MyEU5
European Values

The EU values are common to all the EU countries in a society in which inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination prevail. The EU's values are laid out in Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The European Union is founded on the following values, as stated on the European Union website:

Human dignity

Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected, and constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.

Freedom

Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Democracy

The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. A European citizen automatically enjoys political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.

Equality

Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration. It applies in all areas. The principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

Rule of Law

The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice - its judgments have to be respected by all.

Human Rights

Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice.

Ireland and the EU

Ireland joined the EEC in 1972 with an overwhelming majority of the public voting to join. From the end of the marriage bar, the launch of Erasmus, to joining the Euro, Ireland's five-decade membership of the EU has been marked by key moments that have impacted Irish society today.

Although the campaign to join emphasised Ireland's progressive development in Western Europe, the campaign not to join focused on the fear that Irish neutrality would be compromised. There was an emphasis on the lack of awareness surrounding the political implications of Ireland joining the EEC.

As Irish policies moved towards being more European, they were described as being more secure and predictable for Irish civilians.

Irish Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, the European Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability and Capital Markets, stated that 'Ireland's membership of the European Union has had a huge impact on our lives: from the use of a common currency to protecting our environment, from increased economic growth to tackling gender inequality, and from giving the country a stronger voice on the global stage to promoting social inclusion.'

Public support for the European Union remains high in Ireland, with 92% of people polled in a European Movement Ireland's Red C poll agreeing last year that Ireland should remain a member.

Further Sources

European Union's EU Values

European Commission's About the EU Values

Charter of Fundamental Rights

Government of Ireland's EU50 Information

EM Ireland's 50 Steps

OurEU50: An anthology of Ireland and the European Union.

European Commission Representation in Ireland's website.

European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland's website.

What is Europe doing for your country?

Ireland's contribution to EU strategy.

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