



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ambassador

## Report on first year of activity

Prepared by the Department of  
Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
**Gov.ie**

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## Summary

Dr Patricia Scanlon was appointed Ireland's first AI Ambassador, following an [open call](#) for expressions of interest. The role was established under Strand 1 of the [National AI Strategy, "Here for Good"](#), the objective of which is to develop, build and facilitate strong public trust in AI as a force for societal good. The role of the AI Ambassador includes leading a national conversation on the role of AI in our lives, emphasising Ireland's commitment to an ethical approach to the use of the technology and in particular its adoption by enterprise.

The AI Ambassador is a member of the [Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum](#), established under Strand 3 of the AI Strategy. In her first year in the role, Dr Scanlon has participated in a large number of engagements with media, young people, businesses and other stakeholders to demystify AI and champion its potential as a positive force. Dr Scanlon will continue in the role for a second and final year until May 2024.

## Policy Work and Advice

As part of her role, Dr Scanlon has contributed expert policy advice to Government through regular updates to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and other Departments. Dr Scanlon is a member of both the Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum and the Working Group to develop principles and guidelines for the trustworthy and ethical use of AI in the Public Service.

## UNESCO/OECD and International Engagement

One of the highlights of Dr Scanlon's first year as AI Ambassador was [her visit to Paris](#) in April 2023 for high-level meetings on AI with the OECD and UNESCO. The visit also included meeting innovative AI companies at the Station F start-up incubator and a meeting with the French National AI Coordinator.

The purpose of the visit was for Dr Scanlon to meet with some of the leading policy makers and researchers in the field of AI at a time of rapid developments in AI. Both the OECD and UNESCO have very important roles in terms of developing global recommendations for ethical AI and provide a huge amount of assistance to policy makers.

The visit was also an opportunity to highlight Ireland's ethical and human centric approach to AI while at the same time building public trust and confidence in the technology and demystifying it.

During her visit Dr Scanlon met Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences for UNESCO as well as senior officials from the OECD Science Technology and Education Directorates. The visit contributed to raising Ireland's profile on these issues at the OECD and UNESCO while also focussing on key issues such as women in technology and development.

In March 2023, Dr Scanlon participated in a roundtable discussion alongside the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, in San Francisco with representatives from Enterprise Ireland and Silicon Valley tech leaders to discuss AI benefits and its impacts across society, industry and Government as well as regulation and AI ethics.

## National Youth Assembly

Dr Scanlon participated in the [National Youth Assembly on AI](#) which took place in October 2022 in the Tangent Ideaspace in Trinity College. The event brought together young people from around the country to engage in workshops on AI, and to then put forth their own recommendations to Government. Dr Scanlon also participated in the preparatory session for the youth delegates in advance of the Assembly.

Participants attended a series of workshops delivered by experts across each of four strands identified as particularly relevant for young people. These were: AI and Society, A Governance Ecosystem that Promotes Trustworthy AI, AI Serving the Public, and AI in Education, Skills and Talent. Dr Scanlon facilitated one of the workshops and was on-hand to discuss issues raised by the delegates.

The report and recommendations from the National Youth Assembly will ensure that the views of young people in Ireland on AI are recorded and considered as we look towards the future of AI in Ireland.

## Media and Public Speaking Engagements

Dr Scanlon has carried out a number of media engagements across a variety of platforms and outlets – print, radio, television, podcasts, as well as social media.

A list of media and public engagements activities is detailed below:

Date	Event
4 May 2022	1st Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum meeting
17 June 2022	Keynote at the DETE Senior Management Forum at AVIVA
6 September 2022	2nd Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum meeting
24 September 2022	National Youth Assembly on AI – Prep session

Date	Event
12 October 2022	National Youth Assembly meeting on AI
19 October 2022	Working group on Trustworthy AI
10 November 2022	Panel Moderator at Envision Event at the Convention Center
16 November 2022	3rd Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum meeting
23 November 2022	Digital Ireland Conference
24 November 2022	Public Service Innovation Conference
25 November 2022	Keynote at HSE Spark Forum: AI+ML in Healthcare
25 November 2022	Keynote Speaker - EMPOWER Data Governance Community of Practice Symposium
22 February 2023	4th meeting of Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum meeting
17 March 2023	St Patrick's Day Visit to San Francisco (Enterprise Ireland AI Roundtable)
29 March 2023	Working group on Trustworthy AI
19 April 2023	Panel Participant on 'Looking Forward: Scaling up and capturing the next horizon of Irish enterprise growth and innovation' at Enterprise Ireland Summit 2023
24-25 April 2023	OECD UNESCO Visit, Paris
2 May 2023	Keynote at TechFoundHer conference
25 May 2023	Keynote at TechFest, Cork 2023
31 May 2023	Dublin Tech Summit

## Media

Date	Event
10 May 2022	<a href="#">“Ireland's first AI Ambassador is announced” (rte.ie)</a>
11 May 2022	<a href="#">“SoapBox Labs’ Patricia Scanlon appointed Ireland’s first AI ambassador”</a> – Silicon Republic
21 July 2022	<a href="#">“Demystifying Artificial intelligence”</a> – The Irish Times
12 October 2022	<a href="#">“Young people share their thoughts on AI to inform Ireland’s national policy”</a> – Silicon Republic
15 November 2022	Science week <a href="#">podcast</a> with Tony Cantwell
15 February 2023	<a href="#">“AI ambassador: Ireland could ‘take the lead’ in ethical AI”</a> <a href="#">(siliconrepublic.com)</a>
27 February 2023	<a href="#">Ireland AI Ambassador   The Ryan Tubridy Show - RTÉ Radio 1 (rte.ie)</a>
31 March 2023	<a href="#">“Calls grow louder for AI regulation” (rte.ie)</a>
15 April 2023	<a href="#">“AI could be the next industrial revolution - but what risks does it bring?”</a> – The Irish Times
24 April 2023	<a href="#">RTÉ - Drivetime</a>
3 May 2023	<a href="#">“Is AI more of a friend than a foe?”</a> – Newstalk Breakfast
13 May 2023	<a href="#">Saturday with Colm Ó Mongáin</a>
17 May 2023	<a href="#">“AI ambassador says investment needed for ethical AI systems” (rte.ie)</a>