

An Irish-themed Open Day at the JRC, 4th May

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As is traditional at each open day, the country currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU is represented by a number of exhibits, illustrating aspects of that country's culture. This year, the Irish theme was apparent to anyone who came through the gates, not least to the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, **Máire Geoghegan Quinn** who herself is Irish and who was guest of honour for the day.

Starting with a pleasant surprise at the entrance: visitors were taken off guard by a spontaneous **flashmob of Irish dancers** whose incredible light-footed dancing was a feast for the eyes. Shortly after passing security, there was another treat in store: the dulcid tones of Irish harp strings being plucked by the hands of an expert.

Further on, on via Irlanda, there was an opportunity to fully immerse into all things Irish. The children's stand was packed to overflowing with young ones trying their hand at celtic colouring. Next door, the Irish culture stand had an impressive display of iPads set up for visitors to discover Ireland through 100 objects. The interactive application attracted visitors of all ages who were curious to learn more about the history of the emerald isle. The **Irish science cinema** showed a short film both in English and Italian, entitled "Irish Scientific Achievements" produced especially for the event. The film gave an overview of Irish scientific accomplishments throughout the ages. From **Ernest Walton**, who split the atom, to **John Tyndall** who discovered why the sky is blue, there were many Irish scientific achievements to uncover. Irish traditional music and dance continued throughout the day with more performances from both Irish-native and local musicians from Varese entertaining the many visitors who sat around soaking it all up. As a symbolic gesture before she left the centre, **Commissioner Geoghegan Quinn**, turned a sod at a newly-planted oak tree on via Irlanda, bringing the events of the day to a close. A memorable day was had by all.

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