

Oireachtas Update



In Dáil Éireann, Wednesday and Thursday will see the Second Stage discussions regarding the Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2014. This Bill aims to provide for the effective combating of terrorist offences. It also seeks to give effect to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, 2005.

Seanad Éireann is scheduled to make statements on the Report of the Working Group on Seanad Reform 2015, and on last week's Spring Economic Statement on Wednesday and Thursday. Friday will see the discussion of the Sport Ireland Bill 2014, which is to provide for the establishment of Spóirt Éireann (Sport Ireland) and further, to provide for the dissolution of the Irish Sports Council and the National Sports Campus Development Authority.

On Wednesday, a select sub-committee from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will discuss the Statute Law Revision Bill 2015. The Bill aims to update the Statute Law of the country but revoking instruments made before January 1892.

CSO figures show further decreases to the live register

CSO figures released on Wednesday 29 April reveal that the live register has reached its lowest point since 2009. The Live Register report states that as of April 2015, there is a total of 343,551 people on the live register, down 45,008 from the same month last year. This brings the standardised unemployment rate (SUR) down from 11.6% to just 10%. This is the forty-first month in a row that the live register has reduced.

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD stressed the importance of the Action Plan for Jobs, which was launched in 2012, commenting that the SUR has fallen 5.1% since its introduction.

For every individual that leaves the live register to take up employment, the Exchequer saves approximately €20,000 per year, according to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Central bank governor to retire

Governor of the central bank, Patrick Honohan, has announced that he will not finish out his term, but will retire at the end of this calendar year instead of September 2016.

Honohan, 65, confirmed his early retirement at the publication of the Bank's annual report. He stated that he was "not getting any younger", and that he did not plan on taking up employment after his tenure at the bank had ceased. Mr Honohan began his work at the Central Bank in September 2009; he was elected with the task of rescuing and restructuring the banks after their near-collapse.

He believes that the crisis-management phase of the bank is over, and therefore, he can move on. He has announced his resignation so as to give policy-makers time to find his replacement.

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New Lobbying Register launched

On Thursday 30 April 2015, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD announced the launch of an online register for lobbyists. This follows the Mahon report's recommendation that previously-unregulated lobbying should be subject to a register, as a way of knowing "who is lobbying whom and about what".

The register will be available to the public, and lobbyists are obliged to register and update records three times a year. Both services are free of charge. Sherry Perreault, a Canadian official, has been appointed as Head of Regulation of Lobbying. She will work closely with the Standards in Public Office Commission which will oversee the implementation of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.

Minister Howlin TD, at the launch, stated that "lobbying is absolutely necessary in order to maintain a healthy and well-functioning democracy".

PAI will hold on conference on lobbying on Thursday 25 June.

€1m in Irish aid to go to Nepal

On Tuesday 28 April, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan TD and Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North South Co-operation, Séan Sherlock TD announced that, through Irish Aid's NGO partners, €1m would be provided to assist with food, water, shelter and medical supplies for those displaced by Saturday's earthquake in Nepal.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade established an Emergency Consular Response Team on Saturday, following the disaster. Through this it was agreed that skilled members of Ireland's Rapid Response Corps would be deployed, and work in conjunction with UN workers, to aid those affected by the quake.

Mortgage interest rates cut by up to 0.38%

AIB Group—encompassing AIB, EBS, and Haven—will be cutting the interest rates on standard variable rate (SVR) loans by 0.25% at AIB, and 0.38% at EBS and Haven. This reduction is available to all new and existing customers, and will apply from June.

Interest rates for loan to value (LTV) mortgages will also be reduced by 0.25% in AIB, EBS, and Haven.

Reductions for fixed-rate mortgages will be announced next week.

It is estimated that these lower rates will affect around 158,000 mortgages.



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PAI Blog

Current Developments in Family Leave

by Toby Wolfe

read [here](#)

Spring Economic Statement sets challenges for Government

by Tom Ferris

read [here](#)

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Transforming Lives & Societies

DÁIL

Tuesday 05 May

Wednesday 06 May

Thursday 07 May

The Dáil is not in session

2.30 p.m.

Questions (Minister for Social Protection)

3.45 p.m.

Topical Issues

4.33 p.m.

Leaders Questions

4.54 p.m.

Order of Business

Motion re PQ Rota Change (Departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence)

5.24 p.m.

Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2014 (Seanad) - Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)

6.00 p.m.

Private Members' Business (Fianna Fáil) (3 Hours)

9.00 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

9.30 a.m.

Questions (Minister for Finance)

10.45 a.m.

Statements re Challenges Facing the European Union (Department of Foreign Affairs)

12.00 noon

Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.

Order of Business

Statements re Challenges Facing the European Union (to adjourn at 1.40pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Foreign Affairs)

Motion from the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs re the Commission Work Programme (without Debate)

Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2014 (Seanad) - Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)

4.42 p.m.

Topical Issues

5.30 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

SEANAD

Tuesday 05 May

Wednesday 06 May

Thursday 07 May

2.30 p.m.

Order of Business

3.45 p.m.

Statements on 'Report of the Working Group on Seanad Reform 2015' (Senators Maurice Manning and Joe O'Toole)

5.45 p.m.

Seanad Adjourns

2.30 p.m.

Commencement Matters

3.30 p.m.

Order of Business

4.45 p.m.

Private Members Business – Motion

7.00 p.m.

Statements on the Spring Economic Statement (Minister of State at the Department of Finance)

9.00 p.m.

Seanad Adjourns

10.30 a.m.

Commencement Matters

11.30 a.m.

Order of Business

12.45 p.m.

Sport Ireland Bill 2014 – Report and Final Stages (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

3.00 p.m.

Statements on Europe Day and the European Commission's Work Programme (Department of Minister for European Affairs and Data Protection)

Motion regarding the 'EU Scrutiny Work Programme 2015, Joint Committees' Priorities' report from the Joint Committee on European Affairs – Without Debate

4.30 p.m.

Seanad Adjourns

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday 05 May

No Committee meetings will be held.

Wednesday 06 May

Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: Witnesses before the Banking Inquiry Session A: 9.30 a.m.

[Mr Richie Boucher, Group Chief Executive, Bank of Ireland]; and

Session B: 2.30 p.m.

[Mr Cormac McCarthy, former Group Chief Executive & Director, Ulster Bank]

Foreign Affairs and Trade (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 10 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: Irish Development Association business activities in developing growth markets [Members of the Irish Development Association]

Transport and Communications (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 12 noon (T)

AGENDA: Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Road Traffic Bill 2015 (resumed)

[Representatives of An Garda Síochána Traffic Bureau and the Irish Road Haulage Association]

Education and Social Protection (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 1 p.m. (T)

AGENDA: The use of ICT in primary schools [Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO); Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN); and the Department of Education and Skills]

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 2 p.m.

AGENDA: Private Meeting

Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint) CR2, LH 2000 2.30 p.m.

AGENDA: Private Meeting

Public Expenditure and Reform (Select sub) CR4, LH 2000 4.15 p.m. (T)

AGENDA: Statute Law Revision Bill 2015

[Minister of State at the Department of Finance]

Thursday 07 May

Health and Children (Joint) CR2, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m. The development of quality and affordable childcare [Ms. Ciairín de Buis, Director, Start Strong; Ms. Teresa Heeney, Chief Executive Officer, Early Childhood Ireland; Ms. Orla O'Connor, Director, National Women's Council of Ireland; and Ms. Maria Corbett, Deputy Chief Executive, Children's Rights Alliance]

Session B: 11.30 a.m. Update on Child Protection Issues in the Midlands [Mr. Gordon Jeyes, Chief Executive, Tusla - Child and Family Agency]

Public Accounts CR3, LH 2000 10 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and

(ii) Comptroller and Auditor General Appropriation Accounts 2013

a. Vote 29: Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

b. Chapter 8: Operation of the Emergency Call Answering Service

[Officials from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform]

Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: Witnesses before the Banking Inquiry Session A: 10.30 a.m.

[Mr Michael Torpey, former Group Finance Director, Ulster Bank Group and Mr Robert Gallagher, former Chief Executive, Corporate Markets Div, Ulster Bank]; and

Session B: 3.00 p.m.

[Mr John Beggs, former Chief Economist, Allied Irish Banks; Mr Pat McArdle, former Group Chief Economist, Ulster Bank and Dr Dan McLaughlin, former Chief Economist, Bank of Ireland]

European Union Affairs (Joint) CR2, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)

AGENDA: "Changing Attitudes towards the European Union" [Ms. Liz Wall, National President, Irish Countrywomen's Association; Ms. Maureen Kavanagh, Chief Executive, Active Retirement Ireland; Representatives from Youth Work Ireland and Ms. Noelle O'Connell, European Movement Ireland]



Public Affairs Ireland

Industrial Relations Conference 2015

*Innovations in Workplace Dispute Resolution
In Ireland*

Wednesday, 6th May 2015

The Westin Hotel

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