

Irish Political Studies >

Volume 34, 2019 - [Issue 4: Ireland and EU Crisis Governance: Continuity and Change in the Shadow of the Financial Crisis and Brexit](#)

3,216

Views

28

CrossRef citations to date

12

Altmetric

Articles

A laggard in good times and bad? The limited impact of EU membership on Ireland's climate change and environmental policy

Diarmuid Torney  & Roderic O'Gorman

Pages 575-594 | Published online: 05 Aug 2019

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2019.1647174>



Sample our
Politics & International
Relations Journals

>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article

 Figures & data

 References

 Citations

 Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

ABSTRACT

Ireland has remained broadly immune to pressure for convergence resulting from EU membership in the fields of climate and environmental policy. Neither the Global Financial Crisis nor the impending ecological crisis has significantly impacted its status as a 'laggard' country when it comes to implementation of EU legislation and policies in the field of climate change and environment. The reasons suggested for this are similar to those in other EU states where European environmental law has been inadequately implemented: lack of institutional capacity on accession, mismatch between national and supranational regulatory structures, significant veto players, and rapid economic growth. In the field of climate policy, Ireland repeatedly tops lists for worst performance among EU member states, though there has been some success in the field of renewable energy. While Brexit represents a new crisis for both Ireland and the EU, and

the UK's departure may well have implications for EU climate policy, we argue that it is unlikely to impact on the approach taken in Ireland. The few recent positive developments in the field of climate policy appear to be driven by increased domestic concerns about the impact of climate change, as opposed to the impact of EU membership.

KEYWORDS:

Climate change environment Ireland UK Brexit EU Europeanisation crisis governance

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Mary C. Murphy and John O'Brennan for the invitation to contribute to this special issue and for very helpful feedback on earlier drafts. We are also grateful to two anonymous referees for helpful comments. Any remaining errors are our responsibility.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Dr Diarmuid Torney is an Assistant Professor in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University. He is also an affiliated researcher of the DCU Brexit Institute and a member of its Steering Committee. His research focuses on comparative and global politics of climate change, environment, and energy, particularly in Ireland, the European Union, China, and India. He was central to the establishment of, and teaches on, DCU's MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society.

Dr Roderic O'Gorman is an Assistant Professor in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University. He is also an affiliated researcher of the DCU Brexit Institute. His research focuses primarily on Environmental and Climate Change Law within the EU and the Irish context, as well as the protection of Socio-Economic Rights. He is

Chairperson of the Green Party – Comhaontas Glas and an elected member of Fingal County Council.

ORCID

Diarmuid Torney <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4156-9044>

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
28

If at first you don't succeed: the development of climate change legislation in Ireland >

Diarmuid Torney
Irish Political Studies
Published online: 8 Mar 2017

What explains public support for climate policies? A review of empirical and experimental studies >

Stefan Drews et al.
Climate Policy
Published online: 29 Jun 2015

Barriers to environmental policy implementation: stakeholder perceptions in the context of Ireland >

Cara A. Augustenborg et al.
Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning
Published online: 11 Nov 2025

[View more](#)



Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG



Taylor & Francis
by informa