

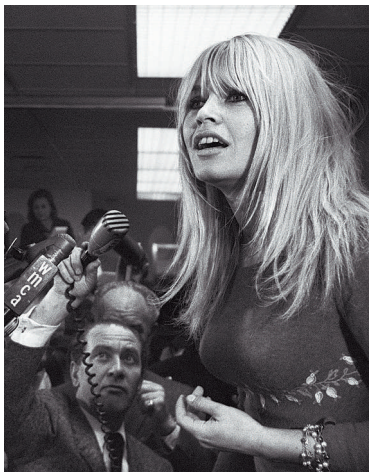
IRISH TIMES
WRITERS'
PREDICTIONS
FOR 2026

News



Besides paid-up influencers, frequent social media posting is no longer about being in the real conversation. Instead, it's about being outside of real life

Una Mullally
Opinion



BRIGITTE
BARDOT
SYMBOL OF THE
SEXUAL
REVOLUTION

Donald Clarke
World News

Extreme
weather
plans
'severely
inadequate'

Climate watchdog criticises lack of detail in State plans to tackle weather events

Proposals contain 'limited commitment to tangible actions', it warns

CAROLINE O'DOHERTY
Climate and Science
Correspondent

New plans drawn up to help the State handle extreme weather and climate change are severely inadequate, a damning assessment by the climate change watchdog has found.

The Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) argues the sectoral adaptation plans (SAPs) lack detail, funding and clarity around who is responsible for delivering them.

In a letter to the Government, the CCAC said it was "extremely disappointed" with the plans, which it said contained "limited commitment to tangible actions".

The letter was sent shortly before Christmas, several weeks away from the first anniversary of Storm Eowyn, which revealed serious weaknesses in the country's power, communications and water services.

It also comes as a report published at the weekend showed climate-related disasters inflicted huge economic harm around the world in 2025, with the 10 costliest causing more than €100 billion in damage.

That bill, calculated in a Christian Aid report, covered not only insured losses and not the incalculable cost of lives lost and communities uprooted.

Storm Eowyn caused more than €300 million in damage to insured property in Ireland.

To prepare for similar extreme weather events and other climate change impacts such as drought, flooding, sea level rise and heatwaves, the Government last month published 10 SAPs.

They cover homes, businesses, farming, road, transport, schools, hospitals, water supplies, telecommunications and electricity networks, the natural and built heritage.

They are meant to ensure all sectors are resilient to extreme weather events and can adapt to longer-term climate changes.

However, the CCAC's assessment says: "Visions of resilience remain generic, and specific resilience targets are

not defined." The council's letter said: "Without greater ambition, resourcing and a more systemic approach, the suffering of our vulnerable communities will increase further and the economic, health and environmental impacts from extreme weather events will continue to mount."

It expressed particular concern about the protection of homes, especially those in coastal areas.

"Issues such as coastal erosion are not dealt with," its assessment says.

It says the plans do not properly address disaster risk reduction or look beyond the country to see how climate impacts elsewhere risk disrupting life.

The CCAC point out that it met departmental officials to help with the plans, made recommendations for inclusion and critiqued the draft versions, and still they came up short.

"There is no clear costing of activities within the SAPs, no indication of investment needs and no clear commitment of available funding to support implementation," the assessment says.

"This is concerning, as lack of financing was already identified as a key constraint to the implementation of the first iteration of SAPs [in 2019]." It says most SAPs "lack specific actions and defined milestones" and "focus heavily on risk identification and information gathering, with limited commitment to tangible adaptation actions".

The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment said the Government thanked the CCAC for its help in developing the plans.

"We will examine the report they have submitted to look at adaptation policy going forward," it said.

It said actions in the SAPs would be funded from departmental budgets and the National Development Plan.

It added that from January a new national adaptation taskforce would "monitor delivery of the actions and address cross-cutting issues and risk ownership in a holistic way".



Peace 'very close', Trump says after Zelenskiy meeting

Donald Trump said last night he believes a deal to end Russia's war in Ukraine is "very close" following a meeting in Florida with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

The US president said one or two thorny issues remain, but his meeting with Mr Zelenskiy in Mar-a-Lago was "excellent" and they covered "95 per cent" of issues.

"I do think we are getting a lot closer, maybe very close," he said at a press conference after the meeting.

Mr Trump said territorial is-

ssues remain but he thinks these will be resolved.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Zelenskiy said he had a great discussion with the American leader, and US-Ukraine security guarantees are "100 per cent agreed to".

Mr Trump said he was on the phone with Russian president Vladimir Putin for "maybe 2½ hours" yesterday. He said he thinks the Russian and Ukrainian presidents both want to see a deal agreed. He said Mr Putin wants to see Ukraine succeed.

Mr Zelenskiy said Ukraine

has a "different position" to Russia on Donbas. He said Russia had to respect Ukrainian land and "the territory which we control". He said Ukraine's attitude to Donbas is "very clear" and that it is "a different position to Russia".

"It is the land of our nation, for generations," he said.

Mr Trump said the issue of Donbas is "unresolved but getting closer".

Asked if there was any agreement on a free trade zone on Donbas, Mr Trump said it was a "very tough issue but one I

think we'll get resolved".

Mr Trump and Mr Zelenskiy spoke with the leaders of France, Finland, Poland, Norway, Italy, the UK and Germany, along with the Nato secretary general and head of the European Commission after their meeting.

Afterwards Mr Trump said he believed Mr Putin was ready to make a peace deal. There were no signs, however, that Russia was willing to drop any of its demands. According to Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov, Mr Trump "listened carefully

yesterday to Russia's assessment of the conflict. Both sides agreed that a ceasefire proposed by Ukraine and Europe would only prolong the fighting "and is fraught with renewed hostilities", Mr Ushakov said.

Asked about Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, one of the key sticking points in the talks, Trump said Mr Putin is "working with Ukraine on getting it open".

"He's been very good in that sense. He wants to see that open," Mr Trump added.

The US president said he had

■ US president Donald Trump greets Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy at Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

offered to address the Ukrainian parliament. "If that would help, I don't know if that would help. I think it would probably help, but I don't even know," he said. - Agencies

➔ Attacks cut power to a million Kyiv households: page 6

Irish Embassy forced to buy
USA '94 World Cup tickets

ÓRLARYAN

Irish Embassy officials spent thousands of pounds buying tickets for Ireland's matches at the 1994 USA World Cup, in an effort to prevent a "riotous situation" after hundreds of Irish fans were left stranded in Florida when a British travel agent went out of business.

The rationale for the decision is outlined in documents released to the National Archives, as is a pre-tournament letter from then-tánaiste Dick Spring to Fifa chief Sepp Blatter seeking "an adequate supply of tickets for Irish supporters".

British travel firm Sportex was wound up while fans were in the US in June 1994, meaning planned hotels and tickets for Ireland's three group games against Italy, Mexico and Norway did not materialise.

A letter dated December 13th, 1994 from the Irish Em-

bassy in Washington, DC to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) explained how embassy officials took matters into their own hands to protect Ireland's "image" in the US.

"[Embassy officials] saved a potentially damaging and even riotous situation when the British travel firm Sportex collapsed and left many Irish soccer fans stranded and without tickets in Florida," the file noted. It said the purchase of the tickets provided "a vital safety net for Ireland and our image here, especially given the intense and daily media interest in the Sportex case".

The official continued: "Though it was a purely defensive and damage-limitation effort on our part, the defusion of the potentially riotous situation involving Sportex fans in Florida prevented the important enhancement of the image of Ireland, which was developed dur-

ing the World Cup, being seriously undermined overnight."

A DFA briefing note from June 1994 outlined that officials were "trying to alleviate the consequences of the failure of this London company [Sportex] to pay for hotel accommodation and transport in the US, and to provide match tickets for 300 to 370 Cork people who had booked three-match packages with them either direct or through Cork travel agents".

The memo noted that, by June 21st, "it was clear that no funds would be forthcoming from the company in time to be of practical relevance to the Irish clients affected".

The actions of the embassy staff were praised afterwards, including in a letter from Ireland's ambassador to the US, Dermot Gallagher, to DFA senior official Anne Anderson on July 15th, 1994.

Weather

Largely cloudy and dry, with a few patches of drizzle. Brighter in Ulster and north Con-naught. Highs of 3-7 degrees. ---

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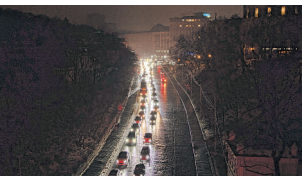
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Home
News

Politics: Ireland's upcoming presidency of the council of the European Union will cost the State over €293 million, with €125 million for An Garda Síochána. Page 3

Transport: Proposed transport police will not prevent antisocial behaviour, a union has claimed. Page 3

World
News



Ukraine: Power was restored to more than a million households in and around Kyiv yesterday, after Russian air attacks caused widespread outages. Page 6

Business
Today

Courts: Bankrupt property developer Sean Dunne has filed a fresh objection in the US to stop \$3.8m being paid to his ex-wives and lawyers. Page 12

Gaming: Games publisher 2K Games saw a 22 per cent rise in revenue at its Irish subsidiary last year. Page 12

Sports
Monday

Rugby: Springboks assistant coaches, including Felix Jones and Jerry Flannery, will provide short-term support to the Bulls. Page 13

Soccer: Leeds United's Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored his seventh goal in six games to secure a 1-1 draw away at Sunderland. Page 14

NSOI

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Great music, great artists,
great experiences



Barry
Douglas
— 16 Jan



Ellinor
D'Melon
— 23 Jan



Mirabelle
Kajenjeri
— 6 Feb



Alexander
Shelley
— 13 Feb

Fridays at the National Concert Hall

NCH

An Ceolraí
Náisiúnta
National
Concert Hall



An Roinn Cultúir,
Comarsáid agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport

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