

Donations to Political Parties

2019

*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

**Standards in Public Office Commission
6 Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2 D02 W773**

Telephone: (01) 6395666

E-Mail: sipo@sipo.ie

Website: www.sipo.ie

Twitter: [@SIPOCIreland](https://twitter.com/SIPOCIreland)

November 2020

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties	5
Amount of donations disclosed by political parties.....	5
Chapter 3: Accounting Units.....	6
Table of Political Parties with Accounting Units	7
Funds held by accounting units in 2019.....	7
Chapter 4: Publication of Statutory Documentation.....	8
Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2019.....	9
Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2019	10

Foreword

The Standards Commission has asked me to present this report to the Ceann Comhairle 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 2019, furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission by political parties, pursuant to section 24 of the Act.

Sherry Perreault
Head of Ethics and Lobbying Regulation
Secretary to the Commission
November 2020

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 2019 were obliged to furnish their donation statements by 31 March 2020. During 2019, there were 22 political parties registered and obliged to furnish a donation statement.

A list of registered political parties required to file a donation statement 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 donation(s) valued at more than €1,500 (including donations from the same source with an aggregate value of more than €1,500). Disclosed donations should include the name, description and postal address of the person by whom or on whose behalf the donation was made.

The maximum total value of donations that a political party may accept from the same donor, individual or corporate, 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 on the Register of Corporate Donors. A political party is also precluded from accepting foreign donations, in any amount, from an individual (other than an Irish citizen) who resides outside the island of Ireland, or from a body corporate or an unincorporated body of persons that does not keep an office in the island of Ireland.

Amount of donations disclosed by political parties

The total value of donations disclosed by political parties during 2019 was €175,576. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties.

A summary of the donations disclosed is shown below:

Party	Total Donations Disclosed €
Aontú	2,500
Fianna Fáil	2,500
Fine Gael	79,456
Green Party	9,000
Labour Party	21,800
National Party	7,500
Sinn Féin	45,620
Workers and Unemployed Action	4,800
Workers Party	2,400
Total	175,576

Chapter 3: Accounting units

An “accounting unit” is defined in the Electoral Acts as a branch or other subsidiary organisation of a political party that, in any particular year, receives a donation the value of which exceeds €100.

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

The “responsible person” of an accounting unit, namely the treasurer or any other person responsible for dealing with donations to the unit, must furnish to the Standards Commission by 31 March each year:

- 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 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 (Certificate of Monetary Donations), 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 responsible person of an accounting unit to fail to comply with this requirement.

The Standards Commission notes that a number of accounting units have continued to flag difficulties that they have had in complying with the legislation. The difficulties largely related to the requirement to provide statements from financial institutions.

Issues identified 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
- lengthy delays with bank procedures to open political donations accounts.

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.

Table: Number of Accounting Units, by political party

Political Party	Total number of accounting units
Fine Gael	39
Fianna Fáil	36
Labour Party	32
Green Party	23
Solidarity – People Before Profit	12
Social Democrats	9
Sinn Féin	8
Total	159

As the March 2020 deadline for submitting returns fell during the early days of the lockdown for the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of organisations submitted returns after the deadline. This was, in most cases, due to delays in compiling information and/or having statutory declarations witnessed. While the deadlines are statutory, the Commission is satisfied that parties made best efforts to comply and has decided not to refer non-compliance to the Director for Public Prosecutions.

All parties are now substantively in compliance.

Funds held by accounting units in 2019

The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2019 was €950,112.

Accounting units are not required to submit a donation statement to the Commission. As noted in previous reports, this makes it difficult for the Commission to ascertain the source of monies held in the political donation accounts of accounting units and to oversee compliance with the donation provisions of the Act.

Again this year, the Commission reiterates its 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. The documents are available on the Oireachtas website at www.oireachtas.ie and on the Commission's website at www.sipo.ie.

Section 73 of the Act requires the documents to be made available for public inspection at its offices at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission's offices are closed to callers. It is therefore not possible to provide for public inspection. Copies can be made available on application to the Commission via email at info@sipo.ie or by telephone at (01) 639-5666.

Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2019

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

Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2019

Aontú

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Anne Farrelly	Individual	2,500
Total		2,500

Fianna Fáil

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Michael Fahy	Individual	2,500
Total		2,500

Fine Gael

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Maria Bailey TD	Individual	1,684
Seán Barrett TD	Individual	1,590
Pat Breen TD	Individual	1,704
Colm Brophy TD	Individual	2,279
Richard Bruton TD	Individual	2,229
Senator Colm Burke	Individual	1,607
Peter Burke TD	Individual	1,590
Catherine Byrne TD	Individual	1,724
Ciarán Cannon TD	Individual	1,580
Joe Carey TD	Individual	1,520
Simon Coveney TD	Individual	2,259
Michael Creed TD	Individual	1,640
Jim Daly TD	Individual	1,580
Michael D'Arcy TD	Individual	1,580
Pat Deering TD	Individual	1,590
Regina Doherty TD	Individual	2,299
Paschal Donohoe TD	Individual	1,640

Andrew Doyle TD	Individual	1,654
Bernard Durkan TD	Individual	2,441
Damien English TD	Individual	2,343
Alan Farrell TD	Individual	1,722
Frances Fitzgerald MEP	Individual	1,787
Charles Flanagan TD	Individual	1,710
Brendan Griffin TD	Individual	1,580
Simon Harris TD	Individual	1,936
Martin Heydon TD	Individual	1,644
Heather Humphreys TD	Individual	1,714
Sean Kelly MEP	Individual	1,754
Enda Kenny TD	Individual	1,590
Seán Kyne TD	Individual	1,580
Josepha Madigan TD	Individual	2,213
Helen McEntee TD	Individual	1,650
Mairead McGuinness MEP	Individual	1,502
Joe McHugh TD	Individual	1,650
Dara Murphy TD	Individual	1,594
Eoghan Murphy TD	Individual	2,402
Hildegarde Naughton TD	Individual	1,661
Tom Neville TD	Individual	1,698
Michael Noonan TD	Individual	1,668
Patrick O'Donovan TD	Individual	1,654
Fergus O'Dowd TD	Individual	1,661
John Paul Phelan TD	Individual	1,524
Noel Rock TD	Individual	1,668
David Staunton TD	Individual	1,580
Leo Varadkar TD	Individual	1,781
Total		79,456

Green Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Christine Magee	Individual	2,000
Ita Gibney	Individual	2,000
Kevin McGeeney	Individual	2,500
Grace O'Sullivan MEP	Individual	2,500
Total		9,000

Labour Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Senator Ivana Bacik	Individual	1,800
Joan Burton TD	Individual	2,400
Brendan Howlin TD	Individual	2,400
Senator Kevin Humphreys	Individual	1,800
Alan Kelly TD	Individual	2,000
Senator Gerald Nash	Individual	1,800
Jan O'Sullivan TD	Individual	2,400
Willie Penrose TD	Individual	2,400
Brendan Ryan TD	Individual	2,400
Sean Sherlock TD	Individual	2,400
Total		21,800

National Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
James Reynolds	Individual	2,500
Justin Barrett	Individual	2,500
Patrick Clancy	Individual	2,500
Total		7,500

Sinn Féin

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Gerry Adams TD	Individual	2,460
Matt Carthy MEP	Individual	2,496
Senator Máire Devine	Individual	1,992
Pearse Doherty TD	Individual	2,288
Dessie Ellis TD	Individual	2,500
Martin Ferris TD	Individual	2,496
Senator Paul Gavan	Individual	2,295
Senator Pádraig Mac Lochlainn	Individual	2,460
Mary Lou McDonald TD	Individual	2,500
Denise Mitchell TD	Individual	2,295
Imelda Munster TD	Individual	2,460
Senator Niall O'Donnghaile	Individual	2,500
Donnchadh O'Laoghaire TD	Individual	2,460
Louise O'Reilly TD	Individual	2,460
Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD	Individual	2,000
Maurice Quinlivan TD	Individual	2,460
Brian Stanley TD	Individual	2,500
Senator Fintan Warfield	Individual	2,500
Senator Rose Conway Walsh	Individual	2,498
Total		45,620

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

Workers Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Sean Hughes	Individual	2,400
Total		2,400