Dear Meath resident,

Over the past 45 years, Ireland’s membership of the European Union has had a hugely positive impact on many aspects of our lives: from unlimited access to the world’s largest consumer market to gaining a stronger voice at international level, from using a common currency to addressing gender inequalities and from supporting a greener society to helping reconcile communities along the Border Region.

Along the way, communities, towns, businesses, students, researchers, farmers, and local and national organisations in each of Ireland’s 26 counties have benefited from EU financing. This publication zooms in on Meath and looks at how the EU has invested in your county. However, it is important to remember that EU financial transfers tell a fraction of the story. The true rewards of EU membership cannot be measured in monetary terms: peace, prosperity, political stability, and the freedom to live, work, study and travel anywhere in the Union.

Yours faithfully,

Gerry Kiely
Head of European Commission Representation in Ireland

For further information, you can find our contact details on the back page of this publication.

How Ireland has benefited from the EU

- Almost €76 billion received since joining the EU in 1973.
- Over €57 billion has been paid in support for agricultural programmes.
- The next largest area of funding came from Structural and Cohesion Funding (over €10.7 billion).
- The European Social Fund contributed almost €6.6 billion towards education and training, social inclusion and supports for vulnerable sectors of our society. Recently, a large emphasis has been placed on up-skilling our workforce.
- By the end of 2017, Ireland had secured funding of €424 million in Horizon 2020 funding.

For the 2014-2020 Budget, the majority of Irish funding will come through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and will be spent on areas such as direct income and market support to the agricultural sector.

Ireland will continue to receive significant funding under the Structural Fund. As in recent years, this funding will focus on research, technology and innovation, contributing to energy efficiency, education and training, and job creation measures.

Additional funding opportunities arise under the Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Connecting Europe and COSME EU level programmes, which cover research, education, infrastructure networks, SME competitiveness and a number of other smaller initiatives.

This information leaflet provides an insight into some of the ways that the EU has recently supported this county.
Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever, with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020). It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the laboratory to the market.

Here are some examples of how organisations in Meath are benefiting.

**€3.2M AGROCYCLE PROJECT ON ENSURING THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF AGRICULTURAL WASTE**

Carton Brothers in Clonee are once again participating in a Horizon 2020 project.

The RefuCoat project is aiming to develop fully-recyclable food packaging with enhanced gas barrier properties and new functionalities using high performance coatings.

Active coatings will be used in films and trays as an alternative to current metallised and modified atmospheric packaging, to avoid the use of non-renewable materials in packaging that currently leads to complex and expensive recycling steps.

The project is focused on two packages: (i) the replacement of metallised packages by the use of hybrid barrier coatings for savoury products and cereals and (ii) the production of middle chain resins to develop a fully recyclable & biodegradable package for chicken meat products.

RefuCoat’s main impacts are expected in the improved performance of food packages, reduction of land-fill waste, cost and environmental effectiveness in processing by Life Cycle and Techno-Economic Assessment, improved preservation of food products and new markets. Furthermore, RefuCoat aims at creating more than 880 jobs.

**SME FUNDING**

A company originally from Meath, Deciphex, was awarded a Horizon 2020 SME €50k research grant. Their project is called PATHOYTIX and uses Artificial Intelligence to transform clinical diagnostic pathology.
EU policy on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) aims to improve the approach to entrepreneurship in Europe, by providing a comprehensive SME policy for EU countries, including Ireland. Supported by EU funding passed directly to the Irish government, this is then implemented at local and national level.

As part of this drive to encourage entrepreneurship in Ireland, a network of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) was established to help local businesses. Working with Enterprise Ireland and the Enterprise Europe Network, the LEOs aim to support entrepreneurship and innovation amongst SMEs, to drive new firm creations, expansion and employment opportunities, as well as to assist in overcoming operational barriers.

The 31 LEOs, located in Local Authorities nationwide, have hands-on teams of experts to provide business advice and information. Each LEO is a gateway to a wide range of government and non-government supports that are available to help local businesses develop. A range of grant supports, from feasibility to local development, is also available. Their aim is to stimulate local business and economic growth and they do this through a number of initiatives.

Meath is serviced by one LEO, which is based in Navan. The LEO supports businesses in the county through a number of services including a programme on Food Tourism and the Boyne Valley Food Network.

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS

As part of the LEOs' initiative to stimulate business development, Entrepreneurship competitions are held at a number of levels. Meath-based Hexafly won the award in the Innovation category at the 2017 National Enterprise Awards. Hexafly supplies sustainable natural commodities to the animal feed, plant nutrition and Bio-polymer industries. The company is currently partnering with multinationals, such as Diageo and Nutreco as both customer and supplier. The company recently opened its new facility at Ashbourne and began producing insect oil, powder and fertiliser. Hexafly plans to open two more facilities in Ireland as well as one in the UK and to franchise or license its technology globally, targeting China, India, the US, and West Africa.

Rural Development

More than €1.6 billion was paid to rural Ireland in 2016 under a variety of EU agricultural schemes. Currently, Irish farmers receive over €1.2 billion of EU funding per year through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). An additional €2.7 billion in funding over a ten-year period was received through rural development programmes.

For the period 2014-2020, the CAP will invest €10.7 billion in Ireland’s farming sector and rural areas, with additional co-financing from the Irish authorities. Under CAP, County Meath received almost €56.6m in 2016, giving an average payment of €15,061 per recipient. Direct Payments of over €50m were made to farmers, with an average amount of €13,810 per recipient.

Other supports received by rural areas include the Rural Development Programme, the investment in towns and villages and structural programmes. The Leader programme continues to support rural communities, including tourism projects. Meath Partnership in Kells implements the programme for the county. Meath was allocated €6.9m for the 2014-2020 programme.

€100k for Donore Community Centre
Funding was allocated for the construction of multi-purpose community facility which includes community meeting and training rooms, general purpose function hall, kitchen facilities and toilets. This project supports the local areas of Donore and Rosnaree. The centre will support all individuals and community groups in achieving a better quality of life, economic, social and educational goals while stimulating the creation and development of a strong, prosperous and caring local community.

€5.4k for 52nd FISLY European Sand Yachting Championships 2017
A LEADER grant was provided to the promoter organisation, the Irish Powerkite and Sandyachting Association, to assist with crowd control, signage, safety wear, promotional activities and stage hire for the Europe wide event that took place for the first time in Ireland in September 2017. The event was hugely successful in attracting competitors from 16 countries, spectator numbers in excess of 500 each day and generated an estimated 2,300 additional bed nights for the local area.
SICAP is the new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. It is funded by the Irish Government with co-funding from the European Social Fund. The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalized in society, living in poverty or in unemployment. It does this through a community development approach. Meath Partnership manages the programme for the county.

Meath Partnership is currently working with over 60 organisations across Europe in 14 new and existing projects funded under Erasmus+ (2014-2020) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the EU. The aim of these projects is to increase the learning opportunities and educational options for youth and adult learners in County Meath.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, these projects will be completed and a series of innovative and new educational resources, that can be accessed and used free of charge, will be made available to service providers, trainers and youth and adult learners within the county.

Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. It provides funding and support for organisations and individuals to operate projects that encourage European exchange, co-operation and learning. Since it began in 1987, approximately 100,000 learners have come to Ireland generating an estimated 500,000 visitors. Ireland will have a total €12.6m to allocate under the student/staff mobilities and strategic partnership actions in 2018 compared to €11.1m in 2017 – an increase of 13%. During the last academic year, there were 3,172 students and 262 staff outgoing participants from Ireland, with a further 7,579 students and 707 staff incoming.

SCIFUN
The aim of this Erasmus-funded project is to address the challenge of engagement in science through using an innovative approach to science teaching and learning, and making learning science fun and relevant to students. The project aims to increase pupils’ motivation and achievement in science and other subjects and to prepare European educators to better engage pupils in science education.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION
A €200m long-term loan from the European Investment Bank is helping deliver the Department of Education’s School Building Programme. It is supporting the construction, enlargement and modernisation of 71 schools, as well as improving energy saving measures. Four schools in Meath are included: Gaelscoil an Bhradáin Feasa in Mornington, St. Paul’s National School in Abbeylands, Navan, St. Mary’s Special School in Johnstown, Navan and Beaufort College in Navan.

Meath is part of the FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) North-East, which also includes Counties Dublin and Louth. Four of the top ports in Ireland are in this area: Howth is the largest with the others being Clogherhead, Skerries and Balbriggan. Ownership levels of fishing vessels are the lowest in the country. However, this FLAG has a high gross tonnage (over 9% of the value of all fish landed). There are significant tourism opportunities for the region and the seafood industry provides good employment opportunities. The FLAG is investing over €1m in economic development of coastal areas and a further €115k to upskill and harness knowledge of the local coastal community. An additional €115k will be spent on promoting social culture and promoting social well-being. So far, the FLAG has assisted three local festivals with seafood themes, two marine tourist projects, two start-up companies in seafood processing and several infrastructure improvement projects.