



Coimisiún Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Commission

*Minutes of Commission Meeting
Tuesday 22 October 2019.*

1. The thirteenth meeting of the Commission of 2019 took place at 11.30 a.m. in Room 2, Leinster House.

2. **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, Deputy Martin Heydon, Deputy Catherine Murphy, Deputy Louise O'Reilly, Senator Ned O'Sullivan and Mr. Peter Finnegan, Secretary General.

Apologies were received from Senator Gerard P. Craughwell.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings of 24 September, 25 September, 2 October and 8 October were agreed by the Commission.

4. **HOSTING OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK OF PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICIALS AND INDEPENDENT FISCAL INSTITUTIONS**

The Commission considered a business case, with a budget requirement of €75,000, seeking approval for the Oireachtas Parliamentary Budget Office, in conjunction with the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council, to host the 12th annual meeting of the OECD Network of Parliamentary Budget Officials and Independent Fiscal Institutions in April 2020.

The Commission approved the hosting the 2020 annual meeting of the OECD Network of Parliamentary Budget Officials and Independent Fiscal Institutions, including the associated budget in the amount of €75,000.

5. **PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

Proposal to facilitate the "Politics in Action" schools programme in Leinster House

The Commission approved the hosting of eight one-day workshops in Leinster House over 2019 and 2020 to facilitate the *Politics in Action* schools programme for students from cross-community schools in Northern Ireland. The workshops will be organised to provide an opportunity for students participating in the Programme to discuss current political and social issues affecting young people with members of both Houses of the Oireachtas.

6. PARLIAMENTARY WORKPLACE SURVEY

Report on Survey Results

The Commission considered the report of the Parliamentary Workplace Survey results. It noted and approved the measures proposed to be undertaken by HR Services in responding to the survey findings, including measures to raise awareness of the Dignity and Respect Policy for the parliamentary workplace, the protections afforded under the policy, the process for making complaints and the complaint resolution process, the supports available to staff in the process and the protection of confidentiality throughout the process. In addition, training will be delivered to ensure a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities under the Policy.

The Commission noted that HR Services would conduct an evaluation and review of the *Dignity and Respect Policy* one year following its introduction.

The Commission agreed that the report on the survey results would be communicated to staff with a message from the Chairperson and that the report would also be placed on the Oireachtas website.

7. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES UNDER THE SCHEME FOR SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS

(i) Provision of additional resources to political groups represented on the Joint Committee on Climate Action

The Commission approved the allocation of additional resources, of 0.5 FTE Senior Administrator post, to Senator Alice Mary Higgins on her appointment to serve on the Joint Committee on Climate Action as the representative of the Seanad Civil Engagement Technical Group in accordance with the Commission decision of 10 July 2018 to provide additional staff resources to support members of the Special Committee.

(ii) Draft Statutory Instrument under the Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Amendment) Act 2014

The Commission approved a Draft Statutory Instrument to give legal effect to its decisions as set out below on the allocation of staff resources under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members in accordance with section 4(3) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts:

- (a) decision of 24 September 2019 to allocate additional staff resources to support members of the parliamentary committees, and
- (b) decision of 22 October 2019 to allocate 0.5 FTE senior administrator post to Senator Alice Mary Higgins on her appointment as the representative of the Seanad Civil Engagement Technical Group to the Joint Committee on Climate Action, in accordance with its earlier decisions of 10 July 2018 and 5 March 2019 and subject to the same administrative arrangements as apply to the posts allocated under SI No. 426 of 2018 and SI No. 167 of 2019.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12.20 p.m.

SEÁN Ó FEARGHAÍL, T.D.

Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission

Dated: