

News

PAI Directory 2011

The political changes that have taken place in 2011 have created a need for an accessible reference point on government, the civil service and parliamentary representatives. The PAI Directory 2011 takes account of the dramatic changes in the governmental landscape in a single volume and easy to use format.

The Directory's information has been updated since the general election 2011 and includes:

- senior and junior ministers' contact details and biographies;
- new departmental structures; and
- a list of the new TDs.

The Directory also features up-to-date information on:

- agencies and associated bodies;
- the Office of the Attorney General; and
- the European Union.

The PAI Directory 2011 is to be published shortly. Copies may be purchased for €19.95 + p.p..

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New arrangements for the Ministerial transport and staff support announced

The Government has agreed on new terms in relation to transport and staff support for Ministers, measures that could save the government substantial sums. From May 1, Garda drivers and state cars will be retained for the President, the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste and the Minister for Justice and Equality (for security reasons) while Ministers, the Ceann Comhairle and the Attorney General, will have to supply their own cars and hire civilian drivers.

Those Gardaí alleviated of their driving duties will be returned to regular duties. In 3 months time, official cars and Garda drivers will no longer be provided to former Taoisigh and former Presidents except in circumstances of important State occasions. The decision does not affect the provision of a State car to the Chief Justice and the current Director of Public Prosecutions. These new measures look set to cut the cost of Ministerial transport by almost 50 percent.

Staffing

The permitted staffing of the private offices and constituency offices of Ministers is being reduced, with immediate effect, from 10 to 8 and 6 to 4 respectively. For Ministers of State the numbers permitted are being reduced by 7 to 5 in private offices and from 5 to 3 in constituency offices. Any Minister of State assigned to more than one Department will be allowed 7 staff members in their private office (down from 9).

This marks a reduction of 25 percent in the permitted staffing of Ministers' Offices and a reduction of 33 percent for Ministers of State. Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr. Brendan Howlin T.D.

commented that “the transfer of staff from Ministers’ offices to front line areas will allow the public service to become more focused on the citizen”.

Programme for Government

These plans follow proposals outlined in the Programme for Government which stated the new coalition’s intention to halve the cost of the existing provision of ministerial transport and put an end to the automatic right to state cars for former office holders and other state officials.

System of appointments to become more transparent

New transparency for appointments system

In the Dáil last week, the Taoiseach announced a new procedure that will be followed when appointing staff to State Boards. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform have also confirmed the changes set to take place to this procedure.

These proposed changes come at a time of controversy which arose following the appointment by the previous Government of 110 people to State Boards in the period between the recent election campaign and the creation of the new government. The new Government, as outlined by the Taoiseach last week in the Dáil, sought legal advice from the Attorney General regarding the appropriateness of these appointments to which she responded that it is not possible to remove these appointees.

Public applications

While plans for a rejuvenation of the appointment system are in the preliminary stages, the Department has confirmed that the Government will introduce public applications for appointments to State Boards in the near future. Chairpersons will continue to be appointed by the Ministers of the relevant department. Furthermore, agency boards will be demolished where appropriate and managers of agencies will report directly to the Ministers of the relevant department on various issues including performance against targets.

Committees

The Taoiseach also outlined that once a person is appointed to a board they will have to go before the necessary Oireachtas committee to present their credentials and competencies to the committee members. This procedure “will bring about an openness and transparency and provide an opportunity for people who want to serve to present their credentials in a proper manner” the Taoiseach added. This step in the appointment process will not be an interrogation but rather “an opportunity for that person to present his or her case, vision, view for the agency or board involved”.

PAI to host conference on the Public Sector in Ireland

An upcoming conference on May 26 entitled “The Public Sector in Ireland in 2011 – Can service be delivered and reforms achieved in a time of sharp fiscal corrections?” will be hosted by Public Affairs Ireland. The keynote address will be delivered by Brian Hayes TD, Minister for Public Sector Reform.

A number of issues currently impacting the Public Sector in Ireland will be discussed on the day including;

- the programme for Government;
- the EU/IMF Programme;
- the four year plan; and
- the Croke Park Agreement.

For more information and to book a place on this conference please click [here](#).

Oireachtas

Dáil

Tuesday April 19

2.30pm

Questions (Taoiseach)

3.15pm

Questions (Minister for Defence)

4.15pm

Leaders Questions

4.36pm

Order of Business

Motion re Passenger Name Record Data (to conclude in 45 minutes) (Department of Justice and Equality)

Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) (number 2) Bill 2011 (Second Stage Resumed) (Department of Justice and Equality)

7.00pm

Private Members Business

Wednesday April 20

10.30am

Leaders Questions

10.51am

Order of Business

11.21am

Questions (Taoiseach)

Statement Re EU IMF Programme (working title) (to conclude within 2 hours and 30 minutes) (Department of Finance)

Road Traffic Bill 2011 (Seanad) Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Transport Tourism and Sport)

Nurses and Midwives Bill 2010 Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Health)

Statements on Suicide Prevention (Resumed) (Department of Health)

1.30pm

SOS

2.30pm

Questions (Minister for Transport)

3.45pm

Statements re the Commission of Inquiry into the Banking Sector in Ireland (Nyberg Report) (to conclude at 7pm) (Department of Finance)

7.00pm

Private Members Business

Thursday April 21

10.30am

Order of Business

Motion re Deployment of Permanent Defence Forces (to conclude within 1hour 5 minutes) (Department of Defence)

Nurses and Midwives Bill 2010 Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Health)

Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) (number 2) Bill 2011 Second Stage (Resumed) (Department of Justice and Equality)

Statements on Suicide Prevention (Resumed) (Department of Health)

3.30pm

Questions (Minister for Foreign Affairs)

Seanad

2.30pm

Order of Business

Motion re: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorists offences and serious crime. (Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform)

Committees

No committees have yet been set up under the 31st Dáil.

Appointments

New Chair of Irish Greyhound Board

The appointment of Mr Phil Meaney as Chairman of Bord na gCon, the body charged with guiding and promoting greyhound racing, was confirmed last week by Minister of Agriculture, Food & Marine Simon Coveney. He will take the position recently vacated by Mr Dick O'Sullivan.

Judge Tom O'Donnell appointed to Circuit Court

The Government last week announced the nomination of Judge Tom O'Donnell of the District Court in Limerick for appointment to the Circuit Court by the President. He would replace Judge Frank O'Donnell who retired last month.

Educated at Crescent College and UCD, Judge Tom O'Donnell was enrolled as a solicitor in 1976 and joined the legal aid panel in 1980. In 1988, he was appointed as a judge of the District court and in 1999 he was assigned to District No.14 (Limerick) 1999. He is currently a member of the District Court Rules Committee 2003.

Kathleen Lynch assigned Minister of older people role

Kathleen Lynch TD was last week appointed as Minister for older people by Minister for Health Dr. James Reilly TD.

Fianna Fáil and Sinn Fein front benches decided upon

Fianna Fáil front bench:

Fianna Fáil Whip and Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Trade: **Seán O Fearghail**

Leader and Spokesperson on Northern Ireland: **Micheál Martin**

Deputy Leader and Finance: **Brian Lenihan**

Public Expenditure and Financial Sector Reform: **Michael McGrath**

Public Sector Reform: **Sean Fleming**

Education and Skills: **Brendan Smith**

Social Protection: **Barry Cowen**

Environment, Community and Local Government: **Niall Collins**

Children: **Charlie McConalogue**

Justice, Equality and Defence: **Dara Calleary**

Health: **Billy Kelleher**

Transport, Tourism and Sport: **Timmy Dooley**

Communications, Energy and Natural Resources: **Eamon Ó Cuiv**

Agriculture and Food: **Michael Moynihan**

Arts and Heritage: **Robert Troy**

Marine and Fisheries: **John Browne**

Horticulture and Rural Affairs: **Seamus Kirk**

Housing, Planning and Gaeltacht Affairs: **Micheal Kitt**

Small Business Regulatory Framework: **John McGuinness**

Spokesperson on Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation: **Willie O'Dea**

Sinn Fein front bench:

Sinn Féin leader: **Gerry Adams**

Public Expenditure and Reform: **Mary Lou McDonald**

Social Protection and Party Whip: **Aengus Ó Snodaigh**

Finance: **Pearse Doherty**

Health and Children: **Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin**

Foreign Affairs and Trade: **Pádraig MacLochlainn**

Enterprise, Jobs, - Innovation and An Gaeltacht: **Peadar Tóibín**

Justice, Equality and Defence: **Jonathan O'Brien**

Communications, Energy and Natural Resources: **Martin Ferris**

Education and Skills: **Seán Crowe**

Environment, Community and Local Government: **Brian Stanley**

Agriculture, Food and Marine: **Michael Colreavy**

Transport and Housing: **Dessie Ellis**

Arts, Heritage, Tourism and Sport: **Sandra McLellan**