

Donations to Political Parties

2022

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



Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí
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Foreword

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended, I am pleased to furnish this report to the Ceann Comhairle. The report relates to annual donation statements/certificates of monetary donations and statutory declarations, in respect of 2022, furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission by political parties, pursuant to section 24 of the Act.



Garrett Sheehan
Chairperson
Standards in Public Office Commission
December 2023

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 Commission) a donation statement covering the preceding calendar year, disclosing certain donations to the party. The party must also provide a statement of any political donations account it maintains in a financial institution covering the reporting year. Finally, the party must provide a certificate of monetary donations.

All political parties registered in 2022 were obliged to furnish these documents to the Commission by 31 March 2023. During 2022, there were 23 political parties registered and obliged to furnish returns.

A list of registered political parties required to file a donation statement is available at Appendix 1.

Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties

Political parties may receive donations from a variety of donors including individual's resident in Ireland, Irish citizens living abroad, and registered, or unregistered, corporate donors. These donations are subject to statutory limits and disclosure thresholds. The Electoral Act 1997, as amended (the Act) also prohibits certain types of donations, including those over allowable limits, and donations from outside Ireland other than in certain specified circumstances.

Where a party receives a donation valued over €100, it must open and maintain a political donations account in a recognised financial institution, into which that and all future donations must be lodged.

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.

Each year, the responsible officer for a political party must provide to the Commission:

- a donation statement, disclosing any donations received in the preceding calendar year 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, and
- where applicable, a statement from the financial institution where the party's 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.

A nil return is still required where a party has not received any donations or does not have a donations account.

While parties may also receive donations of lesser amounts, only those above the statutory declaration threshold fall to be disclosed to the Commission. The amounts set out in this report, therefore, only reflect donations received that were above the declaration

threshold, and are not an accounting of all donations received by a party during the reporting year.

Amount of declarable donations disclosed by political parties

The total value of declarable donations disclosed by political parties during 2022 was €200,161. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties.

Eight of the 23 registered parties missed the original reporting deadline of 31 March. Three of these parties (Identity Ireland (now disbanded), Renua Ireland (renamed in 2023 as Centre Party of Ireland) and The National Party) failed to submit the required statutory returns in respect of their parties for 2022.

The Commission reviewed donation statements and accompanying documentation, and queried lodgements over the allowable donation threshold or where the donor's identity was unclear.

A summary of the donations disclosed is shown in the following table:

Party	Total Donations Disclosed €
Aontú	€5,000
Fianna Fáil	€2,500
Fine Gael	€56,747
The Green Party/Comhaontas Glas	€21,075
The Labour Party	€27,850
Sinn Féin	€80,190
People Before Profit - Solidarity	€1,800
Workers Party	€5,000
Total	€200,162

Note: Figures have been rounded up to the nearest euro where applicable.

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.

As is the case with the parent political party, 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.

In 2022, there were 163 accounting units required to submit statutory documentation to the Commission. 161 accounting units complied with their obligations to submit returns, while 2 units failed to submit returns. However, there was 1 accounting unit who submitted part of a witnessed statutory declaration. In addition, there were 5 outstanding queries at the time of publication of this report which related to incomplete bank statements or no bank statements received. These outstanding matters continue to be pursued.

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 donations account may be protracted and can lead to a delay in the lodging of the donation, as required by the Electoral Act.

Funds held by accounting units in 2022

The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2022 was €1,407,667.91

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. No donation statement is required from accounting units.

Table: Number of accounting units, by political party

Political Party	Total number of accounting units
Fine Gael	37
Fianna Fáil	36
Labour Party	40
Green Party	28
People Before Profit - Solidarity	4
Social Democrats	9
Sinn Féin	9
Total	163

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 these documents to be made available for public inspection at its offices at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773. It is advised to ring ahead to ensure the office is open to callers. Where it is not possible to provide for in-person 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 2022

Aontú
Communist Party of Ireland
Direct Democracy Ireland
Fianna Fáil
Fine Gael
Fís Nua
Green Party
Human Dignity Alliance
Identity Ireland (now disbanded)
Independents 4 Change
Irish Freedom Party
Kerry Independence Alliance
Labour Party
National Party
Party for Animal Welfare
RENUA Ireland (renamed in 2023 as Centre Party of Ireland)
Right to Change Party
Sinn Féin
Social Democrats
People Before Profit - Solidarity
United People
Workers' Party
Workers and Unemployed Action

Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2022

Aontú

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Mulligan, Anne	Individual	2,500.00
Mulligan, Liam	Individual	2,500.00
Total		5,000.00

Fianna Fáil

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Dansko Foods Ltd	Corporate Donor	2,500.00

Fine Gael

Name of Donor	Description of Donor	Value of Donation in €
Ahearn Garret, Senator	Individual	1,547.00
Brophy Colm, Minister	Individual	1,707.00
Bruton Richard, TD	Individual	1,647.00
Burke Colm, TD	Individual	1,520.00
Burke Peter, Minister	Individual	1,707.00
Cannon Ciarán, TD	Individual	1,615.00
Carey Joe, TD	Individual	1,583.00
Carroll MacNeill Jennifer, TD	Individual	1,528.00
Clune Deirdre, MEP	Individual	2,217.00
Coveney Simon, Minister	Individual	1,640.00
Creed Michael, TD	Individual	1,647.00
Dillon Alan, TD	Individual	1,710.00
Doherty Regina, Senator	Individual	1,552.00
Donoghue Paschal, Minister	Individual	1,703.00
Farrell Alan, TD	Individual	1,647.00
Feighan Frank, Minister	Individual	1,643.00
Fitzgerald Frances, MEP	Individual	1,583.00
Griffin Brendan, TD	Individual	1,583.00

Harris Simon, Minister	Individual	1,894.00
Heydon Martin, TD	Individual	1,643.00
Higgins Emer, TD	Individual	1,647.00
Kelly Sean, MEP	Individual	1,707.00
Colm Markey, MEP	Individual	1,647.00
McEntee Helen, Minister	Individual	1,695.00
McGahon John, Senator	Individual	1,633.00
McHugh Joe, TD	Individual	1,588.00
O'Donnell Kieran, TD	Individual	1,583.00
O'Donovan Patrick, Minister	Individual	1,707.00
O'Dowd Fergus, TD	Individual	1,628.00
Phelan John Paul, TD	Individual	1,647.00
Neale Richmond, Minister	Individual	1,538.00
Stanton David, TD	Individual	1,552.00
Varadkar Leo, Taoiseach	Individual	1,640.00
Walsh Maria, MEP	Individual	2,219.00
Total		56,747

Green Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Cuffe Ciarán, MEP	Individual	2,500.00
Hackett Pippa, Senator	Individual	1,775.00
Matthews Steven, TD	Individual	2,200.00
McGeeney Kevin	Individual	2,500.00
O'Brien Joe, TD	Individual	2,500.00
O'Cathasaigh Marc, TD	Individual	2,100.00
O'Gorman Roderic, TD	Individual	2,500.00
O'Reilly Pauline, Senator	Individual	2,500.00
O'Sullivan Grace, MEP	Individual	2,500.00
Total		21,075.00

The Labour Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Hoey Annie, Senator	Individual	1,650.00
Barry Helen	Individual	1,000.00
Frost Eithne	Individual	1,000.00
Howlin Brendan, TD	Individual	2,400.00
Ivana Bacik, TD	Individual	2,150.00

Kelehan Kevin	Individual	1,000.00
Kelly Alan, TD	Individual	2,400.00
Moynihan Rebecca, Senator	Individual	1,800.00
Mulligan Lorraine	Individual	1,000.00
Nash Gerald, TD	Individual	2,400.00
Nugent, Simon	Individual	1,000.00
O'Riordan Aodhan, TD	Individual	2,000.00
Sherlock Marie, Senator	Individual	1,800.00
Sherlock Sean, TD	Individual	2,400.00
Smith Duncan, TD	Individual	2,200.00
Wall Mark, Senator	Individual	1,650.00
Total		27,850.00

Sinn Féin

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Andrews Chris, TD	Individual	2,400.00
Brady John, TD	Individual	2,000.00
Burns Elizabeth	Individual	1,820.00
Carthy Matt, TD	Individual	2,496.00
Cronin Réada, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Crowe Seán, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Doyle Dawn	Individual	2,000.00
Cullinane David	Individual	2,000.00
Daly Pa, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Doherty Pearse, TD	Individual	2,496.00
Ellis Dessie, TD	Individual	2,499.96
Farrell Mairead, TD	Individual	2,499.96
Gavan Paul, TD	Individual	2,160.00
Gould Thomas, TD	Individual	1,900.00
Guirke Johnny, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Mac Lochlainn Pdraig, TD	Individual	2,460.00
McDonald Mary Lou, TD	Individual	2,500.00
McManus Chris, MEP	Individual	2,500.00
Munster Imelda, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Mitchell Denise, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Mythen Johnny, TD	Individual	2,272.70
Ó Murchu Ruairí, TD	Individual	2,500.00
O'Donnghaile Niall, Senator	Individual	2,500.00
O'Laoghaire Donnchadh, TD	Individual	2,499.96
O'Reilly Louise, TD	Individual	2,460.00

O'Rourke Darren, TD	Individual	2,499.97
O'Snodaigh Aengus, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Quinlivan Maurice, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Ryan Patrick, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Stanley Brian, TD	Individual	2,499.96
Tully Pauline, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Walsh, Rose Conway, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Ward Mark, TD	Individual	1,845.00
Warfield Fintan, Senator	Individual	2,000.00
Total		80,189.51

People Before Profit - Solidarity

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Barry Mick	Individual	1,800.00
Total		1,800.00

Workers Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Ryan Eilis	Individual	2,500.00
O'Connor Claire	Individual	2,500.00
Total		2,500.00