

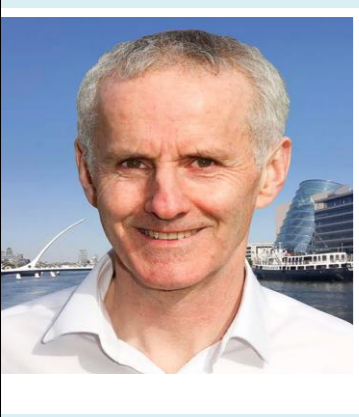


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|  | <p>Is halting the loss of biodiversity/natural ecosystems amongst the priorities of you / your party?</p> | <p>Do you agree that next EU budget must significantly increase and clearly identify resources needed to help Member states including Ireland to protect our shared natural heritage, including by supporting those who manage land for the benefit of biodiversity? Where should this money come from?</p> | <p>Ireland wants to be an environmental leader, but there are several complaints against Ireland for breaches of EU environmental laws waiting for investigation by the European Commission. Will you support strengthened capacity at DG Environment so these cases can be addressed expediently to ensure these problems are addressed? These complaints include state failures in relation to EU protected sites, bird species and habitats. Please elaborate if you wish...</p> | <p>The CAP needs a radical overhaul to support sustainability to ensure the long-term viability of food production and farming sector in the EU. Do you agree? If you agree that CAP needs an overhaul please answer the following... Which specific CAP subsidies would you like to see phased out?</p> | <p>Which safeguards would you like to see introduced?</p> | <p>Which new types of measures would you support?</p> | <p>Will you support the allocation of €15bn for farmers for biodiversity measures under Pillar I and Pillar II and at least 7% space for nature on intensive farms in the next CAP?</p> | <p>What level of funding support for the CAP EcoSchemes do you approve of? 10%, 20%, 50-70%</p> | <p>Will you support stronger conditionality in the next CAP so that public money delivers public goods and supports farmers who support nature?</p> | <p>Agriculture in Ireland and across Europe needs to change to restore farmland biodiversity and tackle climate change while feeding people healthy food and supporting family farms. In your view, what key steps are needed to accelerate ecological transition in agriculture in Ireland? Please provide your answer in the box below.</p> |
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2019 European Election Candidates Responses to BirdWatch Ireland Questionnaire

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|    | <p>Lynn Boylan Sinn Féin (Dublin Region)</p>                   | <p>Yes, I have been a member of the Environment Committee for 5 years, and through working on the Nature Directives, the Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy and as climate change spokesperson, I have always pushed for biodiversity to be part of the conversation. I have raised 40 objections at the Parliament to imports of GMO food and feed into the European Union on the grounds that it jeopardizes our rich biodiversity.</p>  | <p>I recently voted to increase LIFE funding to 10 billion euro, while Fine Gael MEPs chose not to. The LIFE project is essential for protecting the biodiversity of Europe and for local projects have access to funds. Without proper funding, our biodiversity does not have a chance.</p>   | <p>Yes – the CAP needs to work for small farmers and allow them to be custodians of the environment. The poor prices farmers are receiving and unequal system of payments means farmers have been down the road of intensification in order to have a viable standard of living. We want to see a fairer payment distribution to ensure small to medium family farmers are sustainable. Protecting this model will avoid a big increase in feedlots and intensification. Remove CAP payments for feedlots, end subsidies over 60,000 euro to any individual farmer unless due to participation in EcoSchemes</p>   | <p>a capping of payments and convergence of per hectare payments, payments for active farmers and not just landlords</p>  | <p>effective eco-schemes that remunerate farmers fairly</p>   | <p>No</p>     | <p>30%</p>   | <p>Regarding question 6 - not clear whether this relates to a yearly or overall CAP budget and if it would then cover all climate funding too. Regarding question 7, we supported 30% funding support for the CAP EcoSchemes in the Strategic Plan vote. Schemes and conditionality must be workable and not overburden farmers to an extent where it dissuades participation. All public money must deliver public goods. I think a well-designed CAP strategic plan by Ireland can play a big part in this battle. If farmers are well remunerated and the schemes are easily implemented and backed by good science then farmers are in a good position to help us reverse this worrying trend.</p> |
|   | <p>Ciaran Cuffe Green Party (Dublin Region)</p>                | <p>Yes, Biodiversity and a safe climate fundamentally underpin the work of the Green Party and our sister parties in Europe in the EFA/Greens group. In the Oireachtas the Green Party have led the fight against the Heritage Bill which sought to increase slash and burn times into nesting season, and the Wildlife Amendment Bill which facilitates the de-designation of blanket bogs rather than the planned raised bogs. All our candidate MEPs have a long history of activism to defend biodiversity, whether it is in greening cities, protecting the Arctic circle or by improving agriculture in the West of Ireland. Our MEP candidate for Ireland South, Senator Grace O'Sullivan, has passed a motion in the Seanad calling for half of Ireland's ocean to become a Marine Protected Area which is now being taken up by sister parties in the European Greens</p> | <p>YES, Firstly, we believe that the focus should be ensuring that the EU does not finance damage to biodiversity. Existing programmes from agriculture to trade policy must have biodiversity protection and enhancement mainstreamed into their programme goals. Too many Member States resource biodiversity protection while promoting destructive policies alongside it – Ireland's focus on promoting industrial agriculture and heavy pesticide use alongside separate programmes to protect biodiversity is just one example of this. In terms of increasing funding for biodiversity, we would support a simple re-orientating of the CAP budget in that direction so that damaging practices are minimised and stewardship enhanced. In terms of extra funding the EU budget for 2021-2027 plans to spend €19bn on military and security. This doesn't include military research funding under the €100bn Horizon Europe which also includes military purposes. Even if civilian conflict prevention schemes were to be doubled or tripled, there would still be around 12 billion left over which could be re-directed towards preventing the crises of climate and biodiversity breakdown. This breakdown will intensify any existing conflicts, particularly over resources. It is best to prevent root causes of strife and suffering, rather than investing in it.</p> | <p>Phasing out CAP subsidies would not be the correct way of looking at this issue in our opinion. Instead subsidies should be re-orientated, not phased out. Payments should be based on encouraging a stewardship approach to nature, heritage and biodiversity protection, rather than land area or historical stock numbers. Existing practices that are working to protect nature should be encouraged rather than strictly standardised accounting methods such as the EU's natural capital approach. In Ireland the BurrenLIFE programme has been very successful in engaging farmers in conserving traditional farming methods that care for the land. However they would not be successful under the EU Natural Capital approach. We must make it easy for farming people to do the right thing, and be rewarded in a supportive, flexible manner for it.</p> | <p>We need to safeguard our environment (water, air, biodiversity, soils, etc) and payments should be results based. By all means incentivise nature friendly farming practices, but hold back on bulk of payments until result has been achieved. Many marginal farms are already achieving results through methods they have long-practices and should be rewarded, perhaps even retrospectively.</p> | <p>Biodiversity &amp; Natural Climate Solutions Carbon sequestration (through existing and new sources), high nature value farming, integration of animal agriculture and effective environmental land management.</p>  | <p>50-70%</p> | <p>We need to have a soils-first focus. We need to look after and regenerate our soils, farm with lush hedgerows and trees. Reduce input costs (fertilisers, pesticides, feed), utilise soils and grass: the rest should fall into place. Listening to farmers and their communities rather than to a minority of large corporate interests.</p> |  |
|  | <p>Grace O'Sullivan Green Party (South Region)</p>             | <p>Yes, Biodiversity and a safe climate fundamentally underpin the work of the Green Party and our sister parties in Europe in the EFA/Greens group. In the Oireachtas the Green Party have led the fight against the Heritage Bill which sought to increase slash and burn times into nesting season, and the Wildlife Amendment Bill which facilitates the de-designation of blanket bogs rather than the planned raised bogs. All our candidate MEPs have a long history of activism to defend biodiversity, whether it is in greening cities, protecting the Arctic circle or by improving agriculture in the West of Ireland. Our MEP candidate for Ireland South, Senator Grace O'Sullivan, has passed a motion in the Seanad calling for half of Ireland's ocean to become a Marine Protected Area which is now being taken up by sister parties in the European Greens</p> | <p>Yes, Firstly, we believe that the focus should be ensuring that the EU does not finance damage to biodiversity. Existing programmes from agriculture to trade policy must have biodiversity protection and enhancement mainstreamed into their programme goals. Too many Member States resource biodiversity protection while promoting destructive policies alongside it – Ireland's focus on promoting industrial agriculture and heavy pesticide use alongside separate programmes to protect biodiversity is just one example of this. In terms of increasing funding for biodiversity, we would support a simple re-orientating of the CAP budget in that direction so that damaging practices are minimised and stewardship enhanced. In terms of extra funding the EU budget for 2021-2027 plans to spend €19bn on military and security. This doesn't include military research funding under the €100bn Horizon Europe which also includes military purposes. Even if civilian conflict prevention schemes were to be doubled or tripled, there would still be around 12 billion left over which could be re-directed towards preventing the crises of climate and biodiversity breakdown. This breakdown will intensify any existing conflicts, particularly over resources. It is best to prevent root causes of strife and suffering, rather than investing in it.</p> | <p>Agree. We support strengthened capacity at DG Environment. We also support a model that will protect the environment on the island of Ireland, not just in the Republic.</p>  | <p>We need to safeguard our environment (water, air, biodiversity, soils, etc) and payments should be results based. By all means incentivise nature friendly farming practices, but hold back on bulk of payments until result has been achieved. Many marginal farms are already achieving results through methods they have long-practices and should be rewarded, perhaps even retrospectively.</p> | <p>Biodiversity &amp; Natural Climate Solutions Carbon sequestration (through existing and new sources), high nature value farming, integration of animal agriculture and effective environmental land management.</p>  | <p>Yes</p>    | <p>50-70%</p>  | <p>Yes, Yes, and nature must integrate with farming, and both must compliment the other.</p> <p>We need to have a soils-first focus. We need to look after and regenerate our soils, farm with lush hedgerows and trees. Reduce input costs (fertilisers, pesticides, feed), utilise soils and grass: the rest should fall into place. Listening to farmers and their communities rather than to a minority of large corporate interests.</p>  |
|  | <p>Saoirse McHugh Green Party (Midlands North West Region)</p> | <p>Yes I will look for a total overhaul of our agricultural system through the implementation of a common food policy. The CAP has some weak environmental objectives and I feel that using the toolbox of an agricultural production policy will only get us so far. We need to focus our farming on food, farmers and the environment. I would push for a minimum 30% marine protected areas and I will honk we need to drastically reduce quotas if we are to keep our seas living.</p>   | <p>YES, Currently there is so much money wasted at the European level. I think the majority of the CAP budget needs to be supporting biodiversity or at least not harming it. There is a huge amount of CAP spent every year advertising products which I think should end. Similarly, the EU has a big defense budget which would be better served protecting us from the threat of starvation and eventual extinction (not to sound melodramatic)</p>   | <p>Agree. Ireland's terrible performance comes as a shock to most people and it is not a conscious choice people are making (in the most part) more media coverage of our governments failure to protect our environment might encourage them to do more.</p>  | <p>Eventually I would like to see all payments come from the one pillar and have it focused on not solely production but on a range of services. We can no longer afford to subsidize high emitting, monocrop agriculture</p>   | <p>I would support an entirely new governance structure which would bring environment, trade, agriculture, food safety etc into alignment. The common food policy (my hobby horse) is such a structure. Go to IPES-food to read the report which has been submitted to the commission</p> | <p>Yes</p>    | <p>50-70%</p>  | <p>Yes</p> <p>A land trust needs to be set up to halt and reverse the consolidation of land. A cap on CAP payments of 50,000. Rules on retailers need to be introduced to end restrictive contract requirements. Food safety standards need to be scaled appropriately so small producers/processors are not subject to the same stringent conditions. Native broadleaf forestry and agroecology needs to be prioritized. Pesticides need to become the exception rather than the rule. Farmers must be adequately paid to leave land alone or engage in rewilding.</p>  |

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| Lynn Boylan      | Does your party agree that to be in line with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement, EU needs to step up its climate change ambition, namely-greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by at least 55%, energy efficiency has to be increased by 40% and the share of renewable energies needs to be increased to at least 45% by the year 2030?   | Do you agree that climate change and biodiversity loss are symptoms of the same ecosystem crises and must be tackled together?  | What are the top three actions that you / your party is promoting to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland?   | Do you agree that renewable energy deployment must be strategically planned (including sensitivity mapping for birds) to minimise impacts on ecosystems? | What are your proposals for large scale restoration of carbon sinks (eg peatlands, hedgerows, forests/woodlands)?  | Afforestation in Ireland is failing to protect EU-protected birds and their habitats. Do you support our call for a transition in Irish forestry to a more ecologically sound model including through the environmental and ecological assessment of afforestation applications?   | The EU must fully implement the Common Fisheries Policy and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive ensuring an end to overfishing and establishing a network of Marine Protected Areas to conserve marine biodiversity and enhance fishing opportunities. Do you agree?  | What other steps will your party take to ensure that marine spatial planning truly ensures sustainable use of seas and oceans?   | Improved monitoring of fisheries is needed to ensure ongoing issues such as illegal fishing, illegal discarding and unreported bycatch of seabirds and marine mammals are addressed. Improved monitoring would improve data collection, fisheries management and enforcement of rules. Will you/your party support strong action and investment of resources in those areas to make seas safer for wildlife? | Would you support the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, requiring fishing quotas to be set no higher than scientific advice and ensuring stock recovery and preservation of threatened species? | Will you commit to ensuring that the Withdrawal Agreement is NOT renegotiated and that the Future Relationship between the EU and UK maintains a commitment to dynamic regulatory alignment?  |
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| Ciaran Cuffe     | Responding to climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing society. Current trends of dangerous increases in temperatures pose an existential threat to society and will push a huge number of species to extinction within the next few decades. There is a need for a new, long-term climate protection strategy including a transition to a clean, properly sited, sustainable renewables-based energy system that works in harmony with nature. Land use change must also be addressed. Habitat conservation can help climate change mitigation and provide biodiversity co-benefits but must be properly funded (i.e. Peatland conservation, hedgerow conservation, and sustainable forestry). | We see climate change and biodiversity loss not only as symptoms of the same ecosystem crisis, but as symptoms rooted in a human socio-economic and political crisis. The human, climate and biodiversity crises we are experiencing are the direct result of an economic system that has for too long prioritized extraction and profit over care and conservation – for one another and the planet. Neoliberalism has left too many behind to face economic and planetary destitution, while wealth and power is concerted in the few. This has led in no small way to the crises of the far right and Brexit that now threaten the European Union. We believe in a Europe for all, including those with whom we share this interconnected ecological system. | Stop new fossil fuel infrastructure and extraction, reinvest in low carbon just transition for those working in the fossil fuel heavy industries such as peat and industrial farming, and invest in carbon sequestration in keeping with Natural Climate Solutions principles. |  | We agree with the Natural Climate Solutions campaign that the best means of preventing climate breakdown and preventing ecological breakdown is by using natural systems to sequester carbon. Currently the focus is on investing in unproven technological solutions such as fossil fuel carbon capture storage. Instead, let us invest in the proven technologies of defending, restoring and re-establishing forests, peatlands, hedgerows, salt marshes, natural sea-beds and other crucial ecosystems. These will create local resilience and thousands of local, decent jobs – many of them in rural areas where investment is needed. Farmers can be paid properly for the work many of them already do as stewards and heritage protectors. We have repeatedly called on Government to use these proven methods – such as Bord na Móna’s rehabilitation work at Bellacorick, Co. Mayo. We led opposition to the Heritage Bill which sought to extend slash and burn times and the Wildlife Amendment Bill 2016 which seeks to de-designate blanket bog NHAs. Our submission to the Government National Mitigation Plan is available here for more information: <a href="https://www.greenparty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/GPDRAFTNationalMitigationPlansubmission.pdf">https://www.greenparty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/GPDRAFTNationalMitigationPlansubmission.pdf</a> | Yes, We have fully supported and promoted in the Oireachtas and at council level a transition to ecologically sound, indigenous and broadleaf afforestation in a sustainable and community-led manner. We reject the overt investment in Sitka spruce and other harmful methods that do not prioritise community or ecological wellbeing. Our sister parties in Europe have done the same. We have called for the CAP programme to be re-orientated towards supporting farmers to do so. | Senator Grace O’Sullivan, our candidate MEP in Ireland South, passed a motion calling for 50% of Irish waters to be designated as an ecologically coherent network of diverse and significant MPAs on the 23rd of May 2018. We called for such legislation to contain the mechanisms to identify and designate high quality MPAs and ensure they are managed with respect for sustainable livelihoods and their ecological coherence, as part of a European network. Designation must be community-led as far as practicable, with a robust public consultation process as required under the Aarhus Convention and based on robust scientific information on habitats, species, heritage sites and geological-geomorphological features. You can read the motion here: <a href="https://www.oireachtas.ie/ga/debates/debate/seanad/2018-05-23/14/">https://www.oireachtas.ie/ga/debates/debate/seanad/2018-05-23/14/</a> . | We believe in taking an ecosystems approach to marine spatial planning that is based on scientific expertise, local cultural evidence and empowers local communities. Our party submission on the National Marine Planning Framework: Baseline Report National Marine Planning Framework prioritised the use of our waters as a public good, rather than a privatised resource. We believe in empowering people who work and live with the sea to engage in sustainable livelihoods, and the promotion of Ireland as a hub for bountiful wildlife, Marine Protected Areas, thriving, resilient, accessible and sustainable coastal communities. We call for an outright ban on practices such as microbeads production, deep-sea mining and fossil fuel exploration and a mandatory monitoring and reduction of plastics. “Blue Growth” and “ocean wealth” form the dominant narrative around the marine environment in marine spatial planning. While economics is undoubtedly important, the Irish coastal and marine environment is so much more than natural capital and services, but intertwined bio-cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage. Concepts such as “Blue Justice” serve to balance Blue Growth by allowing considerations of fairness, equity and social inclusion, as well as a recognition of different human value systems. | Yes  | Yes  | The island of Ireland is a single biogeographic unit of shared geology, shared waters, shared protected areas, shared air quality. Birds don't know what borders are. Currently Ireland and Northern Ireland share the same EU overarching legislative framework to protect the environment on the island of Ireland. Post Brexit any regulatory divergence poses a risk for the environment and related economic activity, e.g. farming. |
| Grace O’Sullivan | Yes   | We see climate change and biodiversity loss not only as symptoms of the same ecosystem crisis, but as symptoms rooted in a human socio-economic and political crisis. The human, climate and biodiversity crises we are experiencing are the direct result of an economic system that has for too long prioritized extraction and profit over care and conservation – for one another and the planet. Neoliberalism has left too many behind to face economic and planetary destitution, while wealth and power is concerted in the few. This has led in no small way to the crises of the far right and Brexit that now threaten the European Union. 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We called for such legislation to contain the mechanisms to identify and designate high quality MPAs and ensure they are managed with respect for sustainable livelihoods and their ecological coherence, as part of a European network. Designation must be community-led as far as practicable, with a robust public consultation process as required under the Aarhus Convention and based on robust scientific information on habitats, species, heritage sites and geological-geomorphological features. You can read the motion here: <a href="https://www.oireachtas.ie/ga/debates/debate/seanad/2018-05-23/14/">https://www.oireachtas.ie/ga/debates/debate/seanad/2018-05-23/14/</a> .   | We believe in taking an ecosystems approach to marine spatial planning that is based on scientific expertise, local cultural evidence and empowers local communities. 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Concepts such as “Blue Justice” serve to balance Blue Growth by allowing considerations of fairness, equity and social inclusion, as well as a recognition of different human value systems. | Yes  | Yes  | Yes, We support the nine recommendations made in the Environmental Pillar/Northern Ireland Environment Link report Brexit, The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the Environment: Issues Arising and Possible Solutions.  |
| Saoirse McHugh   | Yes but I think we should be more ambitious. Especially in light of Ireland's regular fudging of targets.   | Yes, I think people have become very focused on emissions but if we do not tackle biodiversity loss it doesn't matter, we are doomed anyways,   | Deep retrofit of all homes and buildings. Massive investment in public transport and a massive investment in community owned renewables.   | Yes  | this will all have to be paid for to compensate the farmer. Otherwise it will not happen.  | Yes  | Yes, I'd say we only have a very small window left in which to get this right.  | I would like to see the network of marine protected areas increased massively.   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   |