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Phil Hogan

Ireland (EPP)

Background

Phil Hogan has been an Irish politician for 32 years. He has served in many senior positions in the Fine Gael party since 1993 and he is one of the most experienced politicians in Ireland.

Originally from Kilkenny, he attended University College Cork, where he graduated with a degree in Economics and Geography. He also received a Higher Diploma in Education from the same university, and founded an insurance and real estate business in Urlingford, Kilkenny in the 1980s.

Hogan first became involved in politics after the passing of his father who was a sitting Councillor on Kilkenny County Council at the time of his death. Phil succeeded his father at the age of 22 and subsequently, unsuccessfully, contested the 1987 general election. Soon after, he was elected to Seanad Éireann as a Senator on the Industrial and Commercial Panel, serving between 1987 and 1989. After serving as a Senator in Seanad Éireann for two years, Hogan was elected to Dáil Éireann for the Carlow–Kilkenny constituency in the 1989 general election.

He held his seat in Dail Eireann from 1989 – 2014 and served in roles including Minister of State at the **Department of Finance** (1994 – 1995) and **Minister for the Environment**, Community and Local Government (2011 – 2014). He was also party spokesperson for Business and Chair of the Fine Gael party.

Known as “**Big Phil**” and “the enforcer” in political circles he was credited with strengthening, growing and developing the Fine Gael parliamentary party to the extent that they had an emphatic electoral victory in 2011. He was a close ally of then Prime Minister, Enda Kenny, and is reputed to be an advisor of the current Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar.

In 2014 Hogan was nominated by Jean-Claude Juncker to be the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. As Commissioner, Hogan stipulated that his priorities would be to "ensure that rural development spending is well integrated into jobs - and growth-generating investment strategies at national and regional level".

EU priorities

Key achievements for Phil Hogan in the past five years include managing the dairy price crisis of 2015 and proposing legislation to tackle unfair trading practices in the food supply chain, widely seen as a long overdue first step in levelling the playing field between supermarkets, processors and farmers. The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) revision post 2020 remains under discussion but the 5% cut to

the budget proposed by the Commissioner was seen as a credible performance in difficult post-Brexit circumstances, while the lacking ambition on green aspects of the CAP and fear of re-nationalisation of our agriculture policy are aspects that have been received less positively. Hogan plays a strong role in Brexit negotiations by having an important diplomatic role in fostering the dialogue with his British colleagues, whilst managing to secure an aid package for Irish beef farmers in recognition of challenges facing the sector as a result of ongoing market turbulences related to Brexit. However, his involvement in negotiating the EU-Mercosur trade deal which would see the EU accept 99,000 tonnes of cheaper South American beef into its market every year has undermined his reputation vis a vis European farmers and especially Irish beef farmers. Hogan faced backlash from his own party for signing off on the trade deal, which was rumoured to potentially threaten his reappointment as Commissioner.

Personal Insight

He is affable, witty and pugnacious.

He is forthright in personality style and likes brevity. He is not a politician with an interest in detail.

He has a deep interest in Kilkenny hurling and is a keen golfer playing off a handicap of 17.

Education

Educated at primary and secondary school in County Kilkenny

Graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Economics and Geography) from University College Cork

General Work Experience

Managed and ran the family farm

Established and directed an insurance and real estate business

Political Experience

1983: Elected in the local elections to Kilkenny County Council for the Fine Gael party

1985: Chairman of Kilkenny County Council

1987 - 1989: Elected a member of Seanad Éireann (Upper House of Parliament)

1989: Elected a member of Dáil Éireann (Lower House of Parliament) for the constituency of Carlow-Kilkenny

1993: Appointed Fine Gael Spokesperson on European Affairs and Regional Development

1994: Appointed Fine Gael Spokesperson on Transport, Energy and Communications

1994 - 1995: Minister of State at the Department of Finance

1995 - 2001: Chairman of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Group

1998: Chairman of Kilkenny County Council

2002 - 2007: Appointed Fine Gael Spokesperson on Enterprise, Trade and Employment

2002 - 2007: Appointed Fine Gael Director of Organisation

2007 - 2011: Appointed Fine Gael Spokesperson on Environment, Heritage and Local Government

2010 - 2011: Appointed National Director of Elections for Fine Gael

2011 - 2014: Appointed Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government

2012 - 2014: Chairman of the European Peoples Party of Environment Ministers

2013 January - June: President of the Council of European Environment Ministers