

## Oireachtas Update



This week, the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2015 will reach Final and Report stages in the Seanad on Tuesday, and the amendments from the lower house will be reviewed in Dáil Éireann on Thursday. This bill provides for, “in effect a framework to replace the former sectoral Registered Employment Agreements”. It will do this by reintroducing registration of employment agreements, and establishing minimum remuneration levels for certain kinds of workers.

Wednesday’s Seanad meeting will see the discussion of all Stages of the Houses of the Oireachtas (Appointments to Certain Offices) Bill 2014. The Bill, which was first introduced in July 2014, in the main provides for appointment of the Clerk of the Dáil or Secretary General “through open competition rather than internally”.

Also on Wednesday, a Justice, Defence and Equality joint committee will meet regarding the appointment of members of the An Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission. Thursday’s Banking Inquiry committee meeting will see ex-Taoiseach Bertie Ahern’s testimony.

## Majority of SMEs already engaged in socially responsible activities

A survey of SMEs (undertaken by Isme) found that most respondents were engaged in practices that counted as Corporate Social Responsibility. The survey, entitled “SMEs and CSR” found that while the respondents were involved in the practices, they were not aware that they were.

The CEO of Isme called for higher awareness of CSR, and believes that SMEs who participate are particularly important.

The report found that “These CSR activities are often informal and are considered to be a normal part of business life. They tend to be largely undocumented and unpublicised and are not recorded or planned in strategy documents.”

The main findings are as follows: 92% of respondents donated to charitable organisations, and 34% had a charitable partner. It also found that 72% of owner-managers, and 45% of employees gave time to charitable organisations. Other CSR activities included voluntary donation of inventory to community or charity organisations.

## ABR redevelopment approved

Last week, An Bord Pleanála approved the €230m Alexandra Basin Redevelopment project at Dublin Port. It aims to update the area to enable the accommodation of larger ships, and deepening of the entrance channel. It is estimated that the development will take five years to complete.

Chief executive of Dublin Port Authority Eamonn O’Reilly said, “The engineering design works are already at an advanced stage and we expect the first phase of works to be tendered and a contractor ready to start by October 2015.”

This will be the largest infrastructural redevelopment in the history of Ireland’s main port.

## Drop in public sector absenteeism

A new policy on sick leave management, as set out in Circular 9/2010, was introduced to public sector workers was brought into place in September 2013. The object of the “up to date” policy was “reducing sick absence and increasing efficiency.”

Last week, on Monday July 6, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform released the figures for 2014, figures that were directly influenced by this new policy.

The report states that “The new scheme effectively halved paid sick leave for public sector staff while still providing support for public servants when they are ill.” Due to this, the cost of sick leave to the public dropped nearly 14% compared to 2013, and now stands at €319.3m. The rate of sick leave is now 4.0%; the “number of days lost to sick leave per FTE [Full-Time Equivalent] is 8.7 days”; an additional 260,000 days have been worked by public servants as a result.

## Dublin house prices rising slower than commuter-belt

Daft.ie’s quarterly report found that prices in the capital were rising at a much slower rate than those outside of the county. The Q2 House Price Report (published July 7 2015) notes that “The annual rate of house price inflation has halved in Dublin since the start of the year, falling from over 21% in late 2014 to 9% in mid-2015”, with only a 0.06% this quarter, compared to 4.4% in Cork city.

Ronan Lyons, the in-house economist at the property website attributes this effect to the regulations introduced by the Central Bank last September.

The regulations apply proportionate limits to mortgage lending. In a statement for their unveiling, the Central Bank said, “The key objective of these regulations is to increase the resilience of the banking and household sectors to the property market and to reduce the risk of bank credit and house price spirals from developing in the future”.

Last week, leader of the opposition commented that they had “put legislation before the House this week. It is constructive legislation which would give the Central Bank the capacity to intervene for those 300,000 mortgage holders and also for the 46,000 mortgage holders who are at the mercy of vulture funds”, and asked the Taoiseach to move the legislation in question to the Second Stage. An Taoiseach replied that “legislation would be introduced if the Central Bank required it”.

## PAI BLOG

### Financial Regulation – who pays?

read Tom Ferris’ article [here](#)

### Rounding comes to Ireland

read Ronnie O’Toole’s article [here](#)

### Age Action’s Lifelong Learning – University of the Third Age (U3A) Programme

read Sam O’Brien–Olinger’s article [here](#)

### “Lobbying is a good and proper thing to do”

read PAI report [here](#)

### A Vision for Change, nine years on

read Dr Shari McDaid’s article [here](#)

### Millennials: our future workforce

read Peter Cosgrove’s article [here](#)

## DAIL

## Tuesday 14 July

## Wednesday 15 July

## Thursday 16 July

2.00 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade)

3.15 p.m.  
Leaders Questions

3.36 p.m.  
Questions (Taoiseach)

4.36 p.m.  
Order of Business

Motion re Establishment of Educational Research Centre (Back from Committee) (without debate) (Department of Education and Skills)

Motion re Chairperson of GSOC (Referral to Committee without Debate) (Department of Justice and Equality)

Motion re Extension of Ombudsman's Remit (Private Nursing Homes) (without Debate) (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

5.06 p.m.  
Topical Issues

5.54 p.m.  
Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Bill 2014 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (to conclude at 8pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Justice and Equality)

Children First Bill 2014 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) (to conclude at 9 pm if not previously concluded)

9.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business

10.30 p.m.  
Dail Adjourns

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

10.45 a.m.  
Defence (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Seanad) - All Stages (to conclude within 90 minutes) (Department of Defence)

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government) (to adjourn at 7pm if not previously concluded)

Children (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Seanad) - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) (to conclude at 8 pm if not previously concluded)

Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Bill 2015 (Seanad) - All Stages (to conclude at 9.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)

12.00 noon  
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.  
Order of Business

12.51 p.m.  
SOS

2.00 p.m.  
All Party Motion on the Events at Ballymurphy in 1971 and Legacy Issues (to conclude within 80 mins)

3.20 p.m.  
Statements on Northern Ireland (to conclude within 2 hours)

5.20 p.m.  
Topical Issues

6.08 p.m.  
Morning Business Continued

9.30 p.m.  
Private Members Business

11.00 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

9.30 a.m.  
Questions (Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government)

10.45 a.m.  
Civil Debt (Procedures) Bill 2015 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (to conclude at 1.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Justice and Equality)

Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Amendments from the Seanad (to conclude at 2.30pm) (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Amendments from the Seanad (to conclude at 4.30pm) (Department of Education and Skills)

Harbours Bill 2015 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (to adjourn at 5.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

Motion re Chairperson of GSOC (back from Committee) (to conclude within 20 minutes) (Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon  
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.  
Order of Business

12.41 p.m.  
Morning Business Continued

5.50 p.m.  
Topical Issues

6.38 p.m.  
Dail Adjourns

## SEANAD

## Tuesday 14 July

## Wednesday 15 July

## Thursday 16 July

11.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

Motion regarding the appointment of the chairperson of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission – To be taken without debate

Motion regarding the Ombudsman Act 1980 (Section 1A) (No. 2) Order 2015 – To be taken without debate

1.00 p.m.  
National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission) Bill 2015 – Amendments Back from Dáil (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

3.00 p.m.  
Urban Regeneration and Housing Bill 2015 – Second Stage (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

5.30 p.m.  
Defence (Amendment) Bill 2015 – All Stages (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

6.30 p.m.  
Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Report and Final Stages (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

8.30 p.m.  
Seanad Adjourns

10.30 a.m.  
Commencement Matters

11.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

12.45 p.m.  
Gender Recognition Bill 2014 – Amendments Back from Dáil (Department of Social Protection)

3.00 p.m.  
Motion regarding the Report of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee entitled 'Report on Farm Safety' (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

5.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business - (Fianna Fáil Senators)

7.00 p.m.  
Houses of the Oireachtas (Appointments to Certain Offices) Bill 2014 – All Stages (Department of Public Expenditure)

8.00 p.m.  
Teaching Council (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Report and Final Stages (Department of Education and Skills)

10.00 p.m.  
Seanad Adjourns

10.30 a.m.  
Commencement Matters

11.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

Motion regarding the appointment of the chairperson of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission – Back from Committee without Debate

12.45 p.m.  
Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Bill 2014 – Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)

3.30 p.m.  
Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014 – Committee Stage (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

## Friday 17 July

10.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

11.45 a.m.  
Civil Debt (Procedures) Bill 2015 – Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)

2.30 p.m.  
Urban Regeneration and Housing Bill 2015 – Committee Stage (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

Seanad Adjourn

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

## Tuesday 14 July

Health and Children (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 11.45 a.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: Affordable and Quality Childcare (resumed): Educational needs for carers and community childcare [Mr. Joe Rynn, Ms. Avril McMonagle, Childcare Committees Ireland; and Dr. Mary Moloney, Lecturer in Early Childhood Care and Education, University of Limerick]

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint) CR2, LH 2000 1.30 p.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals: Schedule A: COM(2015)294; (ii) National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development (resumed) [Officials from Inland Fisheries Ireland]; and (iii) The Horse industry (resumed) [Representatives from the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association; the Irish Horse Welfare Trust; the County and City Managers' Association and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals]

Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 2.15 p.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: Electoral Commission in Ireland (resumed) [Ms. Helen Dixon, Data Protection Commissioner; Mr. Tim Duggan, Assistant Secretary, and Ms. Michelle O'Donnell, Assistant Principal, Client Identity Services, Department of Social Protection; Mr. Liam Kenny, Director, Association of Irish Local Government; Dr. Adrian Kavanagh, Lecturer in Geography, NUI Maynooth; and Mr. Sean Donnelly, Political Analyst]

Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 3.30 p.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Select sub) CR4, LH 2000 6.30 p.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: National Cultural Institutions (National Concert Hall) Bill 2015 [Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht]

## Wednesday 15 July

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. John Corrigan, former CEO, NTMA];  
 Session B: 11.30 a.m.  
 [Mr. Pat Farrell, former CEO, Irish Banking Federation] and  
 Session C: 2.30 p.m.  
 [Mr. Dermot McCarthy, former Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach and Secretary General to the Government]

Transport and Communications (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 9.30 a.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Foreign Affairs and Trade (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 10 a.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Education and Social Protection (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 1 p.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

European Scrutiny - Finance and Public Expenditure (Joint sub) CR4, LH 2000 2 p.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint) CR2, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: (i) Motion re: Appointment of a member of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (Subject to referral) [Minister for Justice and Equality]; and (ii) The role and purpose of the Community Trust Ltd [Representatives from the Churchfield Community Trust Ltd.]

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 2.30 p.m.  
 AGENDA: Private Meeting

Public Service, Oversight and Petitions (Joint) CR3, LH 2000 4 p.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: Investigation into US Military and CIA use of Shannon airport and Irish airspace (Public Petition No. P00072/12)(resumed) [Dr. Karen Devine, DCU; and Mr. Paddy Smyth, Irish Times]

## Thursday 16 July

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

AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m.  
 The delay in the registration of nurses and midwives, and its impact on Healthcare services [Dr. Maura Pidgeon, Chief Executive Officer, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland]; and  
 Session B: 11.15 a.m.  
 Transforming the life experience of people with Dementia and Alzheimer's disease and their families [Professor Eamonn O' Shea, Dr. Caitriona Crowe, South Tipperary Dementia Pilot Project; and Ms. Tina Leonard, Head of Advocacy and Public Affairs, Alzheimer Society of Ireland]

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. Paul Gallagher, former Attorney General]  
 Session B: 11.30 a.m.  
 [Mr. Pádraig Ó Ríordáin and Mr. Eugene McCague, Arthur Cox, legal advisors to the Department of Finance]  
 Session C: 2.30 p.m.  
 [Mr. Bertie Ahern, former Taoiseach]

Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement (Joint) CR4, LH 2000 10.15 a.m. (T)  
 AGENDA: Proposals for current and future Integrated Education Initiatives in Northern Ireland [Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the Integrated Education Fund (IE)]





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