24th April, 2017

**Agree on how to Build Ireland 2030 says Harkin**

A proposal that Ireland’s politicians should agree on a minimum 10 year infrastructural investment programme, which would bridge at least two governments, was proposed by Independent MEP Marian Harkin at a conference in Dublin on Monday, April 24th.

The conference was organised by the Construction Industry Federation to provide an opportunity for the construction industry and stakeholders to contribute to the Federation’s proposals for future investment by government on national infrastructure.

MEP Harkin said that government spending on infrastructure had declined sharply since 2008 falling from 5.2% of GDP in 2008 to 1.8% of GDP in 2013. “Despite a slight increase in 2014, Ireland’s investment in infrastructure is still near the bottom of the EU league”, she said.

She proposed the commitment of a defined percentage of GDP to fund public infrastructure in a plan which would include the political priorities of the politicians within a specified budget. “In my opinion those priorities should include the construction of housing, the national roll-out of broadband and the completion of inter-urban motorways, she said.

“Such a strategy would constitute real ‘new politics’ helping to secure long term investment for public infrastructure in Ireland”, she said.

Calling for greater balanced investment for the regions, the Independent MEP quoted the industry body, IBEC’s ‘Building a Better Future’ document which emphasised that Dublin and the east region continue to outperform other regions. “IBEC is correct when it states that regional cities remain poorly connected and it is therefore difficult to produce a counter weight to the growth of Dublin”, she said. A counter weight to Dublin for its own sake was not what we need. “Rather, we need a strong, vigorous, regional input which will contribute significantly to a strong national economy”, Marian Harkin concluded.

Further information from: Marian Harkin MEP

 Tel: +086-8341758

E-mail: [marian.harkin@ep.europa.eu](mailto:marian.harkin@ep.europa.eu)

Website: [www.marianharkin.ie](http://www.marianharkin.ie/)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/marianharkin](http://www.facebook.com/marianharkin)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/MarianHarkin](http://www.twitter.com/MarianHarkin)

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