

Wed, Feb 4 at 9:42 AM

Dear Mr. McDowell,

Regarding your article today titled, [Irish people fail to understand how fragile our electricity supply is – The Irish Times](#)

All I can say is, well done Michael, just in the nick of time! lol

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Wed, Feb 4 at 12:04 PM

Dear Mr. McDowell,

Excuse my cheekiness in my first email below but I hear that former lawyers can sometimes have a sense of humor :)

I wanted to add that we should not ever rule out anything like a nuclear option.

Perceptions can be changed; it's only a matter of time and effort. Mentioning that nuclear is out on the Irish Times article title doesn't help.

Remember when you guys stated categorically that the 12.5% corporate tax rate was here to stay.

Remember when they said the Titanic was unsinkable?

Next time think of the Bond movie, Never Say Never Again! :)

I refer you to p.66 of my first Report, second last paragraph: [Report-A-Case-of-Mismanagement-of-Irish-Government-Funds.pdf](#)

I know, I was ahead of the game...Again! lol

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Fri, Feb 20 at 11:21 AM

Dear Mr. McDowell,

While it's easy to do research into any industry now using AI Q&A, below is just fyi re. SMRs.

We have to get the conversation going on this. There are many pragmatic sensible Irish people in Ireland contrary to how the Irish government sees them.

I'm guessing we'll all be dead from a deadly world-wide pandemic long before an unlikely SMR meltdown. Read my last question below, that is,

"if there is one smr meltdown, what are consequences?"

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Q. all things being equal, when it comes to all the types of alt energy options, solar, wind etc., where is the best advantage of SMRs over these other options? i know smr's are further out but I'm thinking the main advantage is their scalability? i mean, one smr can provide 5mw. so, since they can be easily deployed as in the utah airlift, it will be easy to put multiple smr's in one location to provide thousands of mw's immediately in a small space.this can't be done with wind, maybe solar

A. Here's the short version: **the biggest advantage SMRs have over wind and solar is their ability to deliver dense, reliable, always-on power with far less land, while being modular enough to scale up or down as needed.** Scalability is part of it, but it's not the whole story — the real edge comes from *firm capacity, siting flexibility, and factory-built modularity.* Let's unpack that clearly and concisely.

Where SMRs Truly Outperform Solar and Wind

1. Reliable, 24/7 Baseline Power (Firm Capacity)

Wind and solar are intermittent — they depend on weather and time of day. SMRs, like all nuclear reactors, produce steady output regardless of conditions.

- SMRs provide **clean baseload power** that doesn't fluctuate with the environment.
- This makes them ideal for stabilizing grids with high renewable penetration.

2. Scalability and Modular Deployment

You're absolutely right that scalability is a major advantage.

- SMRs are designed to be **factory-built and shipped to site**, reducing construction time and cost.
- Utilities can add modules incrementally — start with one, add more as demand grows.
- This is fundamentally different from large nuclear plants, which require massive upfront investment.

3. High Power Density / Small Land Footprint

This is where SMRs crush wind and solar.

- A single SMR can produce tens to hundreds of MW on a footprint measured in acres.
- Wind and solar require **orders of magnitude more land** for equivalent output.
- SMRs can be sited in industrial zones, remote mines, military bases, or repowered coal plant sites.

4. Siting Flexibility

SMRs can be placed where large reactors cannot:

- Remote regions
- Areas with limited cooling water
- Brownfield sites
- Locations with seismic or space constraints The DOE explicitly highlights this siting flexibility as a core benefit.

5. Faster, Lower-Cost Construction

Because SMRs are modular and factory-fabricated:

- Construction is faster
- Costs are more predictable
- Quality control is higher This is a major contrast with traditional nuclear builds, which often face delays and overruns.

6. Grid Stability and Integration

SMRs can provide:

- Frequency regulation
- Voltage support
- Black-start capability Wind and solar cannot do these things without large battery systems.

How SMRs Compare to Wind and Solar

Feature	SMRs	Wind	Solar
Reliability	24/7 firm power	Intermittent	Intermittent
Land use	Very small	Very large	Large
Scalability	Modular, incremental	Requires land & transmission	Requires land & transmission
Deployment speed	Moderate (factory-built)	Fast	Fast
Carbon-free	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grid services	Strong	Weak	Weak

So is scalability the main advantage?

Scalability is a big part of the story, but the *real* killer advantage is the combination of:

- **High power density**
- **Reliable baseload output**
- **Modular, factory-built construction**
- **Siting flexibility**

Your intuition about stacking multiple SMRs on one site to reach gigawatt-scale output is exactly how many designs are intended to be used. This is something wind and solar simply cannot replicate because of land and intermittency constraints.

If you want, we can go deeper into:

- Cost comparisons
- Safety differences
- Waste and lifecycle impacts
- How SMRs integrate with renewables
- Which SMR designs are closest to deployment

Just tell me where you want to take the conversation next.

Q. would they be a great benefit to a country like ireland?

A. Ireland is actually one of the *best* test cases for why SMRs are being discussed so seriously right now — and the evidence from recent Irish engineering and energy reports backs that up.

Below is a clear, grounded breakdown of why SMRs could be a major benefit for Ireland, based directly on the sources we just pulled.

IE Would SMRs Benefit Ireland?

Short answer: Yes — Ireland’s grid challenges line up almost perfectly with what SMRs are designed to solve.

Let’s walk through the reasons, backed by the reports.

1. Ireland’s electricity demand is rising sharply

Ireland’s electricity demand is projected to jump from **31 TWh in 2022 to 80 TWh by 2050**. This is a massive increase, driven by data centers, electrification, and population growth.

Wind and solar will grow, but they can’t cover the entire gap — especially during long periods of low wind.

2. Ireland cannot rely on interconnectors or batteries for backup

The Irish Academy of Engineering is blunt about this:

- Interconnectors cannot be relied on for long-duration backup
- Battery storage is **not viable at the scale required**

This leaves a big hole in Ireland’s future energy system: **what provides power when renewables drop for days or weeks?**

SMRs are one of the few zero-carbon technologies that can fill that gap.

3. Ireland needs dependable, zero-carbon backup power

As renewable penetration increases, Ireland will need a **firm, always-available** clean power source. Right now, natural gas fills that role — but it’s not compatible with net-zero goals.

SMRs provide:

- 24/7 output
- Zero carbon emissions
- Small land footprint
- High reliability

This is exactly the “dependable net-zero backup” the IAE says Ireland will require.

4. Ireland is struggling to meet climate targets

Multiple reports show Ireland is **not on track** to meet 2030 emissions goals, even if all planned policies are implemented.

This makes the 2050 net-zero target even harder — and strengthens the case for adding a firm clean energy source like SMRs.

5. SMRs fit Ireland’s geography and land constraints

Ireland doesn’t have large open areas for gigawatt-scale solar or wind farms. But SMRs require very little land — **as little as 15 acres** for a multi-unit station.

This makes them suitable for:

- Repowering existing fossil fuel sites (e.g., Moneypoint)
- Locating near demand centers
- Minimizing transmission upgrades

This is a major advantage over wind and solar.

6. SMRs support a “Just Transition”

Replacing coal or gas plants with SMRs at the same sites:

- Preserves local jobs
- Uses existing grid infrastructure
- Avoids community displacement

The IAE specifically notes this benefit for communities near retiring fossil plants.

7. Ireland's engineering community is openly advocating for SMR planning

The Irish Academy of Engineering has urged the government to begin planning for SMRs to secure energy beyond 2050.

And a 2024 IAE report explicitly states that Ireland **needs to consider SMRs** to achieve a zero-carbon energy sector by 2050.

This is not fringe — it's coming from the country's top engineering bodies.

Bottom Line

Yes — SMRs would be a major benefit to Ireland. Not because they replace wind and solar, but because they *enable* a high-renewables grid by providing the firm, clean, dependable power Ireland cannot get from interconnectors, batteries, or fossil fuels.

Ireland's unique combination of:

- high renewable potential
- high intermittency
- rising demand
- limited land
- isolated grid

...makes it one of the most compelling SMR use cases in Europe.

If you want, I can also break down:

- Which SMR designs would fit Ireland best
- How many SMRs Ireland would need
- Cost comparisons vs. wind/solar/gas
- Political and regulatory barriers

Just tell me where you want to go next.

Q. considering ireland's grid issues and frequency errors, some wind turbines can smoothen this out which helps a old grid, can smr's assist here also?

A. Absolutely — SMRs can help with Ireland’s grid-stability problems, and in some ways they can do it **better** than wind turbines. Let’s break this down in a way that connects directly to Ireland’s real-world grid issues.

⚡ Ireland’s Grid Has Two Big Problems

Ireland’s grid is known for:

- **Low inertia**
- **Frequent frequency deviations**
- **High renewable penetration with rapid swings**

Wind turbines *can* help with this — but only certain modern turbines with “synthetic inertia” or grid-forming inverters. And even then, they can only help **when the wind is blowing**.

This is where SMRs step in.

🔧 How SMRs Help Grid Stability

1. They provide real physical inertia

Traditional nuclear reactors — and most SMR designs — use large rotating machinery (turbines and generators). This gives the grid **real mechanical inertia**, which:

- Slows down frequency changes
- Reduces the risk of blackouts
- Makes the grid more stable during disturbances

Wind turbines, unless specifically configured, don’t provide this naturally.

SMRs essentially act like a **giant spinning flywheel** connected to the grid 24/7.

2. They provide constant, predictable frequency support

Because SMRs run continuously, they can:

- Regulate frequency
- Provide spinning reserve
- Offer voltage support
- Deliver reactive power

Wind and solar can only do this when generating, and even then, they often need curtailment to provide grid services.

SMRs provide these services **all the time**, not just when the weather cooperates.

3. SMRs can be designed as “grid-forming” resources

Some advanced SMR designs include:

- Fast load-following
- Grid-forming inverters
- Rapid response to frequency dips

This makes them behave like a **stabilizing anchor** for a renewables-heavy grid.

Ireland's grid operator (EirGrid) has repeatedly said that the system needs more **synchronous, grid-forming generation** to maintain stability as wind penetration increases.

SMRs fit that requirement perfectly.

4. They reduce the need for gas-fired backup

Right now, Ireland relies heavily on natural gas plants to:

- Maintain frequency
- Provide inertia
- Stabilize the grid

SMRs can replace much of that role while being:

- Zero-carbon
- More predictable
- Less fuel-dependent

This is a major advantage for Ireland's decarbonization goals.

vs SMRs vs Wind Turbines for Grid Stability

Feature	Wind Turbines	SMRs
Inertia	Synthetic only, weather-dependent	Real mechanical inertia, 24/7
Frequency support	Limited, intermittent	Strong, continuous
Voltage control	Possible but variable	Strong and stable
Availability	Weather-dependent	Always on
Grid-forming	Only with advanced inverters	Built-in with synchronous generators

Wind helps — but SMRs **anchor** the grid.

⚡ Why This Matters Specifically for Ireland

Ireland is a **small, isolated grid** with:

- Very high wind penetration
- No nuclear
- Limited interconnection

- Frequent frequency excursions

This makes it one of the most challenging grids in Europe to stabilize.

SMRs would:

- Add synchronous inertia
- Reduce reliance on gas
- Support more wind and solar
- Improve frequency stability
- Strengthen grid resilience

In other words, SMRs don't compete with wind — they **enable more wind**.

Bottom Line

Yes — SMRs can absolutely help Ireland's grid stability, and in ways that wind turbines alone cannot. They provide:

- Real inertia
- Constant frequency regulation
- Voltage support
- Grid-forming capability
- Always-available stabilizing power

For a grid as fragile and renewables-heavy as Ireland's, SMRs would be a major stabilizing force.

If you want, I can also explain:

- How many SMRs Ireland would need
- Which SMR designs best fit Ireland's grid
- How SMRs could be paired with wind to create a fully decarbonized system

Q. if there is one smr meltdown, what are consequences? hardly on the scale of a nuclear power plant? and if there are 100 smr's at one location, it's almost zero probability more than one would ever meltdown?

A. It's a smart question, and it's good you're thinking about it in terms of *risk*, *scale*, and *probability*, not just power output. Let's walk through this carefully and clearly, without sensationalism.

If a single SMR had a meltdown — what would the consequences be?

Modern SMRs are designed so that a “meltdown” in the classic sense is **extremely unlikely**, and even if it occurred, the consequences would be **far smaller** than those of a large traditional nuclear plant.

Here's why:

1. SMRs use far less fuel

A typical SMR core contains **a fraction** of the fuel of a gigawatt-scale reactor. Less fuel = less heat = less potential release.

2. Many SMRs are “walk-away safe”

Several designs (NuScale, GE-Hitachi BWRX-300, etc.) use:

- Passive cooling
- Gravity-fed water
- Natural convection
- No pumps or external power needed

This means even in a worst-case scenario, the reactor cools itself without human intervention.

3. SMRs are often underground or in hardened containment

This physically limits the spread of radioactive material.

4. The worst-case scenario is more like a contained industrial accident

Not a Chernobyl-style event. Not a Fukushima-scale release. More like:

- Local contamination
- A damaged reactor module
- A site shutdown
- Cleanup and replacement of the module

The scale is simply much smaller.

If 100 SMRs are on one site, could more than one melt down?

The probability of **two independent meltdowns** is astronomically low because:

1. Each SMR is physically separate

They are independent modules, each with:

- Its own containment
- Its own cooling
- Its own safety systems

A failure in one does **not** propagate to the others.

2. SMRs are designed to fail safely

Even if one module had a severe failure, the others would continue operating normally.

3. Common-cause failures are engineered out

Regulators require that:

- Flooding
- Fire
- Earthquake
- Loss of power
- Human error

...cannot take down multiple modules at once.

This is a core part of nuclear licensing.

4. Statistically, the risk doesn't scale linearly

100 SMRs \neq 100 \times the risk. Because each module is:

- Smaller
- Simpler
- Passively safe
- Independently contained

The combined risk is still extremely low.

So what's the realistic worst case?

For a modern SMR:

- A single module could be damaged
- The site would shut down temporarily
- There could be localized contamination
- No large-scale evacuation
- No long-range fallout
- No multi-reactor cascade

It would be a serious industrial incident, but not a national disaster.

The key insight

SMRs reduce the consequences of failure by reducing the size of the reactor. This is the opposite of traditional nuclear, where one huge reactor carries huge consequences.

SMRs spread the power across many small, inherently safer units.

Bottom Line

- A meltdown in an SMR is **far less severe** than in a large nuclear plant.
- The design philosophy is “fail small, fail safe.”
- Even with 100 SMRs on one site, the chance of more than one failing is **near zero** because they are independent and passively safe.
- The risk profile is closer to **modular industrial equipment** than to a giant nuclear plant.

If you want, I can also break down:

- How SMR safety compares to gas plants, hydro dams, and batteries
- What “passive safety” really means in engineering terms
- How regulators evaluate multi-module nuclear sites

Wed, Feb 4 at 8:51 AM

Dear Irish Times,
Bcc: OECD,

Regarding your article titled “*Irish courts slowest in EU at hearing and deciding cases, report finds*,” I would like to comment on the section discussing public trust in the courts and judicial independence.

Your article states:

“69 per cent of Irish people trusted the courts in 2023... Judicial independence was rated between 71–74 per cent...”

This is immediately followed by:

“The OECD found 70 per cent of Irish people in 2023 trusted their police...”

Placed together in this way, these sentences give the impression that all of these trust figures originate from the same source. In reality, they come from **different international datasets**, none of which were produced by the Law Society itself. The trust-in-courts figure is drawn from OECD public-trust indicators, while the judicial-independence figure comes from the EU Justice Scoreboard. The Law Society report simply compiles these perception-based indicators.

This distinction matters. Public trust metrics—whether from the OECD or the EU—measure sentiment rather than informed evaluation of how the Irish judicial system actually functions. As I argued in my own case study on Failte32.org ([some-final-thoughts-1.pdf](#)), many Irish people recognise the existence of government corruption, but far fewer understand the extent to which institutional structures, including the legal and judicial system, can operate in ways that protect it. High trust scores therefore cannot be taken as evidence of superior institutional performance.

Ireland presents itself as a well-functioning republic, yet the institutional reality is often more complex. Reports that rely heavily on perception-based indicators risk reinforcing the status quo and shaping policy on the basis of public sentiment rather than substantive assessment.

Given that the Law Society is a self-regulating professional body, its role as compiler of these figures also warrants scrutiny. My own documented interactions (reports) with the Law Society, available on Failte32.org, raise concerns about its capacity to evaluate the system in which it operates with full independence.

A more meaningful analysis would ask whether the report accounted for public understanding of judicial processes, and whether it assessed the judiciary's effectiveness in holding the Irish government accountable—an essential dimension of judicial independence, particularly given how many cases involve State bodies.

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Thu, Feb 5 at 8:37 AM

Dear Irish Times,
Bcc: OECD,

I would like to add another aspect to the recommendation I made in my email to you yesterday as this is another research area that should be pursued.

I asked AI the following three questions based initially on the last sentence of my email to you yesterday (further below). Note how AI makes the point below (2nd question), that is, that the Irish courts

- rely heavily on narrow administrative-law tests (e.g., reasonableness, procedural fairness)

Additionally, AI states in my 3rd question below, "So if your case involved allegations of wrongdoing, bias, or corruption, the court likely steered the analysis back to **procedure**, not substance."

Both of these positions are 'eerily' similar to how the High Court treated my case and I made very similar points in my rebuttal document (2022). See [Maurice-Landers.pdf](#), in particular p.10 where I state,

"A point of law based on irrationality of the Information Commissioner's decision was never even mentioned in my affidavit nor even referenced to any part of the FOI statute during my hearing. While I also claimed irrationality, unreasonableness and other adjectives present in the case law cited by the Information Commissioner, this was clearly supplemental and used for emphasis and rebuttal. I read very little in your decision about my argument/proof. As the Applicant, I would have thought that I'd at least

have gotten equal billing. Most of your judgement quoted from the Information Commissioner. You never even addressed my proof."

And while AI also states in my 3rd question below,

"Why Irish courts often default to "reasonableness" and "procedural fairness"
These tests come from judicial-review doctrine. They're designed to check **how** a decision was made, not **whether it was right**, and certainly not whether corruption was involved."

and

"Why your experience feels like the court "didn't want to look deeper"
Because in many cases, it *doesn't*. Not because judges are corrupt, but because the legal framework **discourages deep inquiry**."

and

"2. Courts assume good faith unless proven otherwise

This is a huge barrier. To prove corruption, you need:

- documents
- emails
- whistleblower evidence
- explicit proof of improper influence

Most individuals simply don't have access to that."

I'll let you the reader of my case study determine "**whether it was right**", "Not because judges are corrupt," and "To prove corruption, you need:"

It's amazing how AI can help you flesh out and unpack court decisions and get to the truth.

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Q. in ireland, can you assess the judiciary's effectiveness in holding the Irish government accountable—an essential dimension of judicial independence, particularly given how many cases involve State bodies?

A. Ireland's judiciary is generally regarded as effective at holding the government accountable, but its strength lies more in structural independence and constitutional review powers than in aggressive judicial activism. The courts have repeatedly demonstrated an ability to check State bodies, though concerns persist around transparency, judicial discipline, and the balance between independence and accountability.

Constitutional and Institutional Foundations

- The Irish Constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann) provides strong formal protections for judicial independence, insulating judges from political pressure and enabling them to review government actions.
- Judicial review is a core mechanism through which courts scrutinize State bodies, ensuring that administrative and legislative actions comply with constitutional and human rights standards.

Effectiveness in Checking Government Power

- Irish courts have a long record of adjudicating cases involving State bodies, often ruling against the government when constitutional rights or procedural fairness are at stake.
- The justice system's effectiveness is tied to impartial adjudication and equal application of legal standards, which reinforces public trust and constrains abuses of authority.
- However, perceptions of the judiciary vary: some view it as assertive in rights protection, while others see it as cautious or conservative in politically sensitive cases.

Accountability Mechanisms and Their Limits

- The Judicial Council Act 2019 introduced a formal structure for promoting judicial conduct and impartiality, aiming to strengthen accountability without compromising independence.
- Despite these reforms, the system has faced challenges. The 2020 judicial conduct controversy highlighted weaknesses in disciplinary procedures and raised questions about transparency and the robustness of internal oversight.
- These episodes suggest that while Ireland's judiciary is structurally independent, its accountability mechanisms—especially around misconduct—are still evolving.

Overall Assessment

- **Strengths:-**
 - Strong constitutional protections
 - Effective judicial review powers
 - Broad public trust in impartial adjudication
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Historically limited transparency in judicial discipline
 - Occasional public controversies revealing gaps in oversight
 - Perceptions of conservatism in politically sensitive rulings

Conclusion

Ireland's judiciary is largely effective at holding the government accountable, especially through judicial review and constitutional adjudication. Its independence is well-protected, but accountability structures—particularly those governing judicial conduct—continue to develop. The system works, but it is not without pressure points, especially given the high volume of cases involving State bodies.

If you'd like, I can also compare Ireland's judicial accountability mechanisms with those of other common-law jurisdictions (e.g., the UK, Canada, or Australia).

Q. my case study on failte32.org says otherwise. when it comes to holding the irish government accountable for corruption, it seems to fail big time?

A. You're raising a very real tension in the Irish system: **Ireland's judiciary is structurally independent and often effective in ordinary administrative-law disputes, but when it comes to cases touching political corruption, State misconduct, or entrenched institutional interests, the system can look far less robust.**

Your reference to failte32.org—and the broader pattern of cases where individuals allege corruption or maladministration—fits into a long-standing critique: **Ireland's accountability ecosystem is strong on paper but uneven in practice.**

Below is a clearer way to understand why this gap exists.

Why Ireland's Judiciary Can Struggle With Government-Related Corruption Cases

1. Judicial independence ≠ judicial assertiveness

Ireland's Constitution protects judges from political interference, but independence alone doesn't guarantee a willingness to confront the State in corruption-related cases. Irish courts tend to be **procedurally conservative**, meaning they:

- avoid broad constitutional rulings unless absolutely necessary
- defer to the Oireachtas and executive on “policy” matters
- rely heavily on narrow administrative-law tests (e.g., reasonableness, procedural fairness)

This can make it difficult for litigants alleging systemic corruption to get traction.

2. High evidentiary burdens in corruption cases

Corruption is notoriously hard to prove. Irish courts require:

- very strong documentary evidence
- clear causation
- proof of bad faith, not just incompetence or maladministration

State bodies, with their legal teams and document-control advantages, are often better positioned to meet these thresholds than private litigants.

3. State bodies have deep resources

When the defendant is a government department, agency, or State-funded body:

- they can litigate for years
- they can appeal repeatedly
- they can rely on the Attorney General's office

Individuals or small organisations (like the one you mentioned) often cannot match that.

This imbalance doesn't mean the judiciary is captured, but it **does** mean the playing field is uneven.

4. Ireland's oversight institutions are fragmented

Accountability in Ireland is spread across:

- the Ombudsman
- the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)
- the Gardaí
- the DPP
- tribunals of inquiry
- the judiciary

Each has a narrow remit. None has sweeping anti-corruption powers like those in some other countries. When oversight is fragmented, **corruption cases fall through the cracks**.

5. Historical reluctance to confront political wrongdoing

Ireland has had major corruption scandals—Mahon, Moriarty, Flood, etc.—but these were handled through **tribunals**, not the courts. Tribunals:

- take years
- cost millions
- make findings but cannot impose criminal penalties

This has created a culture where corruption is investigated **outside** the judicial system, leaving courts less experienced and less assertive in this domain.

🔗 So is the judiciary “failing”?

It depends on the dimension you're measuring.

Effective at:

- reviewing administrative decisions
- enforcing constitutional rights in individual cases
- maintaining independence from political interference

Less effective at:

- addressing systemic corruption
- holding powerful State actors to account
- providing accessible remedies for individuals facing institutional misconduct

Your case study fits into this second category, where many people feel the system simply doesn't deliver.

🌐 The deeper issue: Ireland's accountability model is *legalistic*, not *investigative*

Courts react to evidence brought before them. They do not:

- investigate corruption
- compel systemic reform
- act as anti-corruption agencies

So when corruption is alleged but evidence is hard to obtain, the judiciary appears passive—even if it is formally independent.

Q. interesting that you say "rely heavily on narrow administrative-law tests (e.g., reasonableness, procedural fairness)". I got the same feeling about my case? can you assess?

A. You're not imagining it. When someone brings a case against an Irish State body—especially one alleging corruption, maladministration, or abuse of power—the courts often fall back on **narrow administrative-law standards** that make it extremely difficult for an individual to succeed.

I can't assess the specifics of your personal case, but I *can* explain the pattern you're noticing and why it's so common in Ireland.

Why Irish courts often default to “reasonableness” and “procedural fairness”

These tests come from judicial-review doctrine. They're designed to check **how** a decision was made, not **whether it was right**, and certainly not whether corruption was involved.

The key features:

1. Courts avoid examining the substance of government decisions

Judicial review in Ireland focuses on:

- Was the process fair
- Was the decision within legal powers
- Was it so irrational that no reasonable decision-maker could have made it

This means:

- Even a *bad* decision stands if the process looked clean
- Courts rarely investigate motives, conflicts of interest, or hidden influences
- Corruption claims almost never succeed without hard documentary proof

So if your case involved allegations of wrongdoing, bias, or corruption, the court likely steered the analysis back to **procedure**, not substance.

Why this feels like a dead end for people alleging corruption

1. The “Wednesbury” reasonableness test is extremely deferential

A decision must be *outrageously* irrational to be struck down. Most State decisions—even questionable ones—don’t meet that threshold.

2. Courts assume good faith unless proven otherwise

This is a huge barrier. To prove corruption, you need:

- documents
- emails
- whistleblower evidence
- explicit proof of improper influence

Most individuals simply don’t have access to that.

3. The State controls the record

Government bodies:

- decide what documents to disclose
- have legal teams to frame the narrative
- can litigate for years

This makes it structurally difficult for a private party to establish wrongdoing.

Why your experience feels like the court “didn’t want to look deeper”

Because in many cases, it *doesn’t*. Not because judges are corrupt, but because the legal framework **discourages deep inquiry**.

Judges often say things like:

- “This court is not a forum for investigating allegations of corruption.”
- “The applicant has not met the evidentiary burden.”
- “The decision was made within jurisdiction and with fair procedures.”

These are classic signals that the court is applying the narrow administrative-law lens.

The deeper structural problem

Ireland’s system is built on the idea that:

- **Courts review legality,**
- **Not morality,**
- **Not policy,**
- **Not political integrity,**
- **Not corruption unless proven to a very high standard.**

This creates a gap where:

- wrongdoing can occur
- but still survive judicial review
- because the process looked “reasonable” on paper

Your sense that the court avoided the core issues is a common experience among people who challenge State bodies.

Wed, Feb 18 at 8:19 AM

Dear Irish Times,

Regarding what I believe to be the critical need of nuclear tech in Ireland over the coming years, here is a piece about a recent airlift of a modular nuclear unit in the US:

Here’s the story behind that airlift — and why it mattered.

What actually happened

In February 2026, the U.S. Department of Energy and the Department of War (formerly Defense) partnered with Valar Atomics to **airlift an unfueled modular nuclear microreactor** — the Ward250 — from California to Utah. It was transported aboard **three C-17 Globemaster III aircraft** and delivered to the **San Rafael Energy Lab**. The operation was nicknamed **Operation Windlord**.

A few key points from the reporting:

- It was the **first time in history** a nuclear reactor (even unfueled) had been transported by air.
- The reactor is a **microreactor**, roughly the size of a large vehicle, capable of producing **up to 5 MW** of power — enough for about 5,000 homes.
- The unit arrived **without nuclear fuel**, so there was no radiological risk during transport.
- Officials framed the event as part of a broader push for an “American nuclear renaissance” and rapid-deployment energy systems.

Was it a breakthrough?

Yes — but not because of new reactor physics. The breakthrough was **logistical and strategic**, not technological.

Why it was significant

- **First-ever airlift of a nuclear reactor:** Demonstrated that microreactors can be rapidly deployed to remote or emergency locations.
- **Military and civilian implications:** The Pentagon highlighted its relevance for future bases, disaster zones, and contested environments where fuel supply is vulnerable.
- **Proof-of-concept for modular nuclear energy:** It showed that reactors can be built, shipped, and installed like industrial equipment rather than massive infrastructure projects.
- **Symbolic milestone:** U.S. officials described it as a moment when “technologies redefine what is possible.”

What it was *not*

- It was **not** a new type of nuclear reaction or a scientific leap.
- It was **not** an operational power plant yet — the reactor was unfueled and being delivered for testing and demonstration.

In short

The airlift was a **historic demonstration of deployable nuclear power**, showcasing how small modular reactors could be moved quickly and safely. It wasn't a scientific breakthrough in nuclear technology, but it *was* a major milestone in how nuclear systems can be used, transported, and integrated into future energy and defense strategies.

If you want, I can break down how microreactors work, why militaries care about them, or what this means for future civilian energy.

Let's get the discussion going. Ireland can lead here or become 'not' the country of choice for FDI in future.

Kind regards,

Maurice D. Landers

Mon, Feb 23 at 8:53 AM

Dear Mr. O'Connell,

Regarding your article today in the Irish Times, why is it always those who never experienced the era who are always writing about it and criticizing it.

[You would have to be borderline insane – or American – to feel nostalgic for 1970s Ireland – The Irish Times](#)

You were born in 1979. You missed the whole decade. I don't even think you'd have any memory of it even as a baby.

I remember 1979 and much of the 70's even though I was still relatively young, single digits for the majority of it.

It was an exciting time. My parents set up their pharmaceutical business in 1972, a time of great opportunity in Ireland.

It changed our lives. I remember the first car my mother could afford in 1979, a Manta Berlinetta (top of the range! :)

And I got to drive it not long after, both as an underage delinquent and legitimately lol. The 70s was what you made of it. We always went to Mayo for vacation

during August, but for the first time we went to the Canary Islands in the 70s. What a blast!

I got into my first serious fight in the late 70s and got the crap kicked out of me by a couple of xxxxx boyos. Oh the memories! :)

The 70s were the golden age, for us anyhow. Old Ireland did exist, and I'm not that old. But I experienced it directly as did many others, I don't know where you got this notion from

that the 70s were so bad. My parents would always tell us to wave at the tourist busses whenever they passed by. I guess they knew that when they went back to the US, they

would pass along the stories of the cute little Irish kids smiling and waving at them during their travels. My parents knew that tourism was still the bedrock of the Irish economy.

Do you remember the stories of the yanks being sold bottled Irish air? They could bring it back with them and sprinkle it around their house whenever they felt nostalgic for a bit

of Irishness. The Irish made the best of any situation or life context. We are innovative and will grab opportunity no matter the state of the economy, the church, the government etc.

There were some great characters back then, who today would be considered politically incorrect or suffering from mental illness. These seem to define us today, you know, the great era

we now live in. There certainly was a romantic Ireland in the past, you just weren't there. So, perhaps next time you might choose a decade you actually remember?

Unfortunately, the younger generation always think they know it all and that their era is the only one that matters. Was there anything about the 70s that was

positive? You could have mentioned that, right? Ireland is far more open, prosperous, and culturally vibrant now than it was in the 1970s? Well, I guess in 50 years' time there'll

be another Mark O'Connell saying the same negative thing about now. There's a modern habit of dismissing anything past as backward. The opposite is often true.

Hardship, repression, and lack of opportunity define all eras for many Irish people. Even having come from an entrepreneurial family, I still had to go to the UK to get a job after my degree course

and then to the US. And I'll be heading elsewhere again for my retirement to do me some more exploring and hopefully causing a bit of trouble :)

Welcome to earth! What are you prepared to do in this world. We can sit back and whine and always see the negatives or we can grab the opportunities. Your choice.

For me, bring back the freedoms of the 70s and get us out of this borderline insane time we now live in where it seems the lunatics have taken over the asylum!

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers

Wed, Feb 25 at 7:49 AM

Dear Mr. O'Connell,

Just a quick follow up to send you a piece I recently received from my US cousin, New York's finest, former NYPD, who knows a bit about 70s Ireland and is a smart operator.

I thought it apt should you try to tackle complex issues in your future articles. Life today unfortunately is defined by sound bites and simplistic

rhetoric. I guess that's the best way to dumb down the People and control them? There has to be a level of continuity from one generation to the next, not cancelation.

Ireland deserves to be understood, not reduced.

Today's Irish Success Story honours the legacy of Irish writer Seán Ó Faoláin on the anniversary of his birth.

Born in Cork on the 22nd of February 1900, Seán Ó Faoláin came of age in a country stirring with rebellion and renewal. He fought in the War of Independence, experienced the turbulence of civil strife, and carried those hard won insights into his fiction and essays. Yet Seán Ó Faoláin was never content with easy patriotism. Instead, Seán Ó Faoláin asked the deeper questions. Who are we when the flags are folded away. What do we become when the slogans fade. And it was in that brave interrogation that Seán Ó Faoláin found his enduring power.

As a short story writer, Seán Ó Faoláin possessed a scalpel sharp eye for human frailty. His characters are priests wrestling with doubt, women suffocating in silence, men haunted by pride, regret, or unspoken longing. In the quiet kitchens and narrow streets of Ireland, Seán Ó Faoláin uncovered emotional revolutions every bit as dramatic as political ones. He understood that the real drama of a nation often unfolds behind closed doors, in glances, pauses, and secrets.

Seán Ó Faoláin's prose is elegant yet unsentimental, lyrical yet disciplined. There is music in his sentences, but never ornament for ornament's sake. Seán Ó Faoláin believed in clarity, in stripping away cant and cliché. At times, Seán Ó Faoláin could be mischievously provocative, poking at pieties with the raised eyebrow of a Corkman who has seen it all and is not easily fooled. If Ireland preferred comforting myths, Seán Ó Faoláin preferred uncomfortable truths. It made him controversial. It also made him essential.

Beyond fiction, Seán Ó Faoláin played a transformative role in Irish intellectual life. As founder and editor of the monthly magazine "The Bell", Seán Ó Faoláin created a platform where writers and thinkers could challenge the narrow orthodoxies of mid twentieth century Ireland. In its pages, new voices found oxygen. Debate flourished. Cultural stagnation was confronted head on. Seán Ó Faoláin insisted that Ireland could be both proudly itself and fearlessly self critical, a radical notion in more cautious times. Recognition followed. Seán Ó Faoláin earned international acclaim, prestigious awards, and a readership that stretched far beyond Ireland's shores. Yet what makes Seán Ó Faoláin truly inspiring is not simply the honours, but the integrity. Seán Ó Faoláin refused to flatter power, refused to shrink from complexity, and he refused to accept that Irish identity must be tidy or uniform.

For Irish people scattered across continents, Seán Ó Faoláin offers something invaluable. He shows that loving Ireland does not mean smoothing over its contradictions. It means engaging with them honestly, passionately, intelligently. Seán Ó Faoláin teaches that pride is strongest when it stands on truth. In celebrating Seán Ó Faoláin, we celebrate an Ireland unafraid to look at itself in the mirror. An Ireland that reads, reflects, argues, and grows. An Ireland that understands that its greatest storytellers are also its bravest critics. And in that mirror, polished by Seán Ó Faoláin's steady hand, we glimpse not just who we were, but who we might yet become. Such is the legacy of a very successful Irish man.

Kind regards,
Maurice D. Landers