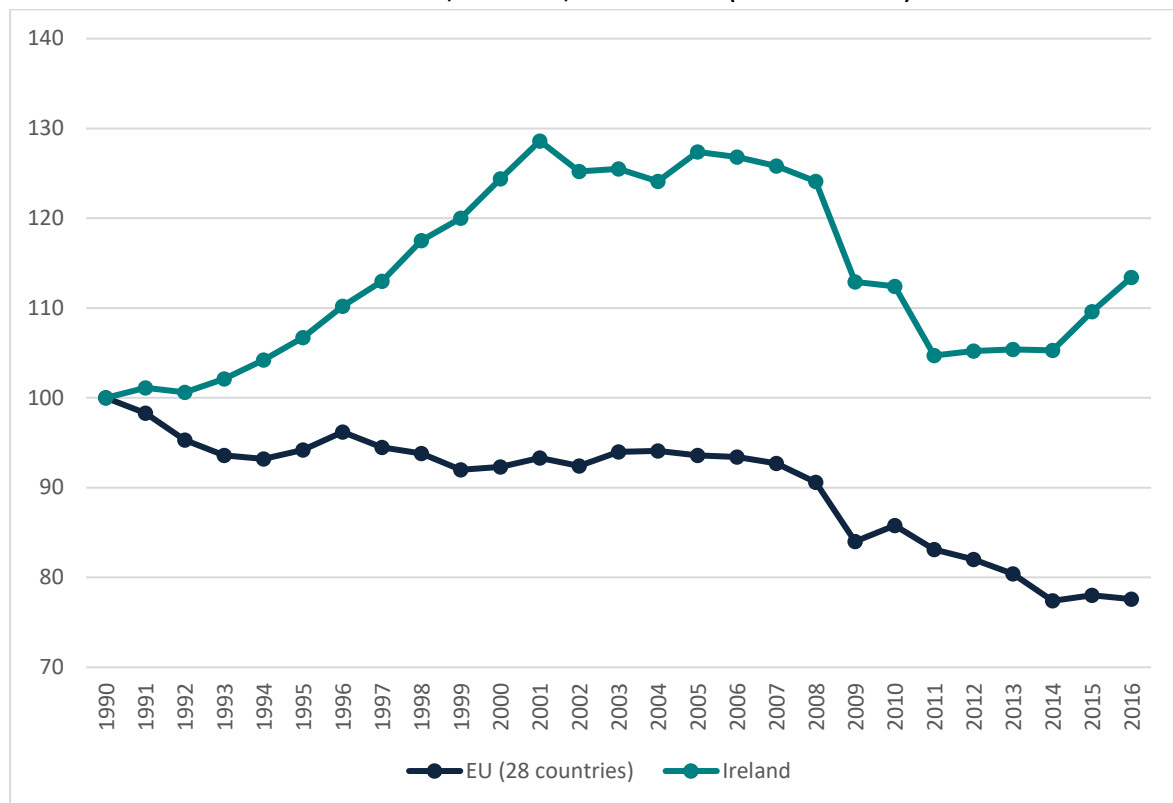


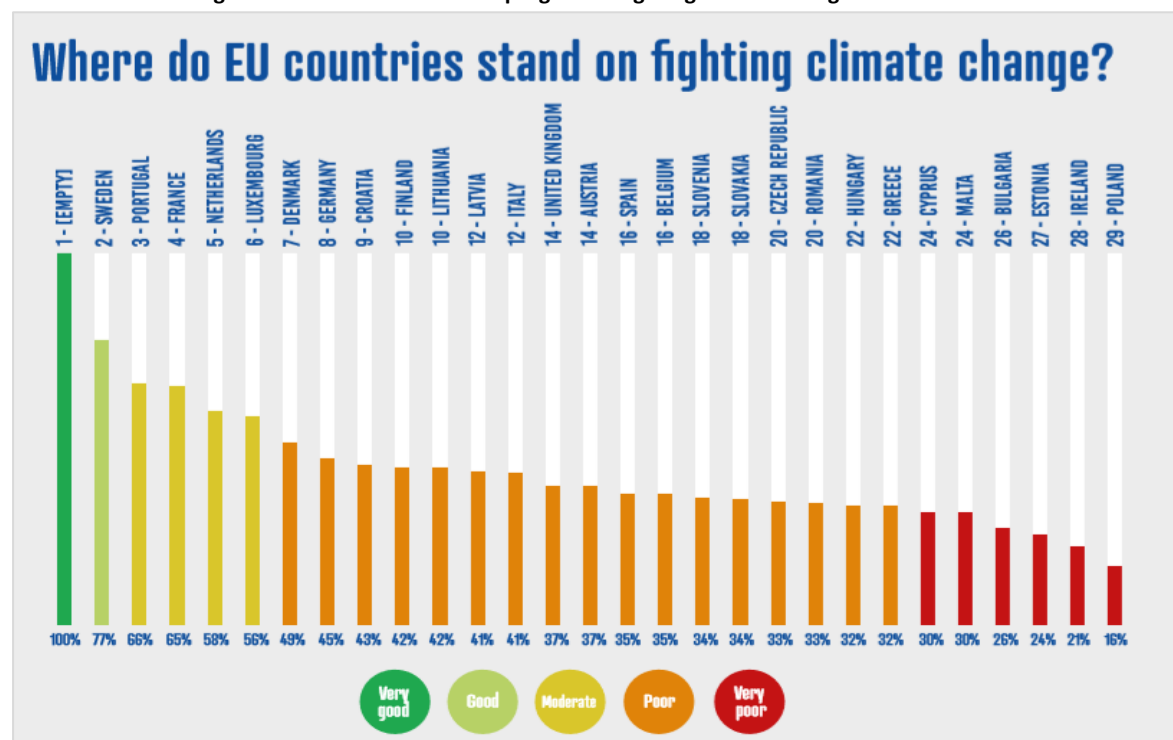
Environment and Sustainability

Chart 9.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trend, 1990-2016, EU and Ireland (Index 1990 = 100)



Source: Eurostat (sdg_13_10)

Chart 9.2: EU Ranking on countries' ambition and progress in fighting climate change



Source: Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, Off Target: Ranking of EU countries' ambition and progress in fighting climate change, June 2018

Environment and Sustainability



The trend for Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions is going in the wrong direction. While still below the peak reached in 2001, our 2016 emissions were the highest they have been since 2010. As can be seen in Chart 9.1, using 1990 levels as a baseline, the gap between Ireland and the EU28 average has been widening since 2010.

In April 2016, Ireland signed up to the Paris Agreement, which aimed to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and keep it below 2°C above. As part of the Nationally Determined Contribution of the EU and its Member States, Ireland committed to an economy-wide absolute reduction from base year (1990) emissions, with a minimum target of 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This built upon the 20% reduction commitment to 2020 previously made. While the EU28 may be moving incrementally towards this target, it is hampered by Ireland's upward trend (Chart 9.1).

In July 2018, the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), an independent advisory body tasked with reviewing national climate policy, published their Annual Review stating that Ireland was "completely off course in terms of achieving its 2020 and 2030 emissions reduction targets" and called on Government to take urgent action to reverse the trend.

Ireland's failure to adhere to the commitments made in Paris was further highlighted by Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe in their June 2018 report. As can be seen from Chart 9.2, from the CAN publication, Ireland ranks second-last of the EU28 due to our "stiff opposition to climate action nationally and in the EU"¹. The ranking assesses both the targets set by member states and the progress made in reducing carbon emissions and promoting

renewable energy and energy efficiency. According to CAN, Ireland has made only 8% progress towards our 2020 target, with emissions from the transport and agriculture sectors increasing significantly. The report suggests that "Without new, immediate and substantive efforts to cut emissions, Ireland faces annual non-compliance costs of €500 million".

As identified by CAN, and reported by the CSO², the Agriculture (at 32.3% of the total) and Transport (at 20%) sectors are major contributors to Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The third (at 20.4%) is the Energy sector. Combined, these three sectors account for almost three quarters of Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions. The National Mitigation Plan identified the development of an 'approach to carbon neutrality' for the agricultural sector as a priority in July 2017 however, as noted by the CCAC, there is no definition of what that means, and therefore no way of implementing or assessing it.

While *Social Justice Ireland* welcomed the passing of the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill in July 2018, and commends Government for making Ireland the first country in the world to divest public money from fossil fuels, this is only a minor part of the solution to a major problem.

Policy Priorities

- Increase the rate of carbon tax.
- Increase the proportion of energy generated by renewables.
- Develop a workable definition of an approach to carbon neutrality for the agriculture sector and implement it.
- End subsidies for harmful environmental practices.

¹ Off target: Ranking of EU countries' ambition and progress in fighting climate change

² Environmental Indicators Ireland 2018