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Voices at the Manifesto Launch...

'The construction industry should support 200,000 construction workers in Ireland. Irish construction workers are going abroad and if that continues to happen the industry will be decimated. The time to invest is when there is value in the market. This media conference in the Aviva Stadium shows the partnership spirit that exists within the industry but there is one partner missing and that is the government.'

Tom Costello, managing director, John Sisk & Son

'If we want the government to listen to us we should have brought a government representative to the Aviva Stadium media conference because the CIC, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, IBEC and ICTU are preaching to the converted. The public perception of the construction industry is that we have had a good time and now we are looking for someone to bail us out. When it comes to attributing blame for everything that has gone wrong with this economy, we are second only to the bankers. The CIC can produce all the statistics it wants but it must address the industry's image problem.'

Cormac Bradley, Engineers Ireland, and Construction Manager at RPS Group

'The Galway Tent image is a monkey that the industry needs to get off its back so you need to go public with your message. While you have had a long dialogue with government departments over the past two years it has been behind closed doors with civil servants. I advise you to make a series of presentations to Oireachtas Committees between now and Christmas, to talk to people who, after the next General Election, may be in a position to respond to your needs.'

Ruairi Quinn, Labour Party TD for Dublin South East

'I'm concerned about the prospects for the industry. By the end of next year it may only account for seven per cent of the Irish economy. I hope the government will take measures to support Irish construction because it is heading to a bad place. The government needs to introduce projects to help small and medium-sized contractors as well as those delivering large infrastructure projects.'

Annette Hughes, DKM Economic Consultants

'There is a major capacity need in terms of transport and energy in particular

and the industry hasn't articulated that well enough to the general public. For example, we can't tap our offshore energy resources because the grid doesn't exist to support it. In addition, continued job losses mean that we are losing the productive capacity for the recovery of our industry.'

PJ Rudden, group environment and energy director, RPS Group and vice president of Engineers Ireland

'What bothers me is that we don't understand as a nation the need for infrastructure. The industry should have a "champion" for infrastructure in government.'

Martin Coleman, director, Carillion Irishenco

'It has been proven internationally that productive infrastructure generates long-term economic growth and it can be delivered using private finance. PPP is a way of delivering infrastructure now and paying for it over the long term. That is what our economic competitors are doing and we need to do it.'

Michele Connolly, partner, KPMG Ireland

'Our PPP approach is much more time consuming than, say, the Public Finance Initiatives in the UK. The government needs to streamline procurement of PPP projects to make them more attractive to international investors.'

Eamon Timoney, managing director, Fehily Timoney, and president of the ACEI

'We need to build 600 schools between now and 2020. In 2001, the HSE identified a requirement for 600 Primary Care Centres around the country – so far only 220 of those have been built. The OPW has millions of pounds worth of projects waiting for the go-ahead from government. The construction industry will build only 10,000 residential units this year yet the ESRI and the CSO predict that we will need 40,000 houses in the years ahead. The country needs a new National Spatial Strategy that isn't about something for everyone in the audience but focuses on environmental sustainability. The new Planning Act needs to be implemented as soon as possible to deal with over-zoning. We are saying to government that now is the time to plan for the future.'

Paul Keogh, Paul Keogh Architects and RIAI president

Irish Quarry Wins Major Environmental Award



Pictured after the presentation in Munich to McGrath Limestone Works are (l-r): Jim O'Brien, president, European Aggregates Association; Liam Smyth, sustainability and marketing manager, Irish Concrete Federation; John Joe McGrath, director, McGrath Limestone Works; Pat O'Donnell, Earth Science Partnership, environmental consultants; and Professor Christian Niemann-Delius, University of Aachen, Germany.

McGrath's Limestone Works Ltd has won a major European environmental award in recognition of outstanding dedication to environmental best practice.

The award which was presented in Munich, Germany on 27 May was sponsored by the European Aggregates Association based in Brussels.

In 2008, McGrath's Limestone Works Ltd, which is located in Cong, Co Mayo, won the Irish Concrete Federation Quarry of the Year and, as a result, the company was entered into the equivalent European awards for sustainable development. There were a total of 30 entries from 10 countries and all entries were assessed by an independent jury of internationally distinguished experts in the fields of biodiversity, conservation, health and safety and mining engineering.

McGrath's Limestone Works Ltd, which produces a large range of concrete, stone and road surfacing products, received the Environmental Best Practice Award for a small company in recognition of outstanding dedication to the environment.

The company's quarry at Cong is located on an isthmus between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib in a very sensitive ecosphere. Aware of its responsibility to the environment, the company has addressed environmental issues by constructing a water treatment plant to ensure that only the highest quality clean water is discharged. In addition, the company has planted a nursery in which many species of trees are growing and is committed to the protection of all fauna on site by creating protected habitats through the increased depth of buffer zones around the quarry.