

Media Release

13 June, 2011

Energy security is a key national strategic issue - SEAI

At an energy security conference this morning hosted by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and opened by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Mr Pat Rabbitte TD, concerns were expressed on Ireland's continued reliance on imported fossil fuels, particularly at a time when Ireland's oil security has decreased due to imports from volatile markets outside of Europe.

Statistics presented by SEAI this morning show that Ireland's import dependence for energy remains at close to 90%, while the EU average remains at 55%. Our reliance on imported natural gas continues to increase, however our security of gas supply is improving thanks to additional liquefied natural gas capacity in the UK and the continued progress towards commercial production in Ireland from the Corrib Gas Field. Additionally, our increasing use of renewable energy has seen it now become Ireland's main source of indigenous energy supply.

Commenting Professor J Owen Lewis, CEO of SEAI said: *"Security of energy supply is emerging globally as a key concern. Nowhere is this issue more relevant than in Ireland where our reliance on oil accounts for over half of all energy consumption. Energy security is now a key strategic issue for Ireland."*

Continuing, he said: *"Global concerns in relation to energy security relate particularly to the risk of disruption related to oil, where prices are high, and demand is likely to considerably outstrip supply in the coming years. While this has potentially significant social and economic implications for Ireland, our large renewable energy resource, aligned with a greater immediate emphasis on energy efficiency across the board, represents a path out of our dependence that also offers opportunities for enterprise and export growth."*

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About SEAI:

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) has a mission to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. The Authority is partly financed by Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programme co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union