

Donations to TDs, Senators and MEPs in 2019



Coimisiún um Chaighdeáin in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

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Foreword

On behalf of the Standards in Public Office Commission, I am pleased to furnish this report to the Ceann Comhairle in accordance with the provisions of section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended (the Act). The donation statements/statutory declarations described in the report were furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission pursuant to section 24 of the Act. The certificates of monetary donations/statutory declarations and statements from financial institutions were furnished pursuant to section 23B of the Act.

Justice Garrett Sheehan
Chairperson
March 2021

Chapter 1: Introduction

Each person who, during a calendar year, is a member of Dáil Éireann (TD), a member of Seanad Éireann (Senator) or a member of the European Parliament (MEP) is required, by 31 January of the following year, to furnish to the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Commission) a donation statement, a certificate of monetary donations, a statutory declaration and, where appropriate, a bank statement in respect of the previous year.

It is an offence to fail to make the necessary returns by the statutory deadline. Where a person is guilty of an offence under this section, he/she is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding €2,500 and to an ongoing fine not exceeding €500 per day for each day, after a conviction, on which the statutory returns are still outstanding.

This report concerns the statutory returns furnished by TDs, Senators and MEPs in respect of 2019.

Details of donations disclosed and made are provided in the appendices to this report.

Chapter 2: General information

The Commission has published guidelines for TDs, Senators and MEPs (collectively referred to herein as “members”) on donations setting out the requirements relating to various matters such as the acceptance and disclosure of donations, prohibited donations and political donation accounts. The guidelines (summarised in the following table) are available on the Commission's website, www.sipo.ie.

Summary donation table for TDs, Senators and MEPs

Political donations account	On receipt of a donation of in excess of €100 a political donations account must be opened (if one has not already been opened) by a TD, Senator or MEP.
Cash donations	€200 is the maximum cash donation that may be accepted by a TD, Senator or MEP in any calendar year from a donor.
Corporate donors	€200 is the maximum donation that may be accepted by a TD, Senator or MEP in any calendar year from a corporate donor unless the corporate donor is registered in the Register of Corporate Donors maintained by the Commission
Individual donors	All donations received by a TD, Senator or MEP exceeding €600 must be disclosed on the donation statement.
Maximum donation	€1,000 is the maximum donation that may be accepted by a TD, Senator or MEP in a particular year from an individual or corporate donor
Multiple donations	Where a donor makes a donation to two or more recipients (multiple members of the same party or to one or more party members and the party itself), the aggregate value of which exceeds €1,500 , he/she is required to submit a donation form to the Commission under Section 24 (1A)
Prohibited donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any donation that exceeds the above noted limits• An anonymous donation exceeding €100 cannot be accepted• Foreign donations, of any value, cannot be accepted from outside the island of Ireland, other than from an Irish citizen

Note: additional donation rules apply for political parties and third parties. Please see www.sipo.ie for further information.

Chapter 3: Donations disclosed

The table in Appendix 1 provides a summary of donations disclosed. Individual donation statements can be viewed on the Commission's website: www.sipo.ie.

A total of 237 members and former members were required to furnish donation statements in respect of 2019, as follows –

- 158 TDs
- 60 Senators
- 13 MEPs
- 6 former MEPs

Returns received

All members were obliged to furnish their donation statements by 31 January 2020.

Where the Commission finds a minor error or omission in a donation statement, it will furnish details of the error or omission to the member and will notify the member that he/she has 14 days from the date of the notice in which to correct the error or make good the omission.

By the 31 January deadline, 192 members had fully complied with the statutory requirements. Forty-five were late. All members had substantively complied by April 2020, with some minor queries still outstanding. These queries are being pursued. As all are in substantive compliance, no files were referred to An Garda Síochána.

Six members had received donations in excess of €200 from their political parties, which had not registered with the Commission as corporate donors at the time the party made the donations.

The Act requires that where a donation in excess of €200 is received from an unregistered corporate donor, he/she must either return the donation or the part in excess over €200 to the donor, or remit the donation to the Commission.

The Commission wrote to each of the members, who each returned either the excess over €200 or the entire donation to their party. Details are set out in the tables below. The Commission also wrote to all registered political parties to set out the requirements of the Act with regard to corporate donations. Parties were informed that if they wish to make a donation to an elected member or an election candidate in excess of €200, they must first register as a corporate donor.

The table in Appendix 1 shows that donations with a total value of **€22,545** were disclosed by members in respect of 2019. When refunds are taken into account, the net total for donations received was €13,645. This is an increase from the 2018 equivalent figure, which was €6,480. European Parliament elections were held in 2019, which contributed to the increase in the value of donations disclosed.

Chapter 4: Donations disclosed by donors under section 24 (1A)

Section 24 (1A) of the Act provides that an individual must furnish a donation statement and a statutory declaration to the Commission if he/she, in a particular year, makes donations exceeding €1,500 in aggregate value to two or more persons who were members of the same political party when the donations were made, or to a political party and to one or more of its members. The donation statement must give details of the donations and the persons to whom they were made, and must be furnished by 31 January of the following year.

If a donor does not intend to comply with this requirement and a member or a party is aware of this, the member/party is prohibited from accepting a donation from that individual.

Five donation statements from individual donors were received in respect of 2019. The table at Appendix 2 sets out the details of the donations disclosed. Donations with a total value of **€44,685** were disclosed by the five donors in respect of 2019. The equivalent figure for 2018 was €6,302. The increase can be largely explained by donations to candidates in the local elections held in 2019.

Chapter 5: Publication of donation statements

The Commission has today laid the donation statements referred to in this report before each House of the Oireachtas, pursuant to section 24 (7) (a) of the Act, and the documents are available on the Oireachtas website www.oireachtas.ie.

The donation statements received are now available on the Commission's website. A copy of this report and accompanying press release are also available on the website www.sipo.ie.

Section 73 of the Act requires the Commission to make the documents 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 at this time. When the offices have been reopened, the documents will be made available 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.

Certificates of monetary donations, statutory declarations and accompanying bank statements are not required to be laid before the Houses and are not available for public inspection as per Section 23B (8) of the Act.

Appendix 1 - Donations disclosed by members

Party	Member	Donor	Total value of donations €
Aontú	Peadar Tóibín TD	Desmond John Tobin 9 St. Helen's Road Booterstown Blackrock Dublin	1,000
Fianna Fáil	Senator Malcolm Byrne	Wexford Comhairle Dáil Fianna Fáil	1,100
		Gorey Fianna Fáil	2,000
		* Aggregate donation from Fianna Fáil	3,100
	Stephen Donnelly TD	Jim Donnelly Richmond Hill Monkstown Dublin	1,000
	Micheál Martin TD	** Fianna Fáil 65/66 Lower Mount Street Dublin 2	1,000
	Michael McGrath TD	* Fianna Fáil Cork South Central CDC	1,000
	Darragh O'Brien TD	Ray Nolan Church Road Malahide Co. Dublin	850
Fine Gael	Michael D'Arcy TD	Jim Allen Newtown Road Wexford	1,000
		Ronald McCormack Plattenstown Coolgreany Gorey Co. Wexford	1,000
		Walter Hobbs 17 Knocksinna Park Foxrock Dublin 18	1,000
Independent	Katherine Zappone TD	Muriel Walls Meadow Nook Richardstown Clane Co. Kildare	1,000

Party	Member	Donor	Total value of donations €
		W91 HXE8 Ireland	
Labour Party	Alan Kelly TD	Declan Kelly Castletown Portroe Nenagh Co. Tipperary	995
	Brendan Ryan TD	* Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) Nerney's Court off Temple Street Dublin 1	1,000
Sinn Féin	Pádraig MacLochlainn Senator	** Donegal Office Services High Road Letterkenny Co. Donegal	1,000
Solidarity-People Before Profit	Paul Murphy TD	Laura Feeney 5 Wynnefield Road Rathmines Dublin 6	1,000
The Green Party	Ciarán Cuffe MEP	* Dublin Bay South Greens Green Party Suffolk St Dublin 2	1,000
		Gearoid O'Fearghail 44 Richmond Ave Monkstown Blackrock Dublin A94DR44	1,000
	Catherine Martin TD	* Green Party/Comhaontas Glas 16/17 Suffolk Street Dublin 2	1,000
	Joe O'Brien TD	Fergus Wheatley 7 Haven View Malahide Co. Dublin K36 Y052	1,000

Party	Member	Donor	Total value of donations €
	Grace O'Sullivan MEP	Sean Ryan Suirville Newtown Waterford	1,000
		Caroline Gray Corballymore House Dunmore East Co. Waterford	600
	Eamon Ryan TD	* Green Party 16/17 Suffolk Street Dublin 2	1,000
Total			22,545

* Donation from unregistered corporate donor – excess over €200 returned to donor.

** Donation from unregistered corporate donor – entirety of donation returned to donor.

Appendix 2 - Donations disclosed by donors under section 24 (1A)

Donor	Recipient of donation	Total value of donations €
Mr. Declan Kelly Castletown Portroe Nenagh Co. Tipperary	Alan Kelly TD The Labour Party	995
	Tipperary Labour Party	1,495
*** Mr. Michael Madden 10 Graham Court Rye New York 10580 USA	Tipperary Labour Party	1,480
Mr. Cathal Queally Aughrim Street Dublin 7	Cian O'Callaghan Social Democrats	750
	Social Democrats	1,000
Irish National Teachers Organisation Parnell Square Dublin 1	Michael Ryan Aontú	1,000
	Cathal Crowe Fianna Fáil	1,000
	Joe Killeen Fianna Fáil	1,000
	Fergal Browne Fine Gael	1,000
	Maria Doyle Fine Gael	1,000
	Aileen Horkan Fine Gael	1,000
	Alice O'Donnell Fine Gael	1,000
	Harry Barrett Independent	1,000
	Fidelma Healy Eames Independent	1,000
	Helena Byrne Teehan Renua	1,000

Donor	Recipient of donation	Total value of donations €	
	Sorcha Nic Cormaic Sinn Féin	1,000	
	Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin Sinn Féin	1,000	
	Eolan Ryng Sinn Féin	1,000	
	Stephen Marken Social Democrats	1,000	
	Mary Cahillane Solidarity People Before Profit	1,000	
	Seonaidh Ní Shíomóin Solidarity People Before Profit	1,000	
	Siobhan Shovlin Solidarity People Before Profit	1,000	
	Fergus Carpenter The Labour Party	1,000	
	Alison Gilliland The Labour Party	1,000	
	Lorraine Ní Sceallaigh The Labour Party	1,000	
	Seána Ó Rodaigh The Labour Party	1,000	
	SIPTU Liberty Hall Eden Quay Dublin 1	Nuala Nolan Aontú	595
		Donal Lynch Fine Gael	595
Pat Hardiman Independent		595	
Mark Lohan Sinn Féin		595	
Cyril Brennan Solidarity People Before Profit		950	
William Lacey Solidarity People Before Profit		595	
Michael O'Brien		595	

Donor	Recipient of donation	Total value of donations €
	Solidarity People Before Profit	
	Jessica Spear Solidarity People Before Profit	595
	Paul Bell The Labour Party	595
	Aidenn Carberry The Labour Party	595
	Andrea Cleere The Labour Party	595
	Luke Field The Labour Party	595
	Mary Frehill The Labour Party	595
	Ciara Galvin The Labour Party	595
	Dominic Hannigan The Labour Party	950
	Peter Horgan The Labour Party	595
	Denis Hynes The Labour Party	595
	Dermot Lacey The Labour Party	595
	George Lawlor The Labour Party	595
	John McDonagh The Labour Party	595
	Marie Moloney The Labour Party	595
	Derek Mulcahy The Labour Party	595
	Eric Nolan The Labour Party	595
	Peter O'Brien The Labour Party	595
	Cathal Rasmussen The Labour Party	595
	Seamus Rodgers	595

Donor	Recipient of donation	Total value of donations €
	The Labour Party	
	Marie Sherlock The Labour Party	595
	Duncan Smith The Labour Party	595
	David Gardiner Workers Party	595
Total		44,685

*** Irish Citizen