

Ireland's Booming Economy in the Midst of Austerity and Cutbacks

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Despite the fact that the Irish people are currently enduring endless austerity and cutbacks, [exports are booming](#). The Irish Exporters Association (IEA) reports a 10 percent rise in the export of goods and services in Ireland between July and September compared to the same period a year ago. Exports are set to hit a record €183.7bn this year and with the [corporate tax rate at 12.5](#) per cent business elites are doing nicely in Ireland. Meanwhile, the Irish government is handing out a large percentage of the budget to unsecured bondholders to the tune of €18 billion this year with a couple of billion more to go before year's end. According to Diarmuid O'Flynn writing in his blog [bondwatchireland](#):

"Please know, we are being betrayed by our own. We are betrayed by our own government, who are colluding with the ECB in implementing a policy of private interests over public good, of the primacy of banks over people; we are betrayed by a national media who have abandoned *their* primary duty of objectively and honestly informing the people of what's happening."

However, the media has been busy reporting the [jailing of Sean Quinn](#) who was formerly Ireland's wealthiest man. He was sentenced to nine weeks in prison for failing to comply with a court order having been previously found guilty of contempt of court, for hiding assets from the former Anglo Irish Bank. It is a sign of the desperation of the Irish people for work that the disgraced businessman (along with his son and nephew) has been the subject of large demonstrations [in support for the Quinn family](#).

Meanwhile the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) is [showing](#) that with all the cutbacks and money being diverted into private interests, household savings are falling, banking business is shrinking and the Government's finances is deteriorating. In the area of education and health, working conditions and cutbacks are having demoralizing effects on society as a whole. For example, the [Teachers' Union of Ireland](#) (TUI) commissioned a new independent survey which showed "the massive impact that cutbacks have had on schools all around the country. In particular, the loss of posts of responsibility such as year head have severely damaged the support framework so important for marginalised students" and that "reduced family incomes have had a significant detrimental impact on students' capacity to purchase school books and other general classroom materials." In a recent [article](#) Consultant Dr Altaf Naqvi "warned that morale among young doctors — both Irish and from overseas — is at 'rock bottom'." He states "I have worked in other countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia but conditions are far worse here and doctors — both national and from overseas — are on the verge of nervous breakdowns, things are at crisis point".

Business and political elites are determined to make ordinary Irish people pay for the

financial crisis with a whole raft of new taxes and charges coming down the line over the coming year. New [annual water and property charges](#) of up to €800 a year combined with a 'gathering tsunami of mortgage arrears' whereby "about 23 per cent of [mortgage holders](#) were either in arrears or had their mortgages restructured following consultations with the banks" may soon create the kind of vocal reaction and demonstrations perceived to be strangely lacking in Ireland up to now.

Caoimhghin Ó Croidheáin is a prominent Irish artist who has exhibited widely around Ireland. His work consists of drawings and paintings and features cityscapes of Dublin, images based on Irish history and other work with social/political themes (<http://gaelart.net/>).

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