

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Road Traffic (No.2) Bill 2014 is on the agenda. On Thursday the Report Stage of the Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011 will be concluded.

The Seanad will meet every day this week. The Social Welfare Bill and Pensions (No.2) 2014 will reach its Report and Final Stages by Wednesday. The Water Services Bill 2014 will be on the agenda for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Regarding Committee Meetings this week, the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis will have private and public meetings throughout the week; on Tuesday afternoon, and Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

New working group founded for Seanad reform

A new working group on reform of Seanad Éireann has been established by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

Its purpose will be to look at potential ways of reforming the Seanad within the current constitutional structure. It will also look at methods of reforming the Seanad in general.

The group will be composed of Tom Arnold (former chairman of the Constitutional Convention), Elaine Byrne (author, journalist and commentator on public policy), Maurice Hayes (former Senator, former Northern Ireland ombudsman and former chairman of the National Forum on Europe), Pat Magner (former Senator) Dr. Mary C Murphy (politics lecturer in UCC), and Mary O'Rourke (former Minister and Senator). This working group will be chaired by former Senator Dr Maurice Manning.

Bord Gáis launch investigation into "financial misappropriation"

Ervia (formerly known as Bord Gáis), the semi-state company responsible for electricity and gas, is probing allegations of financial misappropriation of €500,000 made by a former employee of the company.

The allegation concerns a misappropriation of money in both the Republic and the North to cover a shortfall on a major transmission contract in Munster.

The investigation is being undertaken by KPMG.

Ireland ranked 20th in Web Index study

Ireland has been ranked 20th out of 86 countries in a major new Web Index study by the World Wide Web Foundation which was founded by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web. This index examines and analyses the internet's contribution to economic, political and social progress in over 86 countries.

Denmark topped the index with Finland, Norway, the UK and Sweden composing the other positions in the top 5. The index gave Ireland a total value of 78 out of a maximum of 100. In the various categories, Ireland scored 87 for universal access, 70 for relevant content, 83 for freedom and openness, and 58 for empowerment.

Unemployed worst affected by budget

In ESRI's newly released report *Distributional Impact of Tax, Welfare and Public Service Pay Policies: Budget 2015 and Budgets 2009-2015*, the ESRI's research has found that single unemployed people without children have been the worst affected group by budget cuts since the start of the economic crisis. On the other hand, retired people were found to be the least affected by budget cuts in the last few years.

The hardest hit by Budget 2015 was found to be those on lower incomes who have lost the most in household income.

Additional Arts Council funding announced for 2015

An additional €2 million in funding for the Arts Council for 2015 has been announced by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD. This €2 million will be earmarked specifically for the Arts Council commemorations programme to help mark the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 2016.

This extra funding brings the budget for the Arts Council close to €60 million.

PAI Blog

Google and the EU: Read [here](#)

DAIL

Tuesday 16th December

2.00 p.m.
Questions (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform)

3.15 p.m.

Leaders Questions

3.36 p.m.

Questions (Taoiseach)

4.36 p.m.

Order of Business

Motion re Ratification of EU Aviation Agreements (Referral to committee without debate)

5.06 p.m.

Topical Issues

Road Traffic (No.2) Bill 2014 - (Order for Second Stage and Second Stage)
(Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

7.30 p.m.

Private Members Business - Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Right to Personal Autonomy and Bodily Integrity) Bill 2014 (Technical Group)

Afternoon business continued

10.00 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 17th December

9.30 a.m.
Questions (Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

10.45 a.m.

Road Traffic (No.2) Bill 2014 - Second and Remaining Stages (Resumed)
(Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

12.00 p.m.

Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.

Order of Business

12.51 p.m.

SOS (1 hour)

1.51 p.m.

Topical Issues

Appropriation Bill 2014 - (All Stages)
(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

Road Traffic (No.2) Bill 2014 - Second and Remaining Stages (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

Valuation (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2012 (Seanad) - Second Stage
(Department of Finance)

Customs Bill 2014 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage
(Department of Finance)

7.30 p.m.

Private Members Business - Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Right to Personal Autonomy and Bodily Integrity) Bill 2014 (Technical Group)

Afternoon business continued

10.00 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 18th December

9.30 a.m.
Questions (Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

10.45 a.m.

Protection of Children's Health (Tobacco Smoke in Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) Bill 2012 (Seanad) - Report Stage

Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011 - Report Stage (Resumed)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

12 p.m.

Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.

Order of Business

Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011 - Report Stage (Resumed to adjourn at 2.30pm if not previously concluded)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Statements on the 4th Report of the Constitutional Convention on the Dail Electoral System (to conclude within 90 minutes)
(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

Statements Opposing Domestic Violence (to adjourn within 90 minutes)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

SEANAD

Monday 15th December

2.30 p.m.
Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2014 – Second Stage
(Minister for Health)

4.00 p.m.

Matters on the Adjournment

Tuesday 16th December

11.00 a.m.
Order of Business

12.15 p.m.
Social Welfare Bill and Pensions (No.2) 2014 – Committee Stage
(Department of Social Protection)

4.00 p.m.
Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Bill 2013 – Report Stage (Amendments from Dáil Éireann)

Road Traffic (No. 2) Bill 2014 - All Stages
(Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport)
Matters on the Adjournment

Wednesday 17th December

10.30 a.m.
Order of Business

11.45 p.m.
Social Welfare Bill and Pensions (No.2) 2014 – Report and Final Stages
(Department of Social Protection)

2.30 p.m.
Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2014 – Committee and Remaining Stages
(Minister for Health)

4.00 p.m.
Private Members Business

6.00 p.m.
Water Services Bill 2014 – Second Stage
(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)
Matters on the Adjournment

Thursday 18th December

10.30 a.m.
Order of Business

11.45 a.m.

Statements on Junior Cert Reform
(Minister for Education and Skills)

12.45 p.m.

Appropriation Bill 2014 – All Stages

Motion for the Early Signature of the Appropriation Bill 2014 – without debate
(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

2.00 p.m.
Water Services Bill 2014 - Committee Stage

Matters on the Adjournment

Friday 19th December

10.30 a.m.
Order of Business

Water Services Bill 2014 - Second Stage
(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday December 16th

1.30 p.m.

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)

Committee Room 2, Leinster House

AGENDA: (i) Resourcing in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation [Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Mr. John Murphy, Secretary General at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation];

(ii) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals:

Schedule A: COM(2014)452 re. certain aspects of the organisation of working time in inland waterway transport; Schedule B: COM(2014)449; COM(2014)469; COM(2014)585; COM(2014)587; COM(2014)605; COM(2014)609; COM(2014)636; COM(2014)652; COM(2014)660; COM(2014)664; COM(2014)667; COM(2014)693; Early Warning Notes: EWN(2014)C 330-06; EWN(2014)C 347-06; EWN(2014)C 350-09; EWN(2014)L 319-1

2 p.m.

Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: (i) Draft Guidelines for the Examination of State Aid to the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector [Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine]; and

(ii) Designation of land as Special Protection Areas for the preservation of the hen harrier under The EU Birds Directive [Representatives from Irish Farmers with Designated Land]

2 p.m.

European Union Affairs (Joint)

Committee Room 1, Leinster House

AGENDA: (i) a. Annual Report of the European Court of Auditors 2013; and

b. Landscape Reviews on Financial Risks to the EU Budget and Accountability and Audit in the European Union [Mr. Kevin Cardiff, European Court of Auditors]; (ii) 2015: The European Year for Development [Mr. Hans Zomer, Director, Dóchas; Ms. Sharan Kelly, CEO of Tearfund and Chairperson of Dóchas; and Ms. Olive Towey, Concern]

2.15 p.m.

Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Joint)

Committee Room 4, Leinster House

AGENDA: (i) 1916 Centenary Commemorations [Mr. John Concannon, Co-ordinator, 1916 Centenary Commemorations]; and

(ii) Pre-Legislative Scrutiny on the General Scheme of the Planning and Development (No.1) Bill, 2014 [Officials from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government]

5 p.m.

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform (Joint)

Committee Room 1, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

5:30pm

Administration (Joint sub)

Committee Room 2, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

5.30pm

Health and Children (Joint)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: Session A: 5.30 p.m. Response from the Health Service Executive (HSE) to the findings of the recently published Review of the Ambulance Service by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) [Officials from the HSE]; and

Session B: 7 p.m. Response from the HSE to issues raised by RTÉ's Prime Time programme on Áras Attracta, Swinford, Co Mayo [Officials from the HSE]

6.15pm - Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)Committee Rm 4, **AGENDA:** Private Meeting

Wednesday December 17th

9.15 a.m.

Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)

Committee Room 1, Leinster House

AGENDA: Session A: 9.15 a.m. Private; and Session B: 9.30 a.m. Public Hearing [Mr Peter Nyberg, on the report of the Commission of Investigation into the banking Sector in Ireland, Misjudging Risk: Causes of the Systemic Banking Crisis in Ireland]

9.30 a.m.

Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint)

Committee Room 2, Leinster House

(a) 9.30 a.m. (P)

(b) 10.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA:

(a) Private; and

(b) Report of the Working Group on Review of Firearms Licensing [Officials from the Department of Justice and Equality and Representatives from An Garda Síochána]

9.30 a.m.

Transport and Communications (Joint)

Committee Room 4, Leinster House

AGENDA: Performance of the Irish Tourism Industry in 2014 and the outlook for 2015 [Mr. Stephen McNally, President, and Mr Tim Fenn, CEO, Irish Hotels Federation and Mr Donall O'Keefe Secretary, and Mr Pdraig Cribben, Board Member, Drinks Industry Group Ireland]

10.45 a.m.

Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann (Select)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

1 p.m.

Education and Social Protection (Joint)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

2.30 p.m.

Public Accounts

Committee Room 2, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

4 p.m.

Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann (Select)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: Private Meeting

Thursday December 18th

9.15 a.m.

Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)

Committee Room 3, Leinster House

AGENDA: Session A: 9.15 a.m. Private; and Session B: 9.30 a.m. Public Hearing [Mr. Rob Wright, on the Report of the Independent Review Panel: Strengthening the Capacity of the Department of Finance]

9.30 a.m.

Health and Children (Joint)

Committee Room 2, Leinster House

AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m.

(i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals:

Schedule B: COM(2014)362; and

(ii) The implications for the patient and medical profession of unregistered practitioners of cosmetic surgery [Mrs. Margaret O'Donnell, President, Irish Association of Plastic Surgeons; Ms. Patricia Eadie, Immediate past-President, Irish Association of Plastic Surgeons; Ms. Siobhan Kelly, CEO, Irish College of Ophthalmologist; Dr. Patrick Ormond, Irish Association of Dermatology]; and Session B: 11.30 a.m.

The microbiology of Lyme disease [Dr. Colette Bonner, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Head of the Health Protection Unit, Department of Health; and Dr. Bartley Cryan, Consultant Microbiologist, Cork University Hospital]

10 a.m.

Public Accounts

Committee Room 1, Leinster House

AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and (ii) National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) Financial Statements 2013 [Officials from NAMA and from the Department of Finance]

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