



Trinity European Laureate Award

24 June 2026

Theme: Democracy

Recipient: Michael McGrath, European
Commissioner for Democracy, Justice,
the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Long Room Hub
Arts & Humanities Research Institute



Order of Events

- »» 5.30 p.m. Introduction and welcome by **Deborah Nash**, CEO Brussels Strategy and Communications, Teneo.
- »» 5.35 p.m. Overview of the Trinity European Laureate Awards by **Professor Patrick Geoghegan**, Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub.
- »» 5.40 p.m. Presentation of the Trinity European Award by the Provost of Trinity College Dublin, **Dr Linda Doyle**.
- »» 5.45 p.m. Laureate Address by **Commissioner Michael McGrath**.
- »» 6.00 p.m. Fireside chat on the theme of Democracy with **Commissioner McGrath** and **Mick O'Keeffe**, CEO of Teneo Ireland.
- »» 6.20 p.m. Concluding remarks.
- »» 6.25 p.m. Reception.

Trinity European Laureate Award

Commissioner Michael McGrath

The Trinity European Laureate Award recognises individuals who have made a profound and enduring contribution to Europe's foundational values, with democracy serving as their bedrock. The freedoms we cherish, from the rule of law and the protection of rights to the integrity of our public institutions, depend on citizens' ability to participate freely, confidently, and meaningfully in public life and civic society.

The gold medal for Democracy is awarded to European Commissioner Michael McGrath, in recognition of his exceptional leadership in strengthening these foundations at a time when democracy faces unprecedented global threats. It also honours a career devoted to public service in Ireland and Europe, marked by an unwavering commitment to the principles that sustain democratic societies.

As European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law, and Consumer Protection, Michael McGrath has brought leadership and strategic vision to one of the European Union's most critical portfolios. Today, our democratic institutions are being faced with multi-faceted challenges, including disinformation, external interference, polarisation, and technological disruption. In response, Commissioner McGrath has championed robust measures to safeguard and strengthen the structures and principles that underpin democratic governance and public trust.

Central to this work has been the development of the European Democracy Shield, a groundbreaking strategic framework designed to strengthen democratic resilience across Europe. The initiative helps our societies counter attempts to manipulate and distort public discourse, combat disinformation and reduce its influence and impact, protect the integrity of our elections, and uphold independent media, while strengthening civic participation and democratic engagement.



Democracy cannot be taken for granted. The European Democracy Shield represents a coordinated society-wide approach, utilising civil society, institutions, universities, libraries, media, and citizens to defend the values we hold dear. Only through collective action can we strengthen public trust, elevate public debate, and increase institutional safeguards. While the threats to democracy are becoming more sophisticated, so too must our responses.

Defending democracy today requires courage, vigilance and decisive action. Our essential tasks are to protect elections from manipulation, ensure the safety of journalists and those involved in public life, confront corruption and address abuses of power. In doing so, we ensure public confidence in our essential democratic institutions.

These challenges require responses across society. The European Democracy Shield fosters media literacy, critical thinking, the ability to deal with complexity, and civic participation. Commissioner McGrath's vision empowers citizens to resist manipulation and to engage directly and confidently in democratic life. This incredible service defends democracy and renews and deepens it for a new generation.

The independence of institutions and the rule of law are guarantors of freedom and equality. The Trinity European Laureate Award is therefore conferred on Michael McGrath by the Trinity Long Room Hub and Teneo, the global CEO advisory firm, in recognition of the transformative leadership and vision he has brought to strengthening our democratic institutions and societies and for his enduring contribution to the preservation and renewal of democracy across Europe.

The gold medal recognises his steadfast dedication to defending democratic values, and his pivotal role in upholding the rule of law and building institutional trust. Above all, it affirms Democracy itself, and a recognition that it continues to be strong and resilient.

About Us



As Ireland's great European university, Trinity College Dublin continues to challenge and serve society, making a positive and lasting impact in the world.

Trinity's core principles of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of association are at the heart of a healthy, democratic society, and are fundamental to achieving the positive and lasting change the world so urgently needs.

Europe is as much a cultural and intellectual project as it is a political one, and the humanities help our citizens to interpret complexity and resist simplification. The Trinity European Laureate Awards, a partnership between Trinity's pre-eminent Arts and Humanities Research Institute, the Trinity Long Room Hub, and Teneo, the global CEO advisory firm, form part of Trinity's programme of events to coincide with Ireland's forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU.

This collaboration unites academic insight and leadership experience to explore complex issues and foster meaningful public debate. By informing public conversations about European values, we aim to reinvigorate the European ideal for future generations.

Teneo is the global CEO advisory firm. We partner with our clients globally to do great things for a better future. Drawing upon our global team and expansive network of senior advisors, we provide advisory services across our five business segments on a stand-alone or fully integrated basis to help our clients solve complex business challenges. Our clients include a significant number of the Fortune 100 and FTSE 100, as well as other corporations, financial institutions and organisations.





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