



Irish Centre for European Law



Ionad na hÉireann do Chearta an Duine
Irish Centre for Human Rights

Annual Human Rights Law Conference

Thursday 15 October 2026, 11.00am-5.30pm

Networking Reception: 5.30pm–6.30pm

Michael D. Higgins Auditorium, University of Galway, University Road, Galway, H91 TK33
(and streamed live online)

10.30am -
11.00am

Registration

11.00am -
11.10am

Opening Remarks

Ciarán Toland SC, Deputy President of the Irish Centre for European Law

11.10am -
11.45am

Keynote Address

Michael D. Higgins, Former President of Ireland

11.45am -
12.45pm

Panel 1: Upholding the Rule of Law and EU Values in today's rapidly changing and evolving geopolitical context

Moderator: Senator Patricia Stephenson

Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh, Barrister, Matrix Chambers

International law at a crossroads

Professor Laurent Pech, UCD

Rule of law backsliding in the EU

Professor Ciara Smyth, University of Galway

Asylum and Immigration: Upholding EU values at EU borders

Fred Logue, Managing Partner of FP Logue LLP, Solicitors

Rule of Law and Human Rights through the lens of environmental access to justice

12.45pm - 1.00pm Q&A: Panel 1

1.00pm -
1.45pm

Lunch

1.45pm -
2.45pm

Panel 2: Human rights as a cornerstone in shaping Ireland's EU Presidency and Beyond

Moderator: Emer Lyons, Principal Solicitor, Lyons Skelly Solicitors ,Galway

Lorna Hayes, Deputy CEO of European Movement Ireland

Safeguarding civic space as a key enabler of EU values and fundamental rights

Dr Andrew Forde, Dublin City University

International human rights law in the context of Ireland's EU Presidency Priorities

Sarah Flood, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, Geneva

A consistent voice; human rights in Ireland's foreign policy beyond the EU presidency

2.45pm - 3.00pm **Q&A: Panel 2**

3.00pm -
3.15pm

Mary Robinson Archive: A 60-Year legacy of Human Rights Advocacy and Activism

Niamh Ní Charra, Archivist, University of Galway

3.15pm -
3.30pm

Afternoon Tea/Coffee

3.30pm -
4.30pm

Panel 3: Ireland's Role in Shaping and Strengthening EU Values and Equality (with a focus on human rights including minority rights)

Moderator: Dr Gearóid Ó Cuinn, Director of the Global Legal Action Network

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, International Human Rights Barrister

Transnational Repression: A Growing EU Threat, and How Ireland Should Respond

Noeline Blackwell, Human Rights Lawyer and Activist

Equality for all? Addressing recent challenges in gender equality and womens' rights

Professor Roja Fazaeli, University of Galway

Islam in Ireland: A Minority Discourse in the European Context

4.30pm - 4.45pm **Q&A: Panel 3**

4.45pm –
5.15pm

Closing Keynote Address

Professor Siobhán Mullally, University of Galway

5.15pm –
5.25pm

Closing Remarks

Councillor Helen Ogbu, Galway Mayor

5.30pm

Close