



The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

NEWS RELEASE

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International Airlines Group's Willie Walsh to Receive the Ireland-U.S. Council's Award for Outstanding Achievement at 54th Annual Dinner In New York Thursday November 10, 2016

New York, NY; April 29, 2016: *The Ireland-U.S. Council* will present its *Award for Outstanding Achievement* in 2016 to Willie Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of *International Airlines Group (IAG)* to mark his important contributions to building business bonds between America and Ireland. Throughout his successful career, he has been a superb manager of strategic change in an industry where change has become a byword. The Award will be the centerpiece of the Council's 54th Annual Dinner to be held at the *Metropolitan Club* in New York City on Thursday, November 10, 2016.



Willie Walsh
CEO
International Airlines Group

In August 2015, *IAG* which includes British Airways and Spanish airlines *Iberia* and *Vueling*, purchased *Aer Lingus* in a \$1.8 billion takeover as part of its plans to use *Aer Lingus* to expand its transatlantic services via Dublin. When the takeover was completed he said "Aer Lingus will remain an iconic Irish brand with its base and management team in Ireland but will now grow as part of a strong, profitable airline group. This means new routes and more jobs benefitting customers, employees and the Irish economy and tourism," he said.

Willie Walsh was born in Dublin, Ireland and attended his local secondary school *Ardcoil Rís*. At age 17 he joined *Aer Lingus* as a cadet pilot in 1979. He earned a Master's degree in management and business administration from *Trinity College Dublin* during his pilot years, while advancing to become a Boeing 737 captain.

He joined the management ranks at *Aer Lingus* serving in various positions and in October 2001 was appointed CEO at a time when the airline was faced with bankruptcy and heavy losses. Willie radically restructured the airline and this culminated in it posting an €107 million profit in 2004, making *Aer Lingus* the most profitable state-owned airline in the western world.

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He became CEO at British Airways in October 2005 and CEO at *International Airlines Group* in January 2011 when the new parent company was created following the merger of *British Airways* and *Iberia*.

Brian W. Stack, the President of the Council based in New York, said “We are delighted this year to present the Council’s Annual *Award for Outstanding Achievement* to Willie Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of *International Airlines Group (IAG)*. The members and directors of the Council are delighted to honor such an outstanding and worthy recipient with an award which he greatly deserves. We are pleased to mark the unique and positive contributions which Willie Walsh has made to improving the economic relationship between Ireland and the United States. Throughout his notable career, Willie Walsh has been a manager who envisions and successfully implements big-picture solutions to complex problems. This Council’s mission is to encourage closer commercial connections and deeper business links between Ireland and the United States. Our 2016 Recipient of the Council’s *Award for Outstanding Achievement* has already made a major contribution in this area. Importantly, he has also created a structure that likely will sustain this process long into the future.”

The Ireland-U.S. Council was founded by business leaders in the United States and in Ireland. It is the premier transatlantic business organization that encourages and promotes business between Ireland and the United States and was established in the Fall of 1962. Its founding was in preparation for the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Ireland in the Spring of 1963, as a measure to build institutional form around a structure to improve business, economic and commercial relations between the two countries.

The Council operates a variety of scholarship and internship programs, stages seminars and hosts frequent events in Ireland and in America aimed at developing communications and dialogue between business and political leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. *The Ireland-U.S. Council* is a non-profit organization and has no partisan, political aims or affiliations. The Council’s membership ranks are comprised predominantly of senior executives in business and financial corporations in America and in Ireland. As part of its platform, the Council also supports and sponsors many initiatives in the arts. The Council is headquartered in New York City and has an office in Dublin.

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