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## 'CERN membership can make Ireland a global hub for young scientists and leading innovators' Kelly



Sean Kelly MEP

Sean Kelly MEP and member of the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy Committee, has urgently requested a meeting with Dr Rolf Heuer, Director General of CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research and the world's top particle physics lab, to progress steps towards Ireland's membership of CERN.

Last summer (2013), physicists working at the 27km tunnel at CERN in Geneva, made a groundbreaking announcement, that they had discovered signs of a new subatomic particle consistent with the Higgs boson, the basic building block of the universe. Ireland remains the only country in Western Europe, not to sign-up for membership of the CERN science project.

Sean Kelly MEP, former GAA President and CERN membership advocate said: 'The abundance of scientific creativity amongst school kids and young adults within Ireland was clearly manifested recently at the 50th anniversary of the (BT) Young Scientist and Technology exhibition at the RDS.

One key exhibitor present, the Coderdojo movement, (which has recently launched a LIONS@FRICA partnership with the US Department of State to teach coding skills to the youth in Africa), set-up by Cork-based social entrepreneurs, James Whelton and Bill Liaos, demonstrates how Ireland can be a world leader in nurturing young talent, and preparing future generations for rewarding careers in science and technology. The CERN project, now provides a once in a lifetime opportunity for Ireland to become a world leader in developing a smart, sustainable economy.

'However, Ireland risks lagging behind other leading technology based economies and major software exporters, such as Israel, by not joining the CERN project. The practical fall-out from non-membership means that our scientists and software companies cannot apply and bid for

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multi-million euro contracts and research grants coming from the CERN centre.

'Irish companies simply cannot afford to miss out on the public-private opportunities offered by CERN, working along with major global ICT industry partners, such as Intel, Oracle, Siemens and Hewlett-Packard, and participating in CERN's openlab project, a partnership between CERN and ICT companies to develop future advanced technologies. The benefits in terms of future Innovation and revenues for the economy, significantly outweigh concerns over CERN membership costs of around €11m per year, or even part-membership which is available for just €1m per annum,' commented Mr. Kelly, Ireland South MEP."

'In the meantime, our universities and domestic ICT sector are increasingly losing business visionaries and scientists, to overseas research institutes in the UK and Europe, because of the career advancement opportunities and research funding these countries can offer through their membership of CERN.'

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