



(Map source: Europa)

## Ireland



Population: 3 700 000 inhabitants  
Surface area: 70 000 Km<sup>2</sup>  
Capital: Dublin  
Currency: Euro  
Official languages: Irish - English  
Form of government: Republic  
Membership in the EU: 1972  
Membership in the UIHJ: 1994

## The Sheriffs and the County Registrars

*Who are the professional officers charged with the enforcement of court judgments, the service of writs, or with debt collection?*

The Sheriffs and the County Registrars are the judicial officers that are charged with the process of enforcement of judgments and instruments and writs of execution. The Revenue Sheriffs are charged with the collection of judgment debts owing to the State. The Sheriffs and the County Registrars are entitled to sell by public auction the possessions seized from the debtor. They also may proceed to the serving of writs.

*What is the status of these professional officers?*

The Sheriffs are independent professional officers that operate within a liberal system, whereas, in contrast, the County Registrars are agents of outside status that are being remunerated by the government. They are operating within the constraints of deontological, disciplinary, and professional rules. The Sheriffs are appointed by the High Sheriff while the County Registrars are appointed by the government.

*How are the judicial officers organised ?*

The Sheriffs and the County Registrars are attached to the territorial jurisdiction of the County borough. At present, there are 4 Sheriffs (for the cities of Dublin and Cork), 16 Revenue Sheriffs, and 24 County Registrars (of whom 14 are women). The Sheriffs and the County Registrars are represented at the national level by the **County Registrars Association**.

**Contact:**

**County Registrars Association**  
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*How can one join the profession ?*

Aside from possessing the Irish nationality, the County Registrar candidate must offer proof of an exemplary moral character. The candidate must possess a minimum of eight years experience as a qualified legal counsellor (Solicitor). The County Registrar is appointed by the government.



## The enforcement of court judgments

*Who is charged with the enforcement of court judgments in Ireland?*

It is the Sheriffs and the County Registrars that are charged with the process of enforcement of judgments and instruments and writs of execution, with the exception of moneys owing to the State, which are collected by the Revenue Sheriffs.

*Can one contact a judicial officer directly to have a court order enforced?*

The dossiers are handed over directly by the tribunal to the County Registrar. The creditor is not free to choose his own County Registrar as there exists only one such registrar for each territorial jurisdiction.

*Is the judicial officer empowered to enforce execution against the entire debtor estate?*

The County Registrars and the Sheriffs proceed to the enforcement of a judgment only with respect to a debtor's possessions. They may also proceed to the process of expulsion.

*Is the judicial officer responsible for carrying out the enforcement act?*

Yes. Furthermore, he may have recourse to protection from the public enforcement authorities in case he encounters problems. He is not entitled to arrange repayment schedules, such an arrangement being reserved to the creditor himself.

*Is it possible for the judicial officer to obtain personal information about the debtor and his estate?*

The County Registrar disposes of the same prerogatives as any other citizen with regards to obtaining information on the debtor's estate.

*Who pays for the judicial officer's intervention costs?*

The County Registrar's intervention does not impose any charge on the creditor. The Sheriffs operate instead on the basis of a rate scale at the debtor's charge. However, in case of the latter's insolvency, the creditor will be called upon to assume the costs.

## The service of writs

*Are judicial officers entitled to proceed to the service of writs?*

Yes, but the process is limited to the serving of writs within the framework of the enforcement procedure.

*What are the physical steps involved in serving a writ?*

The writ is physically handed over to the addressee by the County Registrar or the Sheriff.

*What is the force in law of a writ?*

The document avouches the modalities of handing-over of the writ to the addressee.

*Does the judicial officer's intervention fall within the framework of the Council regulation (EC) N° 1348/2000 of 29 May 2000 on the service in the Member States of judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil or commercial matters?*

The County Registrar is both transmitting agency (charged to transmit the writs to another member State) and receiving agency (charged to notify the writs that arrive from another member State).



## Debt collection

*Is the judicial officer empowered to proceed towards the collection of debts?*

No.

*Is it possible to contact a judicial officer directly for the purpose of collecting a debt?*

*What will it cost a creditor to arrange for the debt collection?*

## Other areas of intervention

*May the judicial officer arrange for sales by public auction ?*

Yes, within the framework of the enforcement procedure of the debtor's seized possessions.

*May the judicial officer engage in formulating legal findings and observations, such as statements of facts?*

No.

*May the judicial officer represent the parties before the courts ?*

No.

*Is the judicial officer entitled to offer legal advice ?*

Only within the context of the enforcement procedure.

*Is the judicial officer entitled to engage in other activities ?*

The County Registrars are likewise charged with the administrative processes of the Circuit Courts, of real estate registries, and courts with jurisdiction over trusteeships and legacies in each County.

