

Donations to Political Parties

2021

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



Coimisiún um Chaighdeáin in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

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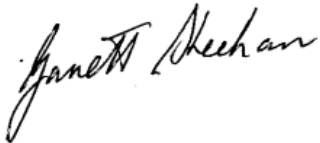
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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword..... | 3 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 4 |
| Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties..... | 5 |
| Amount of declarable donations disclosed by political parties..... | 6 |
| Chapter 3: Accounting units..... | 7 |
| Funds held by accounting units in 2021..... | 8 |
| Table: Number of accounting units, by political party..... | 8 |
| Chapter 4: Publication of statutory documentation..... | 9 |
| Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2021 | 10 |
| Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2021 | 11 |

Foreword

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, 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 2021, 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
November 2022

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 2021 were obliged to furnish these documents to the Commission by 31 March 2022. During 2021, 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 – individuals 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 (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 appropriate 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 2021 was €193,511. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties.

One party, Identity Ireland, did not comply with their statutory obligation to submit a donation statement, a statutory declaration or a certificate of monetary donations to the Commission in respect of political donations received in 2021.

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

| Party | Total Donations Disclosed € |
|-------------------|--|
| Aontú | 5,000 |
| Fine Gael | 58,695 |
| Green Party | 25,624 |
| Sinn Féin | 70,692 |
| The Labour Party | 28,600 |
| The Workers Party | 4,900 |
| Total | 193,511 |

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

Chapter 3: Accounting units

An “accounting unit” is defined in the Electoral Act 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.

The Standards Commission continues to note that a number of accounting units have flagged difficulties that they have had in complying with the legislation. As has been stated by the Commission in previous reports, the difficulties largely relate to the requirement to provide statements from financial institutions.

Issues identified include:

- 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 a donation, as required by the Electoral Act.

Funds held by accounting units in 2021

The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2021 was €938,313.

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.

Table: Number of accounting units, by political party

| Political Party | Total number of accounting units |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Fianna Fáil | 36 |
| Fine Gael | 34 |
| Green Party | 21 |
| People Before Profit/Solidarity | 4 |
| Sinn Fein | 7 |
| Social Democrats | 6 |
| The Labour Party | 26 |
| Total | 134 |

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.

Political parties' donations statements can be viewed pursuant to section 73 on the Commission's website, at www.sipo.ie. The Commission will also make copies of the statements and reports available for public inspection, without charge, at its office at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773, during normal working hours. If you wish to inspect the statutory documentation, please contact the Commission via email at info@sipo.ie or by telephone at (01) 639-5666.

Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2021

| |
|---------------------------------|
| 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 Freedom Party |
| Kerry Independent Alliance |
| Party for Animal Welfare |
| People Before Profit/Solidarity |
| Renua Ireland |
| Sinn Féin |
| Social Democrats |
| The Labour Party |
| The National Party |
| The Right to Change Party |
| The Workers' Party |
| United People |
| Workers and Unemployed Action |

Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2021

Aontú

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Mulligan, Anne | Individual | 2,500 |
| Mulligan, Liam | Individual | 2,500 |
| Total | | 5,000 |

Fine Gael

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Brophy Colm, TD | Individual | 1,706 |
| Bruton Richard, TD | Individual | 1,520 |
| Burke Colm, TD | Individual | 1,520 |
| Burke Peter, TD | Individual | 1,768 |
| Cannon Ciarán, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| Carey Joe, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| Carroll MacNeill Jennifer, TD | Individual | 1,520 |
| Clune Deirdre, MEP | Individual | 2,211 |
| Coveney Simon, TD | Individual | 1,640 |
| Creed Michael, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| Cummins John, Senator | Individual | 1,543 |
| Dillon Alan, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| Donohoe Pascal, TD | Individual | 1,891 |
| Doyle, Andrew | Individual | 1,508 |
| Durkan Bernard, TD | Individual | 1,709 |
| Farrell Alan, TD | Individual | 1,646 |
| Feighan Frank, TD | Individual | 1,643 |
| Fitzgerald Frances, MEP | Individual | 1,583 |
| Griffin Brendan, TD | Individual | 1,646 |
| Harris Simon, TD | Individual | 1,891 |
| Heydon Martin, TD | Individual | 1,643 |
| Higgins Emer, TD | Individual | 1,646 |

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Humphreys Heather, TD | Individual | 1,703 |
| Kelly Sean, MEP | Individual | 1,643 |
| McEntee Helen, TD | Individual | 1,640 |
| McHugh Joe, TD | Individual | 1,643 |
| Naughton Hildegard, TD | Individual | 1,703 |
| O'Donnell Kieran, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| O'Donovan Patrick, TD | Individual | 1,706 |
| O'Dowd Fergus, TD | Individual | 1,646 |
| Phelan John Paul, TD | Individual | 1,646 |
| Richmond Neale, TD | Individual | 1,583 |
| Seery Kearney Mary, Senator | Individual | 2,442 |
| Stanton David, TD | Individual | 1,551 |
| Varadkar Leo, Tánaiste | Individual | 1,640 |
| Total | | 58,695 |

Green Party

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Costello Patrick, TD | Individual | 2,450 |
| Cuffe Ciarán, MEP | Individual | 2,500 |
| Duffy Francis Noel, TD | Individual | 1,545 |
| Gallagher, Susan | Individual | 2,354 |
| Hackett Pippa, Senator | Individual | 1,775 |
| Kinsella Christopher, Estate of | Individual | 2,500 |
| McGeeney, Kevin | Individual | 2,500 |
| O'Brien Joe, TD | Individual | 2,500 |
| Ó Cathasaigh Marc, TD | Individual | 2,500 |
| O'Gorman Roderic, TD | Individual | 2,500 |
| O'Sullivan Grace, MEP | Individual | 2,500 |
| Total | | 25,624 |

Sinn Féin

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Andrews Chris, TD | Individual | 2,435.00 |
| Carthy Matt, TD | Individual | 2,496.00 |
| Conway Walsh Rose, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Cronin Réada, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Daly Pa, TD | Individual | 2,499.97 |
| Doherty Pearse, TD | Individual | 2,496.00 |
| Ellis Dessie, TD | Individual | 2,499.96 |
| Farrell Mairéad, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Gavan Paul, Senator | Individual | 2,160.00 |
| Gould Thomas, TD | Individual | 2,000.00 |
| Guirke Johnny, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Mac Lochlainnn 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 | 2,499.97 |
| O'Reilly Louise, TD | Individual | 2,460.00 |
| O'Rourke Darren, TD | Individual | 2,499.97 |
| Ó Donnghaile Niall, Senator | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Ó Laoghaire Donnchadh, TD | Individual | 2,083.30 |
| Ó Murchu Ruairí, TD | Individual | 2,499.93 |
| Ó Snodaigh Aengus, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Quinlivan Maurice, TD | Individual | 2,460.00 |
| Ryan Patricia, TD | Individual | 2,499.93 |
| Stanley Brian, TD | Individual | 2,499.96 |
| Tully Pauline, TD | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Ward Mark, TD | Individual | 2,222.16 |
| Warfield Fintan, Senator | Individual | 2,500.00 |
| Total | | 70,692.15 |

The Labour Party

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Bacik Ivana, TD | Individual | 2,100 |
| Fitzgerald, Maurice | Individual | 1,000 |
| Henry, John | Individual | 1,000 |
| Howlin Brendan, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| Hoey Annie, Senator | Individual | 600 |
| Kelly Alan, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| Moynihan Rebecca, Senator | Individual | 1,800 |
| Nash Gerald, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| O'Connor Jack | Individual | 1,250 |
| O'Sullivan, Jan | Individual | 2,000 |
| Ó Ríordáin Aodhán, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| Sherlock Marie, Senator | Individual | 1,800 |
| Sherlock Sean, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| Smith Duncan, TD | Individual | 2,400 |
| Walker, David | Individual | 1,000 |
| Wall Mark, Senator | Individual | 1,650 |
| Total | | 28,600 |

The Workers Party

| Name of donor | Description of donor | Value of donation € |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| McDermott Dick, Estate of | Individual | 2,500 |
| Hughes Séan | Individual | 2,400 |
| Total | | 4,900 |