
Charlie McCreevy



Charlie McCreevy was the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services from 2004-10. He played a crucial role in overseeing the European financial system, regulations governing the banking system and the development of a single market in financial services throughout the EU.

He has a reputation as an experienced, lively and sometimes outspoken commentator on issues relating to Ireland's economy and to Europe - from the current Eurozone economic crisis, to the future of the EU and the challenges facing the European financial services sector.

He was an active member of Irish political life from his first election to The Dáil (Irish Parliament) in 1977 as a Fianna Fáil TD and held the seat in Kildare (and later Kildare North) until 2004 when he became Ireland's European Commissioner. In successive governments he served as Minister for Social Welfare (1992-93), Minister for Tourism and Trade (1993-94), Frontbench Spokesperson on Finance (1995-97) and Minister for Finance (1997-2004).

During his term as Minister for Finance, he was responsible for many changes to simplify the tax system and presided over Ireland's entry to the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union, and later, the changeover to the Euro. His tenure coincided with a period of rapid growth in Ireland's economy on the back of a low company tax rate; substantial foreign investment; social partnership between employers, government and unions; and membership of the European Community - which provided payments for infrastructural development and export access to the Single Market. The country became known as the "Celtic Tiger" and attracted investment from international companies such as Dell and Microsoft. He maintained a significant surplus during his tenure, simultaneously implementing a tax-cutting programme, major increases in health, education and pension spending as well as increasing investment in infrastructural development to 5% of GNP. Unemployment consequently fell from 10% to 4.4%.

After resigning as European Commissioner, McCreevey joined the board of the UK's biggest sporting goods retailer Sports Direct, as non-executive director in 2011. He also serves on the board of Ryanair, the budget airline. He has served as a director of Ryanair since 2010.