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Ireland 'unable to freeze criminal assets'

Cormac O'Keeffe
Security Correspondent

Ireland's failure to participate in key international initiatives and conventions is making it "significantly more difficult" to freeze and confiscate criminal assets and incomes, particularly if they cross borders, according to a Government document.

The National Economic Crime and Corruption Strategy also states that Ireland "must enhance" its laws on confiscating proceeds of crime in cases involving a criminal conviction.

The document says the problem in the criminal system contrasts with the civil law process — as operated by the Criminal Assets Bureau — which it says has been successful in the "aggressive pursuit" of assets linked to organised crime. The strategy, developed by the Advisory Council against Economic Crime and Corruption, also recommends:

- Legislation updating Ireland's ethics in public life obligations is "long overdue";
- Ireland's current data picture on economic crime and corruption is incomplete, making it difficult to produce accurate assessments and analyse current and emerging threats;
- Banks or regulators do not share within their sectors information on suspected criminal and fraudulent activity because there is no legal basis to do so, and for fear of breaching data protection rules;

- Economic crime and corruption cases "struggle to find sufficient priority" in the courts and dedicated court lists, sittings or a specialist court could help;
- Ireland should consider introducing 'non-trial resolution measures' or 'deferred prosecution agreement' regimes as a means of corporate compliance and administrative sanctions and avoid lengthy and costly court trials.

The advisory council's report noted that, according to EU estimates, only 1-2% of estimated criminal profits are confiscated. It said that Ireland's asset confiscation system is internationally rated to be "only of a moderate level of effectiveness".

The report said Ireland did not participate in several key international initiatives on asset confiscation, which "could significantly" strengthen operations.

This includes Interpol's 'Silver Notice' system, Euro-pol's Project ASSET initiative, the EU Asset Recovery and Confiscation Directive, and a Council of Europe convention.

The report said: "Ireland's non-participation in these instruments renders it significantly more difficult to freeze, confiscate, and dispose of assets and the proceeds of crime, particularly on a cross-border and transnational basis."

Moguls urge AI safety measures

Tech moguls Elon Musk and Sam Altman have backed a call from the boss of Anthropic for the artificial intelligence (AI) industry to "slow down" to give safety measures time to catch up.

Dario Amodei said he is concerned that, since this summer, AI has been "advancing drastically faster".

World: 7



Shane Lowry celebrates after winning the Amgen Irish Open at Trump International Golf Links, Doonbeg, yesterday.
Picture: Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

Lowry trumps field to take Irish Open

Shane Lowry produced a record-breaking performance to win a truly unique Irish Open — a tournament that contained everything from sporting majesty to questions about Irish unity, and tariffs on whiskey.

US president Donald Trump applauded the Offaly golfer on a career-defining victory at Doonbeg, defeating a top-class field by an incredible 11 shots.

An emotional Lowry said the win came at the end of a difficult year on the course.

"My daughter is always asking: 'When are you going to bring a trophy home?' So I'm going to bring a trophy home," he said.

Mr Trump, who presented the trophy, then told a cheering crowd he planned to take the tariffs off Irish whiskey.

"Everyone's been bugging me. They say: 'Will you do me a favour? It's so unfair...'"

"And I said: 'On behalf of the United States of America, I'm going to take the tariffs off Irish whiskey,'"

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Most favour deportations for criminals

Paul Hosford
Deputy Political Editor

Nearly nine in 10 people in rural Ireland believe that foreign nationals convicted of crimes should be deported, a survey indicates.

The findings, in the Irish Examiner/Ipsos B&A Rural Ireland Thinks survey, show that 89% of people believe that if a foreign national is convicted of a crime here, they should be deported.

In a recent parliamentary question response, justice minister Jim O'Callaghan said that orders can be made for both the removal and exclusion of citizens of the EU and European Economic Area, who "represent a danger to public policy or public security".

Mr O'Callaghan provided figures to Fine Gael TD John Clendennen showing that 47 such removals had taken place in 2021, 50 in 2022, 36 in 2023, and 41 in 2024 — but the number had risen significantly to 132 last year, and is already at 149 in 2026.

■ Majority agree that immigration is good for Ireland's economy

The Rural Ireland Thinks survey, carried out at the start of this month, also shows strong support for the Government's toughening of immigration laws.

In total, some 77% of respondents said that they support the International Protection Bill, which requires applicants arriving in the State to undergo identity and security checks, while biometric data is collected through a system called Eurodac.

However, just 23% say they believe the Government is doing a good job in managing the number of asylum seekers who come to Ireland.

In that category, 50% of people surveyed strongly disagree that the Government is doing a good job.

Six in 10 people agreed that immigration is good for the Irish economy, while 54% said that people who come

from other places "generally contribute positively" to Ireland.

Older adults in Ireland are significantly more supportive of tougher immigration and asylum policies, according to the data.

The survey of 506 people shows that while 77% support the International Protection Bill to toughen the laws here, support rises sharply with age, from 63% among 18- to 24-year-olds to 84% among those aged 65 and over.

There is also strong backing for deporting foreign nationals convicted of crimes, with 89% agreeing overall.

Support is highest among people aged 50-64 at 94%, compared with 81% among 18-24s.

However, attitudes are more divided on the wider economic and social impact

89%

of rural adults agree foreign nationals who are convicted of a crime should be deported, 77% strongly agreeing

of immigration.

Overall, 60% of those surveyed believe immigration benefits the Irish economy, but this rises to 65% among typically 'middle class' social groups, compared with just 50% among more traditional working class groups.

Men are also more positive than women about the benefits of immigration, at 67% versus 53%.

The biggest age divide concerns Government policy: 51% of over-65s support paying more to encourage refu-

gees to return home, compared with just 26% of 18- to 24-year-olds.

Meanwhile, only 23% of people believe the Government is doing a good job handling asylum-seeker numbers, although approval rises to 35% among over-65s.

The poll comes as the Government seeks to tighten rules around Irish citizenship.

Under laws brought to Cabinet last week by Mr O'Callaghan, applicants will have to prove they can speak English or Irish proficiently as part of the "biggest reform of Ireland's citizenship rules in a generation".

The proposed legislation will also increase the length of time a person must live in Ireland to be eligible for citizenship from five years to eight years.

A person seeking citizenship must also demonstrate a "knowledge and understanding of Irish civics", including society and politics, to a certain standard.

The legislation will be applied retrospectively to migrants already living in Ireland who have yet to submit a citizenship application.

The new rules will fall under the Irish Nationality

and Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2026.

A Government statement last week said the changes, much criticised by opposition parties, "reflects the Government's policy that Irish citizenship by naturalisation is an earned privilege and the culmination of sustained lawful residence, economic self-sufficiency, social integration, civic participation and compliance with immigration law, rather than merely the passage of time".

■ This report was funded by the News Reporting Scheme

News: 4

Majority do not expect good standard of life in retirement

Niamh Griffin

Just two in five people expect a good standard of living in retirement despite research showing a jump in pension ownership.

Almost one in four women have no retirement plan in place, with a "significant" pension gap between men and women continuing, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) has warned.

Overall, only one in three people are confident their pension savings will keep pace with inflation.

It cautioned that 63% of people surveyed have never met with a financial adviser, and 25% of private pension holders have a low understanding of fees and charges.

The CCPC data shows that the gender gap persists, with 24% of women lacking retirement arrangements, compared with 17% of men.

Women are less likely to say they understand pensions, at 49%, compared to 63% of men. They are also less confident about the



Gráinne Griffin of the CCPC urged people to speak to a financial planner or advisor about their pension.

standard of living they will have after retiring.

Women are more likely to have a public service pension but less likely to have savings in place.

Gráinne Griffin, the director of financial education at the CCPC, said: "Our research shows that consumers avoid reviewing their pension statements and too often are not confident that their pension will allow a good standard of living in retirement.

"We are encouraging consumers, particularly women, to review their pension and remind them that

they don't need to do it alone."

She urged people to speak to a financial planner or advisor, and said employers who match pension contributions will help ensure more people invest in their retirement.

Ms Griffin said: "Employers that offer to match higher pension contributions make employees much more likely to increase their own level of investment in their pension."

Overall, 70% of people expect to use a State pension to help fund their retirement.

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Inside

News

This summer saw wildfires reach new levels of intensity. Will barbecue bans and fines tackle the burning issue? **Page 5**

Analysis

A compulsory purchase order allows a statutory body to take land, whether the owner wants to sell or not. It is important for landowners to know their rights in this regard. **Page 9**

Outdoors

When we think about protecting the ocean, we tend to picture beaches, fishing boats, plastic bottles. We rarely picture the farm 40km inland or the stormwater drains in our cities. **Pages 12&13**

Arts

How Fiona Shaw, Joan Rivers, and Caryl Churchill influenced Cork playwright Gina Moxley. **Page 14**

Christian Brothers College

Sidney Hill, Cork

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MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 7.00PM

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Applications for First Year 2027 will be accepted from 1 October 2026.

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• Email: info@cbccork.ie
• Website: www.cbccork.ie

Instagram: @officialcbccork

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