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PRESS RELEASE
IRELAND FRANCE BUSINESS AWARDS 2019
SMURFIT KAPPA France, SODEXO Ireland and KINGSPAN win
the 2019 Ireland France Business Awards

The Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Pat Breen presented awards to the winners of the 2019 *Ireland France Business Awards* at a special gala dinner on 28 November at the Cercle National des Armées in Paris, in the presence of H.E. Patricia O’Brien, Ambassador of Ireland to France and Honorary President of NetworkIreland, H.E. Stéphane Crouzat, Ambassador of France to Ireland and Honorary President of the FICC, Richard Dujardin President of NetworkIreland and CEO of ISS France and Margot Slattery, incoming President of the FICC.

Organised annually by NetworkIreland and the France Ireland Chamber of Commerce (FICC) for over 26 years, the bilateral trade awards recognise excellence within the Franco-Irish business community and celebrate the outstanding achievements of the winning companies within their respective sectors and the development of trade and investment between Ireland and France.

Addressing the 180 French and Irish business leaders present, the Minister highlighted the growing importance of developing and nurturing bi-lateral trade and investment between France and Ireland right now and into the future particularly in a post-Brexit era. He then presented the Trophies to the Award winners:

The **Best French Company Award to Caroline O’Loughlin of Sodexo Ireland**, which delivers through its 3,700 employees services that improve the quality of life to clients in business and industry.

The **Best Irish Company in France Award to Jean-Christophe Bugeon of Smurfit Kappa France**. Present in France since 1990, Smurfit Kappa has made a number of strategic acquisitions in 2018, which bring the total number of manufacturing facilities in the country to 54 with around 5,000 employees.

The award for **Impact on Climate Change to Lizzy Young of Kingspan Ireland**, for pioneering insulation, and commitment to achieving 100% Net-Zero Energy by 2020.

“Tonight we are here to honour three outstanding companies: Smurfit Kappa France for best Irish company in France; Sodexo Ireland for best French company in Ireland and Kingspan for Impact on Climate Change.

You epitomise the very best of what the Franco-Irish business relationship can produce. I am delighted we have this opportunity to recognise them and to congratulate them for their achievements”

This year’s Awards attracted the largest number of applicants since the competition began in 1992, which may be a portent of things to come as commercial links between France and Ireland strengthen and consolidate in advance of an imminent Brexit.

The high calibre of candidates across all three categories was recognised by the **jury chaired** by Eoin Scott (Motherboard) and composed of Elaine Howley (Market Advisor Digital Technologies, Enterprise Ireland, France), Isabelle Charneil (Director, Business France Ireland), Kate Solovieva (Vice President, Financial Services - Europe, IDA Ireland), Paul De Vos (Chef du Service Economique, Ambassade de

France en Irlande), Noel Cunningham (Senior Partner, Mazars, Ireland), Donal O’Riain (Founder and Managing Director, Ecocem, Ireland), Monica MacLavery (Manager Southern Europe, Tourism Ireland, Ireland), Joanne Grant (Managing Director, JCDecaux, Ireland) and Gillian Quinn de Shonen (Managing Director, Zumo, France).

The 2019 Ireland France Business Awards were organised with the valued support of PRIMARK, the event Partner, and the sponsors Axway, BNP Paribas, Davy, DOCS and Smurfit Kappa France.

The 2020 Business Awards ceremony will take place in Dublin next year on 19 November.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

NETWORKIRLANDE

NetworkIreland is a dynamic business network based in Paris dedicated to French and Irish companies and professionals whose goal is to strengthen economic exchanges between the two countries.

Launched in May 2010, and heir to the longstanding Franco-Irish Chamber (CCIFIRL), NetworkIreland provides the Franco-Irish business community with good networking opportunities through the organisation of a comprehensive range of activities that appeal to all its members including high-caliber speaker events, business forums & professional development seminars, showcase functions, Annual Business Awards as well as advisory support services.

NetworkIreland works closely with the Embassy of Ireland and the state agencies, Enterprise Ireland, the IDA, Tourism Ireland and Bord Bia. The president, Richard Dujardin, is also CEO of ISS France.

NetworkIreland has a strong bi-lateral relationship with the France Ireland Chamber of Commerce in Ireland.

For more information: www.networkirlande.com

FRANCE IRELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Founded more than 30 years ago, the France Ireland Chamber of Commerce (FICC) is a bilateral organisation that promotes the expansion of trade and business between Ireland and France. It is the third largest bilateral trade association in Ireland with 150 member companies and is represented by over 200 senior French and Irish executives.

The Chamber provides a range of business services and networking events to encourage and facilitate the establishment of new French companies in Ireland and new Irish companies in France. The president, Mathieu Gorge, is also CEO of Vigitrust.

For further information, visit www.networkirlande.com www.franceireland.ie