

Donations to Political Parties

2017

*Report to the Chairman of Dáil Éireann pursuant
to section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997*



Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

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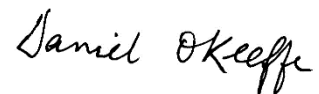
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Foreword

I am pleased to furnish this report to the Ceann Comhairle (Chairman of Dáil Éireann) in accordance with section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended. The report relates to annual donation statements/certificate of monetary donations and statutory declarations, in respect of 2017, furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission by political parties pursuant to section 24 of the Act.



Justice Daniel O'Keeffe
Chairperson
Standards in Public Office Commission
July 2018

Chapter 1: Introduction

Not later than 31 March each year, all registered political parties are required to furnish to the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Standards Commission) a donation statement covering the preceding calendar year.

All political parties registered in 2017 were obliged to furnish their donation statements by 31 March 2018. During 2017, there were 19 political parties registered and obliged to furnish a donation statement. The Socialist Party deregistered from the Register of Political Parties on 27 June 2017 and was therefore only required to submit a statement up to that date.

As of the 31 March deadline, 12 political parties had complied fully with the statutory requirements. All other statements were received after that date, and all parties are now substantively in compliance.

A list of political parties that were issued a donation statement form by the Commission is available at Appendix 1.

Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties

The donation statement provided by a political party must show whether or not, in the preceding calendar year, the party received a donation or donations exceeding €1,500 from the same source. Disclosed donations should include the name, description and postal address of the person by or on whose behalf the donation was made.

The maximum value of donations that a political party may accept from the same person in the same calendar year is €2,500. A party may not accept a corporate or business donation in excess of €200 unless the donor is registered with the Commission as a Corporate Donor. A political party is also precluded from accepting foreign donations from an individual (other than an Irish citizen) who resides outside the island of Ireland. Similarly, no donation of any value, may be accepted from a body corporate or an unincorporated body of persons which does not keep an office in the island of Ireland.

Amount of donations disclosed by political parties

The total value of donations disclosed by parties during 2017 was €156,699. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties for 2017. A summary of the donations disclosed is shown below:

Party	Total Donations Disclosed €
Fine Gael	82,713
Labour Party	21,750
Sinn Féin	47,436
Workers and Unemployed Action	4,800
Total	156,699

* Totals may be inconsistent due to rounding

Chapter 3: Accounting Units

An Accounting Unit is defined in the Electoral Acts as a branch or other subsidiary organisation of a political party which in any particular year receives a donation, the value of which exceeds €100. A responsible person, in relation to an accounting unit, means the treasurer or any other person responsible for dealing with donations to the unit.

An accounting unit which receives a monetary donation of more than €100 must open and maintain an account in a financial institution in the State and must lodge that donation and any further monetary donations received, of whatever value, to that account.

By 31 March each year, the responsible person of an accounting unit must furnish to the Standards Commission:

- * a statement from the financial institution where the political donations account was opened, specifying the transactions that have taken place in relation to the account during the preceding year (bank statement), and
- * a certificate (Certificate of Monetary Donations) signed by him/her, stating that all monetary donations received during the preceding year were lodged to the account and that all amounts debited from the account were used for political purposes, and
- * a statutory declaration, signed by him/her stating that, to the best of the person's knowledge and belief, the certificate is correct in every material respect and that all reasonable action has been taken in order to satisfy him/herself as to the accuracy of the certificate.

It is an offence, under Section 25(1) (c) of the Act, for the treasurer/responsible person of an accounting unit to fail to comply with this requirement.

The Standards Commission notes that a number of accounting units flagged difficulties they have had in complying with the legislation. The difficulties related, for the most part, to the requirement to provide statements from financial institutions.

These issues included:

- accessing bank statements for the preceding calendar year in time for the 31 March deadline;
- retrieving political party bank account statements due to a change of responsible person; and
- accounts closed on foot of anti-money laundering legislation.

The Standards Commission notes that accounting units have reported that the process of opening a political donation account may be protracted and can lead to a delay in the lodging of the donation that requires a branch to be considered an accounting unit for the purposes of the Electoral Act.

84% of accounting units had submitted their returns to the Standards Commission by the deadline date of 31 March 2018. The equivalent figure for 31 March 2017 was 87%.

Table of Accounting Units returns received in respect of 2017

Political Party	Total amount of accounting units	Returns Received before deadline	Returns Received After deadline
Fine Gael	39	37	2
Fianna Fáil	36	36	0
The Labour Party	31	23	8
Sinn Féin	11	4	7
The Green Party	17	17	0
Solidarity-People Before Profit	11	10	1
Communist Party of Ireland	1	0	1
Direct Democracy Ireland	1	0	1
Fis Nua	1	1	0
Identity Ireland	1	1	0
Independents 4 Change	1	0	1
Irish Democratic Party	1	0	1
Kerry Independent Alliance	1	0	1
RENUA Ireland	1	0	1
Social Democrats	1	1	0
The Socialist Party	1	1	0
The Workers Party	1	0	1
Workers and Unemployed Action	1	1	0
United People	1	1	0
Total	158	133	25

Funds held by accounting units in 2017

Accounting units are not required to submit a donation statement to the Commission. This makes it difficult for the Commission to ascertain the source of monies held in accounting units' political donations' accounts. The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2017 was €922,508. The Commission continues to be of the view that further refinement of the legislation is required to ensure that there is full transparency in respect of accounting units.

Chapter 4: Publication of Statutory Documentation

In accordance with section 24(7)(a) of the Act, the Commission has today laid the donation statements/statutory declarations furnished by political parties before each House of the Oireachtas.

In accordance with section 73 of the Act, the Commission has made the donation statements/statutory declarations available for public inspection and copying at its offices on 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. The information is also available on the Commission's website, www.sipo.ie.

Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2017

The Communist Party of Ireland
Direct Democracy Ireland
Fianna Fáil
Fine Gael
Fís Nua
The Green Party
Identity Ireland
Independents 4 Change
Irish Democratic Party
Kerry Independence Alliance
The Labour Party
RENUA Ireland
Sinn Féin
Social Democrats
The Socialist Party *
Solidarity – People Before Profit
United People
The Workers' Party
Workers and Unemployed Action

* The Socialist Party deregistered from the Register of Political Parties on 27 June 2017

Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2017

Fine Gael

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Maria Bailey TD	Individual	1,913
Seán Barrett TD	Individual	1,659
Colm Brophy TD	Individual	1,959
Richard Bruton TD	Individual	2,305
Senator Colm Burke	Individual	1,916
Peter Burke TD	Individual	1,590
Senator Jerry Buttimer	Individual	1,584
Catherine Byrne TD	Individual	1,994
Senator Maria Byrne	Individual	1,519
Ciarán Cannon TD	Individual	1,593
Joe Carey TD	Individual	1,520
Deirdre Clune MEP	Individual	2,075
Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD	Individual	1,631
Simon Coveney TD	Individual	1,640
Jim Daly TD	Individual	1,951
Pat Deering TD	Individual	1,593
Regina Doherty TD	Individual	1,653
Paschal Donohoe TD	Individual	2,083
Bernard Durkan TD	Individual	2,130
Damien English TD	Individual	2,265
Alan Farrell TD	Individual	1,666
Frances Fitzgerald TD	Individual	1,710
Charles Flanagan TD	Individual	1,710
Simon Harris TD	Individual	2,071
Brian Hayes MEP	Individual	2,317
Martin Heydon TD	Individual	1,673
Heather Humphreys TD	Individual	1,713
Sean Kelly MEP	Individual	1,983
Enda Kenny TD	Individual	1,640
Seán Kyne TD	Individual	1,620
Josepha Madigan TD	Individual	1,942
Helen McEntee TD	Individual	1,990
Mairead McGuinness MEP	Individual	2,490
Joe McHugh TD	Individual	1,580
Tony McLoughlin TD	Individual	1,659
Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD	Individual	1,598
Dara Murphy TD	Individual	1,618

Hildegarde Naughten TD	Individual	1,767
Michael Noonan TD	Individual	1,716
Kate O'Connell TD	Individual	1,628
Patrick O'Donovan TD	Individual	1,736
Fergus O'Dowd TD	Individual	1,923
Senator Neale Richmond	Individual	1,514
Noel Rock TD	Individual	1,583
David Stanton TD	Individual	1,653
Leo Varadkar TD	Individual	1,640
Total		82,713

Labour Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Senator Ivana Bacik	Individual	1,650
Joan Burton TD	Individual	2,400
Mr. Robert Dowds	Individual	2,500
Brendan Howlin TD	Individual	2,400
Alan Kelly TD	Individual	1,800
Mr. Denis Landy	Individual	1,500
Senator Gerald Nash	Individual	2,200
Jan O'Sullivan TD	Individual	2,400
Brendan Ryan TD	Individual	2,400
Transport Salaried Staff's Association	Corporate Donor *	2,500
Total		21,750

* Registered corporate donor

Sinn Féin

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Gerry Adams TD	Individual	2,258
Lynn Boylan MEP	Individual	2,288
Matt Carthy MEP	Individual	2,496
Senator Máire Devine	Individual	2,160
Pearse Doherty TD	Individual	2,288
Martin Ferris TD	Individual	2,500

Senator Paul Gavan	Individual	2,255
Senator Pádraig Mac Lochlainn	Individual	2,460
Mary Lou McDonald TD	Individual	2,500
Denise Mitchell TD	Individual	2,255
Imelda Munster TD	Individual	2,460
Carol Nolan TD	Individual	2,500
Liadh Ní Riada MEP	Individual	2,496
Donncha O'Laoighaire TD	Individual	2,460
Louise O'Reilly TD	Individual	2,460
Maurice Quinlivan TD	Individual	2,460
Brian Stanley TD	Individual	2,500
Peadar Tóibín TD	Individual	1,640
Senator Rose Conway Walsh	Individual	2,500
Senator Fintan Warfield	Individual	2,500
Total		47,436

* Totals may be inconsistent due to rounding

Workers & Unemployed Action

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Cllr. Pat English	Individual	2,400
Seamus Healy TD	Individual	2,400
Total		4,800