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## Public Affairs Ireland Weekly Newsletter

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## Survey of civil servants show morale may be at risk

On Thursday, 28 January, the results of the first Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey were published. This survey, part of the October 2014 Civil Service renewal plan, had more than 15,500 civil servants respond to over one hundred statements. This accounts for nearly 40% of the Civil Service workforce.

Some of the main findings are as follows:

- 64% felt that the work they did had a positive impact.
- However, only 19% believe their work is valued by the public. Only 15% believe that the public respects and appreciates their work.
- 70% said they were enthusiastic about their work; 10% were not.
- Only 27% feel that they are adequately rewarded for their work.
- Only 32% said that new ideas were welcome in the workplace; just 22% feel that their department cares about their views or goals.
- The percentage of those who felt poor performance at work by colleagues was dealt with effectively was very low, at 12%.

Minister for Communications Alex White TD said he found the results of the survey discouraging. Speaking at the Ireland eGovernment Awards Ceremony on Friday 29 January, he said that the perception that the work of public servants is not valued “could have a corrosive impact on staff morale – and potentially service delivery itself – if it is not addressed.

“We mustn’t forget the huge contribution that public servants have made to this recovery, or how they maintained, and indeed improved, services during the worst economic crisis in the history of this state, and against the background of pay cuts and a 10% decline in staff numbers”.

According to the Minister, “more needs to be done to highlight both the challenges and achievements of public service delivery”.

## Network for migrant workers launched

Last Friday, 29 January, SIPTU officially launched their Migrant and International Workers Network. In the last census in 2011, there were 268,180 non-nationals at work, representing 15.1% of the workforce. With growing employment, it is reasonable to assume that this number will have increased in the preceding five years.

The Support Network coordinator, Joanna Ozdarska, said that its purpose was to enable migrant workers to support themselves and their communities.

SIPTU’s annual Migrant Workers conference, where the Network was launched, was addressed by Minister of State Aodhán Ó Riordáin TD, SIPTU General President, Jack O’Connor and migrant worker activists. It involved workshops on topics such as training and innovations, and workers’ rights.

Another Support Network coordinator, Evelina Saduikyte, said: “The aim of the Support Network is to organise and support migrant workers effectively and fully participate in union activity. Workers regardless of their country of origin have a shared objective in sustaining and improving working conditions.”

## Access to data is necessary, says Interpol agent

Last Thursday was International Data Protection Day, also referred to as International Privacy Day. Ireland is currently in a very interesting situation with regard to the use and access to personal data.

Last week, it came to light that the Garda Síochána Ombudsman (Gsoc) had gained access to the telephone records of journalists; a review into how this happened has been ordered by Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Justice. Digital Rights Ireland are also currently undergoing a court challenge against mass retention of data by service providers.

This morning, the Irish Times printed the comments of a member on the Gardaí currently working for Interpol. His comments were, on the whole, an explanation and a justification of the use of mobile phone and internet data for investigative purposes.

He commented that in jurisdictions where phone and internet service providers were not required by law to retain data, there was a distinct advantage for criminals. He compared data kept to items kept in your own home – a judge would grant a search warrant of your home if there was “reasonable and appropriate” belief of wrongdoing; he maintains it is the same with personal data.

He went on to say that, “the most commonly requested information was metadata. This includes the identity of the sender and recipients of calls, texts and emails as well as the times and locations those communications took place. As none of the content of the messages is being sought, privacy is less of an issue and the permission of a court is normally not required.”

However, if the investigatory body want a copy of the content, they must get permission as there is a greater expectations of privacy.

## New rules for grocery sector

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD has just signed a set of regulations into law regarding practices in the grocery goods sector. The go some way to “ensuring that dealings in the sector are fair and substantial”.

The following areas are addressed:

- Goods contracts are now required in writing;
- Contracts can only be terminated with express consent from both parties;
- Provisions will be made for force majeure (non-performance due to extenuating circumstances);
- Retailers may be asked to provide a forecast of goods required;
- Suppliers must be paid in 30 days;
- Suppliers being asked to pay for prime shelf space, or stocking goods will be prohibited; and
- Retailers or wholesalers must complete a yearly compliance statement.

The Minister said, “Relationships will continue to be based on commerce and prices will continue to be set by hard negotiations – this is in the interests of consumers ... These measures together with strong enforcement powers will ensure that these relationships are fair and sustainable”.

## This week at Public Affairs Ireland

### On the Blog

IMF keeps its sharp eye on the Irish Economy

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

3Ts Ramp up Campaign for Suicide Prevention Authority

Noel Smyth

Read [here](#)

Another step on the road to the Electoral Commission

PAI Editor Shauna Nimmo

Read [here](#)

Does a Flat Tax have any future in Ireland?

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

Getting the most from the Government's Capital Investment Plan

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

# This week in Dáil Éireann

## Tuesday 02 February

2.00 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Health)

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

Technological Universities Bill 2015 - Report Stage Resumed  
(Department of Education and Skills)

7.30 p.m.  
Private Members Business - (Sinn Féin)

9.00 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Thursday 04 February

9.30 a.m.  
Questions (Minister for Education and Skills)

10.45 a.m.  
Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage  
(Department of Health)

Criminal Justice (Sexual Offences) Bill 2015 (Seanad) - Second Stage Resumed  
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Road Traffic Bill 2016 (Seanad) - Second Stage  
(Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

12.00 noon  
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.  
Order of Business

12.41 p.m.  
Morning Business Continued

4.42 p.m.  
Topical Issues

5.30 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Wednesday 03 February

9.30 a.m.  
Questions (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade)

10.45 a.m.  
Technological Universities Bill 2015 - Report Stage Resumed  
(Department of Education and Skills)

Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage  
(Department of Health)

Criminal Justice (Sexual Offences) Bill 2015 (Seanad) - Second Stage Resumed  
(Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon  
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.  
Order of Business

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 - (Sinn Féin)

9.00 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

# This week in Seanad Éireann

## Tuesday 02 February

2.30 p.m.  
Commencement Matters

3.30 p.m.  
Order of Business

4.45 p.m.  
Statements on the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis  
(Department of Finance)

5.45 p.m.  
Seanad Adjourns

## Wednesday 03 February

10.30 a.m.  
Commencement Matters

11.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

12.45 p.m.  
Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions) Bill 2012 – Report Stage  
(Amendments from Dail Éireann) and Final Stage  
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Energy Bill 2016 - Committee and Remaining Stages  
(Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)

Seanad Adjourns

## Thursday 04 February

The Seanad will not meet today

# This week's Committee Meetings

## Tuesday 02 February

Public Accounts  
CR3, LH 2000 12 noon (T)  
AGENDA: HSE Report to the Public Accounts Committee re. former Foster Home in Waterford Community Area  
[Officials from the Department of Health & H.S.E.]

## Wednesday 03 February

Transport and Communications (Joint)  
CR4, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)  
AGENDA: Engagement with Mr Dermot Divilly, Chairman Designate, An Post

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

## Thursday 04 February

No Committee meetings scheduled