New autumn forecast released by EC

The European Commission released their autumn 2015 Economic Forecast last week, on Thursday 5 November. The report upgraded the previous GDP growth of the Eurozone for 2015 from 1.5% to 1.6%. However, it also reduced its forecast for 2016 from 1.9% to 1.8%.

In contrast to the wider Eurozone area, Ireland’s growth is unprecedented. The document on Irish improvement, entitled “Ireland: Exceptionally strong rebound after years of successful adjustment”. The report states that “Ireland’s recovery appears resilient the weaker global growth. … The government deficit continues to decline and the debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to fall below 100% already this year”.

Romania is the only other country counted that also reaches the “greater than 4%” mark that Ireland has hit. Press releases made by the European Commission have noted that both France and Spain, at the current standard, will miss their deficit targets.

The European Forecasts are released three times a year, and take into account the EU (as well as the individual member states), the Euro area, candidate states and other large economies. It extends “over a time horizon of at least two years and covers about 180 variables”.

The winter 2016 European Economic Forecast is due to be released in February 2016.

SIFs not far away for Dublin

Minister of State with special responsibility for drugs, Aodhán Ó Riordáin, announced last week that it would not be long until Dublin opened its first Supervised Injection Facility. This would be followed by centres in Cork, Galway, and Limerick.

In these facilities, intravenous drug users can bring their own drugs into a secure and medically-supervised facility. They would be required to register with the staff, and sign in on each visit. They would be led to private areas and given a safe tourniquet, a saline solution, and a sterile syringe. Their injections would be supervised by medical staff. There would also be room where people can relax after their injection. The centres would make nursing, welfare and counselling staff available to addicts.

Minister Ó Riordáin has assured critics that certain standards must be met—such as the fact that they would not allow pregnant women to inject in the facility.

Together with new measures that will decriminalise small amounts of drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and marijuana, frontline worker and addicts agree that the “cultural shift” the Minister is preparing for will only do good for the addicts of the country.

Despite the fact that the Minister’s term is coming to an end, he stated that new heads for the Misuse of Drugs Act were currently being drafted, and that we would see these centres operational by next year.
Young men most likely to speed

New RSA figures show that an exceptional number of people in Ireland still engage in reckless behaviour while behind the wheel of a car. In Driver Attitudes and Behaviour Survey 2014, over one thousand drivers were asked about their practices when driving, and how they felt about common road law violations. The following figures are contained within the report:

- Over 40% of Irish drivers break the 100km per hour speed limit.
- 66% of men were identified as high-risk in terms of speeding, with young, well-off males being the most likely to break speed rules.
- One-third of people said they manipulated speed cameras, by only slowing down when in speed camera areas.
- 11% of respondents said they would drive after drinking, with the 65+ category being the most at risk of this.
- 31% of drivers said they have used their handheld mobile to take a call; 16% said they text while driving, and 7% said they sued apps on their phones while driving.
- 10% of drivers admitted to not using appropriate restraints for children in cars.

Rent Certainty measures agreed

Following Budget 2016, there was public outcry calling for a system of rent certainty to aid the rapidly-growing homelessness crisis. Last week, a compromise was reached on new regulations which would help keep tenants in their homes.

Under the new regulations, landlords will only be permitted to raise their rents every two years. There is an exception in this where landlords significantly improve the home; they would be able to raise it only for one calendar year, however, and it would be static until the end of the first two-year period, i.e. 2017. Where landlords do raise rents after the two-year period, they must show evidence that the increase is justified, using examples from the local area.

Incentives, such as 100% interest relief on mortgages for landlords who let to those on the social housing list for five or more years, will be provided to landlords. This is in contrast to the 75% already offered. Notice periods for evictions will also be increased.

The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) would become a “watchdog” of sorts, with increased powers. The rent certainty proposed by Minister Alan Kelly, with rent increased being tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was denied, but the Minister believes this legislation will go a long way to help those at risk of homelessness. It will be considered by the Dáil on Tuesday of this week.

Both the Residential Landlords Association of Ireland and the Irish Property Owners Association have spoken out against the new regulations, saying that they will push landlords out of the market.
This Week at Public Affairs Ireland

Training

ILM Certificate in Leadership
3 day course
Tuesday 10th November,
Tuesday 17th November, and
Tuesday 24th November
9am to 4pm, daily
PAI Main Office

Certificate in Change Management
2 day course
Friday 13th November, and
Friday 20th November
9.30am to 4pm, daily
PAI Main Office

Managing Difficult Staff and Dealing with Conflict
Tuesday 10th November 2015
9am to 1pm
PAI Main Office

PMDS and Managing Performance
Thursday 12th November
9am to 4pm
PAI Main Office

On the Blog

Northern Ireland would suffer most from Brexit
PAI editor Shauna Nimmo
Read here

Multi-unit Developments Act 2011
Michael Williams
Read here

Will a new Investor Court System be introduced as part of TTIP talks between the EU and USA?
Tom Ferris
Read here

“When will we lead the Revolution?”
PAI editor Shauna Nimmo
Read here
Monday 9 November

This week in Dáil Éireann

Tuesday 10 November

2.00 p.m.  Questions (Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)
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

Motion re Horse and Greyhound Regulations (referral to Committee without debate)
(Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

Motion re: Approval by Dáil Éireann of the terms of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Transfer and Mutualisation of Contributions to the Single Resolution Fund (to conclude within 20 minutes)
(Department of Finance)

(Department of Finance)

Horse Racing Ireland Bill 2015 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage
(Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

7.30 p.m.  Private Members Business - (Fianna Fáil)
9.00 p.m.  Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 11 November

9.30 a.m.  Questions (Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport)
10.45 a.m. Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 - Report and Final Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Finance)

Horse Racing Ireland Bill 2015 - Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

Garda Síochána (Policing Authority and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 - Order for Report and Final Stages
(Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon  Leaders Questions
12.21 p.m.  Order of Business

Motion re Economic Partnership with West Africa (Referral to Committee without debate)
(Department of Foreign Affairs)

Children First Bill 2014 - (Amendment from the Seanad)
(Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

12.51 p.m.  SOS (1 hour)
1.51 p.m.  Topical Issues
2.39 p.m.  Morning Business Continued
7.30 p.m.  Private Members Business - (Fianna Fáil)
9.00 p.m.  Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 12 November

9.30 a.m.  Questions (Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)
10.45 a.m. Garda Síochána (Policing Authority and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 - Report and Final Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Criminal Justice (Burglary of Dwellings) Bill 2015 - Second Stage Resumed
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage
(Department of Health)

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

Friday 13 November

10.00 a.m.  Multi-Unit Developments (Amendment) Bill 2015

Freedom of Movement (Common Travel Area) (Travel Documentation) Bill 2014

2.00 p.m.  Dáil Adjourns
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<td>Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Bill 2013 – Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)</td>
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<td>Childcare (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Committee Stage (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)</td>
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<td>3.00 p.m.</td>
<td>National Cultural Institutions (National Concert Hall) Bill 2015 – Committee Stage (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)</td>
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<td>5.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Private Members Business - Education (Welfare) (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Second Stage (Senators Mary Moran, Aideen Hayden, Susan O’Keefe)</td>
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### Tuesday 10 November

**Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 1.30 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** (i) Scrutiny of EU Legislative Proposals:
- (ii) The Fifteenth Report of Credit Review Office [Representative of Credit Review Office]

**Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)**
CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)(M)

**AGENDA:** (i) EID Tagging [Representatives from the Irish Cooperative Organisation Society (ICOS)]; and
(ii) The development needs of the Irish Harness Racing Industry [Representatives from the Irish Harness Racing Association (IHRA)]

**Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Joint)**
CR4, LH 2000 2.15 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Session A: 2.15 p.m.
- Value for Money Report and Policy review of the Arts Council [Mr. Feargal O Coigligh, Assistant Secretary, Ms. Mary Nash, Principal Officer, Arts Division, Ms. Deirdre Mahony, Evaluation Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and Mr. John O’Hagan, Professor of Economics at Trinity, Chairman of the Steering Committee]; and
- Session B: 3 p.m.
  - Engagement with Mr. David Harvey, Chairperson Designate, Irish Museum of Modern Art

**Environment, Community and Local Government (Select sub)**
CR4, LH 2000 5 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Electoral (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2015 [Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government]

**Administration (Joint sub)**
CR2, LH 2000 5.30 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Private Meeting

**Public Expenditure and Reform (Select sub)**
CR1, LH 2000 5.30 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2015 [Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform]

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### Wednesday 11 November

**Transport, Tourism and Sport (Select sub)**
CR4, LH 2000 11 a.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Harbour Bills 2015 [Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport]

**Social Protection (Select sub)**
CR3, LH 2000 1 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Social Welfare Bill 2015 [Minister of State with special responsibility for Employment, Community and Social Support]

**Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform (Joint)**
CR4, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme of a Public Sector Standards Bill [Dr. Elaine Byrne, Journalist and Academic; and Mr. Dan O’Keeffe, Chairman, Mr. Peter Tyndall, Ombudsman, and Mr. Jim O’Keeffe, Members of the Standards in Public Office Commission]

**Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Policing matters [Ms. Nóirín O’Sullivan, Garda Commissioner]

**Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)**
CR1, LH 2000 4 p.m.

**AGENDA:** Private Meeting

**Committee of Procedure and Privileges of Dáil Éireann**
Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House 6 p.m.

**AGENDA:** Private Meeting

**Environment, Community and Local Government (Select sub)**
CR2, LH 2000 7 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** Dublin Docklands Development Authority (Dissolution) Bill 2015 [Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government]

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### Thursday 12 November

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

**AGENDA:** Session A: 9.30 a.m.
- The development of mental health services for children [Professor Kevin Nugent, Director of Developmental Medicine, Boston Children’s Hospital and Faculty of the Harvard Medical School; Dr. Paul D’Alton, President of the Psychological Society of Ireland; Dr. Shari McDaid, Director and Ms. Kate Mitchell, Coordinator, Children’s Mental Health Coalition]
- Session B: 11.15 a.m.
  - The challenges facing the Camphill Communities of Ireland working with people with intellectual disabilities [Mr. Joe Lynch, National Governance Coordinator, Camphill Communities of Ireland]

**Public Accounts**
CR3, LH 2000 10 a.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** (i) Business of the Committee; and
(ii) 2014 Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General:
- a. Vote 3: Office of the Attorney General
- b. Vote 5: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- c. Vote 6: Office of the Chief State Solicitor
  - [Officials from the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of Public Prosecutions and from the Office of the Chief State Solicitor]

**European Union Affairs (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)

**AGENDA:** The forthcoming General Affairs Council (GAC) meeting [Minister of State for European Affairs]