

Oireachtas Update



Dáil Éireann has been adjourned until Tuesday 15th April.

Seanad Éireann has been adjourned until Tuesday 15th April.

There will be no Committee Meetings until the week beginning April 14th.

TD calls for Minister of Finance to moderate mortgage rates

Michael McGrath TD, on Wednesday 1 April, put a question to the Minister of Finance regarding standard variable rate mortgages, and whether the Minister would “use his influence, to express a view and to engage with the financial institutions directly and for the Central Bank to do that same”.

The Minister told the TD that his office had recently been in correspondence with the Central Bank; he also stated that the Central Bank does not “have new proposals for the additional regulation of interest rates ... It has no statutory role in the setting of interest rates by financial institutions”.

Savings of €10.3bn reported due to Troika renegotiations

This morning, Brian Hayes MEP announced that by the end of 2015 the Government will have made savings of €10.3bn on national debt repayments because of renegotiations regarding the Troika bailout plan.

The 2011 forecast for 2012 estimated a repayment of €7.5bn, and the Government actually paid €7.157bn, giving €343m in savings. According to the 2011 forecast, we should have had to repay €11.3bn while the latest forecast projects a repayment of €7.4bn, with a saving of €3.9bn.

According to the MEP, “[b]y replacing the promissory note with a cheaper funding model, we will have to borrow €20bn less over the next decade as a result”. He went on to comment that these savings are the result of “renegotiation, improvements in the economy, rebuilding international reputation and the work the Government has done”.

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New combined Drugs and Organised Crime Unit and supervised injection centres proposed

Catherine Byrne TD has suggested that medically supervised injection centres for intravenous drugs users could help to clean up our streets. She applauded the Ana Liffey Drug Project and their examination of the possibility of opening a centre of this kind.

She said: "It takes the problem off the streets and away from the public who really should not have to see people injecting drugs as they go about their daily business.

The TD said that these injection centres would only prove to complement the new unit that will be called the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, which is a merging of the Garda National Drug Unit and the Organised Crime Unit.

This new unit will have an approach more focused on intelligence-led operations, will have increased capability in dealing with organised crime, it will dismantle organisations and prosecute offenders, and will target criminal organisation support networks and disrupt criminal activity.

Delayed reform of An Garda Síochána legislation has been enacted

On Thursday 2 April, Independent TD Mick Wallace put a question to the Minister of Justice and Equality: what is "the reason much of the promised legislation relating to reform of An Garda Síochána has been delayed"?

The Minister informed the TD that the Garda Síochána (Amendment) Act 2015 was recently enacted. The legislation expands the remits of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate.

She also stated that the establishment of a Policing Authority was crucial in the Government's plan for justice reform.

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By PAI

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