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## Two Irish winners of the European Citizen's Prize 2017 from the European Parliament

The youth organisation, Foróige and the group Border Communities Against Brexit, are among the 50 winners of the European Citizen's Prize 2017.

Since 2008, this prestigious award has recognised projects and initiatives that facilitate cross-border cooperation or promote mutual understanding and EU values. The winners will receive a medal of honour at a public award ceremony in Ireland and will be invited to a joint event with all 50 winners in Brussels on 11 October.

### Foróige

[Seán Kelly](#) MEP nominated Foróige, which is Ireland's leading youth organisation; working with over 50,000 young people aged 10-18 through volunteer-led clubs and youth projects. The organisation operates in rural communities, villages, towns and cities. The Youth Citizenship Programme has been a core part of Foróige's work for almost 50 years. Over 10,000 young people have participated in the Programme in the last three years, empowering them to make a positive impact in their community and strengthening their connection to their local area. Their projects cover equality, the arts, mental health, and inclusion. Participants research their community's needs and organise practical action in response. They engage with a wide network to achieve their goals: local businesses, churches, local councils, charities and schools. Their projects cover equality, the arts, mental health, and inclusion. Past projects have included promoting physical fitness in the local community, highlighting positive mental health among young people, improving access for wheelchair users to local buildings and helping those impacted by flooding through clean-up operations and delivering much-needed supplies. A study by NUIG found that participants demonstrated an increased awareness of social needs and were more likely to get involved in a community issue in future. It also noted a significant increase in members' confidence and skills to take action in their communities.

### Border Communities Against Brexit (BCAB)

Border Communities Against Brexit was nominated by [Matt Carthy](#) MEP, [Liadh Ni Riada](#) MEP, [Lynn Boylan](#) MEP, [Marian Harkin](#) MEP and [Nessa Childers](#) MEP. BCAB is a group of local representatives from a range of business, community and farming sectors established with the

purpose of countering the imposition of a hard border on the island of Ireland because of Brexit negotiations. The group is works on both sides of the border, from Derry to Louth, and is an example of solidarity between communities that will be impacted in different but equally damaging ways by the removal of one side from the European Union. Principles associated with joint membership of the EU such as mutual recognition of standards, freedom of movement, freedom of establishment, the right to access another jurisdiction's public services and tariff-free trade have all gone a long way towards easing the everyday life of border communities. The group campaigns against the loss of farm incomes, PEACE funding and trade and investment, as well as barriers to third level education and the hardships for all people needing to cross the border on a daily basis. They have succeeded in mobilising hundreds of local communities in highlighting the forgotten frontier of the Brexit battle.

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