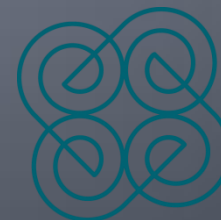


5th & 6th June, 2013 in Budva, Montenegro

Western Balkan Countries (WBC) Steering Platform



Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar
Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh
Irish Presidency of the Council
of the European Union
eu2013.ie

Western Balkan Countries (WBC) Steering Platform

- Welcome, honoured guests.
- As Ireland currently holds the Presidency of the European Union, I would like to say a few words in Irish.
- I'm delighted to be here in the beautiful country of Montenegro. This is the second time that I have been at a meeting of the WBC Steering Platform, and I hope we will have a very interesting meeting today and tomorrow.

Western Balkan Countries (WBC) Steering Platform

- I'm aware that most of the WBC countries would have an interest in joining the European Union at some time in the future, so I thought it might be of interest to delegates to give you a very brief account of the Irish experience of being in the EU from our entry in 1973 until the present time.

Western Balkan Countries SP



Ireland – E.U. Membership

- Ireland joins EEC in 1973 (+ UK & Denmark).
- EEC Members increase from 6 to 9.
- Ireland mainly an Agricultural country in 1973.
- Agriculture accounted for 24% of GDP
- (now 2.5 % Primary Agriculture; 7 % Agri-food)

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland - GDP

- In 1973 Ireland's GDP per capita was 62.4% of the EU average
- In 2007 it was 148%;
- In 2009 it was 128%;



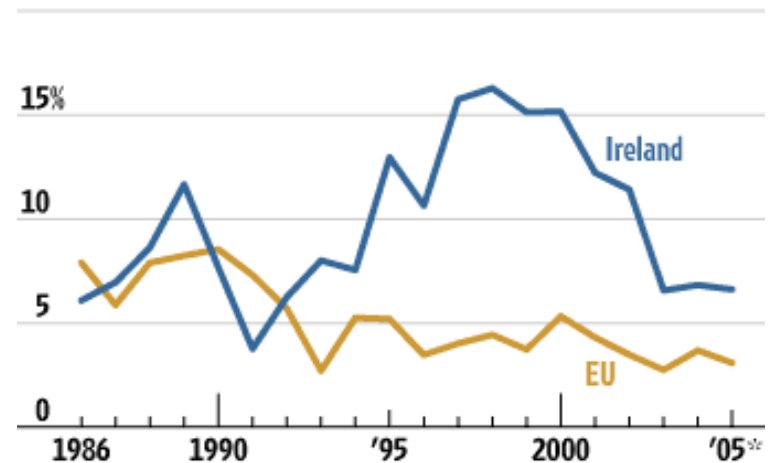
Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland – GDP to Debt Ratio

- Early 1990's: 128%
- 2000's: 35%
- 2012: 112%

Reasons

- Banking & Financial Crisis
- Availability of loans/cheap money
- Property Bubble
- €87 Billion bail-out to the Banking Sector



Western Balkan Countries SP



Ireland – Current GDP and Unemployment

- GDP dropped 10% between 2007 – 2012
- Unemployment: 4.5% in 2007 (Full employment)
- 14.6% in 2013
- Youth Unemployment: 24.3% in 2013

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland - Population

- Population in 1973: 3 million
- Population in 2013: 4.7 million
- Total Employed in 2000's: 2 million

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland – Changing Attitudes to the E.U.

- Up to 2001, Referenda on EU Treaties carried
- 1st Nice Referendum, 2001 – Ireland voted No
- 2nd Nice Referendum, 2002 – Ireland voted Yes
- 1st Referendum on Lisbon Treaty, 2008 – No
- 2nd Referendum on Lisbon Treaty, 2009 - Yes

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland - Positives from the EU Part 1

- CAP Funding:
- ERDF & Cohesion Funding:
- EMU Financial & Monetary Stability
- ECB Interest Rates (positive/negative)
- EURO Membership

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland - Positives from the EU Part 2

- R&I Investment from ERDF funding
- Education & Training from ERDF funding
- Increased FDI in Ireland
- New trading partners in EU
- R&I capability boosted
- FP Participation boosted

Western Balkan Countries SP

Ireland - Positives from the EU Part 3

- FP7 Participation level (1.25% of FP7 funds)
- FP7 Top 5 areas for Ireland (70% of funding)
 - Information & Communication Technologies
 - Marie Curie Programme
 - Health
 - Nanoscience, Nanotechnology, Materials & Production Processes
 - European Research Council