

OPEN AI NARROWS SEARCH FOR DUBLIN HQ

Commercial
Property



“The appearance—at the opening night, anyway—of Hutch himself in a puzzling prologue is an odd start to a show that approaches truth at the most oblique of angles

The Monk ★★★
Donald Clarke Arts&Ideas



‘BUMPING INTO
BRAD PITT WILL
BE A BIG MOMENT.
I HAVE A LINE
READY TO GO’

Róisín Ingle
Life

Russia imports huge quantities of Irish-made parts for attack drones

Investigation

In a 15-month period, beginning in January 2024, just under 10 tonnes of components from Irish companies reached Russia

CONOR GALLAGHER
Crime and Security Correspondent

Electronic components from Irish companies are being shipped to Russia in vast quantities where they are often fitted to “kamikaze drones” for use against civilian targets in Ukraine, an Irish Times investigation has found.

This is despite EU export bans introduced following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, designed to shut off the supply of such technology to Russia.

In a 15-month period, beginning in January 2024, just under 10 tonnes of components from Irish companies reached Russia. All but 4 per cent consisted of components subject to EU export bans, an analysis of trade data shows.

None of the parts were shipped directly from the Irish companies, which are not accused of any wrongdoing. Instead they came from a variety of wholesale and export companies, mostly based in China.

The material included 1.3 tonnes of antennas originally made by the Irish company Taoglas and imported by Russia in 2024.

Kamikaze drones

These antennas weigh as little as 9g, meaning up to 144,000 units were shipped in a single year. That is enough to make 36,000 Geran-2 kamikaze drones, a weapon that has become a central part of Russia’s strategy to wear down Ukraine’s will to fight by attacking civilian targets.

Chips made by Taoglas, which is headquartered in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, have been found in the guidance systems of Geran-2 drones, along with many other components from EU companies, according to unpublished analysis by Ukrainian intelligence.



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The Geran-2 drone, which is being mass-produced in Russian factories, can carry a 90kg warhead and has a range of up to 2,000km.

Last year, Russia launched 34,000 Geran-2s, killing more than 600 civilians and plunging cities and towns into freezing darkness over the winter.

Their low cost and long range mean they also present a big threat to EU countries, European security officials say.

Sensors manufactured by TE Connectivity, another Irish-headquartered company, have also been found in drones.

In March 2022, shortly after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the EU banned the export of technology to Russia which could have military applications.

Trade data

However, the flow of Irish and EU components has continued. Trade data covering the period January 2024 to March 2025 shows Russian companies imported 140 shipments of TE Connectivity-made products, weighing 8.5 tonnes, which are covered by the EU trade ban.

During the same period, five shipments of Taoglas antennas were imported by Russia. All but one of these were of products subject to the EU ban.

Many of the wholesale and export companies, along with the Russian importers, have already been subject to EU, US or Ukrainian sanctions designed to target Russia’s military industry.

In statements, Taoglas and TE Connectivity said they take various measures to prevent the downstream sale of components to Russian customers.

“We do not, and will not, sell to any entity identified as facilitating the diversion of technology to Russia,” Taoglas said. It added it was not previously aware its components were being used in the Geran-2.

TE Connectivity, which is headquartered in Galway, said it “is firmly committed to its policy of no direct or indirect shipments of its products to Russia

or to any sanctioned country and will continue to communicate this policy with distribution partners, and expect them to comply”.

Russia uses western components in many of its military systems, but the Geran-2 is particularly reliant on foreign parts.

The investigation, which was conducted alongside the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and other European media outlets, found the drone contains almost 500 foreign parts, far more than previously known. This includes about 100 components made by 19 European companies.

➔ How Irish components are ending up in Russian drones: page 5

➔ Ukrainian rescuers walk through the rubble of a building heavily damaged in a Russian attack in Odesa last week. PHOTOGRAPH: OLEKSANDR GIMANOV/AFP/GETTY

Meta urges Ireland to block planned EU social media law

Digital Fairness Act proposes banning addictive features such as ‘infinite scroll’

ELLEN COYNE
Political Correspondent

Meta, the global tech giant, wants the Irish Government to use its coming European Union presidency to advocate for the scrapping of a law that would crack down on addictive social media features like infinite scroll.

The owner of Facebook and Instagram, which has a significant presence in Ireland through its European headquarters in Dublin, also wants landmark EU legislation on artificial intelligence (AI) to be paused and rethought. The same legislation has already been stalled and watered down, following intense lobbying from tech giants and the US government.

Meta included the policy proposals in a submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs on Ireland’s upcoming presidency of the EU. The Government has already said digital online safety will be a key theme of its presidency, but so-called simplification of proposed AI legislation is also likely to feature.

In its submission, Meta identified the scrapping of an upcoming European law called the Digital Fairness Act (DFA) as a policy and legislative proposal that Ireland should focus on during its six-month presidency.

The legislation would try to limit what the European Commission believes are unfair commercial practices used by

tech giants including infinite scroll, autoplay, gambling-like features, “dark patterns” that push people towards commercial decisions they may not otherwise make, and personalised advertising and profiling of internet users. Michael McGrath, the European commissioner for justice, is responsible for advancing the Act.

When asked in its submission what Ireland should prioritise during its presidency, Meta said: “The Commission should withdraw the DFA. It



European commissioner Michael McGrath is responsible for the Act

contradicts the EU’s efforts to simplify digital regulations, introducing new rules for companies in areas already addressed by existing (and recent) EU laws.”

Meta is one of hundreds of stakeholders who sent such submissions to the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is the lead department for the EU presidency.

The company referenced a letter sent last October from 19 European leaders, which called for less red tape and greater simplification from the EU. Meta pointed out that the letter “called for ‘self-restraint when it comes to new legislation’”.

Review of SNA allocations paused after backlash

JACK HORGAN-JONES
and MARIE O’HALLORAN

A review of special needs assistant (SNA) allocations is being paused after criticism from teachers, parents and unions.

The U-turn came after the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) contacted almost 200 schools indicating their allocations were being reduced. Minister for Education

and Youth Hildegard Naughton had indicated that the reviews would continue but said yesterday that she would pause the process.

A total of 584 reviews have been carried out, with two-thirds of schools set to retain or grow their SNA allocation for 2026. However, 194 schools would see their allocation cut.

“I want to reiterate that

there are no cuts to SNA numbers. I want to ensure that SNAs are with the children who most need their care,” Naughton said.

“No further letters on SNA review outcomes will issue until these engagements have concluded in the coming weeks,” the Minister added.

The Department of Education had said the number of SNAs allocated to a school can

change for various reasons, including fluctuating student numbers, changes in care needs or students moving to post-primary level. Even after the pause, there were calls for clarity over what would happen in cases where a school had already been told of a cut in its supply.

In the Dáil, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said “no SNA is being removed from any school during this school year”. But he

said “it’s not plausible that there wouldn’t be reviews”.

The Fianna Fáil parliamentary party meeting last night was dominated by the issue, with several party members angry at the way decisions on SNA reductions were communicated.

➔ Taoiseach gives history lesson on SNA introduction: page 2
Analysis: page 3

Weather

Wet and breezy today with widespread outbreaks of rain. Highs of 2-5 degrees in the north and northeast, 6-10 elsewhere

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Home News

US deportation: A court in the United States has issued a temporary order postponing the deportation of Kilkenny native Seamus Culleton back to Ireland. Page 3

Courts: A man who made an online threat to kill Tánaiste Simon Harris has been jailed for four months. Page 4

World News



Russia: A senior Russian official has said Moscow could deploy its navy to protect Russian-linked vessels from potential European seizures. Page 6

Business + Commercial Property

Courts: Two indicative bids have been made to buy East Coast Bakehouse which is currently in examinership, the High Court heard yesterday. Page 12

Markets: Shares in Kerry Group, the food ingredients multinational, plunged 6.4 per cent yesterday. Page 12

Sports Wednesday

Soccer: Real Madrid beat Benfica 1-0 away in a match marred by the alleged racist abuse of Vinicius Júnior and a red card for Jose Mourinho for dissent. Page 17

Rugby: Steve Borthwick has backed Henry Pollock to thrive against Ireland on his first England start. Page 18

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Pulp **Kneecap**
Disclosure DJ Set **Underworld**

Christy Moore **The Mary Wallopers**
Maribou State Live **Self Esteem**
Ezra Collective **Floating Points** Live

Mall Grab **Mogwal** **Damien Dempsey**
Kae Tempest **Annie Mac** Thursday Night **Chet Faker**
Kerri Chandler **The Avalanches** 🇵🇹 **Gillie Band**

BIIRD **Barrington Levy** **Greentea Peng** **Soda Blonde**
For Those I Love **Sprints** **Dry Cleaning** **Gurriers**
Anna von Hausswolff **David Klitt** Performing The Big Romance **Lambrini Girls**
Joy Orbison **Job Jobse** **The Dare** 🇵🇹 **Jyoty** **Sam Alfred**
Say She She **Kean Kavanagh** **Friendly Fires** **Brògeal**
Getdown Services **Moonchild Sanelly** **SexyTadg** **RÓIS** **Rose Betts**
David Keenan **King Kong Company** **Muireann Bradley**
W.I.T.C.H. **Cardinals** **Alabaster DePlume** **Sophie Stel** **Maruja**

Sessy 009 **Byrnes Night** **Seamus Fogarty** **The New Eves**
Black Nylon **The Orchestra (For Now)** **Gently Tender** **HANK**
The Itch **Little Grandad** **George Houston** **Sell Everything** **Cable Boy**
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