU Member States do not need to accredit their Ambassador/nominated Embassy diplomatic staff member as a member of the delegation. Guest States may request accreditation for their Ambassador to Ireland, or a nominated Embassy diplomatic staff member, for this meeting, as an additional member of the delegation, by emailing EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie.

Please note that there is a separate accreditation process for Attachés.

Registration and Accreditation

For security reasons, each delegate must be registered and accredited in order to gain access to the meeting venue, the official dinner, and the cultural visit and welcome reception.

A **Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO)** must be appointed by each invited delegation. The DAO must register all members of the delegation on the Accreditation Platform, in line with the instructions below.

To facilitate the smooth running of the programme, DAOs are asked to submit all requested information relating to their delegation, including transport and accommodation details, and any dietary and accessibility requirements of delegates, in accordance with deadlines as outlined below.

Types of Accreditations

Heads of Delegation will receive a lapel pin. Other delegates will receive an accreditation badge (details below). All delegates must always visibly wear their valid lapel pin or badge, including during the official dinner and site visit. Each delegation will also receive two floater badges, which will be required for delegate access to certain elements of the programme.

Heads of Delegation and accompanying delegates will be given their lapel pin and accreditation badges by their Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO) upon arrival at the airport. Delegates arriving separately from the HoD will be given their badges by their DLO at the earliest opportunity.

Delegates will be requested to provide a photographic ID document when receiving their badge from the DLO. Delegate badges are strictly personal and non-transferable. Floater badges can be transferred as required between delegates and the EPSCO Attachés attending the informal working party on social questions meeting who will also be admitted to the Informal Ministerial meeting venue.

Badge type	Participant Type	Access
Lapel pin	Head of Delegation	Allows access to all areas
Blue badge	Delegate	Allows access to the delegates' lounge and to the press area
Floater badge (two per delegation)	Non-personal, can be transferred between delegation members	Allows access to the plenary room

If you lose your lapel pin, badge or floater badge, you must immediately notify your DLO. Please also notify the event organisers by sending an email to EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie



Opening and Closing Dates of the Accreditation Platform

Once the letter of invitation has been received, invited delegations are requested to appoint a Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO) as soon as possible. Please send an email to EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie straight away (and no later than **6th June**) containing:

- The delegation your DAO represents (i.e. country or organisation name)
- DAO's full name
- DAO's phone number
- DAO's email address

The Accreditation Platform will be open for registration of your delegation once your DAO has been appointed. The Accreditation Platform will be open until **21 June 2026**.

Instructions for the Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO)

The DAO is responsible for the accreditation of all members of their delegation. Once appointed by following the instructions above, the DAO will receive an email from noreply@ireland2026.eu containing a link to the Accreditation Platform to register their delegation. Please note that in compliance with data security requirements, the Accreditation Platform requires Two-Factor Authentication. The DAO will require access to an authenticator application such as Microsoft Authenticator, Google Authenticator or similar in order to access the Accreditation Platform.

DAOs are kindly requested to register their delegation as soon as possible, and no later than **21 June** when the Accreditation Platform will close. To facilitate the smooth running of the programme, DAOs are asked to submit all requested information relating to their delegation, including transport and accommodation details, and delegates' dietary and accessibility requirements if applicable. Please ensure that all details are completed correctly before submitting the registration request, as certain information (for example, the delegate's name) will be printed on their accreditation badge.

All personal information provided for accreditation will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Full details can be found in the Privacy Notice on the Accreditation Platform.

If you have any queries about the registration process, please email EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie.

Delegation Liaison Officers (DLOs)

A Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO) will be assigned to each delegation to assist and accompany the Head of Delegation and delegates throughout the meeting programme. The DLO will:

- Serve as the principal point of contact between the delegation and the Irish EU Presidency meeting hosts
- Accompany and be available to the delegation, ensuring that their programme runs on time and that the delegation is able to participate in all programme elements
- Provide logistical assistance and administrative support at the airport, accommodation, and event venues
- Distribute accreditation lapel pins, badges and floater badges on arrival
- Reserve available rooms for bilateral meetings, if requested



DLOs will contact the Delegation Accreditation Officer no later than two working days before the meeting.

If you have any questions about the role of the DLO, or wish to share positive or negative feedback about the performance of your DLO, please email EUPresidencyDLO@dfa.ie

Diplomatic Clearances

Diplomatic clearances are required in a number of cases as set out below. In these cases, **the relevant accredited Embassy to Ireland must send a Third Party Note (TPN)** and accompanying documentation to the relevant Department at the email address provided below. DAOs are requested to advise their Embassy to Ireland to submit the diplomatic clearance request at the earliest opportunity, in order to facilitate the timely processing of requests.

Scenario	Required documentation	Timeline	Contact email address
Overflights or landings of military or state aircraft	TPN and a completed diplomatic clearance form (available from diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie)	As early as possible, and no later than 48 hours in advance of entry into Irish airspace	diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie
Permission to bring firearm into Ireland (incl. for armed security protection officers)	TPN which includes details of the firearms which will be used, the personnel who will carry them	As early as possible	diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie ; If travelling on a commercial or chartered flight, also: exemptwm@transport.gov.ie
Protection officer requiring radio frequency	TPN which includes details of the radio frequencies proposed	As early as possible	diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie
Requests to wear a military uniform while in Ireland	TPN and a completed Uniform Clearance form (available from diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie)	As early as possible	diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie

If you have questions about the diplomatic clearance process, please email diplomaticclearance@dfa.ie

Delegation Flight Arrivals and Departures

To facilitate arrivals, departures and local transport arrangements for delegations, DAOs are asked to provide all requested information about arrival and departure flights through the Accreditation Platform.

Handling of Luggage

Delegations are strongly advised to travel with **cabin baggage only**, if possible, to facilitate smooth transfers to and from the airport on arrival and departure.



Entering Ireland

Please note that Ireland is not part of the Schengen Area. Therefore, **EU citizens must present a valid passport or national identity card to enter Ireland**. Full details are available [here](#).

Citizens of other countries must present a valid passport or recognised travel document to enter Ireland and may also need a visa. You can find out if you need a visa to enter Ireland [here](#).

Transportation of Delegates

Transportation for Head of Delegation and accompanying accredited delegates will be organised in close cooperation with An Garda Síochána, Ireland's national police and security service.

The Irish EU Presidency will provide transport to and from the airport for Heads of Delegation and accompanying accredited delegates arriving on flights landing from 10:00 on Sunday 5 July onwards and departing on flights leaving before 17:00 on Tuesday 7 July only. Delegations arriving or departing outside of this window will be responsible for their own transport to/from the airport.

When making travel arrangements, Delegations may wish to consider onward journey times by road to the meeting location. The Irish EU Presidency will provide transport for the delegation and any accompanying Embassy representative to and from the following airports:

- Ireland West Airport - 40 minutes
- Shannon Airport - 2.5 hours
- Dublin Airport to Ballina - approximately 3 hours 15 minutes

The Irish EU Presidency will provide transportation between venues for Heads of Delegation and accredited delegates throughout their official programme. Delegations who wish to undertake activities outside of the official meeting programme are expected to make their own transport arrangements and should inform their Delegation Liaison Officer of these plans when known.

Transportation for Delegates Travelling Separately from their HOD

Delegates travelling separately from their HoD are invited to make their own travel arrangements. Information on public transport and taxi options to and from Ireland West Airport, the closest airport to the meeting location, are available [here](#).

Embassy Vehicles

It will not be possible for Embassy vehicles to join the official motorcade or to go airside at the Airport at any point.

Accommodation

The Irish EU Presidency has reserved rooms for the Heads of Delegation and accompanying accredited delegates, for the nights of Sunday 5 and Monday 6 July 2026, in the hotels indicated below.

The Irish EU Presidency will cover the cost of accommodation and breakfast for the nights of 5 and 6 July for the Head of Delegation and one delegate (1+1). Any additional expenses arising from use of the hotels' facilities (such as meals, drinks, room service etc.) must be covered by the delegation.



All other delegates are assigned a pre-reserved room, the cost of which must be paid by the delegation, along with any additional expenses arising from use of the hotel's facilities. For logistical and security reasons, delegations are strongly advised to avail of the assigned rooms. Should you opt to stay at a different hotel, the Irish EU Presidency will be unable to provide you with transportation directly to and from that hotel, or with other logistical supports.

The DAO must request the delegation's accommodation reservations through the Accreditation Platform when registering the delegates. The DAO must indicate which delegate should be assigned the pre-paid room, along with the Head of Delegation, and which delegates are availing of the other reserved rooms.

The cost of the rooms to be paid by the delegation must be paid in advance using the link provided on the Accreditation Platform. The DAO can make payment on behalf of all of the delegates or can send an invitation link to each applicable delegate to invite them to make the payment for their room directly.

If a Head of Delegation or delegate wishes to arrive earlier or extend their stay, they must make the necessary reservations directly with the hotel of their choice. The Irish EU Presidency is not responsible for reserving or paying for hotel stays before or after the nights of 5 and 6 July 2026.

Hotels

Heads of Delegation (Ministers) will stay in:

- [Mount Falcon Hotel](#) - this hotel is 8km distance from St Mary's Secondary School and is also the venue for the official dinner.

Other Heads of Delegation will stay in:

- [Ice House Hotel](#) - this hotel is 9.6 km from Mount Falcon Hotel and 5.1 km from St Mary's Secondary School.
- [Great National Hotel](#) - this hotel is 4.8 km from Mount Falcon Hotel and 4.6 km from St Mary's Secondary School.

Additional delegates will stay in:

- [Great National Hotel](#) - this hotel is 4.8 km from Mount Falcon Hotel and 4.6 km from St Mary's Secondary School.
- [Ballina Manor Hotel](#) - this hotel is 6.9 km from Mount Falcon Hotel and 2.7 km from St Mary's Secondary School.

Transport will be provided to and from these hotels to the programme venues as required.

For queries about accommodation, please contact EUPresidency.accommodation@dfa.ie

Security

The Irish EU Presidency will provide security during the meeting through An Garda Síochána, Ireland's national police and security service. Security zones designated by the Garda authorities will only be accessible to accredited vehicles and accredited individuals wearing a valid pin or badge. For this reason, delegates and other accredited participants must always visibly wear their valid pin or badge.



Heads of Delegation have the option to include a security officer in their delegation. This officer must be registered on the Accreditation Platform. Requests for authorisation to carry a weapon, use a radio frequency, and wear a military uniform while in Ireland must be made in line with the instructions in the [Diplomatic Aircraft / Security Clearances](#) section above. For any questions related to security, including requests to carry out a security visit to Ireland ahead of the meeting, please contact EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie

Media

All media wishing to attend the Informal Meeting of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers must accredit on the media accreditation platform <https://media.ireland2026.eu>. Once media accreditation has been confirmed, accredited media can register for events they wish to attend through the accreditation platform.

Accredited and registered media will be permitted access to the media centre and to media opportunities, including doorstep interviews and press conferences.

Media representatives intending to accompany an official delegation must apply for accreditation as part of the delegation, not through the general media accreditation process. Official media who accredit through the media accreditation process cannot transfer into the delegation.

Media centre location, opening hours and other media information will be circulated to registered media in the media logistics note.

Video Footage and Photographs

The host broadcaster of the Irish EU Presidency will record and stream the following material from the meeting: arrivals, initial handshake greetings, doorstep statements, family photo, tour de table before the plenary session, and the official press conference. This material will be available live via the [European Broadcasting Service \(EBS\)](#).

Photographs and video from the official Irish EU Presidency multimedia team will be available in high-resolution format on the Irish EU Presidency Flickr account (details will be made available in advance of the meeting). Content from the Flickr account may be used free of charge and should be attributed to the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Social Media

Content from the Irish EU Presidency will be available on our social media accounts. Details will be made available in advance of the meeting.

General Information

Useful Contacts

For queries relating to accreditation or meeting logistics: EU26SOC001.logistics@dfa.ie

For queries about accommodation, please contact EUPresidency.accommodation@dfa.ie

For queries relating to the content of the meeting agenda: IEPRES2026dsp@welfare.ie

Emergency services (police, ambulance, fire): 112 or 999



Internet/WiFi

Wireless internet access is available throughout the meeting venue. The network name and password will be available on signage in the venue.

Electricity



The standard electricity supply in Ireland is 230V at a frequency of 50Hz (the same as in other EU Member States). Three-pin power plugs and sockets of Type G are used. Delegates travelling from EU Member States will require a power plug adaptor in order to use electronic devices safely in Ireland.

First Aid and Medical Assistance

Each meeting venue will have a medical unit. If you require medical assistance during the meeting, please alert your Delegation Liaison Officer or a member of venue staff, or follow the signage in the venue to locate the medical unit.

Accessibility

At the time of accreditation, the platform will ask for relevant information on allergies, dietary restrictions and dietary preferences of the Heads of Delegation and delegates, and invite sharing of any meeting-related accessibility requirements. It is important that this information is provided so that delegates may receive all appropriate supports.

Assisted Listening

An assisted listening system will be provided in the plenary room. The system used is Auracast™. This system is Bluetooth® capability which enables the transmission of meeting audio to an unlimited number of receivers with no pairing of devices. The Auracast™ logo will be displayed on screens in auditoriums where the system is in use.



For users with hearing aids or cochlear implants, depending on the manufacturer, most will allow users to connect via their designated app. The Auri audio will appear in the Bluetooth® pairing list. The user can select the desired Auracast™ channel to hear the audio. For users with devices that are not compatible Auracast™, neck loop devices will be made available from the control booth in the plenary room.

Lost and Found

If you have lost or found an item in the meeting venue or in an Irish EU Presidency vehicle, please bring it to the attention of your Delegation Liaison Officer. Please note that the Irish EU Presidency is not liable for personal injuries, losses or damage to the personal property of registered delegates. All delegates should make their own arrangements with respect to personal insurance for their property.



Weather

Temperatures in Ballina in July typically range between 12°C and 18°C. It is generally one of the sunniest months in Ireland, but visitors should prepare for some rain.

Links of interest

1. 🌐 Tourism Ireland – <https://www.ireland.com>
Official tourism website with destinations, itineraries, and travel inspiration.
2. 🚌 Transport for Ireland – <https://www.transportforireland.ie>
3. 🚂 Iarnród Éireann – <https://www.irishrail.ie>
Train schedules and ticket booking.
4. 🏰 [Great things to do in North Mayo and its surrounds - Visit North Mayo](#) Tourist information
5. 🌤️ Met Éireann – <https://www.met.ie>
Official weather forecasts and alerts.
6. 🆘 Tourist SOS Ireland – <https://www.touristsos.ie>
Free assistance service for tourists who lose documents or need support.
7. 🏞️ Wild Atlantic Way – <https://www.wildatlanticway.com>
Information on Ireland's famous coastal scenic route.

Irish EU Presidency Sustainability Policy

The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union provides a significant opportunity to demonstrate Ireland's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Ireland is committed to embedding sustainable practices across all aspects of planning and delivery of our EU Presidency.

To reaffirm our commitment, Ireland has developed a Sustainability Policy for our EU Presidency, applying it directly to official EU Presidency meetings and events held in Ireland. The objective of the policy is to support the organisation and delivery of EU Presidency meetings as sustainably as possible. We wish to encourage the implementation of initiatives that are environmentally, socially and economically responsible throughout the organisation and delivery stages.

We hope that our efforts will be visible across our meetings and events and that you will be inspired to continue making sustainable and environmentally conscious choices. More information about the Sustainability Policy will be available on the official website of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.