Dr Máire Geoghegan-Quinn is Chairperson of Údarás na hOllscoile. She served as the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science from 2010-2014. As Commissioner she established the 'Innovation Union' initiative; progressed the European Research Area; and delivered the largest ever research framework programme, Horizon 2020, with a 30% budget increase (€80 billion in total for research and innovation). She had political responsibility for two directorates general – the Directorate General for Research and Innovation and the Joint Research Centre.

Máire previously served as a Fianna Fáil TD for the Galway West constituency (1975–1997); and held several Ministerial positions including: Minister for the Gaeltacht (1979–1981), becoming the first female Cabinet Minister since the foundation of the Irish State; Minister for European Affairs (1987–1991); and Minister for Justice (1993–1994).

She holds a Degree of Doctor of Laws from University of Galway, a degree of Doctor of Science from UCD (both honoris causa); and the Légion d'honneur among other awards. She is a Member of the Board of Science Foundation Ireland, a Member of the European Joint Research Centre (JRC) Alumni Network and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.