Oireachtas Update

Dáil Éireann is adjourned until Tuesday 22 September 2015.

Seanad Éireann is adjourned until Wednesday 23 September 2015.

There are no Committee meetings this week.

Cost of setting up a business will be significantly reduced

Brian Hayes, Dublin MEP, announced on Sunday 9 August that new proposals accepted by the European Parliament will mean that setting up a company will now not only be cheaper – costing as little as €1 – but will also be much less time-consuming.

Currently in Ireland, setting up a company costs €50, and takes 2-5 days. In contrast, it is free in Slovenia, but takes 2-5 days, while it costs €2,000 in Italy, taking one day.

The proposals will standardise the setting up of companies across EU member states, and will allow citizens to set up companies online, for a tiny cost.

In a Press Release by Fine Gael, Mr Hayes said, through the new system, “Procedures will be made easier, costs will be substantially reduced and cross border trade will be encouraged.”

Two new Eirgrid Board members appointed

On Thursday 6 August, Alex White TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources announced two new appointments to the Board of Eirgrid.

Chief Executive of the Grangegorman Development Agency, Michael Hand, and ex-Chief Executive of Ervia, Gerry Walsh will join the Board.

Speaking at the announcement, the Minister said, “I have every confidence that they will provide drive and vision in delivering a sustainable transmission system that supports both economic and social needs.”

Eirgrid is the Transmission System Operator for electricity in Ireland; its subsidiary SONI is the System Operator for Northern Ireland.

The appointments were made through the Public Appointments Service (PAS).
BOI GDP forecasts show positive growth

Bank of Ireland’s most recent quarterly outlook shows a projected increase of 5.3% in Ireland’s GDP in 2015, and 4.8% in 2016. GNP is also projected to grow by 5% this year, and 4.6% next.

Loretta O’Sullivan, BOI’s chief economist, noted that domestic activity, “especially consumer spending” is “firming and contributing to growth”, and is forecast to rise by 3.2% in 2015 and 2016. She commented further, “With the economy growing solidly, a decline in the unemployment rate to around 8% is expected by the end of 2016”.

Investment also rose last year, by 14%; 2015 is expected to have a double-digit growth.

Culture 2025 Discussion Document launched

On Friday 7 August, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD, launched a Discussion Document for “Culture 2025”, Ireland’s first cultural policy. The aim of the document is to start a conversation amongst the public, and concerned stakeholders, around the policy.

The drafting of the legislation was announced by Arts Minister Jimmy Deenihan on 24 June. It will “set high level aims for the arts and culture sector over the next decade”. When it was announced, Minister Deenihan said the policy will “illuminate the intrinsic value of the arts, creativity and our dynamic nation’s intellectual achievements”, and will focus on the meaning of culture, issues around intellectual property, international representation, and “what can be done to embed culture at the heart of public sector decision-making and discourse, and in corporate and private sector decision-making”.

Speaking on Friday, Minister Humphreys said, “I hope Culture 2025 can help create a platform for bringing together the numerous local, regional and national cultural entities, so they can share best practise and look at new ways of working together”. She went on to say, “I want this policy to be led by those involved in the sector, those who are passionate about the arts, and I am encouraging members of the public to make their views known.” She went on to say that this policy would help decide “how resources should be prioritised, how artists and creative workers should be supported, how access to culture can be improved in disadvantaged areas” amongst other issues.

“To have your input on the National Cultural Policy discussion paper, visit www.ahg.gov.ie/en/Culture/ Culture2025 or email culturalpolicy@ahg.gov.ie”. The deadline is 30 September 2015.
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Public Affairs Ireland

Annual Public Procurement Conference

“Smart” Public Procurement

Wednesday, September 30th, 2015
9am to 1pm
Westin Hotel, Dublin 2

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