

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Second Stage, Committee and Remaining Stages of the Thirty-fourth amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill 2015 are scheduled for consideration.

The Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar TD, will be making statements on ambulance services in Dublin to the Seanad on Tuesday. Also on Tuesday, the Minister of State with special responsibility for the Diaspora, Jimmy Deenihan TD, will be making statements on *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy*.

The Joint Committee on European Affairs will hear on Tuesday from Conservative MEP Sir Bill Cash on the topic of 'Brexit'. The Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis will hear from Mr Simon Carswell of the Irish Times, on relationships between State authorities, political parties, elected representatives, supervisory authorities, banking institutions and the property sector.

Plain packaging legislation for tobacco products passed by Oireachtas

The Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Bill has passed through all stages of the Oireachtas. It was first passed by the Seanad, then debated in the Dáil where it was subject to some technical amendments, and last week returned to the Seanad to pass these final amendments. In effect, there will no longer be any cigarette marketing on packaging, allowing only for the name of the brand and a health warning to be printed on packets.

Ireland is the first European country to bring in such laws, and the second in the world, after Australia. The remaining option for cigarette companies opposing the legislation is to take the State to court.

Rural development advisory group established

An advisory group to advance rural development policy in Ireland and to assist in the implementation of the 34 recommendations of the Government's CEDRA report has been established. This group will be chaired by Pat Spillane, who also chaired CEDRA's (Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas) work in 2012 and 2013. Members of the new advisory group will include the MDs of Supermacs and Dairymaster – Pat McDonagh and Dr Edmund Harty – the CEO of Musgraves, Chris Martin, and Ear to the Ground Journalist, Helen Carroll.

The CEDRA report was completed in December 2012, published in November 2013, and launched in April 2014. In July 2014 Minister Ann Phelan was appointed as the Minister for Rural Affairs with special responsibility for rural economic and development and specifically the implementation of the CEDRA recommendations. Minister Phelan established an Interdepartmental Group, which she chairs, to support the delivery of the CEDRA recommendations.

Happenings at the Oireachtas Banking Inquiry

On March 4 2015 the Banking Inquiry Committee heard from Dr Peter Bacon and Professor Alan Ahearne. Dr Bacon spoke on reports he produced for the Department of Finance in 1998, 1999 and 2000, and on the establishment and operational effectiveness of NAMA. According to Dr Bacon, the measure with the most significant impact in the subsequent rise of house prices was the decision in 2001 to reverse the exclusion of tax deductions of interest for investors.

Professor Ahearne of NUI Galway spoke on issues relating to early warnings signs of a boom-and-bust cycle. He commented that Government intervention in 2004 to end excessive lending practices would have helped avoid the major damage caused in 2005 and 2006.

The Banking Inquiry will soon commence the media module as part of its Context hearings. Chairman of the Committee, Ciaran Lynch TD said: "On Wednesday 25th March, we will commence public hearings on the role of the media during the property boom in the lead-in to the banking crisis and any changes in approach after the crisis." The Committee will hear from former and current executives of Irish media outlets and from a number of media academics.

€2.7 million in grant-aid to seafood processing companies

On Friday the award of €2.7 million in grant-aid to 18 seafood processing companies under the 2015 Seafood Processing Business Investment Scheme was announced. Combined with private sector investment, this means that total investment in 2015 in the seafood processing industry will be close to €9 million. Grant aid is co-funded on a 50/50 basis by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the European Fisheries Fund under the Seafood Development Programme.

The 18 companies receiving grant aid are based in nine coastal counties; Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Louth, Mayo and Wexford. Eligible costs for grant aid include new machinery and equipment, and the construction, extension or modernisation of seafood processing enterprises.

PAI BLOG

Low Pay Commission starts work : Read [here](#)

DAIL

Tuesday 10 March

2.00 p.m.

Questions (Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport)

3.15 p.m.

Leaders Questions

3.36 p.m.

Questions (Taoiseach)

4.36 p.m.

Order of Business

5.06 p.m.**Topical Issues**

Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill 2015 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)

7.30 p.m.

Private Members Business - Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Presidential Voting) Bill 2014 (Deputy Gerry Adams)

9.00 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 11 March

9.30 a.m.

Questions (Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)

10.45 a.m.

Statements on the 20/20 Strategy on the Irish Language (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)

12.00 noon

Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.

Order of Business

12.51 p.m.

Pre European Council Statements (to conclude within 65 minutes)

1.56 p.m.

SOS (1 Hour)

2.56 p.m.

Topical Issues

3.44 p.m.

Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill 2015 - Committee and Remaining Stages (Department of Justice and Equality)

Statements on the 20/20 Strategy on the Irish Language Resumed (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)

7.30 p.m.

Private Members Business - Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Presidential Voting) Bill 2014 (Deputy Gerry Adams)

9.00 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 12 March

9.30 a.m.

Questions (Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)

10.45 a.m.

Children and Family Relationships Bill 2015 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon

Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.

Order of Business

Morning Business Continued

4.42 p.m.

Topical Issues

5.30 p.m.

Dáil Adjourns

SEANAD

Tuesday 10 March

2.30 p.m.

Commencement Matters

3.30 p.m.

Order of Business

4.45 p.m.

Statements on Ambulance Services in Dublin (Minister for Health)

5.15 p.m.

Statements on the Report of BIPA Committee A - Cross Border Police Co-Operation and Illicit Trade (Minister of State at Department of Finance)

6.15 p.m.

Statements on Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy (Minister of State with special responsibility for the Diaspora)

Wednesday 11 March

10.30 a.m.

Commencement Matters

12.00 noon

Order of Business

Motion regarding arrangements for the sitting of the House on Tuesday 24 March, 2015 – without debate

1.15 p.m.

Raitéis maidir le Seachtain na Gaeilge (Aire Stáit sa Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta)

2.45 p.m.

Redress for Women Resident in Certain Institutions Bill 2014 – Report and Final Stages (Department of Justice and Equality)

4.00 p.m.

Private Members Business – Succession (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Second Stage (Senator Feargal Quinn)

Thursday 12 March

[Seanad not in session]

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Tuesday 10 March

1.30 p.m.
Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)
CR4, LH
AGENDA: Action Plan for Jobs 2015 [Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation]

2 p.m.
Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)
CR3, LH
AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals: Schedule B: COM(2014)719; COM(2014)744; COM(2015)1; COM(2015)2; COM(2015)3; and (ii) a. Potential difficulties and price volatility facing the Dairy Industry in 2015 (resumed); and b. Teagasc's Annual Report 2013 [Representatives from Teagasc]

2 p.m.
European Union Affairs (Joint)
CR1, LH
AGENDA: Session A: 2 p.m. Forthcoming General Affairs Council (GAC) meeting, briefing on the European Semester and update on developments in Greece [Minister of State for European Affairs]; and Session B: 3 p.m. United Kingdom: Possible Exit from the European Union (commonly referred to as 'Brexit') [Sir Bill Cash MP]

2.15 p.m.
Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Joint)
CR2, LH
AGENDA: Consultation Paper on the Establishment of an Electoral Commission in Ireland [Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government]

4.45 p.m.
Health and Children (Joint)
CR4, LH
AGENDA: Pre-Legislative Scrutiny on the General Scheme of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015 [Professor Frank Murray, President, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland]

5 p.m.
Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)
CR2, LH
AGENDA: Public Hearing [Mr. Simon Carswell, Irish Times on relationships between State authorities, political parties, elected representatives, supervisory authorities, banking institutions and the property sector]

Wednesday 11 March

9.30 a.m.
Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)
CR1, LH
AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. Public Hearing [Mr. David Farrell, UCD on Public Policy in Parliamentary Democracies]; Session B: 11.45 a.m. - 1.45 p.m. Public Hearing [Ms. Niamh Hardiman, UCD on Systems of Governance]; and Session C: 3.30 p.m. - 5 p.m. Public Hearing [Professor Patrick Honohan, clarification of oral evidence previously given to the Committee]

9.30 a.m.
Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint)
CR2, LH
AGENDA: Research entitled "Conveyancing Survey Results January 2015" [Representatives from the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers]

9.30 a.m.
Transport and Communications (Joint)
CR4, LH **AGENDA:** The discontinuation of certain Expressway services by Bus Éireann [Representatives from Bus Éireann and the National Transport Authority]

10.30 a.m.
Foreign Affairs and Trade (Joint)
CR3, LH
AGENDA: Post meeting update on the meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Council [Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade]

1 p.m.
Social Protection (Select sub)
CR3, LH
AGENDA: Gender Recognition Bill 2014 [Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection]

2 p.m.
Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform (Joint)
CR4, LH
AGENDA: Overview of operations and functioning of the National Lottery Session A: 2.30 p.m. [Representatives of The Retail Grocery Dairy and Allied Trades Association (RGDATA) and Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association (CSNA)]; and Session B: 3.45 p.m. [Representatives of Premier Lotteries Ireland (PLI) and The National Lottery Regulator]

4 p.m.
Public Service, Oversight and Petitions (Joint)
CR3, LH
AGENDA: The Role and Remit of the Ombudsman [Dr. Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children]

Thursday 12 March

9.30 a.m.
Health and Children (Joint)
CR2, LH
AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m. The cost of prescription drugs in Ireland (resumed) [Mr. John Hennessy, National Director, Primary Care Services and Mr. Shaun Flanagan, Chief Pharmacist, Corporate Pharmaceutical Unit, Health Service Executive (HSE)]; and Ms. Teresa Cody, Principal Officer and Mr. Fergal Goodman, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health]; and Session B: 11.15 a.m. Pre-Legislative Scrutiny on the General Scheme of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015 (resumed) [Dr. John Holmes, Research Fellow, Alcohol Research Group, University of Sheffield; and Mr. Colin Angus, Alcohol Research Group, University of Sheffield]

9.30 a.m.
Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)
CR3, LH
AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. Public Hearing [Dr. Elaine Byrne on relationships between State authorities, political parties, elected representatives, supervisory authorities, banking institutions and the property sector]; and Session B: 11.45 a.m. - 1.45 p.m. Public Hearing [Mr. Frank McDonald on relationships between State authorities, political parties, elected representatives, supervisory authorities, banking institutions and the property sector]

10 a.m.
Public Accounts
CR1, LH
AGENDA: Investigation of HSBC Offshore Accounts [Officials from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners]

2 p.m.
European Union Affairs (Joint)
CR2, LH
AGENDA: United Kingdom: Possible Exit from the European Union (commonly referred to as 'Brexit'): Regional and Geopolitical Issues [Professor Jennifer Todd, School of Politics and International Relations, UCD]



Public Affairs Ireland Data Protection Conference 2015

*Data Protection in 2015: the current state of
play and the prospect for reform*

Wednesday, 25th March 2015

The Westin Hotel

Dublin 2

Sponsored by:



ARTHUR COX

@publicaffairsir

#dataprot15