

Rennes 2 welcomes delegation visit from Irish Embassy



Pictured above, Rennes 2 faculty members and staff with the Irish delegation.

The delegation, comprising Deputy Head of Mission, Deirdre Farrell and Arianna Whelan, Second Secretary, met with a team of Rennes 2 faculty and staff to discuss areas of past cooperation and exchanged ideas on how to increase Irish-French collaboration in areas related to higher education for the coming years.

Dr. Lesley Lelourec, Vice President of International Relations, opened the meeting by discussing historic links between Brittany and Ireland in general and with Rennes 2 in particular. She highlighted past and ongoing collaborations with Irish programs and universities, noting that two of our Honorary Doctorates have been bestowed on famous Irish politicians: Mary Robinson in 1975 and John Hume in 2007. She then presented information about Rennes 2's offer to international Anglophone students, including: French-language programmes at the CIREFE, classes taught in English and language assistant exchange programmes.

Other faculty members specializing in Irish Studies at Rennes 2, Professor Anne Goarzin Dr. Stefan Moal, Dr. Grainne O'Keeffe Vigneron, also presented their respective education and research programs linked to Ireland, and the new research network "GIS EIRE" which has received funding from the Irish Embassy. The group discussed specific steps that might be taken to attract more international students from Ireland, from the undergraduate through the post-doctoral levels.

A central theme of the meeting was also the implications that Brexit may have for Ireland, and the new opportunities it may present in bringing France and Ireland closer together within the European context. In the wake of Brexit, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is looking to strengthen their network of ties in neighbouring countries in the fields of consular affairs, culture, economics, politics and higher education.

After the meeting at Rennes 2 University, the delegation was scheduled to meet with representatives from the Regional council to further discuss ways to increase cooperation. The members of the Irish delegation are also visiting other institutions in different regions of France where there is a potential to develop stronger collaborative projects.

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