

Ireland puts its dedication to climate change in writing

Ireland have now joined 195 other United Nations countries in declaring climate change as a key concern. This was solidified by our signature of the Paris Agreement. Alan Kelly TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government signed the Agreement on behalf of the Irish State in New York last Friday 22 April.

The Agreement was accepted by all 196 countries in December 2015. The aim of the Agreement is “to work together to limit the global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts for a 1.5°C target”.

While the signing of the Agreement is riding on the momentum built up during the Climate Change Summit in Paris in December, there are still several stages the Agreement must go through before implementation. The next is ratification.

The Minister, at the signing, said:

“The Paris Agreement represents a major milestone in the collective response to the impacts of climate change and importantly, sends an unequivocal message to business, stakeholders and citizens that all Governments are committed to playing their part in addressing the challenges posed by climate change”.

Ireland, through the EU, has also committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030.

Irish student ambassadors boost interest by 25%

Education in Ireland, an initiative managed by Enterprise Ireland, supports a system of international Student Ambassadors who promote Ireland as a centre of excellence in education across the world.

According to an Enterprise Ireland press release: “75 students from Canada, Chile, Brazil, Russia, China, India, Germany, Malaysia, Nigeria and USA, studying at 23 higher education institutes across the country, are actively promoting Ireland as a destination of choice for third level education.”

The value, they say, lies in the interconnectivity of the millennial generation. Peer to peer communication is fast and overwhelmingly prevalent. Word of mouth means a lot more to the 18-35 age group. The “genuine” good, happy and useful educational experiences of the Student Ambassadors has been key in the drawing new international students to our higher education institutions.

The press release also includes this quote from Giles O’Neill, who is Head of Education at Enterprise Ireland:

“Enterprise Ireland estimates that the international student sector is worth over €1 billion a year to the Irish economy. Since 2012, we have seen an increase of 25% in the number of international students choosing to study in Ireland. This success is in no small part due to our international Student Ambassadors who are virtually connecting with their peers and prospective students around the world, actively encouraging them to study in Ireland”.

WRC sets out its first strategy

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) has just released its first Strategy Statement.

Last Friday, 22 April, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Richard Bruton, TD launched the strategy that will cover the year 2016-2018. The WRC was set up in 2015 with the goal of embedding radical reforms in the culture of workplace relations. It also reduced the number of industrial relations bodies from five agencies to just two.

The strategy sets up some of the following objectives, among others:

- Reduction of waiting times to a target of three months from complaint to hearing, and four months from receipt of complaint to final decision;
- Reduction of costs to all parties;
- Promotion of orderly collective bargaining;
- Providing “real-time” adjudication of a high quality; and
- Development of enterprise-level workplace relations.

At the heart of the strategy is continuing the hard work of the WRC in reducing waiting times and delivering the improved services it has since its establishment last year.

At the launch, Minister Bruton said:

“If we are to deliver full employment in the coming years, we must have modern, flexible workplace relations institutions ... The Workplace Relations Commission has a vital role to play in this, in delivering a world-class service to promote a stable industrial relations environment, supporting businesses and employees to retain good workplace relations. I am confident that the team we have at the WRC, and the strategy we are publishing today, will help to deliver on that”.

The full strategy can be found on www.workplacelrelations.ie

Small victory for Tyrellstown tenants

Several weeks ago, in mid-March, over 100 families were served notices of eviction by management company Twinlite. The so-called “vulture fund” told residents that, due to the debt owed on the development, they would have to vacate their homes.

Fourteen of the families contacted the Private Residential Tenancies Board with questions over the validity of the notices. The letters provided to tenants said the ownership company intended to sell the houses. Earlier this month, High Court Judge Marie Baker said that the mere intention to sell was not sufficient grounds to issue a notice of termination. A lawyer for Twinlite subsequently agreed that the termination notices were invalid.

However, this just buys tenants more time. It does not completely eliminate the threat of being removed from their homes.

The landlord will now have to go about the process again, from the beginning.

This week at Public Affairs Ireland

On the Blog

Independents and the Fence

Laura Mannion

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IMF says “Too slow for too long”

Tom Ferris

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Fourth Generation Economic Regulation

Michael Griffin

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On INIS’ Annual Report 2015

Stephen Collins

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Maureen O’Sullivan

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If you have more than four people who would like to attend a course, the more suitable option may be to work with our team to tailor the course, and have our trainers deliver it specifically to you and your team, either in your offices or in ours.

Your in-house training is completely tailored to your particular needs, from start to finish. Our dedicated In-House Executive Muireann is available to help you build the course your team wants and needs.

Dáil Éireann

Tuesday 26 April 2016

2.30 p.m.
Statements re Mental Health Services (to conclude at 6.30 p.m. if not previously concluded)

6.30 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 27 April 2016

10.30 a.m.
Ireland's Stability Programme Update April 2016 (to conclude at 1.30pm)

1.30 p.m.
Statements on Agriculture (to conclude at 6.30pm if not previously concluded)

6.30 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 28 April 2016

10.30 a.m.
Statements re Refugees (working title) (to conclude at 2.00 p.m. if not previously concluded)

2.00 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Seanad Éireann

Seanad Éireann nominations are underway. Please note the following dates for nominations:

Panel Members

- The period for nominations by Nominating Bodies will expire at noon on Monday 14 March 2016.
- The period for nominations by members of the Oireachtas will expire at noon on Monday 21 March 2016.
- The Seanad Returning Officer will sit for the completion of the panels on Wednesday 30 March 2016.
- The ballot papers will be issued to the electorate on Monday 11 April 2016.
- The poll will close at 11.00 a.m. on Monday 25 April 2016.

University Members

The period for nominations in the university constituencies will expire on Thursday 3 March 2016.

- The ballot papers will be issued to the electorate on Monday 21 March 2016.
- The poll will close at 11.00 a.m. on Tuesday 26 April 2016.

Committee Meetings

Tuesday 26 April 2016

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Session A: 10.30 a.m.
Interim Report of the Committee; and
(ii) Session B: 3.30 p.m.
Housing and Homelessness [Representatives from the County and City Management Association]

Wednesday 27 April 2016

Standing Order 112 (Select) CR2, LH 2000 2.30 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Election of Chair; and
(ii) Subsidiarity Assessment of EU Draft Legislative Proposals:
COM(2016)52;
COM(2016)106;
COM(2016)107;
COM(2016)113; and
COM(2016)128.

Dáil Reform (Sub) Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House
3 p.m.

AGENDA: Private Meeting

Thursday 28 April 2016

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Session A: 10.30 a.m.
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government];
(ii) Session B: 2.00 p.m.
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the Housing Agency]; and
(iii) Session C: 3.00 p.m.
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the Irish Council for Social Housing]