



Coimisiún Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Commission

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



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*Mr. Seán Barrett, T.D.,
Ceann Comhairle*

We are pleased to present the Commission's Annual Report for 2013 to the Houses of the Oireachtas. The report sets out the main activities of the Commission and the Oireachtas Service over this period in supporting the business of both Houses, their committees and members of the Houses.

An overview of the past year reveals increased levels of activity across the services and operations of the Houses. Indeed many areas of business continued the upward trends noted in last year's report, from House sittings, committee meetings, bills presented and public petitions received.

This increase in activity was driven by a number of factors, most particularly the implementation of measures as part of the ongoing programme of Dáil reform.

All this continued with a focus on the delivery of services more efficiently and effectively and ensuring value for the use of taxpayers' money. In 2013, the cost of running the Houses was €101m. This was 10% below budget with significant savings having been achieved. Our stewardship of resources in the coming year will continue to focus on ensuring efficient use of public money and will be supported by a programme of Value for Money Reviews in key spending areas.

A particular highlight in 2013 was the hosting of the parliamentary dimension of the EU Presidency in the first six months of the year. Since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, national parliaments have engaged in a greater degree of inter-parliamentary exchange and debate on EU policies and priorities. This was reflected in the professionally organised and highly effective presidency programme put in place by the Houses of the Oireachtas as the Presidency Parliament.

Over the six months of the Presidency, our committees led a series of EU inter-parliamentary conferences and meetings and welcomed over fifteen hundred parliamentarians from other EU national parliaments and from the European Parliament. These fora provided an important platform for political engagement across a broad range of topics, ranging from EU economic governance and the role of parliaments to protecting our environment for a sustainable future.

Following the successful inaugural plenary meeting in 2012, the North/South Inter-parliamentary Association continued its important work as a forum for dialogue and cooperation between Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas. Building on existing excellent relations, the Association addressed topics of common interest at its biannual plenary meetings, including positive mental health strategies, caring for an ageing population and energy security.



*Senator Paddy Burke
Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann*

Over the course of the year, the Commission devoted much effort to public engagement and bringing the work of the Houses closer to the people. Live webcasting, broadcasting and social media content helped bring the parliamentary proceedings to wider audiences. Significant progress was also made in the development of a Parliamentary TV Channel as well as a programme of capital investment which will improve the capacity to transmit daily proceedings of the Houses, as well as expanding distribution, making the work of the Parliament more accessible to viewers across the country.

We welcomed over ninety thousand visitors to Leinster House this year. The Houses are open to visitors all year round and the walk-up tours on non-sitting days are proving to be a particular success.

The year 2013 is a record of considerable achievement, while at the same time doing more with less and wherever possible improving efficiencies and seeking value for money. The cost of running the Houses in 2013 was €4.6m less than in 2012. There was also a reduction in the number of civil service staff employed in the Service in this period. The number of staff was 379 which is 59 (11%) fewer than the number sanctioned by the Commission in 2008. There were corresponding payroll savings associated with the reduction in staff numbers.

We would like to thank members of the Commission, the committees who advise the Commission and the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service for their work in supporting the Houses and their members.



Seán Barrett, T.D.

Ceann Comhairle

Chairperson



Senator Paddy Burke

Cathaoirleach

Deputy Chairperson

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

June 2014

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION

The Houses of Oireachtas Commission (the Commission) is the governing board which oversees the provision of services to the Houses and their members by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the parliamentary administration) in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2012. It is comprised of 11 members and is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. First established in 2004, it is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions. It is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions and has responsibility for ensuring value for money. The Commission has no role in relation to parliamentary business or procedure.

The 2003 Act provided the inaugural Commission with its funding for the period 2004 to 2006 as well as providing for the establishment of the Commission. Since then, the Commission has overseen the smooth running of services to both Houses and has introduced a number of significant improvements in the services provided to members and to the wider public. Amending legislation was enacted in 2006, 2009 and 2012, the primary purpose of which was to make funding available for the running of the Houses of

the Oireachtas and the parliamentary administration for the subsequent three-year periods. The requirement to provide by statute for a new Commission budget every three years is useful not just in facilitating financial planning but in also affording an opportunity to assess the adequacy of the legislation thereby allowing it to be updated as required. Technical amendments have also been made to the primary 2003 Act in the follow-up amending legislation.

Commission members serve in a corporate capacity and do not represent their parties, or groups, or their own interests, at this forum. The Commission operates on the general principle that it seeks to support Parliament and all members equally in carrying out their role as elected representatives. The Commission has no role in relation to parliamentary business or procedure. Commission members do however carry out a valuable role in communicating information about Commission activity and decisions through the parliamentary party mechanism. Members of the Commission (excluding *ex-officio* members) qualify for an annual allowance.



Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (from left to right): Mr. Dan Neville, T.D.; Senator Tom Sheahan; Mr. Frank Feighan, T.D.; Mr. Seán Barrett, T.D., Ceann Comhairle [Chairperson]; Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach, Seanad Éireann [Deputy Chairperson]; Mr. Bernard J. Durkan, T.D.; Mr. Jack Wall, T.D.; (Inset photos from left to right) Mr. John Browne, T.D.; Senator Marc MacSharry; Senator John Whelan; (Absent) Secretary General, position vacant at present.

ROLE OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

The role of the Commission under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2012 is “to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas, to act as governing body of the Service, to consider and determine policy in relation to the Service, and to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General”. The Commission was established on 1 January, 2004 and is comprised of 11 members as follows:

- ◆ the Chairman of Dáil Éireann (*ex-officio* member) (*Chairperson of the Commission*);
- ◆ the Chairman of Seanad Éireann (*ex-officio* member) (*Deputy Chairperson*);
- ◆ the Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (*ex-officio* member) (position vacant at present);
- ◆ a member of one of the Houses of the Oireachtas appointed by the Minister for Finance [the “representative of the Minister for Finance”];
- ◆ 4 ordinary members appointed by Dáil Éireann; and
- ◆ 3 ordinary members appointed by Seanad Éireann.

Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission of 31st Dáil/24th Seanad

Ex-officio members:

Seán Barrett, T.D., Ceann Comhairle [Chairperson]
 Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach, Seanad Éireann [Deputy Chairperson]
 Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service [*Retired 05/08/2013*] (position vacant at present);

Member appointed by the Minister for Finance:

Jack Wall, T.D.

Members appointed by Dáil Éireann:

John Browne, T.D.
 Catherine Byrne, T.D. [*Resigned w.e.f. 19/09/2013*]
 Frank Feighan, T.D.
 Dan Neville, T.D.
 Bernard J Durkan T.D. [*Appointed 23/10/2013*]

Members appointed by Seanad Éireann:

Senator Marc MacSharry
 Senator Tom Sheahan
 Senator John Whelan

The Commission provides services to the members of both Houses of the Oireachtas and the staff in their employment, as well as to Service staff, Departmental officials, party staff and advisors, media and visitors.

The legislation sets out certain specific functions of the Commission as follows:

- ◆ overseeing on-going expenditure and keeping annual accounts;
- ◆ producing and publishing strategic plans, annual reports, annual estimates and handbooks and information about the business of the Houses for members;
- ◆ preparing and publishing guidelines for members on the use of publicly funded services and facilities;
- ◆ exercising certain functions regarding secretarial facilities for members and qualifying parties; and
- ◆ exercising certain legal functions (including participation in proceedings where necessary and arranging for legal advice).

Matters Outside the Remit of the Commission

The Commission does not have a role in:

- ◆ setting members’ salaries or allowances;
- ◆ setting staff pay, conditions, pensions;
- ◆ appointing staff at specified senior management grades, namely, at or above Principal Officer 1, without the consent of the Minister for Finance;
- ◆ capital expenditure - the Commission does not control or manage any building works - this function is carried out by the OPW for all Government Departments and Offices; and
- ◆ strategic vs operational functions – day-to-day management is a matter for the Secretary General and the Management Advisory Committee.

Code of Conduct for Commission Members

The Code sets out the agreed ethical standards that inform the conduct of members of the Commission, both collectively and individually, in performing their functions and duties.

Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann have adopted Codes of Conduct for their members as required under the Ethics Acts 1995 and 2001. Commission members are bound by the requirements of these Codes in their capacity as Deputies and Senators.

Interaction between Commission Members and other Members of the Houses

The formal mechanism for interaction/communication between the Commission and members of the Houses is via the Joint sub-Committee on Administration (JsCA) which communicates the views of members on matters of policy to be decided by the Commission and makes recommendations on such matters as appropriate.

Transparency and Accountability

The Commission is accountable to the Houses for the performance of its functions. The Commission is therefore in effect the "Minister" for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

The Commission operates in a transparent manner – the minutes of the meetings, once adopted, are published to the Oireachtas website and Commission documents are subject to the Freedom of Information Acts. The Commission is also required to publish an Annual Report each year. This report, which details the work carried out by Parliament and the support services provided by the parliamentary administration, as well as accounting for the public money spent in running Parliament in a given year, is laid before both Houses and also published to the Oireachtas website.

Commission Committees

The Commission has two key standing advisory Committees – namely the Finance Committee, which considers quarterly financial reports in detail and submits them to the Commission for approval, and the Audit Committee, which oversees and advises on risk management, internal controls (internal audit) and value for money issues. The Audit Committee reports annually to the Commission. Further details on the work of the Audit Committee in 2013 can be found in Appendix 8 on page 96.

The Commission also establishes sub-Committees as required and currently has established a sub-Committee on Accommodation and Catering and a sub-Committee on Communications.

Commission Activities

The Commission met 8 times during 2013 and the minutes of these meetings are available on the Oireachtas website at www.oireachtas.ie.

During the year, the Commission:

- ◆ agreed annual estimates, reviewed quarterly reports from the Finance Committee and noted the 2012 Annual Accounts;
- ◆ continued to monitor budgets and seek savings in the context of the Croke Park Agreement/Haddington Road Agreement;
- ◆ noted the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Annual Resource Plan, 2013;
- ◆ noted the Strategic Plan Progress Report for 2012;
- ◆ noted the OPW's proposed works for the Leinster House complex for the period 2013-2016 and for the National Gallery of Ireland;
- ◆ noted the Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the Print Facility;
- ◆ noted the Library and Research Services (L&RS) Strategy 2013-2015 and the L&RS online public access catalogue;
- ◆ noted the revised Audit Guidelines for Members; and
- ◆ the eligibility of certain expenses under the PRA.

Commission Meetings			
Meetings	2011 *	2012	2013
Commission	6	10	8
Finance Committee	4	4	4
Audit Committee	4	4	4
Other	1	11	4
Totals	15	29	20
* Year of General Elections which impacted the number of meetings held.			

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the Service) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. The Service is headed by the Secretary General/Clerk of the Dáil. The functions of the Service are to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees, and to members of the Houses. The Service is staffed by approximately 389 civil servants of the State (in 2013 398 full-time equivalents in place filling over 378.92 posts) and 48 State industrial staff who are employed by the Commission. There are also non-established civil service staff comprising five civilian drivers and 7 staff of Office Holders. There are also approximately 394 (full-time equivalents) political staff working in either Leinster House or in members' constituency offices who are employed directly by the members or the party for whom they work and who are paid by the Commission.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

The Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service is the Chief Executive of the Commission and Clerk of Dáil Éireann, having responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies (in the same way as the Secretary General of a Government Department vis-à-vis the Minister of that Department). The Secretary General is a member of the Commission, while also being accountable to it and subject to its direction, as well as being the Accounting Officer in respect of Commission expenditure.

THE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Secretary General is assisted by the Service's Management Advisory Committee (MAC), which includes the four most senior managers in the Service. The top level management structure is an apex of two Assistant Secretaries reporting to the Secretary General as agreed by the Commission in 2006.

See pages 60 and 61, for further details on the activities of the MAC during 2013.

See Appendices 2 and 3, pages 66 and 67, for the composition of the MAC and the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Organisation Chart.



Members of the Management Advisory Committee: (from left to right) Ms. Michelle Grant, Human Resources; Mr. Vivian Uíbh Eachach, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin; Mr. Peter Finnegan, Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services Division and Clerk Assistant of the Dáil; Mr. Michael Errity, Assistant Secretary, Corporate & Members' Services Division; Ms. Adrienne Harrington, Office of the Commission and Secretary General; (Inset photo) Ms. Deirdre Lane, Clerk of the Seanad.



ROLE OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE

STRATEGIC VISION
<p>Our role in serving the Irish Parliament is expressed in the following statements of our mission and vision.</p> <p>These statements in turn inform our strategies and the specific actions we propose to deliver them.</p>
OUR MISSION
<p>We serve the democratic interests of our main stakeholders, the Irish people, by serving parliament through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ enabling the Houses, their Committees and their members to do their parliamentary business; and ♦ meeting members' needs as public representatives in the context of parliamentary business.
OUR VISION
<p>"A World-Class Parliamentary Service".</p>
OUR STRATEGIES
<p>We identify the following three strategies for our work on behalf of the Commission under this plan:</p>
Improving Services to Parliament
<p>The Chairpersons and members of the Houses and the Committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.</p>
Improving Services to Members
<p>Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.</p>
Enhancing Service Capability
<p>The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.</p>



*Mr. Peter Finnegan
Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services.*

The Strategic Objectives of the Commission provide the framework for the provision of services to support the business of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the work of members of the Houses.

This report provides an overview of the Service's key activities in the provision of support services to the Houses and their members in 2013 in accordance with these objectives.

The Strategic Objectives are:

- ◆ Improving Services to Parliament – The Chairpersons and members of the Houses and their committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services;
- ◆ Improving Services to Members – Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work;
- ◆ Enhancing Service Capability – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.

Over the course of the year, the Service continued to provide high quality parliamentary support services to the Houses, their members and committees. The Houses continued to meet for more hours which, together with implementation of new procedures as part of the ongoing programme of Dáil Reform, necessitated higher levels of support. The number of bills introduced remained well above the average. Parliamentary questions continued at high levels. Despite their increased workload due to EU Presidency related responsibilities, Oireachtas committee continued their important oversight and scrutiny work and held more meetings and presented more reports than last year.

While meeting these challenges in an ever-tightening economic environment, the Service used this opportunity not just to reduce costs but also to adapt and improve its support services to respond to the requirements of the Houses and the changing needs of members.

Activities in this regard include the support provided to Oireachtas Committees in undertaking pre-legislative scrutiny of Government legislation as a new initiative in the parliamentary process in 2013. Pre-legislative scrutiny allows members to have a greater input into draft legislation before a Government bill is formally presented to the Houses, thereby improving the quality of legislation.

With the enactment of the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act, the Houses were granted important new powers to enhance parliamentary accountability through in-depth investigation of public policy matters. Work proceeded on developing processes and procedures for the exercise of the parliamentary power of inquiry.

A new legislative processing system, the legislative workbench, was implemented in the Bills Office in collaboration with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. This collaborative approach allows sharing of legislative texts between both offices as well as process automation, thereby eliminating duplication of effort and ensuring savings and efficiencies.



*Mr. Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services.*

Plans were set in train for the development of a Parliamentary TV Channel to make the work of the Parliament more accessible by providing live television coverage of the debates and proceedings of the Houses and their committees. This is an extremely important initiative in facilitating greater public engagement with the work of the Parliament.

With a focus on promoting best practice in management processes and responsible stewardship of public resources, audit and review activities focused on contracting and financial practices, asset management, service level agreement compliance, and business continuity planning. A value for money review of the Library and Research Service was also conducted. These ongoing systematic evaluations will be complemented by further value for money expenditure reviews in the year ahead to ensure optimal use of public resources.

In keeping with its human resources strategy, the Service continued to refine and introduce new training and development initiatives to allow staff to develop their skills and knowledge so that they may continue to provide high quality support to the Houses and members.

The Houses ended 2013 reporting an underspend of €11.1m attributable to savings measures implemented during the year. Because of these cost savings the Houses have been able to continue to operate within budget and without any reduction in service levels. The focus will continue on rigorous financial accountability and identifying opportunities to improve efficiencies in order to ensure value for money in the use of public resources.

Through the collective efforts of the staff of the Service, the Houses and their members continued to receive effective and responsive services in what was a particularly demanding period in the parliamentary calendar. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of staff and thank them for their commitment and professionalism in meeting these challenges and contributing to the Service's strong performance over the year.

Finally we would like to thank Mr. Kieran Coughlan, former Secretary General who retired in August, for his work and commitment and the valuable experience he brought to bear over many years of dedicated service to the Houses of the Oireachtas.



Peter Finnegan
Assistant Secretary
Parliamentary Services



Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary
Corporate and Members' Services

Houses of the Oireachtas Service
June 2014

Managing Resources

- ◆ The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2012 enacted in December 2012 provided the Commission with its budget of €334m for the next three-year period from 2013 to 2015. The Act approved a revised format for the presentation of the Commission's Accounts to allow for changes in the Service's structure making it a traditional subhead-based format. 2013 is the first year that the accounts are presented in the new format; and
- ◆ The annual estimate for on-going expenditure for 2013 was €112.038m. Actual overall net expenditure in 2013 was €100.95m which represents an underspend of €11.1m.

Sittings of the Houses and Committees

- ◆ 123 Dáil sittings (1,023 sitting hours);
- ◆ 111 Seanad sittings (722 sitting hours); and
- ◆ 580 Committee meetings (1,130 sitting hours).

Business of the Houses and Committees

- ◆ 140 Bills published as initiated;
- ◆ 52 Acts passed;
- ◆ 4,988 amendments tabled to Bills;
- ◆ 129 Bill reprints as a result of amendment or passage by both Houses;
- ◆ 50,926 Parliamentary Questions processed (90% of which were submitted electronically); and
- ◆ 20 Committee Reports published.

Procedural Knowledge Management

- ◆ The panel of Temporary Chairpersons was updated by new appointments during 2013; and
- ◆ The panel of Temporary Clerks was expanded to increase the number of staff having key House clerking skills and expertise.

Parliamentary Questions

- ◆ 50,926 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) were processed by the Questions Office during 2013.

Seanad Engagement with Civic Society

In 2013, the Seanad continued to engage with civil society and the following people addressed the Seanad:

- ❖ Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative; Secretary General for Disaster Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- ❖ Mr. David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions; and
- ❖ Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Ireland's EU Commissioner with responsibility for Research, Innovation and Science.

Seanad Public Consultation Committee

- ◆ In February 2013, the Committee published a report entitled *"Changes in Lifestyle can prevent approximately one third of Cancers. How does Government and society respond to this challenge?"*.

Committee Outputs

In 2013, there were:

- ◆ 580 meetings of the various Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and sub-Committees for which the Committee Secretariat has responsibility, involving some 1,765 speaking witnesses over the course of 1,130 sitting hours; and
- ◆ 20 policy reports, 8 pre-legislative reports and 13 EU Scrutiny reports were published.

On-going Reform of the Committee System

In 2013, Oireachtas Committees continued to engage in a number of activities under the reform agenda including:

- ◆ on-going mainstreaming of EU legislation scrutiny across all Sectoral Committees;
- ◆ increased engagement with Ministers pre and post EU Council meetings and with Secretaries General on the EU Departmental six-monthly reports;
- ◆ structured annual work programmes for Sectoral Committees;
- ◆ continuation of pre-legislative scrutiny by Sectoral Committees of the Heads of Bills, including the seeking and analysis of submissions received from interested stakeholder groups and individuals;
- ◆ on-going engagement meetings by Sectoral Committees with Chairperson Designates of State Bodies and Agencies; and

- ♦ moving towards a new “whole of year” budgetary timetable with enhanced financial scrutiny/Sectoral Committee engagement on the 2013 estimates and 2014 expenditure allocations.

North South Inter-Parliamentary Association

The Association met on two occasions in 2013:

- ❖ on 26th April 2013 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, the second plenary was held. The agenda, chaired by Speaker Hay, Northern Ireland Assembly, had a health theme; and
- ❖ on 8th November 2013 in the Seanad Chamber, Leinster House, the third plenary was held. Chaired by An Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett, TD, the agenda continued the health theme and also discussed energy security.

Parliamentary Dimension of Ireland’s Presidency of the EU Council in 2013

- ♦ 8 Inter-Parliamentary conferences took place in Dublin Castle;
- ♦ Over 1,000 delegates attended; and
- ♦ 55 different speakers addressed the conferences, including EU Commissioners, Government Ministers, An Taoiseach, An Tánaiste and An Ceann Comhairle (for more information turn to the ‘EU Presidency - Parliamentary Dimension’ feature on pages 34-37)

Parliamentary Library and Research Services

- ♦ 3 pre-legislative papers and 38 research papers were prepared for Committees;
- ♦ 50 Bills Digests and Debate Packs were circulated to members in 2013;
- ♦ There were 8 presentations to staff from the Central Statistics Office (CSO);
- ♦ 2,529 on-demand information and research queries from individual members and other users were responded to during 2013. Topics included renewable energy, employment law, health insurance, equality legislation and income tax; and
- ♦ 80,000 documents are now available via the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

Documents Laid before the Houses

- ♦ 1,990 documents were laid in 2013; and
- ♦ There are now nearly 1,000 users of the eDocs Laid system which saw a 99.98% compliance usage across Departments and Agencies.

Communications Unit

- ♦ The Houses of the Oireachtas took part in both Culture Night and Open House in 2013;
- ♦ Greater use of the Oireachtas social media pages with over 14,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter; and
- ♦ Local media newspaper and radio reports were compiled, published, broadcast and posted to the Oireachtas website.

Training for Members and Political Personnel

During 2013, Training Unit continued to provide training/information sessions to members and political personnel. Some of the key training provided include:

- ♦ constituency database training;
- ♦ occupational First Aid;
- ♦ fire safety/fire warden training; and
- ♦ language training.

2012 Public Representation Allowance Audit

- ♦ The third audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted in 2013 by an independent auditor, selected by a competitive tender process;
- ♦ A total of 120 members, who received vouched allowances in 2012, were auditable in 2013 and the auditor selected 12 of these (10%) by random sample; and
- ♦ The audit report was considered by both the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Audit Committee. Administrative amendments have been included in updated Audit Guidelines, with other substantive items arising from the auditor’s report being referred to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

ICT

- ◆ A Parliamentary Question system review to identify short-term improvements that can be readily made to the existing PQ ICT system and to identify design options for the future development of the system;
- ◆ A new contract for a combined Application Delivery Controller to provide full network access SSL VPN remote access connectivity from a variety of devices and advanced application load balancing functionality;
- ◆ Installation and configuration of a Mobile Device Management System for the management of mobile devices; and
- ◆ The provision of a print kiosk to ensure members have timely availability to relevant Chamber printed documents if required.

Salaries Section

- ◆ Implementation of the provisions of the Haddington Road Agreement changes to payroll within the specified time frame;
- ◆ Payroll system updated to cater for the deduction of the Local Property Tax;
- ◆ Migration to SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area) for all payee bank accounts; and
- ◆ Payment of salary and pension by payable order was discontinued in 2013 and all payments now made by EFT.

Parliamentary Printing and Publishing

- ◆ Alternative ways of meeting the growing demand for electronically published versions of daily parliamentary publications are being constantly investigated. Options being pursued include reducing print runs, more widespread use of electronic publication and “print on demand” options and the provision of more accessible electronic texts.

Houses of the Oireachtas Service Language Scheme

- ◆ During 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme for the period 2012 to 2015 with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was progressed. The Scheme sets out the Service’s commitments regarding the use of the Irish language in its service delivery and Rannóg an Aistriúcháin manages the Scheme on behalf of the Service.

Translation of Statutory Instruments

- ◆ Rannóg an Aistriúcháin has now taken on the statutory responsibility of providing translation services in relation to Statutory Instruments and provides this service to sponsoring departments and bodies.

Freedom of Information

- ◆ 107 Freedom of Information (FoI) requests were received in 2013.

People and Organisation Development

- ◆ The People and Organisation Development (POD) Programme established three cross-grade and cross-functional groups (internally-led and supported by experts). In 2013, these groups reported on strategies the Service should pursue in relation to:
 - ❖ People, Skills and Talent;
 - ❖ Valuing Leadership and Developing Leaders; and
 - ❖ Results for a High Performance Organisation.
- ◆ The Service approved key initiatives aimed at improving performance and developing capacity. These initiatives which will be rolled-out in 2014 include:
 - ❖ Coaching, Training and Development to support High Performance;
 - ❖ A Code for Working Together and a Leadership Practice based on organisational values; and
 - ❖ Developing High Performance Teams.

Training for Staff of the Service

- ◆ Training and learning interventions were provided to civil service staff in a wide range of areas. Training interventions were provided both in-house and externally. Some of the key training initiatives provided include:
 - ❖ customer service;
 - ❖ accredited food safety training;
 - ❖ procurement training;
 - ❖ financial courses for staff of Finance and Salaries Units;
 - ❖ shorthand proficiency course;
 - ❖ PMDS training in conjunction with the HR Unit; and
 - ❖ language training.

Procurement Unit

- ◆ During 2013, the Procurement Unit proactively engaged with and offered comprehensive advice and support services for 45 separate tendering processes across the Service.

Internal Audit

The Audit Committee met four times in 2013 and considered the following matters:

- ❖ eight Internal Audit reports;
- ❖ eight information notes and briefings;
- ❖ an independent audit of the members' Public Representation Allowance; and
- ❖ an external Audit of PABX Telephone System.
- ◆ The Internal Audit Unit also participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service Internal Audit network) and a group of Heads of Internal Audit of parliaments and assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

Provision of Legal services

- ◆ During 2013, the Office of the PLA produced approximately 270 legal advices, of which 35.5% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas committees and 64.4% were in response to advices sought by the Service.

Value for Money Review

- ◆ A Value for Money & Policy Review (VFMPR) of the Oireachtas Library and Research Service (L&RS) was brought to conclusion during 2013; and
- ◆ Consideration of the final report will continue into 2014.

Business Process Improvement Projects

- ◆ During 2013, the Service continued to participate in the BPI Network established by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform;
- ◆ BPI Project 1: Review of Committees' Administration Report;
- ◆ BPI Project 2: Receipt and processing of PQ reply material from Government Departments; and
- ◆ BPI Project 3: Receipt and processing of PQs within the Oireachtas Parliamentary Questions Office.



COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING OF PARLIAMENTS – KEY FINDINGS

We have compiled a *Summary Report on International Benchmarking Between Parliaments* using international key statistics collected from a variety of sources through desk-based research and surveys of parliamentary contacts in a selected number of other jurisdictions¹. While every effort is made in our methodology to compare like with like, all inter-parliamentary comparisons are subject to the caveat that different parliaments may have different accounting systems, different functions and election cycles, and different systems of operation and sitting patterns. Although our methodology aims to compare our performance on a similar basis as in our previous Annual Reports, this was not fully possible as complete data was not available in all cases, and 2011 was an election year in Ireland. Nevertheless the benchmarking for 2013 indicates that, compared to 10 parliaments surveyed, the Irish Parliament had:

- ◆ more sitting days per year than the parliaments surveyed, except for the UK;
- ◆ second highest number of sitting hours in 2013 of countries compared;
- ◆ third highest number of parliamentary questions tabled annually and the highest number of parliamentary questions per member; and
- ◆ a significant number of visitors in view of its relative size.

Further specific findings of the benchmarking initiative are included throughout this report.

¹ Comparator parliaments [Australia (BC), Austria (BC), Belgium (BC), Germany (BC), Northern Ireland (UC), Poland (BC), Scotland (UC), Spain (BC), United Kingdom (House of Commons & House of Lords) (BC), Wales (UC)] were surveyed on the topics of political representation, sittings and business of parliament, staff and resources, and contact with the public. Different subsets of these countries are included in each comparison according to the available data and their comparability with the Oireachtas in each case. Calendar year 2013 and parliamentary year 2012-2013 were the data reference years.

BC refers to bicameral (i.e. two Chambers) parliaments and UC refers to unicameral (i.e. one Chamber) parliaments.



STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 1 - IMPROVING SERVICES TO PARLIAMENT

This Strategy is about ensuring that the chairpersons and members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees can be assured of continual, high quality parliamentary support services.

HOUSES AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Sittings and Business of Parliament

The Houses sat for a combined total of 234 sitting days and 1,745 sitting hours during 2013.

Supporting the sittings of the Houses and their Committees during 2013 encompassed:

- ◆ 123 Dáil sittings (1,023 sitting hours);
- ◆ 111 Seanad Sittings (722 sitting hours);
- ◆ 580 Committee meetings (1,130 sitting hours);
- ◆ 20 Committee Policy reports published;
- ◆ 140 Bills published as initiated;
- ◆ 4,988 amendments tabled to Bills;
- ◆ 129 bill reprints as a result of amendment or passage by both Houses; and
- ◆ 50,926 Parliamentary Questions processed.

Procedural Development Programme

Our Procedural Development Programme aims to broaden our capacity and enhance our capability in the delivery of core parliamentary business support services to both Houses and Committees. Details of new and continuing activities in this area during 2013 are set out below.

Panel of Temporary Chairpersons

The panels of Temporary Chairpersons who may chair proceedings in the Dáil or Seanad in the absence of the Ceann Comhairle and Leas-Cheann Comhairle or Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach, respectively, were both updated by new appointments during 2013.

Building on the introductory training, follow-up briefings are provided for the new panel as required.

Panels of Temporary Clerks

During 2013, the panel of Temporary Clerks was expanded in order to increase the number of staff having key House clerking skills and experience. The panel now includes almost all staff at Assistant Principal level or higher who have relevant procedural experience.

Induction training is provided to new panel members on all aspects of House business and procedure. New clerks are introduced to chamber duty on the basis of "sitting in" with an experienced clerk before they begin full service on their own.

Meetings of the panel of Dáil Temporary Clerks are held regularly (every 4 to 6 weeks) to review key issues arising in practice, to share learning and other experience and to provide feedback from the House Chairpersons and Temporary Chairpersons. Events in the Chamber are reviewed with reference to recordings of proceedings and other resources including Standing Orders and Rulings of the Chair.

Daily House Business Briefing Services

Members of the panels of Temporary Chairpersons and Temporary Clerks receive notice by e-mail of the daily schedule of business and briefing for the Chairperson on individual daily business items. They also have direct access to these and other resources in a dedicated database. One-to-one briefing on particular items of business is also provided to the Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons and members of the panels on a daily basis as required and/or requested.

Procedural Knowledge Management Initiatives

The information and knowledge management initiatives undertaken in 2012 in the procedural business sections were continued throughout 2013 and have contributed to the forward business planning of those sections. Extensive changes in staff assignments during 2013 have required an emphasis on knowledge transfer and inheritance planning, with great flexibility being demonstrated by staff at all levels.

In 2013, in the Bills Office, the new legislative processing system – the Legislative Workbench – which was introduced in 2012 in collaboration with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, has been fully implemented. As of Autumn 2013, all Bills are processed in the new system.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Processing of Legislation – the Bills Office

The Bills Office is responsible for undertaking the procedural tasks relating to the legislative process in the Houses, from initiation of a Bill to passage through both Houses, including the printing and circulation of all Bills and amendments tabled by Ministers and members. It examines the texts of all Bills and amendments to ensure they comply with the Constitution, Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and other matters of order. On Committee and Report Stages, the Bills Office prepares the procedural brief for the Chairpersons of both Houses, Chairpersons of Select Committees and Clerks of the Houses and Committees. It provides briefings on the legislative process and procedures to members, their staff and Department officials. The Bills Office also undertakes tasks arising from the responsibilities of the Clerk of the Dáil under the Electoral Acts.

Bills Office Statistics

The following statistics indicate production volumes for some activities in the Bills Office in 2013:

- ◆ 140 Bills were published during 2013 (up from 119 in 2012 and 84 in 2011); 58 were Government Bills and 82 were Private Members' Bills. The total number of pages was 2,993 compared with 3,263 in 2012 and 1,810 in 2011;
- ◆ 4,988 amendments were processed during 2013, up from 4,450 in 2012 and 2,249 in 2011. The total number of pages of these amendments increased to 1,634 from 1,407 in 2012 and 783 in 2011;
- ◆ there were 129 instances of Bills being reprinted after amendment in 2013, up from 53 in 2012 and 48 in 2011. The total number of pages of these was 3,187, increased from 2,353 in 2012 and 2,280 in 2011; and
- ◆ 52 Bills were enacted by the Oireachtas during 2013 (compared with 54 in 2012 and 42 in 2011). The total page volume of these decreased to 1,716 pages from 2,015 in 2012 but is an increase from 1,456 in 2011.

Legislative Drafting Service for Members

During 2013, the Bills Office continued to facilitate members in availing of the legislative drafting service which began as a new initiative in 2011. The availability of legal expertise in drafting Private Members' Bills is an important service for members of the Houses in undertaking their legislative role in the Parliament. Over the course of 2013, drafting instructions for 14 Private Members' Bills were assigned under this service. The pilot drafting scheme will continue to the end of 2014 and will be reviewed at that point.

During 2013, the new format for legislation was fully implemented with all new Bills published from September 2013 published in this new format. As the new format, the Legislative Workbench, is operated in both the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), there has been a reduction in the requirement for Government Departments to procure white prints of draft legislation. Savings will accrue to Departments as a result. Work is continuing between the Service and the OPC on further integration, based on this new format, to ensure that resource savings can be maximised.

Journal Office

The main area of responsibility for the Journal Office is to support the sittings of the Dáil. This involves the production of the daily Order Paper, and any Supplementary Order Papers, including receipt and examination of all motions and amendments to motions to ensure compliance with Standing Orders as well as providing assistance in drafting technical motions, printing and circulation of notice of motions and updating the status of all business items. The Journal Office also offers advice on parliamentary procedures to the Ceannt Comhairle, members of the Dáil, and the Clerks through the preparation of daily notes on the business each day. Advice is also provided to the Government Chief Whip's Office on procedural aspects of proposals for Government business.

The maintenance of an archive of procedural records and supporting documentation is a key task within the Journal Office. The preservation of this archive includes maintaining Dáil Standing Orders, drafting amendments to Standing Orders as required, recording Rulings of the Chair, periodically re-printing the volumes of Standing Orders and Salient Rulings and producing Journals of the sittings. The Journal Office administers the divisions within the Dáil Chamber. This role includes the provision of assistance to the Clerks in the Chamber for "list" or "manual" divisions, along with assisting with the management of the e-voting system and recording and circulation of the results of divisions.

The Journal Office is responsible for providing administrative support to the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges and its Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform and the Sub-Committee on Privileges. It is also responsible for supporting the Seanad Returning Officer to administer Seanad Elections and Seanad Bye-Elections.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Journal Office Statistics

The following statistics indicate production volumes for some activities in the Journal Office in 2013 consequent on sittings of the Dáil:

- ◆ 123 Dáil Order Papers were produced (the same number as in 2012 and up from 108 in 2011);
- ◆ 31 Supplementary Order Papers were produced (down from 34 in 2012 and 39 in 2011);
- ◆ secretariat support and advice for 7 meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges (up from 6 in 2012 and 4 in 2011);
- ◆ secretariat support and advice for the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform; and
- ◆ administrative back-up for 197 Dáil divisions (up from 169 in 2012 and 164 in 2011).

Parliamentary Printing and Publishing

The Service is continuing to explore alternative ways of meeting the growing demand for electronically published versions of its daily parliamentary publications (Order Papers, Question Papers and Amendment Lists) in preference to paper printed copies. Options being pursued include reducing print runs, more widespread use of electronic publication and "print on demand" options and the provision of more accessible electronic texts.

Parliamentary Questions — the Questions Office

The Questions Office is responsible for the processing of Parliamentary Questions as well as the production of the Question Paper for each sitting of Dáil Éireann. The Questions Office assists and advises members on the drafting and suitability of questions in accordance with Standing Orders and advises the Ceann Comhairle on the admissibility of questions and topical issues.

Parliamentary Questions 2011, 2012 & 2013

	2011*	2012	2013	% variance on 2012
PQs Processed	37,397	56,027	50,926	-9.1
Oral Replies	1,716	1,881	1,684	-10
Written Replies	27,391	42,682	39,952	-6.4
PQs Withdrawn	7,537	10,325	7,834	-24.1
PQs Disallowed	753	1,301	1,456	12
% PQs disallowed	2%	2%	2.9	0.9

* There was a General Election in 2011.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament



An Leas-Chathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Denis O'Donovan, addresses members of the media at the launch of the (SPCC) Seanad Public Consultation Committee's report on how changes in lifestyle can prevent cancer.

Seanad Office

The main area of responsibility for the Seanad Office is to support the sittings of the Seanad. This involves the production of the Seanad Order Paper, Supplementary Order Papers, Matters on the Adjournment, Journal of Proceedings and Seanad Standing Orders. Government and Private Members' motions for the Seanad Order Paper are submitted to this office and examined to ensure they comply with Standing Orders. The Seanad Office also publishes the Register of Members' Interests annually. The office provides procedural advice for the Cathaoirleach, Leas-Chathaoirleach and panel of Seanad Temporary Chairpersons. It also provides secretariat support and advice to the Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges and Seanad Public Consultation Committee. The Clerk of the Seanad is the Seanad Returning Officer for Seanad General Elections for the 43 panel members. She is responsible for the Annual Review of the Register of Nominating Bodies under the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Act 1947 and for the detailed planning and conduct of the Seanad General Election and Bye-Elections.

Camera Ready Seanad Order Paper

During 2013, the Seanad Office adapted its systems for the production of the Order Paper and now has the capacity to send the Order Paper to the printing contractor in a camera ready format. It is estimated that this change will result in an annual saving in print costs of approximately €15,000.

Engagement with Civic Society

The Seanad continues to engage with civic society and allow persons and representatives of public and civic life to address Seanad Éireann and in 2013 the following people addressed the Seanad:

- ◆ Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative, Secretary General for Disaster Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction discussed the changing attitudes towards disasters and the need to plan ahead;
- ◆ Mr. David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions addressed Seanad Éireann on the theme of The 1913 Lockout and its Relevance to Modern Ireland on 25th September 2013 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1913 Lockout; and
- ◆ Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Ireland's EU Commissioner with responsibility for Research, Innovation and Science, addressed Seanad Éireann on 8th May 2013 on the issue of the role that European research, innovation and science policies play in helping to support the development of the Irish economy.

The Seanad also invited Irish Members of the European Parliament to address the House. The House heard from:

- ◆ Mr. Gay Mitchell MEP;
- ◆ Ms. Marian Harkin MEP;
- ◆ Ms. Mairead McGuinness MEP;
- ◆ Ms. Phil Prendergast MEP;
- ◆ Ms. Emer Costello MEP;
- ◆ Mr. Pat the Cope Gallagher MEP;
- ◆ Mr. Seán Kelly MEP;
- ◆ Ms. Nessa Childers MEP; and
- ◆ Mr. Jim Higgins MEP.

Seanad Public Consultation Committee

During 2013, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee invited submissions from relevant stakeholders on how changes in lifestyle can prevent some cancers. In February 2013 the Committee published a report, *'Report on Changes in Lifestyles can prevent approximately one third of Cancers. How does Government and Society respond to this challenge?'*, recommending the development of a national physical activity plan for all age groups, including the extension of bike/walking schemes and to ensure that this plan is central to urban and rural planning. The report also focused on the concentration on communities at local level as the place to encourage significant lifestyle change.

The Committee heard from a number of contributors and experts in the field of Social Entrepreneurship and a public hearing was held on the 21st February 2013.



Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, makes a point during her address to Seanad Éireann.

Seanad Office Statistics

The following statistics indicate production volumes for some activities in the Seanad Office in 2013:

- ◆ 111 Seanad sitting days (up from 110 in 2012 and 81 in 2011);
- ◆ 722 Seanad sitting hours (up from 698 in 2012 and 520 in 2011);
- ◆ 111 Seanad Order Papers were produced (up from 110 in 2012 and 81 in 2011);
- ◆ 10 Supplementary Order Papers were produced (up from 5 in 2012 and 6 in 2011);
- ◆ 42 Journal of Proceedings were prepared (up from 30 in 2012 and 20 in 2011);
- ◆ 77 Motions were processed (down from 94 in 2012 and 260 in 2011);
- ◆ administrative back-up for 257 Seanad divisions (up from 198 in 2012 and 173 in 2011);
- ◆ compilation of Register of Interest of Members of Seanad Éireann;
- ◆ secretariat support and advice to 13 meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges (down from 17 in 2012 and 14 in 2011);
- ◆ secretariat support for 6 meetings of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee; and
- ◆ annual review of Register of Nominating Bodies.



EU Commissioner with responsibility for Research, Innovation and Science, Ms. Máire Geoghegan Quinn with the Cathaoirleach, Senator Paddy Burke, prior to addressing a session of Seanad Éireann.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE RELATED ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Role of the Committee Secretariat

The role of the Committee Secretariat is to provide an efficient and effective secretariat and ancillary services for the Committees in all their activities, and to plan and make provision for on-going contingencies and future developments in the Committee system.

Committee System of the 31st Dáil/24th Seanad

The Committee system of the 31st Dáil/24th Seanad was established in June 2011. It was reconfigured in June 2012, based on issues raised and feedback provided during the first year of its operation. During 2013, the Committee Secretariat continued to provide on-going procedural and administrative support to:

- ♦ two Dáil Select Standing Committees (Committee of Public Accounts and Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann);
- ♦ one Seanad Select Standing Committee (Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann);
- ♦ one Joint Standing sub-Committee (Joint sub-Committee on Administration);
- ♦ nine Joint Committees which shadow Departments (one shadowing three Departments, five shadowing two Departments and three shadowing one Department) with associated Select and Select sub-Committees; and
- ♦ three Joint Committees with specific subject area remits (Public Service Oversight and Petitions, Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and European Union Affairs).

The Committee Secretariat also has responsibility for the operation of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) and the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA).

The Committee Secretariat supports the operation of the Working Group of Committee Chairpersons (WGCC) which liaises and consults on common issues affecting Chairpersons of Committees and on operational aspects of Committee-related activities.

Committee Outputs

In 2013, there were 580 meetings of the various Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and sub-Committees for which the Committee Secretariat had responsibility, involving 1,765 speaking witnesses, 1,130 sitting hours and with 20 policy reports, eight pre-legislative reports and 13 EU scrutiny reports published.

Powers of Oireachtas Committees

The powers of Committees are set out in their Orders of Reference, that is, the specific instructions given to them by the Houses, and include power to:

- ♦ receive submissions and hear evidence from interested parties or groups;
- ♦ discuss and draft proposals for legislative change;
- ♦ print and publish minutes of evidence and related documents; and
- ♦ require attendance of (i) Ministers to discuss current policies and proposals for legislation, and (ii) principal Office Holders in bodies in the State which are wholly or partly funded by the State, subject to their right to decline in writing to attend for stated reasons.

In addition to considering any Bills and Estimates for Public Services, Dáil Select Committees and sub-Committees are also required to consider Annual Output Statements and Value for Money and Policy Reviews of their respective Departments. As Joint Committees, they are empowered to consider matters of policy including:

- ♦ EU matters and proposals for EU legislation for which the respective Minister is responsible (Joint Committees are empowered to require the relevant Ministers to attend before them in advance of EU Council meetings to discuss agenda items);
- ♦ public affairs administered by the relevant Department;
- ♦ related policy issues, annual reports and accounts, statements of strategy and corporate plans in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department; and
- ♦ statutory Instruments made by the relevant Minister and the Strategy Statement for the relevant Department.

Sectoral Committee Activities during 2013

Apart from the on-going consideration throughout the year by Select Committees and Select sub-Committees of Bills, Estimates and Motions referred and a range of on-going work on EU mainstreaming matters by Joint Committees [separately reported in the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs Annual Report on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002 for the period 1 January to 31 December 2013], a wide range of policy matters were considered and pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS) undertaken at Joint Committee level. (See Appendix 13 for further information)

Non-Sectoral Committee Activities in 2013

The Joint and Standing Committees carried out a wide range of activities during 2013, as detailed opposite.

The **Committee of Public Accounts** held 34 public meetings with a range of public bodies to examine issues that were the subject of a report from the Comptroller and Auditor General. In addition to the examining the largest public bodies in term of expenditure and employment, such as Revenue, Social Protection, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA), the Committee examined a number of specific issues including:

- ◆ remuneration in bodies receiving large amounts of funding from the HSE, with particular reference to the Central Remedial Clinic;
- ◆ acquisition of the old Glass Bottle Site by the Dublin Docklands Development Authority;
- ◆ the operation of a SIPTU National Levy Account; and
- ◆ controls and payments through the Medical Card Scheme.

In addition, a delegation consisting of two members of the Committee travelled to Ethiopia in late November to review Irish Aid expenditure.

The Committee issued the following reports in 2013:

- ◆ Irish Aid [Report published March 2013];
- ◆ Health Service Executive [Report published March 2013]; and
- ◆ Interim Report on Bank Stabilisation Measures [Report published November 2013].

The **Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade** considered a range of issues during 2013 including:

- ◆ issues on the agenda of the EU Foreign Affairs Council during meetings with the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- ◆ contribution of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to economic recovery [Report due to be published January 2014];
- ◆ political issues, aid matters and human rights – in this regard, it met with a number of organisations, both based in Ireland and abroad; and
- ◆ the Review of Foreign Policy and External Relations being undertaken by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – in this regard, the Joint Committee agreed to a series of meetings to assist it in making an input into the review.

The Joint Committee, in conjunction with the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, hosted the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy on 24 and 25 March 2013 as part of the Parliamentary Dimension of the EU Presidency (see *EU Presidency - Parliamentary Dimension*); it also participated actively in the similar conference hosted by Lithuania in the latter half of 2013.

The Joint Committee undertook a number of visits abroad, namely:

- ◆ to Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel to examine the prospects for progress in the Middle East Peace Process and, as a secondary purpose, the crisis in Syria with particular reference to the plight of refugees; and
- ◆ to Ghana as an African country that is not a focus for development cooperation (Irish Aid) but provides opportunities for trade promotion as outlined in the Africa Strategy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The **Joint Committee on European Union Affairs** considered a wide range of issues including:

- ◆ *Ireland and the Future of the European Union*: The Joint Committee held an extensive series of meetings on this issue, which focused on financial, budgetary and economic policy integration in the EU, the necessary steps to bolster democratic accountability and legitimacy, the role for national parliaments in the EU system and implications for Ireland of the United Kingdom's relationship with the EU. A report is in preparation for publication in early 2014;
- ◆ *The Social Dimension of Economic and Monetary Union*: The Joint Committee considered how social indicators could be part of the formal economic surveillance associated with EMU and in December 2013 issued a formal contribution to the European Commission on this issue;
- ◆ *Youth Unemployment in Europe and the European Youth Guarantee*: In this context, the Joint Committee published a report in July 2013 entitled "*Guaranteeing Our Future - A Report on the Need for a Youth Guarantee*"; and
- ◆ a range of issues related to the Joint Committee's work programme, including the priorities of the Lithuanian EU Presidency, the Role of the Court of Auditors and its 2012 Annual Report, the experience of Latvia and Estonia in the EU, the European Movement Accountability Report 2012 and Ireland's National Reform Programme for 2013 (related to the European Semester).

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

The Joint Committee held monthly meetings with the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade or Minister of State with special responsibility for European Affairs in advance of meetings of the General Affairs Council to enable it to continue effective oversight of the Government's policy approach and to have an input into, and an exchange of views on, topics arising on the agendas of those Council meetings.

The Joint Committee participated at the Conference of the Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European Affairs (COSAC), where the Chairperson of the Joint Committee has been a member of the Troika since 1 July 2012. As part of Ireland's EU Presidency in 2013, the Joint Committee hosted the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting in January 2013 and the COSAC Plenary Meeting in June 2013.

As part of its commitment to enhance its interaction with other Member States' national parliaments, the Joint Committee met with incoming delegations from France, Germany and Turkey and also travelled abroad to engage with its counterpart committees in Luxembourg, Latvia and Estonia.

The Joint Committee published the Tenth Annual Report on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002 as required under section 5 of the Act. The report outlines the EU scrutiny activities of the Oireachtas and its Committees during 2012.

The **Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement** examined a wide range of issues during 2013 including:

- ◆ impact of the flags protest in Belfast on the local retail sector;
- ◆ 15 years of the Good Friday Agreement;
- ◆ Bill of Rights and Irish Language Act for Northern Ireland;
- ◆ exploration of education as a tool for empowerment and overcoming social disconnection;

- ◆ impact of religious sectarianism and the trauma of conflict; and
- ◆ cross border cooperation in the areas of education, transport infrastructure and economic development.

The Joint Committee met informally with the Rt Hon Ms Theresa Villiers MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to discuss developments in Northern Ireland. As part of its work programme, the Joint Committee continued its visits to Northern Ireland and the border region, meeting with local representatives and community leaders. In that context, the Chairman led a cross-party delegation from the Committee in a two-day visit to Belfast, engaging in a wide range of discussions with the Irish Joint Secretary, British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat, community groups on the Falls Road, the Short Strand Residents Association, the Parades Commission and the Inner East Forum. The Joint Committee also had a very productive engagement with church leaders from the Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church and Catholic Church.

The **Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions** was established July 2012.

Public Petitions

The Public Petitions System and associated website (<http://petitions.oireachtas.ie/>) were launched to the public on 13 September 2012. In 2013, 84 petitions were received. (See Appendix 14-Page 108: Petitions received by the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions during the course of 2013).

In 2013, an additional member of staff was assigned to the petitions process, A working group of members of the Committee was also set up to give preliminary consideration to petitions before they are submitted to the Committee. This resulted in an outcome wherein, by year end, 79% of petitions received had been submitted to the Committee for consideration (up from 37% at end 2012).

The Committee heard oral evidence in relation to each of the petitions set out below:

12 June 2013	Strategy on Suicide Awareness - Petition No. P00061/12 from Ms. Patricia O'Neill - Meeting with Minister of State Kathleen Lynch T.D.
19 June 2013	Back to Education Allowance Scheme – Petition No. P000043/12 from Mr. Thomas Kevin Walshe - Meeting with Petitioner and representatives of INOU and officials from Department of Social Protection.
18 July 2013	Employment Appeals Tribunal Costs - Petition No. P00027/12 from Mr. John O'Sullivan - Meeting with Petitioner and representatives of MANDATE, ICTU, IBEC and SIPTU.
02 Oct 2013	Revised Eligibility Criteria for State Contributory Pension - Petition Nos. P00053/12 and P00003/13 - Meeting with Minister for Social Protection.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Further details of individual petitions received and information in relation to the petitions process are also available on the petitions website (<http://petitions.oireachtas.ie/>).

Public Service Oversight

The Committee responded to reports by the Ombudsman and An Coimisinéir Teanga in the areas set out below:

06 Feb 2013	Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant (Report by Ombudsman) - Meeting with Ministers and Officials
06 Mar 2013	Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant (Report by Ombudsman)(resumed) - Meeting with Departmental Officials
29 May 2013	Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant (Report by Ombudsman)(resumed) - Meeting with Departmental Officials
03 July 2013	(1) Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission's Special Report in respect of issues concerning informant handling and (2) issues arising from the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission Annual Report for 2012 - Meeting with Garda Ombudsman Commission
26 Sept 2013	Office of the Ombudsman Annual Report 2012 - Meeting with Ombudsman
23 Oct 2013	Ombudsman and Information Commissioner - Meeting with Nominee
20 Nov 2013	(1) Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission's Special Report in respect of issues concerning informant handling - Meeting with Garda Commissioner (2) issues arising from the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission Annual Report for 2012 (resumed) - Meeting with Garda Commissioner
04 Dec 2013	An Coimisinéir Teanga's Annual Report for 2012 - Meeting with An Coimisinéir

Committees on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann

Each House has established a Select Committee on Members' Interests under the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001. These Committees draw up and publish guidelines concerning the steps to be taken by members to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Acts, draw up a code of conduct for non office-holders and investigate alleged contraventions of the Acts by members.

Alleged contraventions of the Ethics in Public Office Acts

Members of the Houses may make a complaint directly to the Select Committee of the House of which the member complained of is a member. Under the Acts, members of the public are required to direct any complaints to the Clerk of the Dáil or the Clerk of the Seanad as appropriate.

The summary position in relation to Complaints made or referred to the Committees on Members Interests for 2013 is as follows:

	Complaints before Committee on 1 January 2013	Complaints received in course of year	Complaints in respect of which investigation was discontinued	Reports made or other action taken by Dáil or Seanad arising from consideration of Complaints	Complaints referred to SIPO	Complaints before Committee as of 31 December 2013
Dáil Committee on Members' Interests	1	1	0	2	0	0
Seanad Committee on Members' Interests	0	2	1	0	0	1

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

In the course of the year, each Select Committee also undertook other work in relation to its statutory functions under the Acts, principally as follows:

- ♦ in January 2013, guidelines were issued by each Committee in respect of the registration period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012;
- ♦ in March 2013, each Committee on Members' Interests drew members' attention to the view expressed to it by the Standards in Public Office Commission that the acceptance of free or sponsored travel and accommodation may fall within the definition of a donation for the purposes of the Electoral Acts and that such donation is subject to the normal aggregation and reporting thresholds and donation limits; and
- ♦ the Committee investigated an alleged breach of the Ethics legislation concerning the use of a Seanad pre-paid envelope.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

International visitors to Ireland

Each year, we receive visits from members and staff of other parliaments during which issues of mutual interest are discussed. The Ceann Comhairle and the Executive Committee of Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (the Irish Parliamentary Association) invited parliamentary delegations to visit Ireland during 2013 from the following countries:

- ♦ Trinidad and Tobago in February;
- ♦ Korea-Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group in May; and
- ♦ Vietnamese Parliamentary Group in July.

The Oireachtas hosted Speaker and Ministerial-level visitors during the year including:

- ♦ Prime Minister of Serbia in February;
- ♦ Speaker of the U.K. House of Commons in March;
- ♦ President of the Assembly of the Macedonia in May;
- ♦ The Secretary General of the Council of Europe in May;
- ♦ Chair of China Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in May;
- ♦ The Japanese Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in May;
- ♦ The Deputy Prime Minister, Macedonia, in June;
- ♦ A Japanese Parliamentary delegation in July;
- ♦ The Chair of the CPPCC, Shanghai, in November; and

- ♦ The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in December.

The Oireachtas also hosted a number of miscellaneous visits during the year as follows:

- ♦ Trans-Atlantic Legislators Dialogue meeting in Leinster House in June;
- ♦ A group from the US Centre for Irish Studies (Lori Gallagher) in June;
- ♦ Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust in June;
- ♦ New Zealand Government Whip (Ms. Louise Upton) in June;
- ♦ Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)/Network of Women Parliamentarians of Central Africa (RFPAC) delegation in June;
- ♦ Saskatchewan Legislative Interns in July;
- ♦ Ms. Leslie Williams, MP, New South Wales, and Mr. Rob Stokes, MP, New South Wales, in July; and
- ♦ State Legislatures visit RIPON/Franklin Centre in August.



Mr. Seán Barrett, T.D., Ceann Comhairle, greets Rt. Hon John Bercow M.P., Speaker of the House of Commons, on his visit to the Oireachtas.

Promoting Ireland's Influence Abroad - International Role of Members

Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas play an international political role through their membership of international bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, and other inter-parliamentary associations (see details opposite).

The Houses of the Oireachtas also maintains a close working relationship with the institutions of the European Union through its participation in:

- ◆ The Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments, meetings of COSAC, (the Association of European Affairs Committees of EU National Parliaments and the European Parliament);
- ◆ Joint Parliamentary Meetings which are meetings organised and chaired jointly by the parliament of the country holding the EU Presidency and the European Parliament; and
- ◆ Joint Sectoral Committee Meetings which are meetings organised and chaired jointly by the relevant sectoral committee or committees of the parliament of the Member State holding the EU Presidency and the relevant committee of the European Parliament.

Official Bi-lateral Visits:

Bi-lateral visits represent key opportunities for cementing bonds between parliaments and countries.

In 2013, the following out-going bilateral visits were undertaken by the Irish Parliament:

- ◆ China, from 11th to 20th May 2013; and
- ◆ Hungary, from 16th to 18th September 2013.

Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assemblies (IPU)

Ireland has been a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union since 1928, over 80 years. This is the key international co-operation forum between parliaments of the world. It has 163 member states and a further 10 with observer status. The IPU Assembly meets two times a year (March and October).

In 2013, the Oireachtas attended the following two IPU Assembly meetings:

- ◆ 128th Assembly held in Quito, Ecuador from 21st to 27th March; and
- ◆ 129th Assembly held in Geneva, from 6th to 10th October.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (COE), which is based in Strasbourg, can be considered the oldest international parliamentary assembly with a pluralistic composition of democratically elected members of parliament.

In 2013, the Oireachtas attended four plenary COE sessions held in Strasbourg in January, April, June and September as well as 20 Committee meetings.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE represents the parliamentary dimension of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The Parliamentary Assembly is composed of 323 parliamentarians from its Member States, whose primary task is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue.

The members of the Assembly come together three times a year to debate a wide variety of issues relevant to the ultimate goal of human security for all in the OSCE region.

In 2013, the Oireachtas attended the following OSCE meetings:

- ◆ three Plenary Sessions held in Vienna, Istanbul and Montenegro and one Bureau Meeting held in Copenhagen; and
- ◆ Election Observation Missions - three Missions held in Sofia in May, Azerbaijan in October and Turkmenistan in December.

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

In 2013, the Ceann Comhairle and the Leas-Chathaoirleach attended the First Summit of EU Speakers of Euro-Med Parliaments held in Marseille in April.

EU Mainstreaming

Following the review of mainstreaming in 2012, the new mainstreaming model was rolled out across all Sectoral Committees in early 2013, providing for the prioritisation of draft EU proposals. Sectoral Committees agreed their list of priorities from the 2013 EU Commission Annual Work Programme and these were incorporated into the first *EU Scrutiny Work Programme 2013, Joint Committees' Priorities* which was adopted by both Houses. The Work Programme assisted committees in giving better focus to their EU scrutiny work in 2013 by concentrating on those proposals which they prioritised.

In 2013, the Sectoral Committees considered a total of 605 documents/draft legislative proposals from the EU institutions, an increase of 13.5% on 2012 figures. Of these, 11.5% were deemed to have significant implications and therefore warranted further scrutiny. Three reasoned opinions and eight political contributions were made to the European Commission. A total of 21 pre-Council meetings with 10 Ministers/Ministers of State and one Assistant Secretary were held by nine Joint Committees.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Secretaries General of Departments also attended at nine meetings of Joint Committees to discuss their 6-monthly departmental scrutiny reports.

Europe Week 2013

Europe Week was once again a feature of the parliamentary calendar with Europe-related business and activity being considered in the Dáil, Seanad and Committees from 7th to 9th May 2013. The business commenced with a photo call involving the Ceann Comhairle, the Cathaoirleach and Committee Chairs to coincide with the launch of the *EU Scrutiny Work Programme 2013, Joint Committees' Priorities* which was adopted by both Houses on 7th May. Statements on Europe Day were taken in the Dáil on 8th May while the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn addressed the Seanad on "the role of research, innovation and science in supporting the development of the Irish economy". Six Committees considered specific EU-related business with the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs sitting on three separate occasions.



Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Paddy Burke, and An Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Barrett T.D., launch Europe Week 2013.

Oireachtas Representation in Brussels

The Service's EU representative enables regular, early and informal information exchange on the results of other national parliaments' scrutiny activities and particularly on the subsidiarity provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and reporting on issues of interest to the Houses of the Oireachtas and is, therefore, a key support mechanism for the enhanced role of the Houses under the Treaty. The representative

position was an important and vital component in the parliamentary dimension of Ireland's EU Presidency, by ensuring the engagement of over a dozen EU Commissioners and high level officials in the parliamentary conferences hosted in Dublin during the Presidency; arranging of high level bi-lateral missions to Brussels on issues of interest to Committees; participating fully in the COSAC Secretariat, and in supporting Ireland's membership of the Presidency "Trio" in the 18-month period to mid-2014.

North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association

Following the establishment of the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA) and the first plenary meeting in 2012, the Association met on two occasions in 2013 in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The second and third plenaries were held on 26th April 2013 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, and on 8th November 2013 in the Seanad Chamber, Leinster House, respectively.

The second plenary agenda, chaired by Speaker Hay, Northern Ireland Assembly, had a health theme and discussed positive mental health strategies, suicide, type 2 diabetes and caring for an ageing population. The third plenary meeting, chaired by An Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Barrett T.D., continued the health theme in its first session with a discussion on emergency ambulance and out of hours GP services. In the second session, members discussed energy security.

The NSIPA Executive Committee met on three occasions while the Oireachtas Executive Committee also met on three occasions.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA)

The 46th BIPA Plenary was held in Letterkenny on 4th and 5th March 2013, with An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, giving the key note speech. The main theme of the plenary was energy, with an address on delivering the benefits of renewable energy by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte TD. Others aspects of energy were discussed with public and private sector leaders.

The 47th BIPA Plenary was held in London on 21st and 22nd October 2013. The theme of the plenary focused on Northern Ireland with an address by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP and the Deputy Chief Constable of Northern Ireland PSNI, Ms. Judith Gillespie OBE.

The main focus for the Assembly during 2013, through its Committees initially, was on renewable wave and tidal energy; credit unions; the EU Atlantic Strategy; and human trafficking, with reports on these subjects adopted by the Assembly at the plenaries.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Communications Unit

The goals of the Communications Unit are to:

- ♦ increase public understanding of the Houses of the Oireachtas and its members; and
- ♦ improve public perception of the national parliament.

2013 saw further expansion into social media whereby approximately 9,500 people now choose to follow our Twitter news service that tweets every strand and stage of Oireachtas business, publications, media announcements and broadcast content in up to 100 tweets per week.

Elsewhere the development of the Parliamentary TV Channel continued apace. Channel production is about production and distribution. 2013 focused on production and the changes became visible in Autumn when a new look captioning system was rolled out. The use of plain English captions that explain the nature of each stage of Dáil, Seanad and Committee business helped advance the service. In December 2013, UPC reported on its second customer survey where up to 25% of all customers now use the channel on a weekly basis.

2014 will see the focus shift with the continued improvement in the service being matched by greater distribution to more homes nationwide.

The Houses of the Oireachtas led the production of another very successful National Bravery Awards in October 2013. National and regional media coverage, a very positive response from recipients and a great support from our partners in the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Red Cross and the respective City Councils helped ensure that the Bravery Awards continue to grow in the public life of the country.

Communications Strategy 2012 – 2014

The objectives of the Strategy are to provide accurate and timely information about the Houses of the Oireachtas to the media; improve public access to and engagement with the Houses of the Oireachtas and its members; and communicate the functions and work of the Houses of the Oireachtas to a wide range of stakeholders. Eight strategies have been identified to deliver on the objectives – Media, Web, Social Media, Broadcasting, Education, Visitor Experience, Public Events and Publishing. Targets include webcasting, on-line education and local and national media.

The Communications Strategy is informed by long-term aims that are themselves informed by research undertaken annually. 2013 saw the findings of the latest research highlighting low public understanding and even lower public perception of the Oireachtas. The research identifies the

communications and information needs and preferences of the public and this allows the Oireachtas to target its communications resources based on actual stakeholder requirements. In this regard, broadcast media, including TV, national and local radio and local newspapers, proved to be where the greatest focus should be. The issues of low perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness inform the effort to provide more information about how and why parliament is financed and to build context around the business of a parliamentary democracy.

Ireland's EU Presidency

www.parleu2013.ie

A communications strategy for the parliamentary dimension of the Irish EU Presidency in 2013 was principally web-based. Every strand of the parliamentary dimension was web-streamed and pushed out across social media and published through an easy use website. Media coverage was low level and the level of interest from the wider public and interested groups was promoted directly across the web. (For further information on the Parliamentary Dimension of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union see the special feature on pages 34-37)

Daily Video of Business for both Houses of the Oireachtas

In 2013 the Communications Unit continued to produce a plain English video that explains for people what is happening on that day in the Dáil, Seanad and Oireachtas Committees. This short video is integrated into the Parliamentary Channel and is also promoted across various social media including Twitter and Facebook.



'Today in the Houses of the Oireachtas', produced by the Communications Unit, is part of the daily programme schedule on the Parliamentary TV Channel.



ParlEU2013.ie

Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar
Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh
An Ghné Pharlaiminteach

Irish Presidency of the
Council of the European Union
Parliamentary Dimension



Parliamentary Dimension of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Ireland held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first six months of 2013 with the Houses of the Oireachtas hosting the “parliamentary dimension” of the Presidency. An Official Steering Group co-ordinated the preparations and reported to the Political Steering Group chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. The Political Steering Group decided that the eight inter-parliamentary conferences to take place during the Presidency should be held in Dublin Castle in order to avail of the excellent conference facilities and the centralised provision of services by OPW in Dublin Castle and to reduce costs and staff resources required thereby contributing to an efficient Presidency. Over **1,000** delegates from parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament attended the conferences. **55** separate speakers addressed the conferences including **10** EU Commissioners, **9** Government Ministers, including the Taoiseach and Tánaiste, and the Ceann Comhairle. President Michael D. Higgins addressed the delegates for the COSAC Plenary at a dinner in the Mansion House. The overall cost of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency was €650,000.

The Parliamentary Dimension of the Presidency was communicated through traditional and social media. A common thread running through the messaging of the programme of meetings was the ever-increasing role for national parliaments in an evolving European Union. All eight meetings were webcast live and broadcast on the Oireachtas television channel. A live blog kept the web audience updated through the course of each meeting, which included links to speeches and presentations as they were delivered.

The following eight conferences, with themes and topics, were held –

- (1) **Conference of Parliamentary Committees for European Union Affairs - COSAC Chairpersons** (27-28 January) which, as well as agreeing the programme for the COSAC Plenary and dealing with procedural matters, discussed (a) Priorities of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union; and (b) Future of Europe: towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union;
- (2) **Meeting of Chairpersons of Finance Committees** (24-25 February) had as its main theme ‘Future Strategies for Integration, Growth and Better Budgetary Control’ with three individual topics for discussion, namely, (a) Future Evolution of Economic and Monetary Union; (b) Supporting Growth and Reform - the EU Financial Framework up to 2020; and (c) EU Economic Governance and the Role of Parliaments;
- (3) **Meeting of Chairpersons of Agriculture and Fisheries Committees** (10-11 March) had as its main theme ‘The Future of the Common Agriculture and Fisheries Policies and support strategies for young farmers’ with three individual topics for discussion, namely, (a) Update on the Common Agriculture Policy negotiations; (b) support strategies for young farmers; and (c) Reform of Common Fisheries Policy - update on current negotiations;

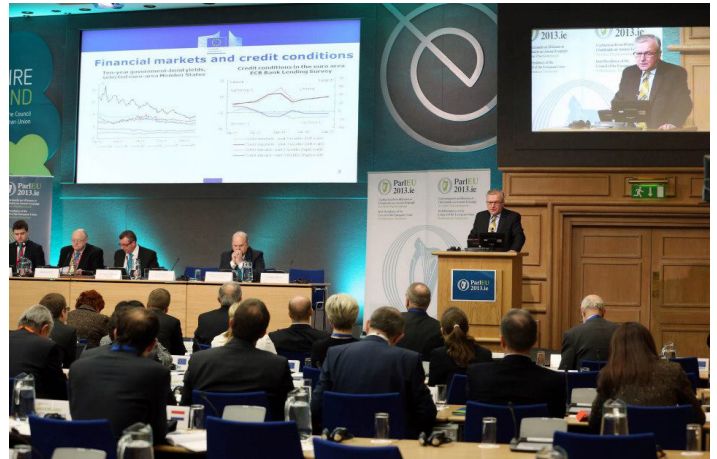
- (4) **Inter-parliamentary Conference on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP)** (24-26 March): The topics for discussion included (a) CFSP and CSDP - Working for Peace, Security and Development in Africa; (b) Conflict prevention - the EU as Peacemaker; (c) Comprehensive Approach to instability in Africa - the experience of the Horn of Africa; (d) Middle East Peace Process - the role of the European Union; and (e) European Council on Defence 2013;
- (5) **Meeting of Chairpersons of Employment, Enterprise, Innovation and Social Affairs Committees** (28-29 April) had as its main theme 'Strategies to combat youth unemployment and harness the potential of European Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' with three individual topics for discussion, namely, (a) Youth Unemployment - An EU Challenge; (b) Harnessing the Potential of European SMEs and Fostering an Entrepreneurial Europe; and (c) Enterprise through Innovation;
- (6) **Meeting of Chairpersons of Environment and Energy Committees** (12-13 May) had as its main theme 'Clean energy for the future' with separate sessions on (a) Sustainable production of energy within the EU; (b) Protecting our environment for a sustainable future; and (c) Towards our Climate Change Goals;
- (7) **Meeting of Chairpersons of Communications, Education and Transport Committees** (16-17 June) had as its main theme 'Connecting Europe's Citizens and Communities in a Digital Age' with separate sessions on (a) Rethinking Education for a Digital Age; (b) The Smart Move - Progress Towards Intelligent Transport Systems; and (c) Digital Agenda Towards 2020; and
- (8) **Conference of Parliamentary Committees for European Union Affairs - COSAC Plenary** (23-25 June) had separate sessions on (a) Taking Stock and Looking to the Future; (b) Future of European Integration; (c) Delivering on Development; (d) A European Future for Young Citizens; and (e) Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy - Maintaining Momentum.

In addition to the conferences held in Dublin, there was parliamentary representation at conferences in Brussels organised by the European Parliament. Parliamentary Week (29-30 January) on the European Semester at the European Parliament was attended by the Ceann Comhairle, the Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs as well as two members of the Committee and the Chair of the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Presidency in Pictures



Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D., and Mr. Andrew Doyle T.D. with Mr. Dacian Ciolos (centre), EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, at the meeting of Chairpersons of Agriculture and Fisheries Committees.



EU Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, Mr. Olli Rehn, addresses the meeting of Chairpersons of Finance Committees held at Dublin Castle.



Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mr. Richard Bruton T.D., addresses the Chairpersons of Employment, Enterprise, Innovation and Social Affairs Committees at their gathering on the theme of 'Strategies to combat youth unemployment and harness the potential of European Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)'



(L-R) EU Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, Mr. Olli Rehn; Oireachtas Finance Committee Chair, Mr. Ciaran Lynch T.D.; Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael Noonan T.D.; and EU Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget, Mr. Janusz Lewandowski.



Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Agriculture and Fisheries Committees of EU National Parliaments together with Mr. Pat Deering, T.D., (Committee Member); Mr. Martin Heydon, T.D., (Committee Member); Mr. Andrew Doyle, T.D., (Committee Chair) and Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Mr. Simon Coveney T.D. at the conference in Dublin Castle in March 2013.



The UK's Minister for Europe, Rt. Hon David Liddington M.P., pictured with the Chair of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs, Mr. Dominic Hannigan T.D.



Citizens were kept informed via a range of media platforms during Ireland's EU Presidency including a dedicated website, 'www.ParIEU2013.ie', illustrated above.



Minister for Social Protection Ms. Joan Burton T.D.; Oireachtas Committee Chairs Mr. Damien English T.D. and Ms. Joanna Tuffy T.D., pictured with the Chairpersons of Employment, Enterprise, Innovation and Social Affairs Committees of EU National Parliaments at Dublin Castle in April 2013.



Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Pat Rabbitte T.D.; Oireachtas Joint Committee Chairs Mr. Michael McCarthy T.D. and Mr. John O'Mahony T.D. and the Chairpersons of Environment and Energy Committees of EU National Parliaments gather prior to their meeting at Dublin Castle during Ireland's presidency of the European Union.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Culture Night and Open House

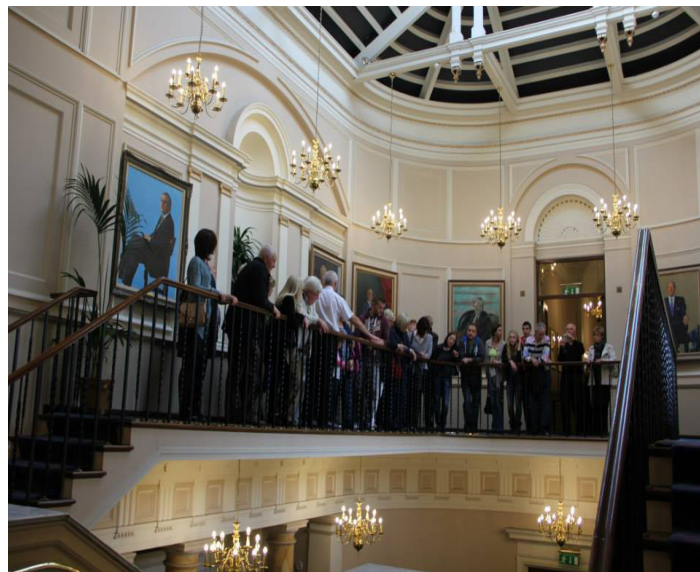
During 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas participated in two national events, Culture Night and Open House, when 2,500 members of the public visited Leinster House and enjoyed tours of the Dáil and Seanad Chambers.

Other Communications Unit activities during 2013 included:

- ♦ in conjunction with the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions, the Unit launched a parliamentary petitions website, an important innovation in parliamentary democracy. For the first time in the 93-year history of the Oireachtas, citizens have a direct route to influence the parliamentary agenda;
- ♦ there was greater use of social media with more than 14,000 followers on Twitter/Facebook;
- ♦ local media newspaper and radio reports were compiled, published, broadcast and posted to Oireachtas website; and
- ♦ the hosting of a meeting of the Irish Parliamentary (Former Members) Society in the Dáil Chamber on 25th January 2013 with the theme "Reforming the Constitution". A wide range of issues was debated across four sessions with approximately 70 former members in attendance.



Former members of the Oireachtas held their 3rd annual gathering on the theme "Reforming the Constitution".



Members of the public on a guided tour of Leinster House as part of Culture Night.

Oireachtas App

As part of the Oireachtas Communications Strategy, an App was designed, developed and delivered in 2013 and launched publicly in January, 2014. The App is another step towards an approach to public engagement that ensures that every citizen has easy access to the business of the Oireachtas, no matter what type of media they choose when seeking to be informed.

Seanad Transition Year Challenge

The Seanad Transition Year Challenge was another success in the area of civic engagement whereby hundreds of schools nationwide took the invitation to either produce an essay or short film on two topics: 'Does the Leaving Cert prepare you for life?' or 'What are challenges facing Ireland and does one think their future lies here?'

The up-take was very positive and showed again how a parliament can reach out and engage young people when it speaks their language and addresses issues that concern them.

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICE

In 2013, the L&RS launched an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) which makes the complete collection of documents laid and significant elements from the historical collections available to the general public.

The L&RS also drafted and commenced the implementation of its 2013-2015 strategic plan, and hosted the annual conference of the Inter Parliamentary Research & Information Network. The Head of Research travelled to the national parliament of Macedonia to advise on the development of their parliamentary research service. The L&RS worked with the Central Statistics Office to provide eight information briefings to members on topics such as adult literacy, employment and earnings and the national accounts.

Launch of Online Public Access Catalogue and Online Exhibitions

The significant achievement for the L&RS in 2013 was the launch in November of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) by Dr. Diarmaid Ferriter of UCD and the Ceann Comhairle.



Dr. Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor of Modern History at UCD, addresses those gathered for the launch of the L&RS Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

The OPAC makes the complete collection of documents laid and significant elements from the historical collections available to the general public. With over 80,000 individual items and in excess of 6 million page scans, it represents one of the largest digital archives in the State.

The Houses of the Oireachtas is the only parliament or assembly in the British Isles to share its catalogue and online resources in such a comprehensive manner. Take-up of the new service has been very positive, with over 2,000 downloads per month.

The OPAC augments and increases the range of Irish primary source material available on line in subject areas such as Irish history, public administration, economics and social science. Users can search for and download copies of the documents. The L&RS also undertook the digitisation of the Dublin Castle Tracts to enhance this collection.



*Map of Ireland by Abraham Ortelius, (1527-1598), DCA00102
From the Dublin Castle Archival Material Collection, DCA*

First Anniversary of Wordpress Site

In October, the L&RS celebrated a full year of use of the Wordpress site, which received over 30,000 unique visits in the year, with over 150,000 items viewed. The site functions as a one stop shop for members and staff wishing to access L&RS resources and on line databases.

Hosting of IPRIN Conference

The L&RS hosted the Annual Conference of the Inter Parliamentary Research & Information Network (IPRIN) in September. IPRIN is a network for librarians and researchers working in the parliamentary libraries of the Oireachtas, Westminster, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly and the Tynwald (Isle of Man). The annual conference is the key event in the IPRIN calendar. This year 40 delegates discussed use of technology in parliamentary libraries, approaches to supporting legislative scrutiny, how to progress collaborative research and how to add value by data visualisation. Two keynote presentations looked at the role of the Constitutional Convention, and the development of collections services within the L&RS.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

Advising on the Development of a Parliamentary Research Service

Following an invitation from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Head of Research travelled to the national parliament of Macedonia to provide training to staff in the newly established Parliamentary Institute and to share experience on how to develop research services, specifically developing user entitlements and protocols, designing and delivering legislative analysis services and anticipating and meeting the needs of individual members.

Strategic Planning and Promoting Services

The 2013-2015 L&RS strategic plan was drafted and implementation commenced in 2013. The plan revised staff structure to better support the L&RS strategy. Teams are now based along service-lines which enables meeting the demands of members, Committees and the Service and is also promoting innovation.

The L&RS contributes to the Service through leadership in information management, and contributes to the parliament by delivering information and research services to inform members and Committees about legislation, policy and topical matters.

The L&RS delivers:

- ◆ expert information and research services which are impartial, value-added, responsive and accessible to the Houses, Committees and members; and
- ◆ professional information and records management services.

Its values are impartiality, client focus and excellence in service. All services are subject to a continuous cycle of review, analysis and improvement.

Three strategies have been identified to deliver on their mission, and to achieve their vision:

- ◆ research and analysis;
- ◆ value-added information; and
- ◆ information governance and management.

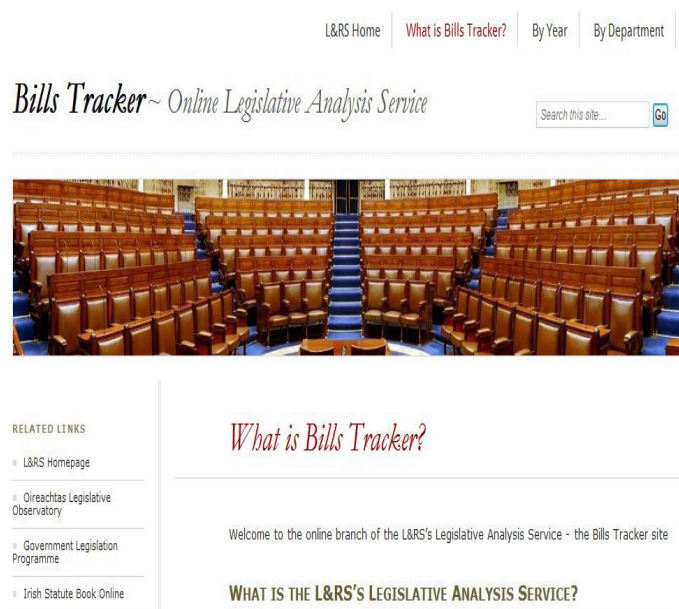
Other 2013 achievements will be reviewed under these headings on pages 41 and 42.

L&RS services were promoted by holding regular information and research sessions where members and their staff could drop by and receive a briefing on services such as Legislative Analysis Services (LAS), eResources or Factiva, or simply ask a question. A series of focused briefings on services to political parties was also initiated.

L&RS on demand information and research requests								
	2011		2012		2013		Total Output 2011-13	% variation 2011-13
Client category	No. of requests completed	% of requests	No. of requests completed	% of requests	No. of requests completed	% of requests	No. of requests completed	% of requests
Members	1,514	48%	989	39.8%	1,081	42.6%	3,584	-18%
Members' staff	834	27%	858	34.5%	746	29.4%	2,438	-10.5%
Committees *	133	4%	108	4.3%	88	3.5%	329	-34%
Service staff	234	8%	180	7.2%	234	9.2%	648	0%
External – ECPRD	56	2%	61	2.5%	71	2.8%	188	27%
External – Other	291	9%	216	8.7%	247	9.7%	754	-15%
External – General Public	69	2%	74	3%	71	2.8%	214	3%
Total	3,131	100	2,486	100	2,538	100%	8,155	-19%
* Work for Committees tends to involve larger pieces of research with longer lead times. The volume is smaller than that for other client categories but significant time and staff resources are involved.								

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Legislative Analysis Service



The Legislative Analysis Service (LAS) is designed to assist members in their scrutiny of legislation before the Houses. The LAS, via Digest and Debate Pack and online Bills Tracker service, provides members with relevant, authoritative information and research on Bills. The service aims to assist members in preparing for second stage debates. Typical content for a Digest includes the policy background to the Bill, the stated policy objective, the current law, details of the principal legislative provisions, a summary of stakeholder reaction/ media commentary and an examination of the potential implications of the Bill. The L&RS continued to develop this service, with a focus on online content and delivery.

A Value for Money and Policy Review report noted that members rated the LAS service of greatest value to them of all L&RS services. 93% of survey respondents indicated that the LAS services were either 'very valuable' or 'valuable' to them.

Information and Research Services to Committees

The L&RS collaborated with the research service (RaISe) of the Northern Ireland Assembly, to support the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association. Six research papers were jointly prepared for the two plenaries held in 2013 and identified experts who would make presentations to the plenaries.

The L&RS contributed to the prompt, effective and efficient reform of parliamentary legislative process by assisting Committees in their scrutiny of General Schemes of Bills. Specifically, the L&RS provided the following three Committees with a range of research products which assisted them in their scrutiny and in their preparation of reports setting out their views on proposed legislation:

- ◆ Joint Committee Transport & Communications - General Scheme of the Shannon Aviation Services and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2013;
- ◆ Joint Committee Justice, Defence & Equality - General Scheme of the Gambling Control Bill 2013; and
- ◆ Joint Committee Education & Social Protection - General Scheme of the Gender Recognition Bill 2013.

The L&RS also drafted 38 research or discussion papers for Committees. In particular, it contributed to the following:

- ◆ preparation of three research papers for the Joint sub-Committee on Fisheries which assisted it in its preparation of the report entitled *Promoting Sustainable Rural Coastal and Island Communities* (this report is due to be launched by the sub-Committee on Inis Óírr in January 2014);
- ◆ research papers with lines of questioning (Questions in Context Service) provided to the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform on the two occasions it met with the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council in respect of the Fiscal Assessment Reports; and
- ◆ research advice and paper provided to the Joint Committee on Transport & Communications which assisted it in its preparation and publication of the report entitled *Addressing the growth of Social Media and tackling Cyberbullying*.

Information and Research Services to Individual Members

The L&RS responded to almost 2,500 information and research queries from individual members and other users during 2013, with most queries received from members and their parliamentary assistants. Amongst the topics researched were renewable energy, employment law, health insurance, equality legislation and income tax.

In line with the L&RS statement of services, a number of strategies were implemented to maximise the reuse of research. These included the following:

L&RS Notes

The L&RS produced 27 *L&RS Notes* in 2013. These notes reuse earlier research and focus on topics or themes of current interest to members. Topics covered included net

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wealth tax, anti-social behaviour orders, medical card eligibility, the economics of nuclear power and comparative social welfare payment rates.



L&RS NOTE

Economics of nuclear power in Ireland

17 December 2013

In Focus pages

In 2013 the In Focus pages were launched. In Focus pages are an online resource that detail a specific theme and include Factiva alerts, articles and commentary. In Focus topics covered in 2013 included universal health insurance and issues relevant to rural and coastal communities.



VALUE ADDED INFORMATION SERVICES

The L&RS progressed a number of strategies to enable easy access to its resources and research. An ICT infrastructure was developed within the L&RS that facilitates delivery of innovative and responsive services, and use of this infrastructure was maximised.

Members received expanded posts from the L&RS intranet blog advising them of new and topical publications and enhancements to the eDocs weekly list by indicating items of particular interest or relevance.

The L&RS continued to develop the Information Skills programme and ran a very successful course on how to search the Internet effectively and also delivered 1-1 training sessions as requested.

A second series of the popular Find it guides was produced dealing with the parliamentary process and focused on Debates, Parliamentary Questions, Bills and Acts.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The L&RS has developed strategies for effective information and records management and is now focused on the implementation of these strategies and on the establishment of sustainable management models.

Implementation of Information Strategy

There was progress on the implementation of a number of information strategy-related projects during 2013 including, intranet and web development. A more co-ordinated approach will be required during 2014.

Implementation of Records Management Policy

The implementation of the records management policy (approved by MAC, December 2012) commenced in 2013. A series of procedures and guidelines to support this implementation was approved by MAC in July 2013, followed by a pilot implementation across three sections of the section-level classification schemes plus records retention schedules.

The Service is establishing a decentralised records management function under the overall direction of the Head of Library and Research Services. This function and the full implementation of the records management policy will be co-ordinated by a consultant records manager in the short-term and the project plan for the implementation of the records management policy will be submitted for approval by MAC.

Documents Laid before the Houses

There are now nearly 1,000 users of the eDocs Laid system which saw a 99.98% compliance usage across government departments and agencies, with 1,990 documents laid in 2013. The system feeds directly into the online archive and OPAC so that the general public can access documents laid within 24 hours of receipt by the L&RS.

In 2013, the system was used to facilitate access by the general public to the Report of the Smithwick Tribunal.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Debates Office

The Debates Office produces the Official Report of the debates of both Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees. This is an authoritative, complete, accurate and impartial record of the contributions of all speakers, in the language of the contribution (Gaeilge or English). The production of the Official Report is delivered through a team of Editors, Parliamentary Reporters and administrative staff. In recent years, the focus has moved from a printed version of the Official Report to publishing electronically on Lotus Notes and in HTML, XML and PDF on the website. The Official Report of the Dáil and Seanad debates is published incrementally on the Oireachtas website throughout the sitting day.

Parliamentary Questions tabled by Deputies for written reply are collated, formatted and published in the Official Report at the end of each day's Dáil proceedings.

The Official Report of Committee meetings is published on the website generally within 2-4 working days.

Debates Office developments during 2013

A long-term strategic objective of the Service has been to achieve ownership and control of its own data and their methods of production and publication.

Full implementation of the debates authoring system occurred in 2013.

The Official Report of the Dáil, Seanad and Committee meetings (a total of 2,875 hours of debate in 2013 and 39,952 Written Replies in 2013) is now produced, end-to-end, by the Debates Office and made available in a timely fashion on Lotus Notes for in-house users, Departments and the media, and in HTML, XML and PDF format on the Oireachtas website.

This has generated significant savings annually in the printing and publishing expenditure for the Oireachtas Service, without the need for extra resources for the additional work involved in preparing, formatting, indexing and publishing the debates and it eliminates dependencies on external suppliers.

RANNÓG AN AISTRIÚCHÁIN – TRANSLATION SERVICE

Functions of Rannóg an Aistriúcháin

Under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2006, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas. It also produces official translations of Statutory Instruments,

Standing Orders of the Houses, Order Papers, Proceedings of the Houses, Strategic Plans and Annual Reports of the Commission and miscellaneous items for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. Rannóg an Aistriúcháin also manages and publishes An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar of the Irish language) and is the national authority of the State as regards the Irish language version of EU Treaties.

As well as producing official translations of documents, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides a simultaneous translation service to Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and their Committees.

Official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas are published and made available on the Oireachtas website and on the www.achtanna.ie website.

Houses of the Oireachtas Service Language Scheme

During 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme for the period 2012 to 2015 with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was progressed. The Scheme sets out the Service's commitments regarding the use of the Irish language in its service delivery and Rannóg an Aistriúcháin manages the Scheme on behalf of the Service.

Translation of Statutory Instruments

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin has now taken on the statutory responsibility of providing translation services in relation to Statutory Instruments and provides this service to sponsoring departments and bodies.

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS BUILDINGS, ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Security Services in Leinster House

In all, 95,451 visitors passed through the Houses in 2013. This is a slight decrease on 2012 figures and is mainly reflected in the reduction in tour visitors. Leinster House is a focal point for demonstrations on both national and local issues, the frequency, scale and intensity of which remained high. Management of these protests by both the Superintendent's Section and An Garda Síochána ensured that there was no disruption to the business of the Houses and all parliamentary activities continued as normal. The Houses of the Oireachtas Service and An Garda Síochána continually monitor security issues to ensure that reactions to incidents and events are appropriate. The impact of risk materialisation in terms of security and reputation of the institution of parliament is never underestimated.

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Tour Visits and Events

The Houses of the Oireachtas is a popular venue for tour visitors, the main categories being members' constituents and school groups, international visitors, and parliamentary delegations. The total number of visitors for 2013 was 52,000 which is slightly down on 2012 and seems to be due to a reduction in the number of school groups. The 'walk-up' tours on non-sitting days, which were introduced in 2012, continue to be popular and successful, especially with overseas visitors.

The Parliamentary Ushers who deliver the tour service continue to improve their skills in delivery of tours and are encouraged to broaden their language skills. A small number of staff are proficient enough to deliver tours through Irish and this is a focus for future improvement.

Health and Safety Policy

During 2013, the premises was a safe place to work and visit and no major accidents occurred. A review of fire safety management commenced and is expected to be completed in 2014. Risk assessments are on-going and reflected in the annual safety audit.

The Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to discuss health and safety issues, takes any necessary measures and also acts as a communications forum for all staff.

Energy Management

Improvements in the Houses of the Oireachtas energy usage have been made over the past number of years. The energy management team were awarded the OPW's National Best Energy Management Team for 2013. A report on the Energy Usage in the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2013 is set out in Appendix 12, page 103.

An Energy Awareness Day for members and staff was held to provide updates on the energy reduction programme being run in the Leinster House complex and to provide advice on how to save energy (and therefore money) at home. The energy management team ensured that an extensive and full review of all energy sub-meters was carried out in 2013, thus ensuring accurate readings for all stakeholders.

Oireachtas Crèche and Fitness Room

The Superintendent's section is responsible for the operation of services such as the Oireachtas Crèche and Fitness Room. The crèche provides an on-site childcare facility for children up to age 5, as well as late-evening care and drop-in services and is operated by a third-party service provider. The facility is open to the children of members and staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas as well as staff of Government Departments. Services are paid for directly by the users to

the service provider. The fitness room is open to all members of the Houses and staff on payroll and 51 people joined the fitness room in 2013. Overall in 2013, there were 4,741 individual visits to the fitness room.

Business Continuity Planning/Disaster Recovery

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning for the Houses of the Oireachtas commenced in 2009 and work has reached a stage where current ICT systems can support all critical services that are required to facilitate simultaneous sittings of both Houses and their Committees in an alternative location to the Leinster House complex.

During 2013, on-going review and refinement of planning documents was undertaken including review of the overall Incident Management Plan (IMP) and the Work Area Recovery Plan (WARP). Further review and updating of specific sectional recovery plans was also completed which included all procedural Sections of the Service.

Detailed work commenced to identify the technical infrastructure and accommodation requirements for all political parties to ensure continuity of business in the event of a disaster situation.

Simulation exercises were conducted with the Incident Management Team and the Human Resources Team and plans to carry out a detailed simulation exercise in Dublin Castle in February 2014 were progressed.

Catering Facilities

Bar and restaurant catering facilities are provided to members, staff and visitors to Leinster House. In 2013 the Food and Beverage Manager (recruited in late 2012) in conjunction with the Facilities Management Unit continued to improve the catering service, introducing new menus and implementing initiatives to promote healthier eating which included a healthy eating week and the display of indicative calorie counts on some menu items.

Accommodation

In 2013, two significant projects were brought to a conclusion in conjunction with the OPW which significantly improve the overall functioning of the accommodation available to the Houses of the Oireachtas:

- ◆ New Electrical Substation: In 2013, a new substation in Fisheries Yard and ancillary works were completed to ensure security of services; and
- ◆ Universal Access Link to the Engineering Block adjacent to the Leinster House complex: In 2013 works were completed to put in place accessible access between Leinster House and its adjacent building. Prior to this improvement, the building was inaccessible for people with mobility difficulties.

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PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS UNDER STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 1: IMPROVING SERVICES TO PARLIAMENT

Operational Statistics

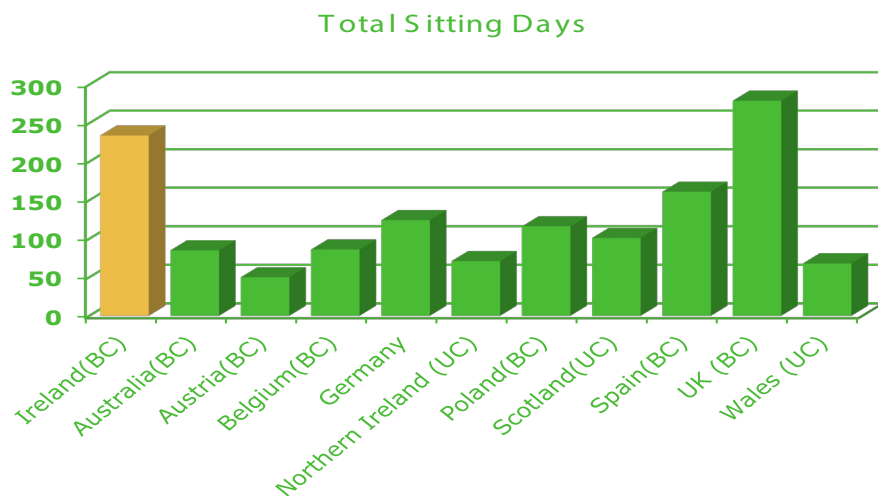
Activity	2011*	2012	2013	Total Output 2011-13	% variation 2011-13
No. of Dáil sitting hours	845	1001	1,023	2,869	21%
No. of Dáil sitting days	108	123	123	354	14%
No. of Seanad sitting hours	520	698	722	1,940	39%
No. of Seanad sitting days	81	110	111	302	37%
No. of Committee sitting hours	541	1,032	1,130	2,703	109%
No. of Committee meetings	315	572	580	1,467	84%
No. of Committee reports**	10	18	20	48	100%
No. of submissions from Procedural Offices	975	1,701	1,597	4,273	64%
No. of pages printed - Order Paper	1,071	1,479	1,984	4,534	85%
No. of pages printed - Question Paper	3,280	4,848	4,850	12,978	48%
No. of takes - Debates	10,903	15,553	17,058	43,514	56%
No. of pages printed - Bills Only	4,090	5,626	6,180	15,896	51%
No. of pages printed - Amendments to Bills	783	1,407	1,634	3,824	109%
No. of pages printed - Acts enacted in 2013	1,906	803	1,219	3,928	64%
No. of press releases	332	757	745	1,834	124%
No. of visitors to Leinster House	75,058	109,300	95,451	279,809	27%
No. of tours conducted of Leinster House	2,185	2,563	2,608	7,356	19%
No. of Departmental officials visits	7,153	14,458	12,110	33,721	70%
* There was a General Election in 2011.					
** Refers to Policy Reports only.					

COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING OF PARLIAMENTS

Extract from Report on International Benchmarking between Parliaments

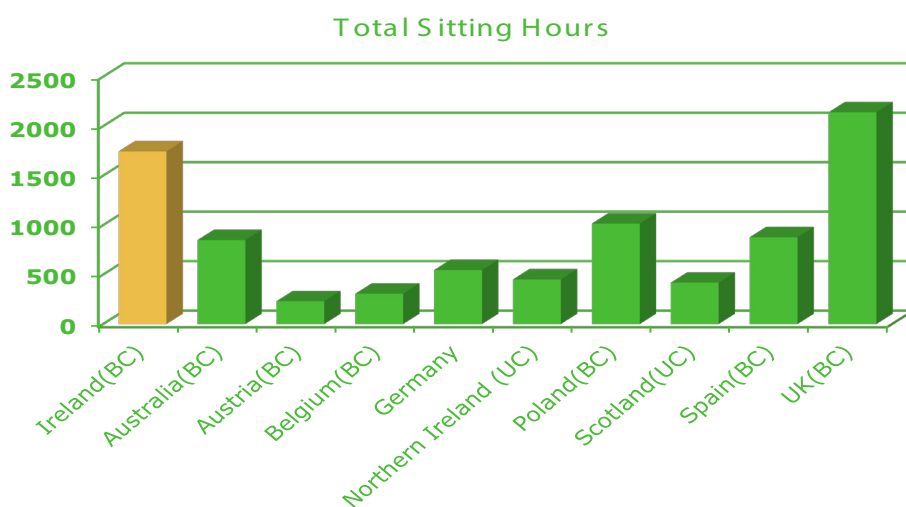
While every effort is made in our methodology to compare like with like, all inter-parliamentary comparisons are subject to the caveat that different parliaments may have different

functions and election cycles, and different systems of operation and even sitting rhythms.



Sitting Days and Sitting Hours

The Houses of the Oireachtas performs well when benchmarked against other national parliaments in terms of total sitting days and sitting hours, recording 234 sitting days and a total of 1,745 sitting hours for both Houses. The average recorded for 2013 in the comparison was 114 sitting days and 715 sitting hours.



In comparison with other bicameral parliaments surveyed, the Houses of the Oireachtas is ahead all others except the UK in terms of sitting days and sitting hours for 2013.

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Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

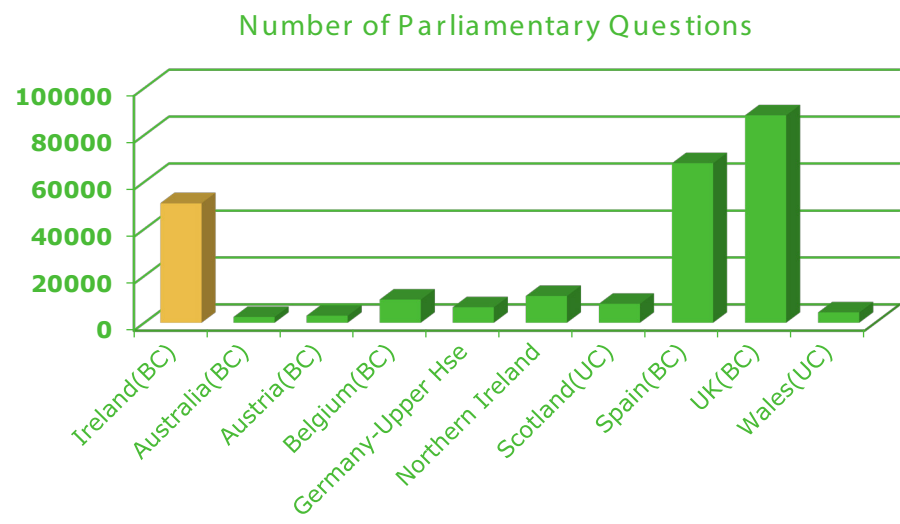
Recess Weeks

When comparing the number of recess weeks out of 10 parliaments surveyed, Dáil Éireann has a total of 15 which is lower than the survey average of 20 weeks.



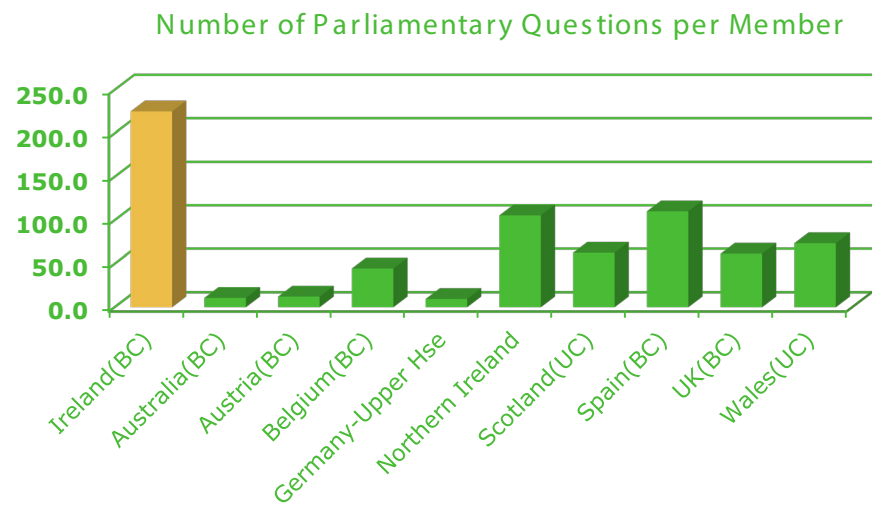
Parliamentary Questions

With a total of 50,926 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) tabled, Dáil Éireann registered third highest of 10 parliaments represented below. The Irish figure is more than twice the average number of 22,461 questions tabled.



Parliamentary Questions per Member

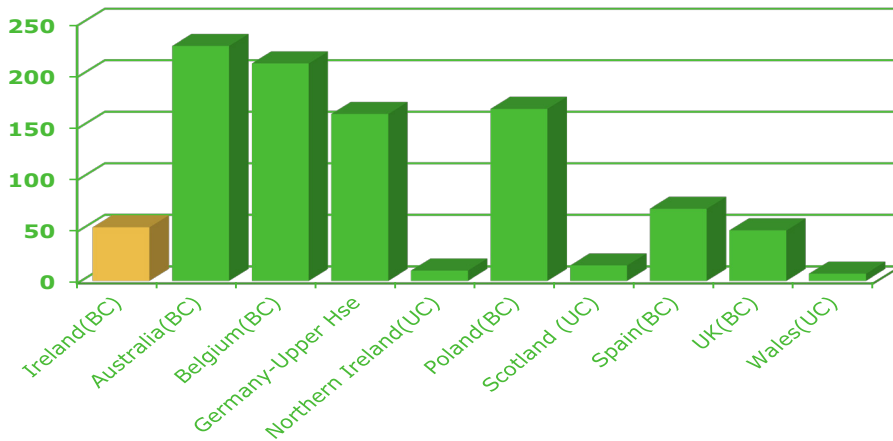
Comparing the number of PQs tabled with the number of members of the House in which the questions were tabled, Dáil Éireann has the highest number of questions asked with 225 per TD, over three times the average figure of 54 questions per member.



PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 1: Improving Services to Parliament

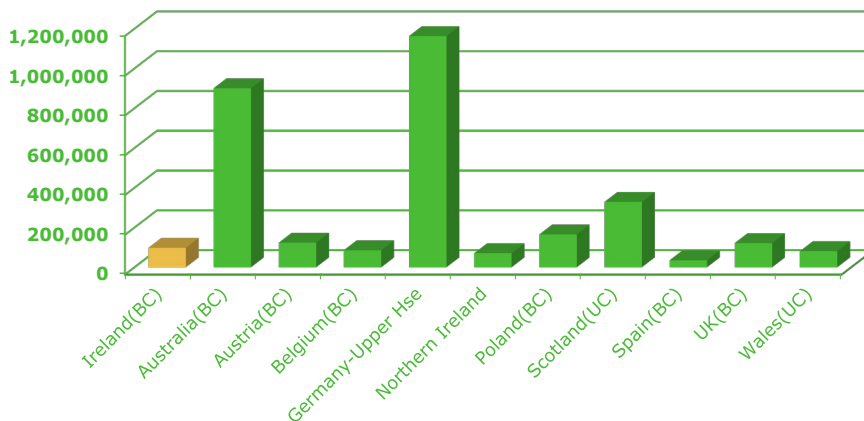
Number of Acts



Number of Acts for 2013

The Houses of the Oireachtas had 52 Bills enacted in 2013.

Number of Visitors



PUBLIC ACCESS TO PARLIAMENT

Total Number of Visitors

In terms of visitors per year, and in view of its relative size, the Houses of the Oireachtas fares well when benchmarked with 95,451 visitors in 2013.



STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2 - IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

This Strategy is about ensuring that members receive the services they need to fulfill their roles as public representatives.

Joint sub-Committee on Administration

The Joint sub-Committee on Administration consists of sub-Committees of the Dáil and Seanad Committees on Procedure and Privileges established and joined together by orders of the Dáil and Seanad of 12 June 2012. The Joint sub-Committee represents the views of members in relation to services provided for and by the Houses and makes recommendations on these to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

During 2013, the sub-Committee considered a range of matters including:

- ◆ Parliamentary Internship Programme in the Houses of the Oireachtas;
- ◆ calorie counts of food on the menus of the Oireachtas Restaurant;
- ◆ the Public Representative Allowance System;
- ◆ opening hours of the Dáil Bar;
- ◆ training programme for members and political personnel;
- ◆ use of the AV Room for external groups;
- ◆ catering issues; and
- ◆ use of mobile phones and electronic devices in the Dáil and Seanad Chambers and Committee rooms.

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

HR Services comprises:

- ◆ HR Unit - which provides services to civil service staff of the Commission;
- ◆ HR Unit for Members - which provides services to members and political personnel;
- ◆ Training & Development Unit - which provides training services to members, political personnel and to civil service staff;
- ◆ Pensions Unit - provides services (pensions) to all groups;
- ◆ Salaries Section – provides payroll services to all groups; and
- ◆ The Reform Delivery Unit - has a co-ordinating role on Reform Delivery for the Service.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES/MEMBERS' SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Members' Services

Members' Services provides a one stop shop for all members' needs. Members use the One Stop Shop as a source for information relating to any allowance and payment applicable to their position. Members' Services processes most of the allowances due to members and provides guidance and assistance to them on allowable expenses, salaries and related issues.

After the budget announcement in December 2012, the rules relating to the Parliamentary Standard Allowance (PSA) were amended. As a result, Members' Services revised all guidance documents and forms relating to the PSA in 2013 and these were then circulated to members on several occasions over the course of 2013.

Seminars have also been conducted for members in order to familiarise them with the new rules relating to the PSA.

Conduct of the 2013 Audit - Public Representation Allowance

The third audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted in 2013 by an independent auditor, selected following a competitive tender process. The auditor was responsible, independently of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, for preparing an audit process document and for communicating with the members selected for audit in relation to all matters. As part of the contract, the auditor implemented a system to select the members for audit by random sample. A total of 120 members, who received vouched allowances in 2012, were auditable in 2013 and the auditor selected 12 of these (10%) by random sample.

The detailed audit plan to conduct the audit was prepared by the auditor. All records are held by the members themselves and not by the Service. The purpose of the audit was to establish:

(1) that a member has receipts to match the amount of allowance paid; and

(2) that those receipts were in respect of items which are allowable expenses under the regulations.

Information on the Public Representation Allowance, which is part of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance payments, including the audit reports, is published on the Oireachtas website.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 2: Improving Services to Members

The audit report submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service was considered by both the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Audit Committee in November and December 2013. The auditors provided the necessary certification in respect of all members audited and made recommendations relating to the expenses system. The administrative amendments have been included in updated Audit Guidelines. Other substantive items arising from the auditor's report are being considered by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform as part of his Department's on-going review of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance.

Print Facility

The Print Facility is provided by the Commission pursuant to legislation and may be used by members, solely in connection with their parliamentary duties, and by qualifying parties, for the purposes of facilitating the parliamentary activities of their elected members.

The Print Users' Council was established to issue determinations on material referred to it by the print manager or members/parties, and comprises of 4 members of the Commission, a senior manager from the Service and a legal advisor. It periodically reviews material printed with a view to establishing a body of precedents which will provide clarity to both the users and the operators of the facility on the basis of accepted benchmarks/examples for future acceptable use.

TECHNOLOGY AND OFFICE SUPPORT

ICT Support Services

ICT services for members and their staff are provided both in Leinster House and countrywide in their homes or constituency offices through a managed services contract. The internally-staffed ICT Unit provides first-line ICT support services to over 380 civil service staff and also looks after the administration and procurement of ICT services and systems.

Under regulations made by the Commission, a specified set of ICT equipment together with broadband service is supplied to each TD and Senator. ICT supports and services for members are subject to on-going review and development, with the following key standard ICT supports in place for members:

- ◆ a desk-based service in Leinster House providing telephone and desk-side support, and supported by a nationwide team of field staff;
- ◆ broadband connections between members' constituency offices/homes and Leinster House;

- ◆ a secure browser-based off-site logon facility so that all members may access their Leinster House files off-site;
- ◆ a comprehensive constituency database management system for handling constituency casework. This system facilitates tailored and targeted correspondence ranging from individual replies to customised and personalised constituency mailshots;
- ◆ access on the move to key services. Members may use certain mobile devices to access their email while "on the move" – the Oireachtas IT systems integrate with these devices;
- ◆ digital dictation facilities;
- ◆ Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony services in the Leinster House complex;
- ◆ WiFi is available in all areas of the Leinster House complex, with a guest access system available for use by visitors; and
- ◆ a video-conferencing system in Leinster House.

Asset Management

During 2013, an ICT Unit project team installed a new asset management system, completed a full audit of the hardware estate and engaged in documenting and process mapping the procedures involved in the movement of ICT equipment.

The ICT Unit also carried out an audit of all software, identifying software installations and confirming vendor license grants, thereby identifying legacy systems and unrequired licensing, resulting in cost savings.

Telephony

The ICT Unit undertook an audit on phone lines and achieved significant savings through line rationalisation.

Customer Service

The ICT Unit implemented a new call management system in January 2013 for use by the Staff helpdesk. The system manages calls through the incident management process and provides important management information on the service being provided. The system also provides staff of the ICT Unit with a new knowledge database with capability to record new solutions and fixes.

Staff of the ICT Unit also provided additional support at EU Presidency meetings.

Mobile Access

Following a decision by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission to provide tablet devices to members as part of a strategy to reduce print production costs, and to move towards a 'print on demand' strategy in respect of parliamentary documents, the ICT Unit provided tablets with secure access to Oireachtas email, the Constituency Database and the Committees Database to Members.

The ICT Unit also rolled out "soft tokens", which appear as a mobile application on smart phones or tablets, as an alternative to the remote access key fobs traditionally provided to allow remote access to email and files.

Data Security

As part of its on-going programme to enhance systems, the ICT Unit has implemented new Intrusion Detection and Prevention systems. A series of security policies are being reviewed to ensure that standards are maintained to appropriate levels.

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

ICT Unit continues to work with Oireachtas business units to maintain and develop its business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities. Regular simulation exercises are carried out to test these capabilities.

Significant ICT activities undertaken during 2013

- ◆ a Parliamentary Question system review to identify short-term improvements that can be readily made to the existing PQ ICT system and to identify design options for the future development of the system;
- ◆ a new contract for a combined Application Delivery Controller to provide full network access SSL VPN remote access connectivity from a variety of devices and advanced application load balancing functionality;
- ◆ installation and configuration of a Mobile Device Management System for the management of mobile devices;
- ◆ the development of a Media Enquiry Database for the Communications Unit;
- ◆ the provision of a print kiosk to ensure Members have rapid availability to relevant Chamber printed documents if required; and
- ◆ relocation of communications equipment providing connectivity to the Ministerial landing to a more secure and safe location.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 2: Improving Services to Members

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS UNDER STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2: IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

Operational Statistics

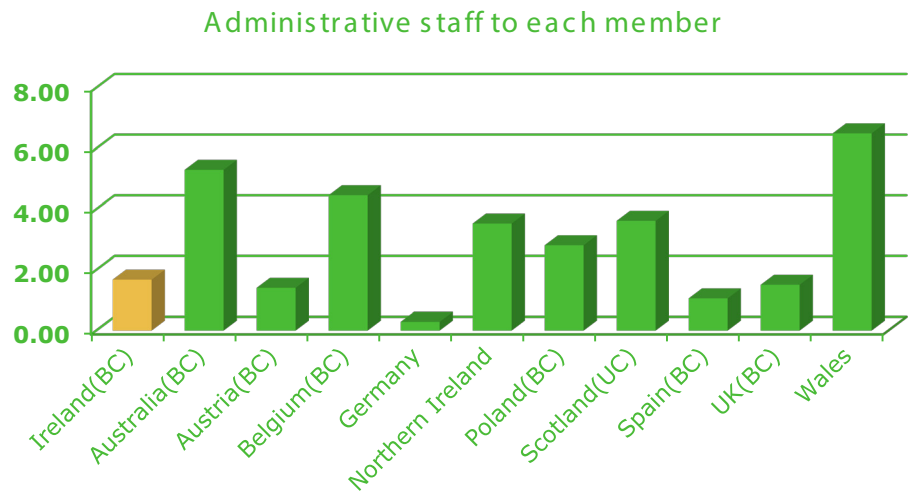
Activity	2011	2012	2013	Total 2011-2013	% variation 2011-2013
No. of ICT help desk calls from members and their staff	16,182	13,384	11,651	41,217	-28%
No. of payments (members' allowances and members' pensions)	8,985	8,286	8,444	25,715	-6%
No. of members on training courses	57	29	1	87	-49%
No. of political personnel on courses	453*	178	106	737	-77%
No. of queries dealt with by Members' Services	3,370	2,555	10,820	16,745	221%
* There was a General Election in 2011. Figures relating to political personnel on training courses reflect the fact that there was a significant turnover of political personnel compared to non-election years.					

COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING OF PARLIAMENTS

Extract from Report on International Benchmarking between Parliaments

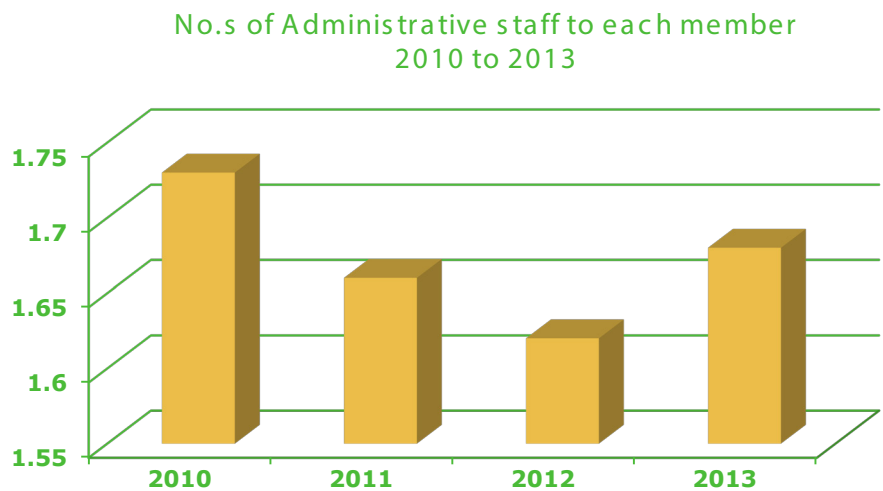
Ratio of Administrative Staff to each Member

Ireland has 1.68 administrative staff to each member in comparison to, for example, the Welsh Assembly which has 6.5 admin staff to every member.



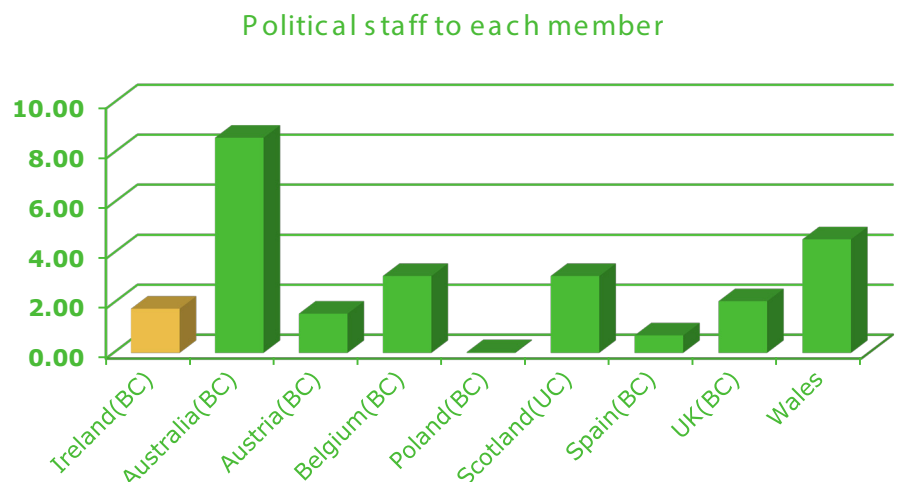
Comparative ratio of Administrative Staff to each Member 2010-2013

In 2013 the ratio of administrative staff to members was 1.68:1, up from 1.62:1 in 2012.



Ratio of Political Staff to each Member

In the comparison of the number of political staff to the number of members, Ireland has 1.77 staff per member. The Australian Parliament has the highest staff ratio per member with 8.61.





STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 3 - ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY

This Strategy is about achieving the highest standard in public service and parliamentary administration.

MANAGING PEOPLE AND BUDGETS

Human Resources (HR) Services – overview of current operating environment

There are two main categories of staff in Leinster House. Firstly, there are the established civil service staff of the Commission. As at December 2013, there are 389 sanctioned posts of which 378.92 posts were filled by 398 people. There are also non-established civil service staff comprising five civilian drivers and seven staff of Office Holders. In addition, 48 staff are employed between the Restaurants, Bars and Print Facility. In 2013, the focus of the HR Unit was to ensure that, having regard to sanctioned numbers, adequate staffing levels were in place to support the operations of the Service. This involved reassignment of staff from within the Service, redeployment of staff from other Civil Service organisations and, where appropriate, recruitment of staff (in accordance with the Codes of Practice of the Commission on Public Service Appointments).

Secondly, staff of members and parties employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance (496 people employed in 399.96 full-time equivalent posts) are the employees of the member or party concerned and are not public servants but they are paid by the Commission. Accordingly, all personnel administration functions in relation to pay, leave and other entitlements are undertaken by the HR Unit for Members.

Whereas the HR Unit provides services to the civil service staff and the HR Unit for Members provides services to members and the staff of members, the Training and Development Unit, Pensions Unit and Salaries Section provides services to all groups.

In addition to maintaining key support services, HR Services has a lead role for the Service in supporting the:

- ◆ People and Organisation Development Programme; and
- ◆ Reform Delivery.

People and Organisation Development

The People and Organisation Development Programme (POD) is an initiative to increase organisational capacity, to implement change and to enable the Service develop as a high performing organisation. The Programme established three cross-grade and cross-functional groups (internally-led and supported by experts). In 2013, these groups reported on strategies the Service should pursue in relation to:

- ◆ People, Skills and Talent;
- ◆ Valuing Leadership and Developing Leaders; and
- ◆ Results for a High Performance Organisation.

The Service approved key initiatives aimed at improving performance and developing capacity. These initiatives which will be rolled-out in 2014 include:

- ◆ Coaching, Training and Development to support High Performance;
- ◆ A Code for Working Together and a Leadership Practice based on organisational values; and
- ◆ Developing High Performance Teams.

Reform Delivery Unit

The Service is represented at Assistant Secretary level on the Central Reform Delivery Board for the Civil Service which operates under the aegis of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The overall reform plan for the Service was revised in 2013 to include implementation of the measures provided in the Public Service or "Haddington Road" Agreement. Progress on implementation is reported regularly to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

There has been a significant reduction in staff numbers since 2009 and numbers in place are 11% below sanctioned posts. At the same time, key output indicators, for example, total sittings, have increased. The Service continues to deliver services which are essential for the maintenance of the core parliamentary business and associated services to members. These services are delivered despite Dáil Reform measures implemented in November 2013 placing further demands on available resources, for example, earlier sittings on Wednesday and Thursday and an increase in the number of Friday Sittings. This has been achieved, in part, by reviewing practices and processes and seeking to match resources to peak demand. An example of this can be seen where permanent part-time usher staff who work primarily on sitting days were appointed for the first time in 2013.

In addition, the provisions of the Haddington Road Agreement including additional hours, reduced overtime and reduced salaries have allowed underlying payroll costs to be reduced and off-set the potential costs of the increase in sitting hours and days introduced in November 2013.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 3: Enhancing Service Capability

HR Services also provides secretariat and other support services for the Partnership Committee which continued to meet in 2013 and which considered the Reform Programme and actions relating to changes in the workplace.

In addition to meeting operational targets, key activities of each of the units of HR Services in 2013 were:

HR Unit (providing services to civil service staff of the Commission)

- ◆ Flexible Working Hours Scheme rolled out for staff up to and including the grade of Senior Clerk;
- ◆ preparation for transition to the Human Resource Shared Services Centre (HRSSC) PeoplePoint;
- ◆ implementation of changes arising from the Haddington Road Agreement;
- ◆ disability survey conducted and provision of the Disability Liaison Officer Service provided;
- ◆ Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) – seminars held for staff at all levels as well as workshops on Enhancing Performance Conversations;
- ◆ support for the Health and Safety Committee;
- ◆ recruitment - competitions held both internally and externally;
- ◆ resource management through use of redeployment, secondments and mobility to match the skills required to fill staff vacancies;
- ◆ input to the Business Continuity Plan of the Service; and
- ◆ systems development aimed at achieving efficiencies and improving services.

HR Unit for Members

- ◆ liaison with Party Administrators; and
- ◆ advice in relation to employment matters and changes to terms and conditions of employment, for example, revised sick leave arrangements for civil service staff apply also to staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

Pensions Unit

- ◆ introduction of the Single Pension Service Scheme for all new entrants commencing on or after 1 January 2013; and
- ◆ implementation of the aggregation of pensions for the purposes of the reduction of pension costs under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013.

Salaries Section

- ◆ implementation of the provisions of the Haddington Road Agreement changes to payroll within the specified time frame;
- ◆ payroll system updated to cater for the deduction of the Local Property Tax;
- ◆ migration to SEPA for all payee bank accounts; and
- ◆ payment of salary and pension by payable order was discontinued in 2013 and all payments now made by EFT.

In relation to Training and Development the range of activities is related to the group for which services are provided. Services to members and political personnel are set out in the 2011 Training and Information Programme developed following the 2011 Elections. Some of the key training initiatives provided include:

- ◆ constituency database training;
- ◆ occupational first aid;
- ◆ fire safety/fire warden training; and
- ◆ language training.

Training and learning interventions were also provided to civil service staff in a wide range of areas encompassing technical, professional and personal development training. Training interventions were provided both in-house and externally as appropriate. Some of the key training initiatives provided include:

- ◆ customer service;
- ◆ accredited food safety training;
- ◆ procurement training;
- ◆ financial courses for staff of Finance and Salaries Units;
- ◆ shorthand proficiency course;
- ◆ PMDS training in conjunction with the HR Unit; and
- ◆ language training.

Information Seminars

Information Seminars also proved a popular and effective way of enhancing knowledge in certain areas for both members and political personnel and civil service staff. Successful in-house information seminars were provided on a range of topics including:

- ◆ Autism awareness for front line staff;
- ◆ Data Protection issues;
- ◆ Parliamentary Questions;

- ◆ Stress Management; and
- ◆ The Legislative Process.

Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme

The Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme has operated throughout the civil service very successfully for many years. 43 staff of the Service availed of the Scheme in the academic year 2013. The Scheme continues to play an important role in career and personal development for staff members as it gives individuals the opportunity to pursue an area of study that assists the Service in the delivery of organisational and business unit objectives and develops the skill-set and capacity of staff.

Interparliamentary Staff Programmes and Visits

In 2013, the Service hosted visits from:

- ◆ German Bundestag Officials;
- ◆ Kenyan Parliamentary Officials; and
- ◆ Dutch Young Civil Servants Organisation from the High Councils of State.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Control, Reporting and Governance Systems

The main functions of the Finance Unit include:

- ◆ manage and monitor expenditure;
- ◆ Annual Account production for the previous year by 31 March;
- ◆ management accounts production for MAC, Finance Committee and Commission;
- ◆ assist Comptroller & Auditor General's Office in their annual audit of the Commission Accounts; and
- ◆ preparation of the Estimate for the following year.

2013 was the first year of the three-year budget 2013-2015 which was set in legislation at €324m. Actual expenditure for 2013 was €100.95m.

Financial reporting in the Service continues to be carefully managed with expenditure monitored on a monthly basis by the MAC. A quarterly report is examined by the Finance Committee of the Commission and following its consideration, the Finance Committee makes a report to the Commission where these matters are considered further.

The annual accounts of the Service are signed off by the Accounting Officer, while the Comptroller & Auditor General conducts an audit of the accounts each year. The annual account is then published in the Commission's annual report (Please see App 6, pg 70).

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Informal Feedback Forum for Members

The Secretary General continued to meet with members of the cross-party Informal Feedback Forum (IFF). The IFF met on two occasions to July 2013 to discuss and explore service delivery and improvement initiatives, prior to implementation. The Forum has discussed a wide variety of topics including:

- ◆ general accommodation, L&RS and ICT matters;
- ◆ training for members and political staff;
- ◆ protocol for receipt of documentation from Committee witnesses;
- ◆ issues relating to Parliamentary Questions; and
- ◆ webcasting and local radio broadcasts.

TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE WORK

On-going reform of the Committee system

In 2013, Oireachtas Committees continued to engage in a number of activities under the reform agenda including:

- ◆ on-going mainstreaming of EU legislation scrutiny across all Sectoral Committees;
- ◆ increased engagement with Ministers pre and post EU Council meetings and with Secretaries General on the EU Departmental six-monthly reports;
- ◆ structured annual work programmes for Sectoral Committees;
- ◆ continuation of pre-legislative scrutiny by Sectoral Committees of the Heads of Bills, including the seeking and analysis of submissions received from interested stakeholder groups and individuals;
- ◆ on-going engagement meetings by Sectoral Committees with Chairperson Designates of State Bodies and Agencies;
- ◆ moving towards a new "whole of year" budgetary timetable with enhanced financial scrutiny/Sectoral Committee engagement on the 2013 estimates and 2014 expenditure allocations; and
- ◆ fully operational paperless Committee meetings using a centralised document database.

Scrutiny of Public Expenditure

The new budget timetable envisages Estimates for Public Services being considered by Committees and agreed by Dáil Éireann before year end. This is necessitated by the European Semester process and the Government's own Dáil reform measures. Despite some leeway on this timetable

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 3: Enhancing Service Capability

in respect of consideration of the 2014 Revised Estimates, it has proven to be very challenging for Departments/ Offices and Committees. Further discussion will be required throughout 2014 with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform about the timing of the publication of the 2015 estimates to ensure that both Departments and Committees are afforded maximum time within the new timetable so that the estimates are given appropriate and adequate consideration. The Oireachtas, through its Committees, is committed to continue to enhance its scrutiny of estimates as a core on-going activity each year.

Procurement Unit

The Procurement Unit ensures compliance with the EU Public Procurement Directives in all above EU threshold tender processes. It also ensures best practice procedures are conducted for all below EU threshold purchases whilst continuously seeking optimal value for money outcomes in all projects.

During 2013, the Procurement Unit proactively engaged with and offered comprehensive advice and support services for 45 separate tendering processes across the Service.

GOVERNANCE AND FUTURE PLANNING

Management Advisory Committee (MAC)

The MAC is the senior management body of the Service which acts in a strategic oversight, advisory and co-ordinating capacity in support of the Secretary General. The MAC consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary Corporate & Members' Services division, the Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services division, the Clerk of the Seanad and the chairpersons of the three sub-committees of the MAC.

The MAC meets monthly to consider and decide on strategic, operational and financial policies for the Service, which may then be submitted to the Commission for decision as appropriate.

There are a number of standing items on the MAC agenda including financial and human resources, management information reporting, risk management updates and updates on topical issues across the Service. The MAC agenda is closely aligned with the Commission agenda.

The MAC met 14 times in 2013. The main policy issues considered included the following:

- ◆ review of the Services' Annual Resource Plan;
- ◆ review of risk materialisation reports;
- ◆ implementation of Croke Park and Haddington Road Agreements, as well as the Integrated Reform Delivery Plan;

- ◆ report on a Parliamentary Printing Strategy;
- ◆ report on Protocol for witnesses appearing before Committees;
- ◆ Business Process Improvement Process Report on Receipt and Processing of Written PQ Replies; and
- ◆ the Service's Draft Fraud Policy.

MAC Sub-Committees

The MAC established three sub-committees in 2011; People & Finance; Systems; and Business & Strategy. Each sub-committee is chaired by a Principal Officer, with each Principal Officer in the Service being a member of one of these groups. These appointments are for a 12 month period, with the chairpersons of each sub-committee becoming a full participatory member of the MAC for this period. The positions will be filled on a rotating basis. Each sub-committee reports to the MAC and/or the Secretary General as appropriate and reports annually to the MAC on its work in general.

People and Finance Sub-Committee

The People and Finance sub-committee considers such matters as human and financial resources for the Service, as are referred to it by the MAC/Secretary General. It met four times in 2013 to consider:

- ◆ the 2014 Annual Resource Plan;
- ◆ the Carry-Over of Annual Leave and Proposal on Core Office Hours;
- ◆ the implementation of a Flexitime System; and
- ◆ Accumulated Annual Leave.

Systems Sub-Committee

The sub-committee on Systems has general oversight of the development of information and ICT services and strategies for the Service, including monitoring progress on ICT projects and expenditure, as are referred to it by the MAC/Secretary General. The sub-committee met on eight occasions during 2013. Among the key issues considered were:

- ◆ the introduction of a Managed Print Service;
- ◆ a Parliamentary Printing Strategy;
- ◆ ICT Security Charter and Policies; and
- ◆ the development of apps for the Service.

Business and Strategy Sub-Committee

The sub-committee on Business and Strategy considers such matters of strategy, business operations and organisation development for the Service as are referred to it by MAC/ Secretary General. It met five times in 2013. Among the key issues discussed were:

- ◆ Draft Fraud Policy for the Service;
- ◆ Records Management Policy for the Service;
- ◆ Value for Money Report on the Library and Research Services; and
- ◆ Business Process Improvement report on the processing of PQ replies.

Risk Management Committee

During 2013, the Risk Management Committee focused on revising the Service Risk Policy. The Committee also worked on developing strategic risks for the Service with an emphasis on the reporting and consideration of “emerging risks”, where an existing risk changes in likelihood or impact or a new risk poses an immediate threat to the Service.

Enhanced Internal Audit and Oversight Functions

The Internal Audit function of the Houses of the Oireachtas contributes to the oversight and accountability of the Service. The 2013/15 Internal Audit work programme provides that two audits be carried out each quarter to ensure that risks are identified and managed; that systems, procedures and internal controls in place are effective and to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. A number of external audits covering technical areas will also be undertaken.

Reporting to the Head of the Office of the Commission and Secretary General (OCSG), the Internal Audit Unit’s functions include;

- ◆ reporting on the Service’s compliance with relevant policies, circulars, regulations and guidelines;
- ◆ analysing the financial and other risks to which the Service is exposed;
- ◆ reporting on the implementation of audit recommendations; and
- ◆ supporting the Audit Committee in its work.

The Audit Committee met four times in 2013 and considered the following matters;

- ◆ eight Internal Audit reports;
- ◆ eight information notes and briefings;

- ◆ an independent audit of the members’ Public Representation Allowance; and

- ◆ an external Audit of PABX Telephone System.

The Internal Audit Unit is represented on the Risk Management Committee, where its role includes advising on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service’s procedures relating to risk management and providing assurance on the processes for the management of risk.

Work continued on the development of a Fraud Policy, the overall objective of which is to ensure the highest standards of ethical behaviour from all staff of the Oireachtas Service and others who conduct activities with the Service. The policy relates to fraud involving the assets and resources of the Service and applies to all areas of activity conducted by the Service. The policy document was agreed by MAC during 2013, who advised that a procedural document should be drawn up to accompany the Fraud Policy. Work on this document is currently being undertaken.

To help ensure that it operates in accordance with best practice, the Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service Internal Audit network) and a group of Heads of Internal Audit of parliaments and assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

Freedom of Information (FoI)

There were 107 FoI requests in 2013. The FoI procedures continue to be managed by the Library and Research Service up to the point of assignment to the relevant decision maker. The FoI strategy group was convened to explore broadening the range of information routinely published on Oireachtas. ie. One information session for FoI decision makers was held.

Provision of Legal Services

The core duties of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor (PLA) are:

- ◆ to provide legal advice to all Committees in relation to, *inter alia*: the application of relevant legislation, the legislative and non-legislative powers of Oireachtas Committees, parliamentary privilege, compliance with Standing Orders, Constitutional and natural justice, the rules of fair procedure and any legal issues surrounding the subject matter of the Committee enquiry;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach in relation to all services administered by them;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Clerks of both Houses in relation to any legal issue arising in the discharge of their statutory functions;

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 3: Enhancing Service Capability

- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in relation to any legal issue arising in the discharge of their statutory functions;
- ◆ to draft Statutory Instruments decided on by the Commission in exercising its regulatory function;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in respect of legal issues arising in a corporate setting;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to individual members of either House but only in so far as such advice is in connection with the performance by that member of his/her parliamentary functions; and
- ◆ to manage the conduct of any legal proceedings involving either House of the Oireachtas, a Committee, the Commission or any member of either House in respect of proceedings arising solely from the performance by them of their parliamentary functions.

During 2013, the Office of the PLA produced approximately 270 legal advices, of which 35.5% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas committees and 64.4% were in response to advices sought by the Service. 14 requests for legal advice were outsourced for specialist advice in 2013.

Parliamentary Lawyers' Conference

The Annual Conference of Parliamentary Lawyers of Ireland and the United Kingdom was hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas in Dublin on Thursday/Friday 21st/22nd November, 2013. In attendance were parliamentary lawyers from the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Northern Ireland Assembly the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.



Our picture shows the delegates who attended the Annual Conference of Parliamentary Lawyers of Ireland and the United Kingdom, which took place in November 2013, assembled outside Leinster House.

VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEWS

Value for Money Reviews

A Value for Money & Policy Review of the Oireachtas Library and Research Service (L&RS) was brought to conclusion during 2013. The review was overseen, managed and delivered by a Steering Committee. The Committee included an independent Chair and internal and external members.

The Steering Committee met a total of nine times. Five of its meetings were conducted between January and July 2013. The Committee's final report was received by the MAC in July. The MAC's Business and Strategy Sub-Committee considered the review report in October and a report of its deliberations will be considered by the MAC in 2014.

Business Process Improvement (BPI) Projects

BPI has been part of the Service's efficiency programme for a number of years. The Service has identified potential operational processes for BPI review in its Public Service Reform Delivery Plans. During 2013, the Service continued to participate in the BPI Network established by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

BPI Project 1: Review of Committees' Administration Report

In March, a BPI Review of Committees' Administration was completed and a report was submitted to the Oireachtas Committees' Secretariat. Its recommendations are being considered in the context of other developments.

BPI Project 2: Receipt and processing of PQ reply material from Government Departments

In July, the Debates Office presented its BPI Report to the MAC on the receipt and processing of PQ reply material from Government Departments. The MAC's Business and Strategy Sub-Committee considered the report in October and a report of its deliberations will be considered by the MAC in early 2014.

Arising from the report, the ICT Unit commenced a review of the PQ infrastructure between the Oireachtas and Government Departments. This technical review is scheduled for completion in early 2014.

BPI Project 3: Receipt and processing of PQs within the Oireachtas Parliamentary Questions Office

A preliminary BPI review of the Parliamentary Questions Office's internal processes was submitted in December 2013. The review report will be presented to the MAC in early 2014 for consideration.

Project Management

During 2013, the Service's Project Management Guidelines were updated and reissued in light of experience and to take account of changes to internal and central public policies and rules. The updated guidelines incorporate internal audit recommendations and the Service's procurement, risk management, financial governance, financial authority, and business continuity policies and guidance. A Project Management Toolkit was designed to build on the guidelines and to provide further practical guidance on the tools and techniques that can be used for the management of projects.

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strategic Commitment 3: Enhancing Service Capability

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS UNDER STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 3: ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY

Operational Statistics

Activity	2011	2012	2013	Total 2011-13	% variation 2011-13
Civil Service Staff turnover - incorporating new entrants, retirements/departures, internal promotions, career breaks and persons on secondment	69	76	70	215	1.5%
No. of financial transactions	9,265	9,238	9,066	27,569	-2%
No. of PMDS meetings	519	831	464	1,814	-10%
No. of training interventions	1,338	615	717	2,670	-46%
No. of calls to ICT staff helpdesk	4,161	5,695	7,441	17,297	79%
No. of people for whom travel arrangements were made	65	107	88	260	35%
No. of pages translated	1,948	2,136	2,402	6,486	23%
No. of Commission meetings	6	11	8	25	33.3%
No. of Commission Committee and sub-Committee meetings	9	18	12	39	33.3%
No. of MAC meetings	18	19	14	51	-22%
No. of MAC sub-committee meetings	N/A	7	17	N/A	N/A

Clerking Services – procedural advice services to the Chairperson during, or in the context of, sittings e.g. advice on Standing Orders, rulings of the Chairperson or other conventions and practice.

Clerks' Rota – Members of staff at Assistant Principal level and above, who have the required procedural knowledge and experience, perform clerking duties in the Houses on a rota basis. The rota is managed by the Clerk's office and each member of staff is assigned a fixed slot (usually of 1 hour's duration) each week.

COSAC - (*Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communautaires*) is the Conference of the committees of the national parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European affairs as well as representatives of the European Parliament. Each year COSAC meets twice in plenary session usually in May and October. Each plenary session is preceded by a meeting of Chairpersons of Committees to prepare the agenda for the plenary session and usually meets in February and July.

Commission – the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is the governing board which oversees the provision of services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members by the parliamentary administration, the Service.

Corporate Governance – the system by which organisations are directed and controlled. Corporate governance is concerned with the way corporate entities are governed, as distinct from the way businesses within those companies are managed. Corporate governance addresses the issues facing boards of directors, such as the interaction with top management, and relationships with the owners and others interested in the affairs of the company.

Croke Park Agreement – the objective of the Croke Park Agreement is the transformation of public services. It requires all public sector bodies to reduce expenditure, reduce staff and work more efficiently.

European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) – The ECPRD acts as a channel for requests for information whenever one parliament would like to know more about practice and policy in other countries. The Centre's role is bringing together the information, facilitating the exchange of ideas and making the retrieval of data and the circulation of studies easier.

Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) – the objective of the Haddington Road Agreement is the reduction of the public service pay and pensions bill. It seeks the delivery of an integrated, efficient and effective public service by focusing on reform measures in the areas of redeployment, performance management, flexible working arrangements, work-sharing arrangements and workforce restructuring.

Informal Feedback Forum (IFF) – a cross-party group of members from both Houses, acting on a voluntary and informal basis, to provide feedback on the performance of the Service in meeting members' needs in the delivery of services and to act as a sounding board for initiatives that will arise from time to time in these areas.

Knowledge Management (KM) – Effective knowledge management ensures that staff have access to the right knowledge and information at the right time so that they can put that knowledge into action and work more efficiently. Knowledge management is the art of identifying and organising tangible information to make it easily accessible across the organisation and facilitating the interaction of people to share their experiences and knowledge to grow and learn or decide better and faster.

Library & Research Service (L&RS) – the Library & Research Service delivers information and research services to support the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information and records management.

Procedural Services – procedural services are those concerned with advice to the Chairpersons of the Houses and their Committees (e.g. clerking services concerned with Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and parliamentary conventions) as well as services provided by the Committee secretariat and the procedural offices e.g. the General Office (Parliamentary Questions, adjournment matters), the Bills Office (Bills, Amendment Lists) and the Journal Office (Journals of Proceedings, Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair, Order Papers).

Risk Management – detailing the various things which can go wrong in the running of a business and assessing, if they do go wrong, what damage will result and what can be done to either prevent the risk or manage it if it happens.

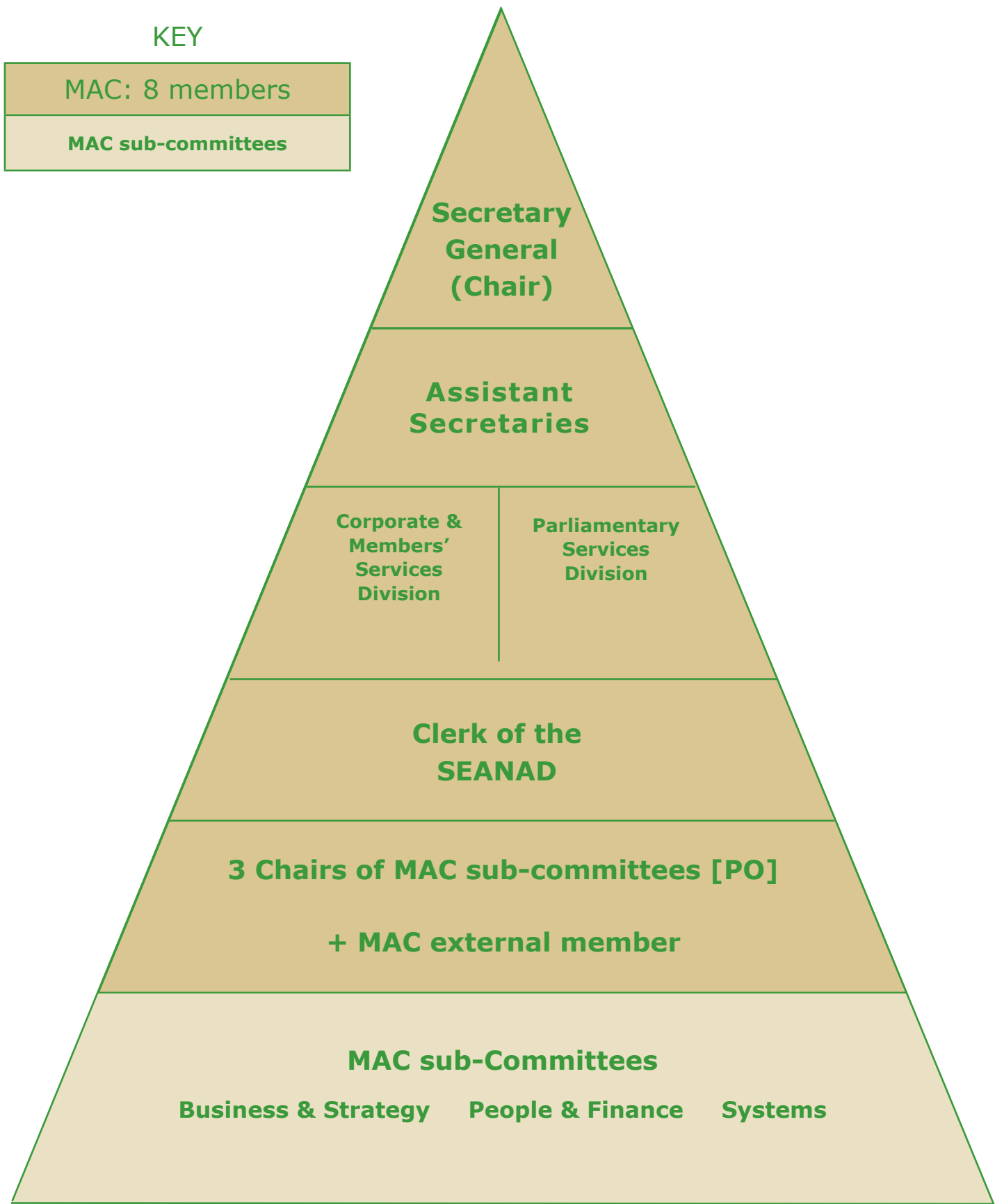
Risk Materialisation Reporting – a system where, if a risk does come about and cause difficulties, the person responsible for dealing with the effects has to formally report on what happened, why, what the impact was and what new things have been learned in order to prevent a recurrence.

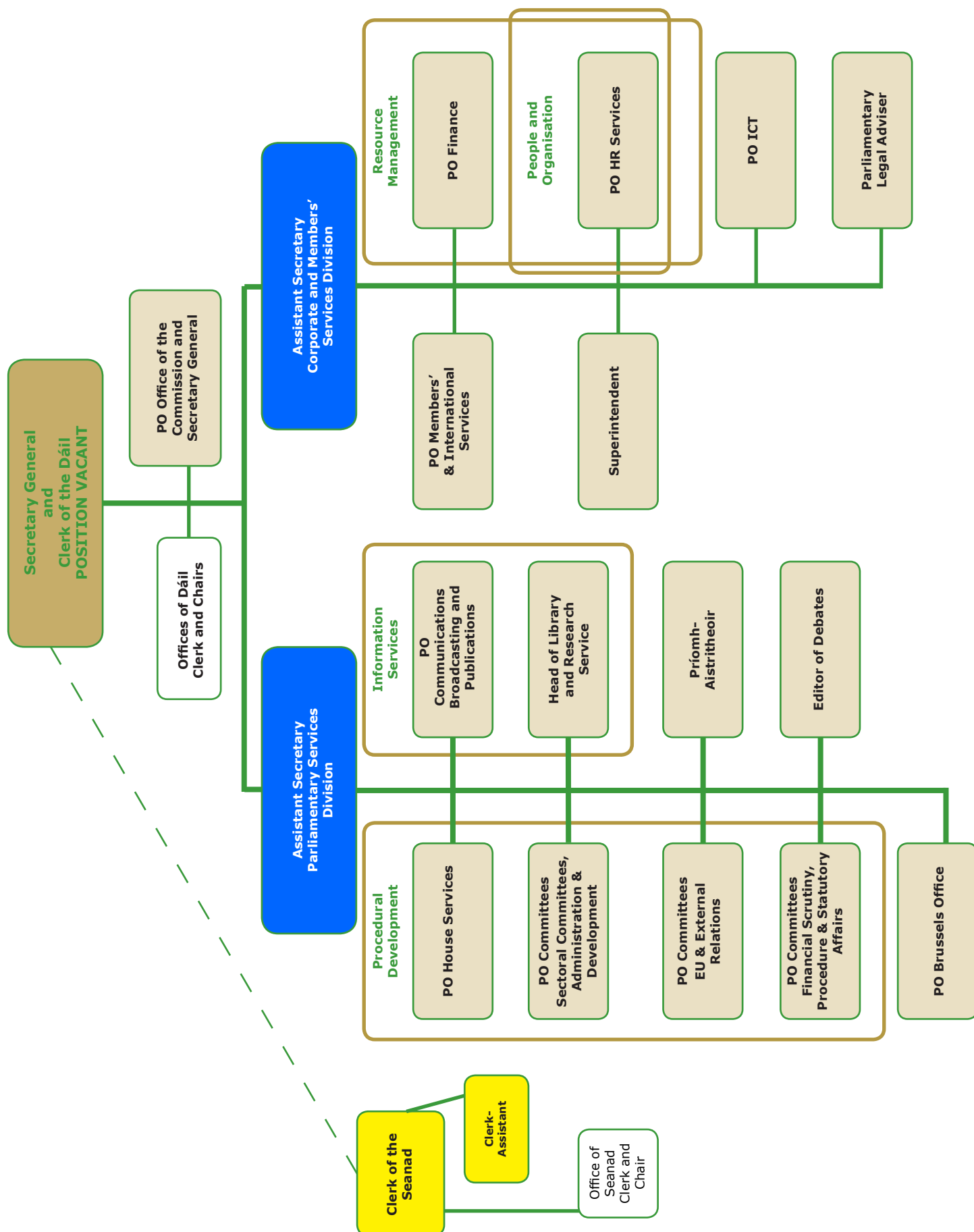
Sectoral Committees – Committees made up of members of one or both Houses which "shadow" Government Departments e.g. the Joint Committees on Transport, Foreign Affairs, etc.

Statement of Resources – the staffing resource requirements for each business unit to carry out its functions is determined following an annual review process and includes necessary adjustments to ensure that requirements are kept up to date.

System for Recording Attendance (SRA) – a system to record (electronically if possible) the daily times of arrival and departure of staff at their place of work so as to comply with Organisation of Working Time legislation.

The Service – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (formerly called the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. It is headed by the Secretary General who has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies.





3 Year Budget 2013—2015 fixed by 2012 Act = €324m

Breaks down as follows:

	€m
2013 Provisional Outturn	€101
2014 Estimate	€108.3
2015 Forecast	€114.4
Current 3 Year Projection	€323.7

Category	2013 Outturn	2013 Budget	Variance	
	€000	€000		
Administration and Services	39,415	44,441	-11%	Underspend
International Parliamentary Activities	295	562	-48%	Underspend
Members' Staff Pay and Pensions	19,766	20,247	-2%	Underspend
Members (incl. MEPs) Pay and Pensions	31,442	32,835	-4%	Underspend
Members and Former Members Allowances and Expenses	9,416	12,519	-25%	Underspend
Committee Travel	135	180	-25%	Underspend
Other Committee Expenses	518	1,255	-49%	Underspend
	100,986	112,039	-10%	Underspend

Statement of Resources (Civil Service staff only) 2013 – 2014 [at 31 December 2013]

The Commission, at its meeting on 18 June 2008, approved core numbers for the Civil Service staff of the Service¹. The numbers sanctioned by the Commission stood at 435² established Civil Service posts and 54 State Industrial Employees (Bar, Restaurant and Print Facility). There are now a number of vacancies arising from the Commission decision in May 2009 that no public service post³, however arising, will be filled by recruitment, promotion or payment of an allowance for performance of duties at a higher grade. When vacancies arise, the Secretary General allocates or reorganises work or staff accordingly or in very limited circumstances, approval can be sought through business case for additional numbers up to an overall approved number of 389 agreed by the Commission for 2013. Such exceptions, which arise in very limited circumstances only, require the prior sanction of the Secretary General as appropriate. In its consideration of any such exceptions, the Secretary General may require the suppression of a post or posts within the Service, yielding an equivalent payroll saving. Although there are 379 posts filled at present (December 2013), the overall or underlying level of vacancies is 59 which is a reduction of 11% on sanctioned numbers of 438.

Table 1: Summary numbers by grade (excluding State Industrial Employees)

Grades		Numbers as approved by Commission on 18/06/08	Variance approved by the Secretary General since 18/06/08	Full Time Equivalent numbers in place (December 2013)
Secretary General		1	1	0
Assistant Secretary		1	2	2
PO (higher)		3	2	1
PO (standard)		17.5	16.5	15.5
AP		45.5	45.5	⁴ 43.2
HEO		40	41	39.6
EO		52	52	43.3
CO		84	84	62.52
Superintendent Section	Ushers, Service Officers and Cleaners	81	81	67.9024
	Team Leaders	9	9	7
	Head and Deputy Head Ushers	3	3	2
Assistant Editors		7	7	6
Assistant Librarian		5.5	5.5	6
Deputy Editor		3	3	2
Translator Grad I		2	2	2
Translator Grad II		4	5 ⁵	6
Translator Grad III		14	16 ⁶	10
Outreach Officer		4	4	0
Reporters		39	39	35.2
Senior Researchers		4.5	4.5	4.5
Researchers		15	15	12.8
Total		435	438	373.42
Records Manager post		0	1	0
Temp EU Presidency				2
Specialist, Temporary & Other			4	3.5
Cumulative totals		435	442	378.92

¹ Table 1 details the changes in numbers across grades in the period.

² Increased to 438 following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Service.

³ This also applies to temporary appointments on a fixed-term basis and to the renewal of such contracts.

⁴ Includes Accountant.

⁵ Increased following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

⁶ Increased following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

These accounts have been prepared and signed by the Secretary General in accordance with the statutory obligations under section 14 (as amended) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2012 and have been submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for audit. The Report of the C&AG on these accounts was not received within the timeframe of the statutory deadline of the publication of this Annual Report and therefore the accounts may be subject to change. The final version of the accounts will be published to the Oireachtas website when certified.

**ACCOUNTS OF THE
HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION
FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2013**
(kept in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2012)

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Introduction

As Accounting Officer for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission ("the Commission"), I am required each year to prepare the account for the Commission in the form of an appropriation account and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2013 for the salaries and expenses of the Houses of the Oireachtas, including certain grants-in-aid, and for certain expenses in connection with the European Parliament.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the statement of estimates, prepared and published by the Commission in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2012 ("the Acts"), of the amount of moneys required by the Commission in respect of on-going expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2013.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles (appended at note 8) and notes 1 to 7 form part of the account.

Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

The standard accounting policies and principles for the production of appropriation accounts have been applied in the preparation of the account except for the following:

Basis of Accounts

The accounts of the Commission are prepared in accordance with the Acts and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Finance. The Acts require that the Commission keep the accounts in such form as may be approved of by the Minister for Finance. The Minister has directed that the accounts be kept in the form of an appropriation account.

The Commission's accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amount of moneys stated in the statement of estimates that is (a) prepared and published by the Commission (b) presented to Dáil Éireann and (c) furnished to the Minister for Finance in accordance with the Acts.

Receipts

Receipts of the Commission specified in Schedule 2 shall be used by it for the purposes of the performance of its functions and the annual value of such receipts shall be duly deducted from the specified budget and accounted for. Where they arise, they are reported in a note to the Account (Note 4).

Capital Assets

The rate of depreciation of IT equipment and software was 20% to 31 December 2013. Assets with a value of under €1,000 are included where the quantities are material.

Superannuation

Superannuation payments for former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, former secretarial assistants employed by members of the Houses and former members of the European Parliament are met on a current basis by the Commission.

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL

Responsibility for system of Internal Financial Control

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me and my other obligations as Secretary General. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under on-going review.

The position in regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administrative procedures, management reporting and internal audit is as follows:

Financial Control Environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- ◆ financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability;
- ◆ reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned;
- ◆ formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action; and
- ◆ there is an audit committee to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that -

- ◆ there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management;
- ◆ there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- ◆ a risk management system operates within the Service;

- ♦ there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems;
- ♦ there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines; and
- ♦ that the Service is in compliance with all relevant guidelines regarding procurement and is complying with all circulars relating to the mandatory framework agreement and contracts.

Internal Audit

I confirm that the Service has an internal audit function, which operates in accordance with a written charter which the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) have approved. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial and other risks to which the Service is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, approved by me, are based on this analysis. These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by me and the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee operates in accordance with the terms of reference set out in Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003-2012. Its work is also governed by the Audit Charter, approved by the MAC and subject to regular review. Its responsibilities include advising on the form of accounts of the Commission as well as on risk management, internal audit and internal controls.

I have put procedures in place to ensure that all internal audit recommendations are followed up and progress on implementation is reported on regularly to both me, the MAC and the Audit Committee.



MICHAEL ERRITY

Accounting Officer

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

28 March 2014

**Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
Appropriation Account 2013**

	2013 Estimate provision €000	2013 Outturn €000	2012 Outturn €000
1. Administration			
(a) Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service	23,273	22,776	22,449
(b) Travel and subsistence	447	279	273
(c) Training and development and incidental expenses	1,609	603	1,858
(d) Postal and telecommunications services	1,018	801	908
(e) Office equipment and external IT services	7,574	5,568	7,648
(f) Office premises expenses	2,602	2,837	2,493
(g) Consultancy services and value for money and policy review	873	343	578
(h) Parliamentary printing	2,225	1,165	1,784
(i) Library and research services	538	421	468
(j) Public relations and communications	86	76	60
2. Other services			
(a) Payment in respect of catering and bar staff	1,675	1,647	1,649
(b) Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies	158	95	101
(c) Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services	2,521	2,899	1,488
(d) Grant-in-aid in respect of inter-parliamentary activities	220	85	178
(e) Grant-in-aid to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly	150	110	100
(f) North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association	34	5	5
(g) Termination allowances in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas	70	11	116
(h) Grant to Irish Parliamentary (former Members) Society	10	10	10
(i) Grant-in-aid in respect of "Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais"	12,128	11,411	13,330
(j) Pension scheme for secretarial assistants	669	690	633
3. Membership of Dáil Éireann			
(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)	15,775	15,251	15,736
(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for non-office holding members	17,244	16,601	15,335
(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance	3,704	3,226	3,650
(d) Public Representation Allowance	3,582	2,954	3,385
(e) Other allowances	2,732	1,415	1,872
4. Membership of Seanad Éireann			
(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)	4,112	4,034	4,114
(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for non-office holding members	2,334	2,475	2,057
(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance	1,373	1,191	1,350
(d) Public Representation Allowance	636	574	555
(e) Other allowances	482	46	480
5. Membership of Oireachtas Committees			
(a) Travel expenses	180	135	112
(b) Other expenses relating to Committees	1,255	518	54
6. Membership of European Parliament			
(a) Salaries of members of the European Parliament	93	90	93
(b) Pensions of former members of the European Parliament	657	645	670
Gross Expenditure	112,039	100,987	105,589
DEDUCT			
Receipts of the Commission		(39)	
Net Expenditure	112,039	100,948	105,589
Surplus for the year		€11,090,788	€10,000,975

Notes to the Appropriation Account

1 Operating Cost Statement 2013

	Note	€000	2013 €000	2012 €000
Pay			75,631	76,180
Non-Pay			<u>25,356</u>	<u>29,409</u>
Gross expenditure			100,987	105,589
Deduct				
Receipts			<u>(39)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net expenditure			100,948	105,589
Changes in capital assets	2.2			
Purchases Cash		(1,161)		
Depreciation		1,168		
Loss on disposals		<u>23</u>	30	940
Changes in net current assets				
Increase in closing accruals		833		
Decrease in stock	2.5	<u>43</u>	<u>876</u>	<u>(509)</u>
Direct expenditure			101,854	106,020
Net allied services expenditure (Cash)	1.1		20,824	21,043
Notional Rents			<u>2,936</u>	<u>2,922</u>
Net Programme cost			<u><u>125,614</u></u>	<u><u>129,985</u></u>

1.1 Net Allied Services

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following estimated amounts in relation to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission borne elsewhere

Vote		2013 €000	2012 €000
12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	e 2,076	2,818
13	Office of Public Works	e 4,508	3,371
20	Garda Síochána	e -	64
	Central Fund:	e	
	Allowances to Leaders of certain Parties in Dáil Éireann	8,332	8,435
	Re-imbursements of Electoral Expenses	26	473
	Pensions in respect of former Cinn Comhairle (No. 38 of 1938, etc.)	426	426
	Payments to qualified parties under the Electoral Acts 1997 to 2001	<u>5,456</u>	<u>5,456</u>
		<u><u>20,824</u></u>	<u><u>21,043</u></u>

"e" indicates that the number is an estimated value or an apportioned cost.

2 Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 €000	2012 €000
Capital Assets	2.2	<u>1,880</u>	<u>1,910</u>
Current Assets			
Bank and Cash	2.4	(858)	1,141
Net amount due from the Exchequer	2.8	17	248
Stocks	2.5	124	167
Prepayments		1,693	3,065
Accrued income		971	418
Other debit balances	2.6	<u>876</u>	<u>1,157</u>
Total Current Assets		<u><u>2,823</u></u>	<u><u>6,196</u></u>
Less Current Liabilities			
Accrued Expenses		768	753
Other credit balances	2.7	<u>34</u>	<u>2,546</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u><u>802</u></u>	<u><u>3,299</u></u>
Net Current Assets		<u>2,021</u>	<u>2,897</u>
Net Assets		<u><u>3,901</u></u>	<u><u>4,807</u></u>
Represented By:			
State Funding Account		<u><u>3,901</u></u>	<u><u>4,807</u></u>

2.1 State Funding Account

		2013 €000	2012 €000
Balance at 1 January		4,807	5,239
Disbursements by the Commission			
Estimate Provision	Account*	112,039	
Surplus	Account*	<u>(11,091)</u>	105,589
Expenditure (cash) borne elsewhere	Note 1	20,824	21,043
Non Cash Expenditure - Notional Rent	Note 1	2,936	2,922
Net Programme Cost	Note 1	<u>(125,614)</u>	<u>(129,985)</u>
Balance at 31 December		<u><u>3,901</u></u>	<u><u>4,807</u></u>

*Note: "Account" refers to the face of the Appropriation Account

2.2 Capital Assets

	IT Equipment €000	Furniture and Fittings €000	Office Equipment €000	Total €000
Gross Assets				
Cost or valuation at 1 January 2013 *	7,715	2,375	14,480	24,569
Additions	307	18	836	1,161
Disposals	(457)	-	(57)	(514)
Gross assets at 31 December 2013	<u>7,565</u>	<u>2,392</u>	<u>15,259</u>	<u>25,217</u>
Accumulated Depreciation:				
Opening balance at 1 January 2013 *	6,856	1,846	13,958	22,659
Depreciation for the year	366	177	626	1,168
Depreciation on disposals	(436)	-	(55)	(491)
Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2013	<u>6,785</u>	<u>2,023</u>	<u>14,529</u>	<u>23,337</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2013	<u>780</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>1,880</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2012	<u>859</u>	<u>529</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>1,910</u>

* Depreciation for assets taken on in 2012 purchased prior to 2012, were deducted from 2012 additions in the account. Therefore, the 2012 closing balances in the account do not match the detailed fixed assets register balances.

2.4 Bank and Cash

	2013 €000	2012 €000
at 31 December		
PMG balances	(859)	1,141
Bank of Ireland payments account	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>(858)</u>	<u>1,141</u>

2.5 Stocks

	2013 €000	2012 €000
at 31 December		
Stationery	34	71
IT consumables	54	67
Other	<u>36</u>	<u>29</u>
	<u>124</u>	<u>167</u>

2.6 Other Debit Balances

2013
€000

2012
€000

at 31 December

Amounts due from the State

Income tax	0	-
Pay Related Social Insurance	0	-
Pension Contributions		-
Universal Social Charge	<u>0</u>	<u>-</u>
	0	-

Recoupable salaries	13	34
Recoupable energy costs	-	403
Recoupment of travel schemes	184	44
Other debit items	<u>679</u>	<u>676</u>
	<u>876</u>	<u>1,157</u>

2.7 Other Credit Balances

2013
€000

2012
€000

at 31 December

Amounts due to the State

Income tax	-	904
Pay Related Social Insurance	-	407
Professional Services Withholding Tax	9	20
Value Added Tax	5	282
Pension Contributions	0	136
Income to be surrendered	20	59
Pension levy	-	247
Universal Social Charge	<u>-</u>	<u>272</u>
	34	2,327

Payroll deductions held in suspense	-	218
Other credit suspense items	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>34</u>	<u>2,546</u>

2.8 Net amount due from the Exchequer		2013	2012
		€000	€000
at 31 December			
Surplus		11,091	10,001
Exchequer grant undrawn		<u>(10,860)</u>	<u>(10,343)</u>
Net amount due to the Exchequer		231	(342)
Balance brought forward at 1 January		<u>(248)</u>	<u>94</u>
		<u>(17)</u>	<u>(248)</u>

Represented by:

Debtors

Bank	2.4	(858)	1,141
Debit balances: suspense	2.6	<u>876</u>	<u>1,157</u>
		17	2,298

Creditors

Due to State	2.7	(34)	(2,327)
Credit balances: suspense	2.7	<u>-</u>	<u>(219)</u>
		(34)	(2,546)
		<u>(17)</u>	<u>(248)</u>

2.9 Commitments		2013	2012
		€000	€000
at 31 December			
Global commitments			
Procurement subheads		361	914

2.10 Matured Liabilities		2013	2012
		€000	€000
at 31 December			
Estimate of matured liabilities not discharged at year end		194	-

3 Variations in Expenditure

An explanation is provided below in the case of each expenditure subhead where the outturn varied from the amount provided, by more than €100,000 and by more than 5% (25% in the case of administrative subheads).

Sub-Head	Less/(more) than provided €000	Explanation
1(b)	168	The saving arose as expenditure on travel was less than anticipated.
1(c)	1,006	The saving mainly arose due to an unused contingency provision.
1(e)	2,007	The saving arose due to underspends in the ICT project expenditure and less than anticipated expenditure on ICT equipment and upgrades.
1(g)	529	The saving arose due to expenditure on consultancy was less than had been provided for.
1(h)	1,059	The saving arose mainly due to less than anticipated expenditure on bound volumes and bilingual acts.
2(c)	-378	The overspend relates to the replacement of obsolete broadcasting equipment.
2(d)	135	The saving arose due to less travel being undertaken than had been provided for.
2(i)	717	The underspend relates to a contingency provision for Members' pensions which was not required in the year.
3(c)	478	The saving arose because provision is made for full entitlement and invariably full entitlement is rarely drawn down.
3(d)	628	The saving arose because provision is made for full entitlement and invariably full entitlement is rarely drawn down.
3(e)	1,317	The saving arose mainly due the postal allowance not being drawn down.
4(b)	-141	The overspend arose due the filling of vacancies earlier than anticipated.
4(c)	182	The saving arose because provision is made for full entitlement and invariably full entitlement is rarely drawn down.
4(e)	437	The saving arose mainly due the full postal allowance not being drawn down and an underspend in the Special Secretarial Allowance.
5(a)	737	The saving arose due to expenditure on the EU Presidency was less than had been provided for.

4 Receipts

4.1 Receipts of the Commission

	2013 €000	2012 €000
1 Sales of services of Broadcasting Unit	28	93
2 Net income of catering and bar services *	-	220
4 Any other receipts obtained by the Commission in the performance of its functions except where they consist of expenses paid by the Commission on behalf of its members and staff which have been recouped by it from them	11	27
	<u>39</u>	<u>340</u>

4.2 Receipts of the Commission payable to the Central Fund

3 Members' contributions under the European Parliament (Irish Representatives) Pension Scheme, 1979	5	6
4 Any other receipts obtained by the Commission in the performance of its functions except where they consist of expenses paid by the Commission on behalf of its members and staff which have been recouped by it from them	46	
	<u>51</u>	<u>6</u>

* Income from the catering and bar services is included in accrued income in the balance sheet as it was not received until 2014.

5 Employee Numbers and Pay

Houses of the Oireachtas Service*

Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)

Departments
Agencies

	2013	2012
	426	429
	-	-
	<u>426</u>	<u>429</u>

	€000	€000
Pay	20,974	20,749
Redundancy payments	34	-
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	211	188
Other allowances	165	150
Overtime	1,254	1,296
Shift and roster allowances	390	344
Employer's PRSI	1,589	1,524
Total pay	<u>24,617</u>	<u>24,251</u>

*On the payroll of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties

	2013	2012
Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)	<u>400</u>	<u>392</u>
	€000	€000
Pay	15,815	14,465
Redundancy payments	-	-
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	1	-
Overtime and extra attendance	2,045	2,040
Employer's PRSI	1,811	1,718
Total pay	<u>19,672</u>	<u>18,223</u>

5.1 Allowances and Overtime Payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Maximum individual payment 2013 €	Maximum individual payment 2012 €
Houses of the Oireachtas Service				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	43	7	19,585	19,585
Other allowances	50	3	35,137	35,137
Overtime	209	61	28,009	31,416
Shift and roster allowances	71	-	7,578	7,578
Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	1	-	901	-
Overtime and extra attendance	448 ¹	2	11,125	16,434

¹This figure is greater than the full time equivalent figure shown above (400) as it includes worksharers and changes in personnel.

5.2 Performance and Merit Payments

Four officers received ex-gratia payments in recognition of exceptional performance. The total amount paid was €10,329.96.

Under the terms of the AHCPS/IMPACT 1% PCW restructuring agreement, in 36 instances a total of €65,297.37 was paid in respect of Seniority Allowances and Special Service Payments.

5.3 Other Remuneration Arrangements

Houses of the Oireachtas Service

This account includes expenditure of €344,902 in respect of six officers who were serving outside the Service for all or part of 2013 and whose salaries were paid from the main salary subhead of the Service.

Statutory redundancy payment of €10,524 and a Voluntary Early Retirement payment of €23,683.10 made to one member of staff.

Nine former civil servants were re-engaged on a fee basis at a total cost of €106,004.75.

Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties

This account includes expenditure of €81,875 in respect of three political staff who were serving outside the Service for all or part of 2013 and whose salaries were paid from the main salary subhead of the Service.

A total of €62,949.79 in pension lump sums was paid to five former secretarial assistants who were over 60.

6 Miscellaneous Items

6.1 Contingent Liabilities

The Service has contingent liabilities of €40,250.

The Commission is involved in a number of legal proceedings which may generate liabilities depending on the outcome but due to this uncertainty no estimate of the amount involved can be determined at this point.

6.2 Write-offs

	2013	2012
	€000	€000
The following sum was written off in the year:		
Suspense account balance	<u>91</u>	<u>180</u>
	<u><u>91</u></u>	<u><u>180</u></u>

6.3 Late Payment Interest

	2013	2012
	€	€
Total of Interest Due	1,072	412

7 Grant in Aid and Miscellaneous Accounts

7.1 Ciste Pinsean Thithe An Oireachtais (Comhaltai)

ACCOUNTS OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Receipts		
Grant-in-Aid	11,412,915	13,330,706
Contributions by Members of the Oireachtas	<u>990,500</u>	<u>1,043,126</u>
	<u>12,403,414</u>	<u>14,373,832</u>
Payments		
Pensions and Lump Sums	12,397,328	14,367,107
Fees and Expenses	<u>6,901</u>	<u>6,838</u>
	<u>12,404,229</u>	<u>14,373,945</u>
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	(815)	(112)
Balance at bank as at 1 January	<u>1,126</u>	<u>1,239</u>
Balance at bank as at 31 December	311	1,126

7.2 CUMANN PARLAIMINTEACH NA hÉIREANN

ACCOUNT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Receipts		
Grant-in-Aid	85,400	175,586
Members' Subscriptions	2,222	3,334
Reimbursements	<u>71</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Receipts	87,693	178,920
Payments		
Expenses of Irish Delegations on Foreign Visits	1,725	33,553
Expenses of Foreign Delegations visiting Ireland	4,941	25,736
Inter Parliamentary Union Conference Expenses	25,933	34,357
Other Expenses	<u>75,807</u>	<u>76,290</u>
Total Payments	108,406	169,936
Surplus/Deficit for year	(20,713)	8,984
Opening Balance	<u>40,754</u>	<u>31,770</u>
Closing Balance	20,041	40,754

7.3 BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

ACCOUNT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Balance at 1 January	21,617	17,722
Receipts		
Grant-in-Aid	110,000	100,000
Miscellaneous Receipts	<u>539</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Receipts	110,539	100,000
Payments		
Plenary Sessions	84,527	57,101
Committees	30,777	31,078
Miscellaneous	<u>5,638</u>	<u>7,926</u>
Total Payments	120,942	96,105
Balance as at 31 December	<u>11,214</u>	<u>21,617</u>

8 Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

STANDARD STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

Basis of Accounts

Appropriation Accounts, showing the financial transactions of Government Departments¹, are prepared in accordance with the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act, 1866 (as amended by the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993) and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Finance.

The Accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amounts provided under the Appropriation Act. The Accounts also show prior year figures for comparison purposes. Some information of an accruals nature is included in the notes to the accounts.

The standard accounting policies and principles set out below are applied in the preparation of the Accounts. Any departures from the standard policies and principles are explained in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the appropriation account.

Reporting Period

The reporting period is the year ended 31 December 2013.

Receipts

Appropriations in aid are receipts that may, under section 2 of the Public Accounts and Charges Act, 1891, be used to meet expenditure to the extent authorised by the annual Appropriation Act. In general, these are receipts arising in the normal course of a Department's business under the Vote.

The Department of Finance requires certain receipts of Departments to be credited directly to the Exchequer as 'extra' receipts. In general, these are receipts that have no direct connection with the Vote expenditure or are 'windfall' receipts. Such extra receipts may not be used to meet expenditure from the Vote. Where they arise, they are reported in a note to the Account (Note 4).

Payments

Payments consist of those sums which have come in course of payment during the year. Sums are deemed to have come in course of payment where the liability has been incurred, payment is due and the cheque or payable order has been drawn.

Matured Liabilities

Where a liability has been incurred and payment is due (i.e. the liability has matured), payment should be completed before the year end to ensure the integrity of the Appropriation Account. In cases where payment has not been effected and matured liabilities are outstanding at year end, the amount of such liabilities should be given in a note to the Account (Note 2).

Accruals

Each appropriation account incorporates information of an accruals nature in the notes to the Account, including:

- ♦ an operating cost statement (Note 1), showing the total amount of resources consumed by the Department in the year;
- ♦ a balance sheet showing the Department's assets and liabilities at year end (Note 2), with further explanatory notes including details regarding capital assets, capital assets under development, the net liability to the Exchequer, and commitments.

The balance sheet includes the position at year-end in relation to the following.

- ♦ **Accrued expenses** — these represent all liabilities at the balance sheet date with the exception of liabilities in regard to remuneration and pensions. In the case of goods and services, an accrued liability is recognised when the payee has met the contractual requirement to provide the goods or services ordered. Amounts due for goods delivered, but not yet paid for, even if un-inspected and not taken to stock, are treated as a liability. In the case of grants, a liability is recognised when the grantee has met all the requirements of the grant scheme but has yet to receive payment. Travel and subsistence liabilities are recognised when travel has been completed.

¹In this statement, the term 'Department' includes central government departments, offices and agencies responsible for Vote management and accounting.

Capital Assets

The opening and closing values of capital assets on a Department's asset register and details of depreciation are shown by way of note to the balance sheet.

The following are not included in the statement of capital assets:

- ♦ assets worth less than €318 acquired from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2003, or assets worth less than €1,000 acquired since 1 January 2004;
- ♦ heritage assets, the value of which cannot be adequately expressed in financial terms.

8.1 Valuation of Assets

Land and Buildings

All lands and buildings owned by the State and controlled/managed by a Department are included in the statement of assets and liabilities (and capital assets note). Where relevant, the basis of valuation of land and buildings is explained in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the appropriation account.

Where land and buildings are (a) vested in the Office of Public Works or (b) vested in a Minister but in fact controlled/managed by the Office of Public Works, they are included in the account for that Office. Otherwise, they appear in the account for the relevant Department.

Where lands or buildings are vested in a Minister but are, in fact, controlled/managed by an outside body, they are not included as assets of the Department, but the ownership of the asset is noted in the Department's Account.

Departments that cannot provide valuations for State-owned lands and buildings controlled or managed by them should append to the Account a schedule of these assets.

Equipment, Furniture and Fittings

Since 1995 equipment, furniture and fittings are valued at cost.

Other Assets

Where required, accounting policies in respect of valuation of other assets (e.g. specialised vehicles) are set out in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the appropriation account.

- ♦ **Prepayments** — payments made during the year of account to meet expenses which will arise in whole or in part in a subsequent financial year.
- ♦ **Accrued income** — this income due to the Department at the end of the year of account which has yet to be received.
- ♦ **Deferred Income** — this represents income received by the Department during the year of account for goods/ services which it has yet to provide.

8.2 Depreciation

Land is not depreciated. Where relevant, buildings are depreciated as indicated in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the appropriation account.

Equipment, furniture and fittings are depreciated on a straight-line basis at the following annual rates over their estimated useful lives:

- ♦ furniture and fittings, and telecommunications equipment — 10%
- ♦ IT equipment and software, scientific and laboratory equipment and other office machinery — 20%.
- ♦ Major operational software systems — 10%

Where required, other capital items are depreciated as indicated in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the appropriation account.

Capital Assets Under Development

A statement on capital assets under development is provided as a note to the balance sheet. It shows cash payments on assets being developed within the Department, *e.g.* software development or construction projects, which were not yet recognised as assets at the start of the year of account.

Stocks

Consumables are stated at the lower of cost or departmental valuations.

Net Amount due from/to the Exchequer

The net amount due from/to the Exchequer note shows the funding position at the balance sheet date taking into account the issues from the Exchequer on a cumulative/rolling basis. The breakdown of that figure in terms of bank/cash balances, debtors' receipts due and current liabilities are also shown.

Commitments

A commitment is a contractual obligation to pay on delivery for goods or services which have yet to be supplied at year-end. In the case of grant schemes, a commitment is recognised when the grant is approved but the grantee has yet to fulfil the requirements of the scheme.

A note provides figures for commitments likely to materialise in the subsequent years under (a) procurement and (b) grant subheads, excluding commitments under €10,000.

A separate note is provided giving details of multi-annual capital commitments over €6,350,000.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises in any situation where past or current actions or events create a risk of a call on the Exchequer funds in the future. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the account but are disclosed by way of a note unless the possibility of an outflow of resources is remote.

Superannuation

Superannuation payments for retired civil servants, Gardaí, teachers, army personnel and Health Service Executive and former Health Board personnel are met on a current basis from Votes 12, 20, 26, 35 and 39. Provision for superannuation does not appear in the Appropriation Accounts of other Votes.

Foreign Currency Transactions

Transactions arising in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rates of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the year-end rates of exchange.

OTHER NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

General Principles

In general, the other notes to the Accounts aim to draw the attention of the Dáil Éireann and of the Committee of Public Accounts to matters bearing on parliamentary control, or to provide fuller information about material transactions of an unusual nature recorded in the Account *e.g.* losses, special or *ex gratia* payments, and extra remuneration. Except in the cases outlined below, notes are provided where an individual transaction, or a category of transactions taken together, involves a sum of €50,000 or more.

Where amounts lower than the threshold values are involved, notes are also provided where a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Department of Finance considers that a note should be given.

Legal Costs

In cases where cumulative legal costs incurred in the year of account exceed €50,000 a note is to be provided with a breakdown of the total costs into:

- ◆ Legal fees; and
- ◆ Compensation paid.

Variations from Grant

In the case of variations from grant (Note 3), a note is provided where the variation:

- ♦ is €100,000 or more; and
- ♦ represents 5% or more of the subhead (25% in the case of administrative subheads).

Where special circumstances warrant, a lower percentage variation may be explained by way of note.

Notes in relation to variations in the categories of appropriations in aid are included on a similar basis.

Extra Remuneration

In the case of extra remuneration, the details given (Note 5) include the total amount paid under each category, the total number of recipients, the number of individuals that received €10,000 or more, and the maximum individual payment, if over €10,000. Severance/redundancy amounts should also be disclosed where material.

Late Payments

In the case of interest payments under the Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Regulations, 2002, information is supplied (Note 6) where:

- ♦ the total of interest payments due was €10,000 or more; or
- ♦ an individual payment was €10,000 or more.

Fraud or Suspected Fraud

In the case of losses due to fraud or suspected fraud, information is supplied (Note 6) where:

- ♦ The total losses during the accounting period were €100,000 or more; or
- ♦ an individual loss was €10,000 or more; or
- ♦ for losses under €10,000, a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform considers that a disclosure should be made.

Commissions and Inquiries

Where appropriate, Miscellaneous Notes (Note 6) include a statement of expenditure on each Commission or Inquiry financed from the Vote. Where a Commission or Inquiry has been established on a temporary basis, the total expenditure since its establishment is also given.

Petty Cash

Amounts relating to petty cash are included in the PMG balance disclosure.

Grant-in-Aid Fund and Miscellaneous Accounts

Where relevant, accounts of grant-in-aid funds financed from the Vote and of other miscellaneous accounts are presented in Note 7.

8.3 Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais - Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

Basis of the Scheme

The Houses of the Oireachtas (Members) Pension Scheme was established by the Oireachtas (Allowance to Members) and Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices (Amendment) Act, 1960 and came into operation on 1 December 1960. The purpose of the scheme is to provide pension and lump sum benefits for members who cease to hold office and to provide pensions for the surviving spouses and children of deceased members. There have been a number of statutory revisions to the scheme since its introduction.

Part 10 of the Ministerial, Parliamentary and Judicial Offices and Oireachtas Members (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2001 allows credit under the Scheme in certain circumstances for pensionable service given in other designated public offices. The Scheme was also amended by Statutory Instrument 384 of 2001 to enable the partial transfer of service in the Northern Ireland House of Commons and the Northern Ireland Assembly, such service being deemed reckonable service as a member of Dáil Éireann.

Scheme Funding

Pensions, paid from a Fund established under the Scheme, are provided out of compulsory contributions paid by all members of the Oireachtas and funding provided by the Exchequer.

A member ceasing to hold office and receiving a refund of pension contributions retains the option of repaying the refund within two years of becoming a member in the future in order that the earlier service can be reckoned for pension purposes.

The Ministerial, Parliamentary and Judicial Offices and Oireachtas Members (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2001 provides that contributions shall cease once 7,300 days service has been attained.

Basis of Accounting

Under Section 2(3) of the Scheme, the Trustees are required to keep proper accounts of all receipts and expenditure, to prepare an annual account for each financial year and to present the account, following audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General, to each House of the Oireachtas.

The Account has been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

Grant-in-aid receipts are received from the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

As the scheme is now in effect financed on a "pay-as-you-go" basis in common with the generality of the pension schemes throughout the non-commercial public sector, it is considered that the requirement under Section 6 of the Scheme for a periodic actuarial valuation no longer applies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Statement sets out the key objectives and associated actions contained in the Strategic Plan and assigns an estimated proportion of the financial provision in the Commission's Statement of Estimates for 2014. This is compared with corresponding financial information for 2013. The numbers of staff assigned to each strategy area in 2013 are also stated.

In recommending an annual statement that links outputs, resources and strategic objectives, the intention of the Department of Finance was that the statements would be available to Dáil Éireann and its committees when considering the revised estimates of expenditure for Government departments and offices. As the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is independent of this process and as its estimates procedures are set out separately in legislation, the Commission's statement is published in its annual report.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is committed to good governance, use of resources and modernisation and aims to meet best public service practice in this regard. The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will continue to monitor developments in relation to systems for the alignment of strategic and financial information and will implement change in a manner that advances the achievement of its key objectives.

2. Summary Statement of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission's Key Objectives

The mission of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is to enable the Houses of the Oireachtas, their Committees and members to do their work, to deliver services to members that respond to their needs and to promote public understanding of the work of our parliament.

Summary of key objectives		Combined performance indicators
a	Improving Services to Parliament: The Chairpersons and Members of the Houses and their committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys of officeholders and members on core procedural services. Compliance self-audit of key support services for House and committee sittings.
b	Improving Services to Members: Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys of members on administrative support services.
c	Enhancing Service Capability: The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of initiatives under Towards 2016 and Transforming Public Services. International benchmarking against other parliaments and their administrations. Surveys of staff and members on facilities and services provided.

3. Financial provision for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Central Fund*	Statement of Estimates 2013 € million	Outturn 2013 € million	Statement of Estimates 2014 € million	% Change on 2013 Outturn
	112.039	100.948	108.342	7%

* Section 5 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009 provides a 3 year budget to the Commission and stipulates that the expenditure incurred by the Commission in the performance of its functions is charged on, and paid out of, the Central Fund. The Commission is obliged by Section 13 of the Acts to prepare and publish each year a statement of estimates of the amount of moneys required by it in respect of on-going expenditure.

4. Breakdown of total gross expenditure at 2 above by key objective

	Key objectives	Statement of Estimates 2013 € million	Outturn 2013 € million	Statement of Estimates 2014 € million	% Change on 2013 Outturn
a	Improving Services to Parliament	84.550	77.755	82.440	6%
b	Improving Services to Members	13.560	11.442	12.778	12%
c	Enhancing Service Capability	13.929	11.751	13.124	12%
		112.039	100.948	108.341	7%

5a. Improving Services to Parliament

Objectives

Houses and Committee Business

- ◆ Strengthen our ability to provide advice and other services to chairpersons and members in the core business area of parliamentary procedure.

Public Engagement

- ◆ Promote greater knowledge and perception of parliament through our public information, media relations, education and visitor programmes, and our official publications.

Parliamentary Library

- ◆ Promote the parliamentary library as a research hub to support the legislative and scrutiny work of parliament.
- ◆ Inter-Parliamentary Relations
- ◆ Foster international and EU relations and North-South co-operation through participation in inter-parliamentary activities.

Records of Proceedings

- ◆ Provide enhanced public access to the work and records of parliament through our reporting, broadcasting and Irish language translation services.

Parliament Buildings

- ◆ Develop and improve the physical environment of parliament as an institution of State, a workplace and a place for visitors.

	Statement of Estimates 2013 € million	Outturn 2013 € million	Statement of Estimates 2014 € million	% Change on 2013 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Members' pay and pensions	32.834	31.432	32.215	2%
Members' staff pay and pensions	20.247	19.766	20.569	4%
Staff of the Service	13.316	13.037	13.656	5%
Total pay	66.397	64.235	66.440	3%
Non-pay	18.550	13.520	16.000	18%
Total Expenditure	84.550	77.755	82.440	6%
Number of staff employed on key objective (whole time equivalents) in 2013: 212.5				

Key Operational Outputs Achieved

Improving Services to Parliament

- ✦ 140 Bill published and 4,988 amendments processed;
- ✦ 95,451 visitors to the Houses and 2,609 tours conducted;
- ✦ 50,926 PQs processed;
- ✦ 17,058 takes completed of Dáil, Seanad and Committee proceedings;
- ✦ 2,402 pages translated into Irish;
- ✦ 9,066 financial transactions completed in Finance Unit;
- ✦ 3,416 requests received and dealt with by Communications Unit including 2,140 requests received from members of the public; and
- ✦ 527 pupils (16 classes) visited as part of the Educational Outreach Programme.

5b. Improving Services to Members

Objectives

Human Resources

- ✦ Support members as employers by providing best-practice employer advice and personnel administration and training supports under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

Financial Resources

- ✦ Provide expert advice services and financial systems to ensure that members receive their pay, allowances, pensions, entitlements, information and other financial supports for their work.

Technology and Office Support

- ✦ Provide ICT systems, office equipment, supplies and other office services that members need to conduct their parliamentary business.

Research and Information

- ✦ Deliver expert research and information services to members that meet their needs as parliamentarians and public representatives.

Accommodation and Facilities

- ✦ Provide office accommodation, refreshment and other workplace facilities that enable members and their staff to work effectively and in comfort.

	Statement of Estimates 2013 € million	Outturn 2013 € million	Statement of Estimates 2014 € million	% Change on 2013 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Staff of the Service	5.738	5.617	5.884	5%
Non-pay	7.822	5.825	6.894	18%
Total Expenditure	13.560	11.442	12.778	12%
Number of staff employed on key objective (whole time equivalents) in 2013: 91.5				

Key Operational Outputs Achieved

Improving Services to Members

- ✦ ICT Unit - 19,092 helpdesk calls from members, members' staff and staff of the Service;
- ✦ 25 official visits received and 39 foreign visits supported by Travel and Inter-parliamentary Section;
- ✦ 3,147 members' allowances payments;
- ✦ 5,297 members' pension payments;
- ✦ 96 legal advices provided to Oireachtas Committees;
- ✦ 1,827 research requests from members and members' staff dealt with by Library & Research Services; and
- ✦ 107 members and members' staff attended training provided in 2013.

5c. Enhancing Service Capability

Objectives

Managing and Developing People

- ✦ Make best use of our people through strategic recruitment and effective resource planning, by implementing our policies on performance management, career planning and training and by fostering our values of professional excellence.
- ✦ Provide financial management systems to ensure that best economic use is made of the financial resources of the Commission.

Customer Focus

- ✦ Renew our commitment to quality service by engaging with Members and other key customers and building on our existing service improvement and feedback initiatives.

Transforming the Way We Work

- ✦ Increase our service agility by continuously reviewing our structures, systems and policies in keeping with best practice in public service management.
- ✦ Foster collaborative approaches to working through team-building and cross-functional initiatives.
- ✦ Support effective working through our policies on knowledge and records management, better internal communications and sustainable working.

Governance and Future Planning

- ✦ Modernise our legislative framework to enhance our systems of governance and optimise our senior management structures under the Commission.
- ✦ Strengthen our future planning and critical review capabilities by improving our systems of risk management, business continuity planning and audit.
- ✦ Redefine our approaches to the provision of legal advisory services and the discharge of our electoral and other statutory functions.

Managing and Measuring Performance

- ✦ Implement these strategies through our local business plans, measure our performance and review our efficiency and effectiveness to ensure our services deliver value for money.

APPENDIX 7

Annual Output Statement 2013

	Statement of Estimates 2013 € million	Outturn 2013 € million	Statement of Estimates 2014 € million	% Change on 2013 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Staff of the Service	5.894	5.768	6.043	5%
Non-Pay	8.035	5.983	7.081	18%
Total Expenditure	13.929	11.751	13.124	12%
Number of staff employed on key objective (whole time equivalents) in 2013: 94				

Key Operational Outputs Achieved
Enhancing Service Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ eDocs now primary mechanism for laying documents- 99.98% of documents now laid electronically; ✦ 80,000 documents are now available via the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC); ✦ Public tours on non-sitting days and customer-friendly ways of accessing these tours available; ✦ Records Management Policy implemented; ✦ Use of resources in Rannóg an Aistriúcháin optimised by taking on new work related to the provision of an SI translation service; ✦ Daily plain English video that explains what is happening each day in the Dáil, Seanad and Oireachtas Committees; ✦ Refresher/induction training for new Temporary Clerks implemented; and ✦ 139 training interventions facilitated by Training Unit in 2013 including 198 language classes.



ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee is a statutory sub-Committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission and was placed on a statutory footing in 2010.

The membership of the Committee comprises:

- ♦ one member of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission;
- ♦ at least one but not more than 3 other members of either House of the Oireachtas;
- ♦ at least 2 but not more than 3 external persons; and
- ♦ one member of the staff of the Service.

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- ♦ Mr. Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson);
- ♦ Deputy John Browne (Commission member);
- ♦ ¹Mr. Padraic Donlon (Staff representative);
- ♦ Deputy Sean Fleming;
- ♦ Deputy Kevin Humphreys;
- ♦ Deputy Peter Mathews;
- ♦ Mr. Cyril Maybury (External Member); and
- ♦ Mr. Bryan O'Sullivan (External Member).

¹Mr. Padraic Donlon was appointed in substitution for Mr. Alan Murphy as the staff representative in May 2013.

ROLE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The role of the Committee is to:

- ♦ advise the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions;
- ♦ advise the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions; and
- ♦ report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

The Committee's duties include advising the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions including the following:

- ♦ the proper implementation of public service guidelines on financial matters;
- ♦ compliance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866, section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and any other obligations imposed by law relating to financial matters;

- ♦ the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's procedures relating to public procurement, seeking sanction for expenditure and complying with that sanction, acquiring, keeping custody of and disposing of assets, risk management, financial reporting, internal audit, internal controls; and
- ♦ the form of accounts of the Commission for approval by the Minister for Finance.

AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CHARTER

The Audit Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference and Charter, updating the Charter to reflect the fact that the Internal Audit Unit adopts a combination of risk and systems based approach to its audits supplemented, where appropriate, by the use of transaction-testing, vouching and other verification methods.

The Charter also acknowledges that fact the Internal Audit Unit will implement the Internal Audit Standards issued in November 2012, by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The following matters were considered by the Committee in 2013:

Internal Audit Work Programme 2013

The Committee considered the following 8 Internal Audit reports:

Internal Audit Report on Assets Register

The Internal Audit unit conducted an audit of the Fixed Assets Register (non-ICT) to provide assurance that the overall framework and systems are effective and to provide recommendations on matters where it is apparent that enhancements may be made.

Internal Audit Report on Broadcasting Unit

This audit assessed whether the Service has internal controls in place and that procurement and financial guidelines are complied with and to provide recommendations on matters where it is apparent that enhancements may be made.

Internal Audit Report on Contract Extensions

This audit assessed whether the Service is in compliance with relevant policies, that procurement guidelines are being complied with and that supporting documentation is available.

Internal Audit on Termination Payments

This Internal Audit was conducted to ensure that the risks relating to the making of Termination Payments by the Service have been adequately considered and recorded, that decisions in relation to Termination Payments from the period following the general election in 2011 were in compliance with relevant circulars and regulations and to provide recommendations on matters where it is apparent that enhancements may be made.

Internal Audit on Restaurant

This audit reviewed the Restaurant facilities operated by the Service looking specifically at stock management, cash management, procurement and human resources.

Internal Audit on Bar

This audit reviewed the Bar facilities operated by the Service looking specifically at stock management, cash management, procurement and human resources.

Internal Audit on Print Facilities

The audit objectives were to ascertain internal controls and risks and to review the systems the Service has in place to provide printing facilities for Members and to determine whether it is operating in accordance with the Service Level Agreement in place.

Internal Audit on Severance and Redundancy Payments

The audit objectives were to provide assurance that the risks relating to the making of severance and redundancy payments to political staff by the Service have been adequately considered and recorded, that decisions in relation to such payments from the period following the general election in 2011 were in compliance with relevant circulars and regulations and to provide recommendations on matters where it is apparent that enhancements may be made.

Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations

The Internal Audit Unit presented reports in March and November regarding the implementation of recommendations arising from Internal Audit reports.

Internal Audit Work Programme 2013 – 2015

The Committee noted the 2013 – 2015 Internal Audit Work Programme which had been approved by the Secretary General. The plan envisages that 2 audits would be carried out each quarter to provide assurance that systems, procedures and internal controls in place are effective, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, and to consider whether risks are managed. A number of external audits will also be undertaken (a minimum of one per year) covering technical areas e.g. ICT, Security.

Audit of Public Representation Allowance

The Committee noted the third external audit of the Public Representation Allowance since the allowance was introduced in March 2010. The audit is an annual requirement under the Oireachtas (Allowances and Facilities) Regulations, 2010 which came into effect on 1 March 2010. The audit examined whether members had valid evidence of vouchers, receipts and bills for expenses which come within the allowable categories under the regulations. The Committee was advised that changes in the 2013 Budget mean that almost all expenditure relating to this allowance will be required to be vouched with effect from 1 January 2013.

External Audit of PABX Telephone System

This audit assessed the resilience and security of the PABX system and risks relating to its operation, assessing the management and maintenance of the system.

Comptroller and Auditor General External Audit

The Committee reviewed the 2011 annual accounts of the Commission.

Risk Management

The Committee reviewed four risk materialisation reports. The risk management process in the Service is monitored and overseen by the Risk Management Committee which ensures that risk management activities are carried out effectively and in a timely manner.

Internal Audit standards

The Committee noted the revised Internal Audit Standards issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in November 2012 and noted that further guidelines relating to Audit Committees are expected in the future.

APPENDIX 9

Bills 2013

No.	Bill Name	Date Presented/ Introduced
1	Water Services Bill 2013 [Seanad]	08/01/2013
2	Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Bill 2013	08/01/2013
3	Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Bill 2013	09/01/2013
4	Mortgage Restructuring Arrangement Bill 2013 [PMB]	22/01/2013
5	Further Education and Training Bill 2013	23/01/2013
6	Reform of Judicial Appointments Procedures Bill 2013 [PMB]	29/01/2013
7	Criminal Justice Bill 2013 (changed from) Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2013	29/01/2013
8	Climate Change Bill 2013 [PMB]	31/01/2013
9	Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Bill 2013	06/02/2013
10	Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	06/02/2013
11	Finance Bill 2013	11/02/2013
12	Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) Bill 2013	11/02/2013
13	Rights of Grandparents Bill 2013 [PMB]	13/02/2013
14	Motor Vehicle (Duties and Licences) Bill 2013	13/02/2013
15	Cemetery Management Bill 2013 [PMB]	20/02/2013
16	Civil Law (Missing Persons) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	20/02/2013
17	Judicial Sentencing Commission Bill 2013 [PMB]	20/02/2013
18	Public Holidays (Lá na Poblachta) Bill 2013 [PMB]	21/02/2013
19	Employment Equality (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	21/02/2013
20	Credit Institutions (Stabilisation) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	27/02/2013
21	Seanad Electoral Reform Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	01/03/2013
22	Poor Relief (Ireland) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	05/03/2013
23	Employment Equality (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	08/03/2013
24	Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	13/03/2013
25	Social Welfare Appeals Bill 2013 [PMB]	13/03/2013
26	Maternity Protection (Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas) Bill 2013 [PMB]	13/03/2013
27	Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) Bill 2013	13/03/2013
28	Food Safety Authority of Ireland (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	14/03/2013
29	EU Scrutiny and Transparency in Government Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	14/03/2013
30	Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 (changed from) Courts Bill 2013 [Seanad]	14/03/2013
31	Retention of Newborn Screening Cards Bill 2013 [PMB]	26/03/2013
32	Scrap and Precious Metal Dealers Bill 2013 [PMB]	26/03/2013
33	Civil Registration (Marriage Equality) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	26/03/2013
34	Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2013	27/03/2013
35	In Camera Rule in Childcare and Family Law Proceedings Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/03/2013
36	Criminal Justice (Unlicensed Money-Lending) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	28/03/2013
37	Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013	02/04/2013
38	Statute of Limitations (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	27/03/2013
39	Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	12/04/2013
40	Mortgage Resolution Bill 2013 [PMB]	17/04/2013
41	Financial Stability and Reform Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	18/04/2013
42	Finance (Local Property Tax Repeal) Bill 2013 [PMB]	18/04/2013
43	Forestry Bill 2013	22/04/2013
44	Housing (Amendment) Bill 2013	23/04/2013
45	Corporate Manslaughter Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	02/05/2013
46	Sea Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction (Fixed Penalty Notice) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	08/05/2013
47	Health (Fluoridation of Water Supplies) (Repeal) Bill 2013 [PMB]	09/05/2013
48	Public Health (Availability of Defibrillators) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	08/05/2013
49	Seanad Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	09/05/2013
50	Statistics (1926 Census) Bill 2013 [PMB]	09/05/2013
51	Housing (Purchase of Voluntary and Co-Operative Housing) Bill 2013 [PMB]	09/05/2013
52	Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	14/05/2013
53	Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013	15/05/2013

No.	Bill Name	Date Presented/ Introduced
54	Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013	20/05/2013
55	Road Traffic Bill 2013 [PMB]	22/05/2013
56	Gender Recognition Bill 2013 [PMB]	22/05/2013
57	Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013	21/05/2013
58	Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	24/05/2013
59	Seanad (No. 2) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/05/2013
60	Access to the Countryside Bill 2013 [PMB]	29/05/2013
61	Interest Rate Approval Bill 2013 [PMB]	30/05/2013
62	European Union (Accession of the Republic of Croatia) (Access to the Labour Market) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	31/05/2013
63	Thirty-second Amendment of the Constitution (Abolition of Seanad Éireann) Bill 2013	04/06/2013
64	Debt Collectors Bill 2013 [PMB]	13/06/2013
65	Health (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	12/06/2013
66	Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013	14/06/2013
67	Regulation of Moneylenders Bill 2013 [PMB]	18/06/2013
68	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2013 [PMB]	19/06/2013
69	Prison Development (Confirmation of Resolutions) Bill 2013	20/06/2013
70	Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Bill 2013	25/06/2013
71	Food Provenance Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	26/06/2013
72	Equal Status (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	27/06/2013
73	Child Care (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2013 [PMB]	26/06/2013
74	Road Traffic (No. 2) Bill 2013	26/06/2013
75	Legal Recognition of Gender Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	27/06/2013
76	Protected Disclosures Bill 2013 [Seanad]	01/07/2013
77	Mental Health (Anti-Discrimination) Bill 2013 [PMB]	26/06/2013
78	Parental Leave Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	03/07/2013
79	Thirty-third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Bill 2013	05/07/2013
80	Child Care (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 2013 [PMB]	10/07/2013
81	Child and Family Agency Bill 2013	10/07/2013
82	Garda Síochána (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	11/07/2013
83	Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill 2013	15/07/2013
84	Financial Services (Protection of Deposits) Bill 2013 [PMB]	16/07/2013
85	Down's Syndrome (Equality of Access) Bill 2013 [PMB]	17/07/2013
86	Betting (Amendment) Bill 2013	17/07/2013
87	Fines (Payment and Recovery) Bill 2013	17/07/2013
88	Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	23/07/2013
89	Freedom of Information Bill 2013	22/07/2013
90	Friendly Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	23/07/2013
91	Gas Regulation Bill 2013	25/07/2013
92	County Enterprise Boards (Dissolution) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	29/07/2013
93	Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Bill 2013	09/09/2013
94	Upward Only Rent (Clauses and Reviews) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	18/09/2013
95	Electoral (Amendment) (Hours of Polling) Bill 2013 [PMB]	24/09/2013
96	Land and Conveyancing Law Reform (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	10/10/2013
97	Energy Regulation (Code of Practice) Bill 2013 [PMB]	10/10/2013
98	Local Government Reform Bill 2013 (changed from) Local Government Bill 2013	15/10/2013
99	Local Government (Town Centres) Bill 2013 [PMB]	16/10/2013
100	Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	17/10/2013
101	Social Welfare and Pensions Bill 2013	21/10/2013
102	Finance (No. 2) Bill 2013	22/10/2013
103	Seanad Electoral (University Members) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	22/10/2013
104	Censorship of Publications Board Repeal Bill 2013 [PMB]	23/10/2013
105	Restorative Justice (Reparation of Victims) Bill 2013 [PMB]	24/10/2013

APPENDIX 9

Bills 2013

No.	Bill Name	Date Presented/ Introduced
106	Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) (No. 2) Bill 2013	05/11/2013
107	Parental Leave (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	05/11/2013
108	Protection of Minimum Wage Earners Bill 2013 [PMB]	05/11/2013
109	Companies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	06/11/2013
110	Cyberbullying Bill 2013 [PMB]	06/11/2013
111	Thirty-Fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Judicial Appointments) Bill 2013 [PMB]	05/11/2013
112	Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2013	12/11/2013
113	Recognition of Irish Sign Language for the Deaf Community Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	14/11/2013
114	Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	20/11/2013
115	Protection of Life in Pregnancy (Amendment) (Fatal Foetal Abnormalities) Bill 2013 [PMB]	21/11/2013
116	Cannabis Regulation Bill 2013 [PMB]	20/11/2013
117	Pensions (Traceability of Assets) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
118	Pensions (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
119	Environment and Public Health (Wind Turbines) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
120	Environment and Public Health (Wind Turbines)(No. 2) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
121	Environment and Public Health (Wind Turbines)(No. 3) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
122	Protection of Life in Pregnancy (Amendment) (Fatal Foetal Abnormalities)(No. 2) Bill 2013 [PMB]	28/11/2013
123	Water Services (No. 2) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	28/11/2013
124	European Parliament Elections (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	28/11/2013
125	Critical Utilities (Security of Supply) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	10/12/2013
126	Thirty-Fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Neutrality) Bill 2013 [PMB]	10/12/2013
127	Planning and Development (Transparency and Consumer Confidence) Bill 2013 [PMB]	11/12/2013
128	Pyrite Resolution Bill 2013 [Seanad]	10/12/2013
129	Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	12/12/2013
130	Health Identifiers Bill 2013 [Seanad]	11/12/2013
131	Appropriation Bill 2013	12/12/2013
132	Protection of the Public Interest from Tobacco Lobbying Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	17/12/2013
133	Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2013	16/12/2013
134	Social Clauses in Public Procurement Bill 2013 [PMB]	17/12/2013
135	ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Bill 2013	17/12/2013
136	Health Service Executive (Financial Matters) Bill 2013	18/12/2013
137	Nama and Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Transparency Bill 2013 [Seanad] [PMB]	19/12/2013
138	Industrial Development (Forfás Dissolution) Bill 2013	19/12/2013
139	Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Bill 2013 [Seanad]	19/12/2013
140	Public Health (Sunbeds) Bill 2013	19/12/2013

No.	Act Title	Date Signed
1	Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Act 2013	05/02/2013
2	Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Act 2013	07/02/2013
3	Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2013	26/02/2013
4	Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) Act 2013	13/03/2013
5	Child Care (Amendment) Act 2013	13/03/2013
6	Water Services Act 2013	20/03/2013
7	Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2013	20/03/2013
8	Finance Act 2013	27/03/2013
9	Motor Vehicle (Duties and Licences) Act 2013	28/03/2013
10	Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) Act 2013	28/03/2013
11	Education and Training Boards Act 2013	08/05/2013
12	Defence Forces (Second World War Amnesty and Immunity) Act 2013	14/05/2013
13	National Lottery Act 2013	14/05/2013
14	Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013	28/05/2013
15	Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013	29/05/2013
16	Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Act 2013	04/06/2013
17	Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2013	04/06/2013
18	Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013	05/06/2013
19	Criminal Justice Act 2013	12/06/2013
20	Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013	28/06/2013
21	European Union (Accession of the Republic of Croatia) (Access to the Labour Market) Act 2013	01/07/2013
22	Housing (Amendment) Act 2013	02/07/2013
23	Health Service Executive (Governance) Act 2013	03/07/2013
24	Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013	09/07/2013
25	Further Education and Training Act 2013	10/07/2013
26	Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Act 2013	11/07/2013
27	Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Act 2013	22/07/2013
28	Prison Development (Confirmation of Resolutions) Act 2013	23/07/2013
29	Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 2013	23/07/2013
30	Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2013	24/07/2013
31	Health (Amendment) Act 2013	24/07/2013
32	Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013	24/07/2013
33	Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013	24/07/2013
34	Construction Contracts Act 2013	29/07/2013
35	Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013	30/07/2013
36	Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013	09/10/2013
37	Taxi Regulation Act 2013	23/10/2013
38	Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2013	09/11/2013
39	Gas Regulation Act 2013	03/12/2013
40	Child and Family Agency Act 2013	15/12/2013
41	Finance (No. 2) Act 2013	18/12/2013
42	Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) (No. 2) Act 2013	18/12/2013
43	Appropriation Act 2013	20/12/2013
44	Adoption (Amendment) Act 2013	20/12/2013
45	Credit Reporting Act 2013	23/12/2013
46	Companies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013	24/12/2013
47	Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) (Amendment) Act 2013	24/12/2013
48	Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2013	25/12/2013
49	Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Act 2013	25/12/2013
50	Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013	25/12/2013
51	Pyrite Resolution Act 2013	25/12/2013
	Thirty-third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Act 2013	01/11/2013

Report on Compliance with the Provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002)

Period covered by this review: 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

Statement of Compliance

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service complies with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002).

The Act has been implemented in full since 10 May 2002 within the Service. It is the policy of the Service to settle all invoices promptly with due regard to contractual terms where applicable, good financial and cash management practices and the provisions of the legislation.

Instructions have been issued by the Finance Unit to all staff processing payments to ensure that the provisions of the legislation are complied with. While the procedures are designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

Payments that fell due under the terms of the Act within the relevant period

In the period under review there were a total of 24 late payments and the amount of interest paid in respect of these late payments was €1071.62

24 of these payments involved invoices in excess of €317; the total value of the 24 payments was €268,178.81. The average delay in making these payments was 27 days. During the period in question the proportion of the total value of payments (€29 million in 2013) represented by payments which involved prompt payment interest was 0.9%

Reduction of payment period to 15 days

With effect from 15 June 2009, the Service reduced its maximum target period for payments to suppliers from 30 days to 15 days to reflect a change in Government policy. Had the 15 day target been in place on a statutory basis, a further 61 payments would have incurred prompt payment interest, representing 0.7% of the total number of payments processed from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013.



Michael Errity,
Assistant Secretary,
Corporate and Members' Services

March 2014

ENERGY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The energy needs for the House of the Oireachtas are met as part of the system for the Government Buildings complex which is managed by the Office of Public Works.

The OPW have installed sub meters on the various different buildings in the Oireachtas as part of the "Optimising power @ work campaign" to record the fuel and electricity consumption and this is monitored through a web based reporting system. The Houses of the Oireachtas also have a combined heat and power plant which supplies electricity to the ring electrical system and heat to the old House.

The Houses of the Oireachtas also has responsibility for Kildare House and it is also fed from the district heating system and the electricity ring. In 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas and Kildare House consumed 15,997 MWh of energy, consisting of:

- ◆ 6,889 MWh of electricity; and
- ◆ 9,108 MWh of fossil fuels.

Actions Undertaken in 2013:

During 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas undertook a range of initiatives to improve our energy performance, including:

- ◆ Participation in the "Optimising Power @ Work campaign", where staff are encouraged to be more energy efficient. This has included a continuous review of the heating and ventilation systems to ensure they are operating only when required and significant savings have been identified here;
- ◆ Night energy audits have been undertaken to identify areas where energy savings can be made;
- ◆ Heating and ventilation times have been changed to reflect the longer opening hours of the Houses and to ensure no equipment is run out-of-hours;
- ◆ Wood chip boilers are now fully commissioned and are providing up 25% of the complex's heating load;
- ◆ Energy awareness day, efficient lighting display for the staff to explain new more efficient lights; and
- ◆ Reduction of the MTHW summer flow temperature.

Altogether, these and other energy saving measures have resulted in saving 650 MWh annually.

Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- ❖ Review of Commonage Lands and Framework Management Plans [Report published July 2013];
- ❖ Grocery Goods Sector 'Increasing equity and transparency in producer-processor-retailer relationships' [Report published October 2013]; and
- ❖ Promoting Sustainable Rural Coastal and Island Communities.

Education and Social Protection

- ❖ Tackling Back to School Costs [Report published June 2013];
- ❖ Reform of the Junior Certificate in Post-Primary Schools;
- ❖ The role of Special Needs Assistants in Schools [Report due to be published 2014];
- ❖ General Scheme of a Gender Recognition Bill 2013 [PLS Report due to be published January 2014]; and
- ❖ General Scheme of an Education (Admissions to School) Bill 2013 [PLS Report due to be published March 2014].

Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht

- ❖ Engagement on a range of separate policy issues relating to flooding, climate change, genealogical heritage and the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030;
- ❖ General Scheme of the Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013 [PLS Report due to be published February 2013];
- ❖ Title of Architect [Report published July 2013]; and
- ❖ General Scheme on the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2013 [PLS Report published November 2013].

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform

- ❖ 2013 Pre-Budget Submissions [Report published January 2013];
- ❖ Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Bill 2013 [PLS Report published February 2013];
- ❖ General Scheme of the Freedom of Information Bill 2013 [PLS Report published June 2013];
- ❖ 2014 Pre-Budget Submissions [Report published October 2013];
- ❖ General Scheme of the Regulation of Lobbying Bill 2013 [PLS Report published November 2013];

- ❖ Review of progress in regard to the operations of the newly established Insolvency Service of Ireland and the contribution of financial institutions towards attaining a sustainable resolution to personal debt issues;
- ❖ Assessment of the impact of the liquidation of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation (IBRC) and the funding requirements of the State following exit from the Economic Adjustment Programme; and
- ❖ Engagement with the Irish Fiscal Council, the Department of Finance and representatives of Civil Society on the annual budgetary process, macroeconomic position and forecast/growth projects for 2014.

Health and Children

- ❖ Public Hearings on the Implementation of the Government decision following the publication of the Expert Group Report on A, B & C vs Ireland [Report published February 2013];
- ❖ General Scheme on Protection of Life in Pregnancy Bill 2013 [PLS Report published May 2013];
- ❖ Organ Donation [Report published October 2013];
- ❖ End of Life Palliative Care in Ireland [Report to be published in 2014];
- ❖ Childhood Obesity [Report to be published in 2014]; and
- ❖ Childhood Poverty in Ireland [Report to be published in 2014].

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

- ❖ Creating Policies that Work-Actions to Address Youth and Long-Term Unemployment [Report published February 2013];
- ❖ Exploring a new approach to providing mentor services for the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector in Ireland [Report published March 2013];
- ❖ South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) 2013-2023 - Plant the SEEDS – Grow the Economy [Report published and launched in Waterford September 2013]; and
- ❖ Impact of Black Economy on the Retail Sector [Report due to be published in 2014].

Justice, Defence and Equality

- ❖ Penal Reform [Report published March 2013];
- ❖ Review of legislation on Prostitution [Report published June 2013];

- ❖ General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Corruption) Bill [PLS Letter to Minister June 2013];
- ❖ General Scheme of the Gambling Control Bill [PLS Report published November 2013];
- ❖ Submissions received in relation to Domestic and Sexual Violence [Report published November 2013]; and
- ❖ Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity [Report due to be published in 2014].

Transport and Communications

- ❖ Promoting a Sustainable Future for the Post Office Network [Report published March 2013];
- ❖ Addressing the Growth of Social Media and Tackling Cyberbullying [Report published July 2013];
- ❖ Sponsorship of Sports by the Alcohol Drinks Industry [Report published July 2013]; and
- ❖ General Scheme of the Shannon Aviation Services and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2013 [PLS Report published November 2013].



Members of the Jt Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine pictured at the launch of their review of "Commonage Lands and Framework Management Plans."



Members of the Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht launch their report on "Title of Architect".

APPENDIX 13

Sectoral Committee Activities during 2013



Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Andrew Doyle T.D., and Committee Member Mr. Martin Ferris T.D. meet NI Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Ms. Michelle O'Neill, MLA, prior to her address to the Committee on CAP Reform.



Mr. Pat Breen T.D. (Chair), pictured with Mrs. Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), prior to her address to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade.



The Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communications launches its Report on 'Promoting a Sustainable Future for the Post Office Network' in the AV Room, Leinster House.



(L-R) Mr. David Stanton T.D. (Chair); Ms. Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy T.D. and Mr. Sean Kenny T.D. greet Mr. Weixiong Chen, Deputy Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate.



A delegation from the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality visited the 108th Battalion on manoeuvres in the Glen of Imaal.



Mr. Tom Hayes T.D., Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communications, and Mr. John O'Mahony T.D. meet An Post Chair Designate, Mr. Christoph Mueller (centre).



Mr. Jerry Buttimer T.D., Chair of the Jt. Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children, greets experts from R.T.E.'s 'Operation Transformation' series before their meeting with the committee to discuss tackling obesity.



Committee Chair, Mr. Damien English T.D., briefs the media at the launch of the Jt Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's report entitled "Creating Policies that Work: Actions to Address Youth and Long-Term Unemployment".

APPENDIX 14

Petitions received by the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions during 2013

No.	Received	Title
1	04/01/2013	Perjury to gain elected office
2	07/01/2013	Implement right of abortion
3	18/01/2013	Provision of Good Samaritan clause in State Contributory Pension legislation
4	18/01/2013	Reverse Zoning on Floodplain for Safety of Little Bray Community
5	30/01/2013	New Treatment for Cystic Fibrosis 'Celtic' Gene
6	14/02/2013	Local Authority
7	15/02/2013	Concerns over inappropriate standards related to dive industry legislation
8	20/02/2013	Failure of the State to provide a statutory process of appeal under Section 16 of the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act, 2003
9	20/02/2013	The state's failure to provide an independent process of appeal against a VEC's refusal to provide qualified pay or increments for prior approved teaching service in the EU
10	22/02/2013	Failure of the State to provide a framework for rectification of errors made by the banking system specifically in relation to indiscriminate over-lending otherwise known as reckless lending
11	01/03/2013	The Right to Die than live in this Country
12	06/03/2013	Solicitors Corruption
13	12/03/2013	Miscarriage of Justice
14	19/03/2013	The medical criteria of disabled drivers and passengers (Tax concessions) Regulations 1994 SI 353 of 1994, treats upper limb amputees less favourably than lower limb amputees
15	02/04/2013	Extending the FOI Acts to include the Data Protection Commissioner and the Financial Services Ombudsman
16	12/04/2013	Consent System for Organ Donation
17	17/04/2013	Amendment to Fire Regulations (Domestic fire escapes)
18	27/06/2013	Legislation against Cyber Bullying and anonymous websites
19	25/09/2013	Death of person in disputed circumstances in 1979
20	03/07/2013	Misappropriation of public Funds by a Government Department
21	04/07/2013	Driving Licence Issue with Dublin City Council
22	17/08/2013	Superannuation
23	03/08/2013	Request for Cork County Council to take charge of the maintenance of the estates, roads and parks in the surrounding area
24	13/09/2013	Dispute between Petitioner and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment/Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation
25	23/09/2013	Recruitment policy within RTE
26	24/09/2013	Strict Professional Secrecy Provisions in the Central Bank Act 1942
27	01/10/2013	That planning fees charged for Holiday homes/self-catering accommodation are consistent in all local authorities
28	15/10/2013	Attempting to obtain Medical Records without permission
29	22/10/2013	Legalise Cannabis Ireland
30	16/11/2013	Requiring Constancy of Public Office
31	03/12/2013	Supplementary primary education tax payable by Australian (and other) nationals on working visas in Ireland
32	04/12/2013	Equality and fairness regarding the raising of the State Pension age to 66 and beyond

APPENDIX 14A

Petitions brought before the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions during 2013

Meeting Date	Petition No:	Title
11/12/2013	P00029/13	Legalise cannabis Ireland
11/12/2013	P00026/13	That planning fees charged for Holiday homes/self-catering accommodation are consistent in all local authorities.
11/12/2013	P00024/13	Recruitment Policy within RTE.
11/12/2013	P00018/13	Legislation against Cyber Bullying and anonymous websites
11/12/2013	P00080/12	Garda Coverup
11/12/2013	P00048/12	Death of person in disputed circumstances in 1979
11/12/2013	P00046/12	Alleged Garda misconduct leading to wrongful conviction
11/12/2013	P00037/12	Alleged miscarriage of justice
27/11/2013	P00072/12	Investigation into US Military and CIA use of Shannon airport and Irish airspace
27/11/2013	P00062/12	Introduce Equality Budgeting
06/11/2013	P00025/13	Strict Professional Secrecy Provisions in the Central Bank Act 1942
06/11/2013	P00052/12	Alleged theft, fraud and illegal sale of the assets of dissolved companies vested in the Minister for Finance
06/11/2013	P00033/12	The application of the Freedom of Information Acts and the Ombudsman Acts to the Central Bank of Ireland
06/11/2013	P00028/12	Save Kilmainham Mill
16/10/2013	P00078/12	Closure of Carpentry Joinery at the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
16/10/2013	P00067/12	Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2010
09/10/2013	P00020/13	Driving Licence Issue with Dublin City Council
09/10/2013	P00013/13	Miscarriage of Justice
09/10/2013	P00001/13	Perjury to gain elected office
09/10/2013	P00068/12	Return of probity and the proper adjudication practices and hence accountability at the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Agriculture
09/10/2013	P00065/12	Anomaly in Jurisprudence
18/09/2013	P00006/13	Local Authority
18/09/2013	P00003/13	Provision of Good Samaritan clause in State Contributory Pension Legislation
18/09/2013	P00077/12	Foreign Driving Licence Swap for Irish Driving Licence for all Applicants
18/09/2013	P00045/12	Issues relating to the Office of the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces and the Ombudsman (Defence Forces) 2004 Act
10/07/2013	P00019/13	Mis-appropriation of public Funds by a Government Department
10/07/2013	P00060/12	Conflict of Interest - Tourism Operator, Traffic Signage Manager & Rates Collector
10/07/2013	P00059/12	Male Discrimination and Exploitation
10/07/2013	P00056/12	Imposter acting as a Commissioner for Oaths
26/06/2013	P00054/12	0.6% Pension Levy
26/06/2013	P00053/12	State Pension (Contributory) Eligibility
26/06/2013	P00031/12	An Bord Pleanála's view of planning precedent in local authorities
19/06/2013	P00043/12	Issues arising in relation to the Back To Education Allowance Grant (BTEA)
15/05/2013	P00047/12	Policy Issues within the Defence (Amendment) Act 2007
15/05/2013	P00027/12	The fact that Employment Appeals Tribunal costs must be met by the complainant in the first instance
01/05/2013	P00069/12	Allow Irish overseas to vote
01/05/2013	P00063/12	Petition for clean air and clean streets
01/05/2013	P00049/12	Underreporting of road traffic accidents in Ireland
01/05/2013	P00044/12	Revising Postal Ballot Rules
01/05/2013	P00029/12	Open access to publicly-funded research
17/04/2013	P00012/13	Solicitors Corruption
17/04/2013	P00011/13	The Right to Die than live in this Country
17/04/2013	P00007/13	Inappropriate standards related to dive industry legislation
17/04/2013	P00058/12	Change in Mandatory Sentencing for Murder convictions
17/04/2013	P00051/12	Concerns about Fishing Legislation decisions
27/03/2013	P00057/12	Take Ro/Accutane off the market
27/02/2013	P00002/13	Implement Right of Abortion

APPENDIX 14A

Petitions brought before the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions during 2013

Meeting Date	Petition No:	Title
27/02/2013	P00081/12	Video games in English Curriculum
27/02/2013	P00076/12	The Gathering and Irish Parish Records
27/02/2013	P00075/12	Withdrawal of Foreshore Licence granted to Providence Resources PLC to drill for oil in Dublin Bay and call for a public inquiry.
27/02/2013	P00074/12	Dalkey Oil Drilling License
27/02/2013	P00073/12	Unjust Hike in Registration fee by Garda National Immigration Bureau
27/02/2013	P00064/12	Foreshore license granted by Minister Jan O'Sullivan re oil & gas drilling in Dalkey Bay
27/02/2013	P00035/12	Microwave Sickness/Electrosensitivity
13/02/2013	P00005/13	New Treatment For Cystic Fibrosis 'Celtic' Gene
13/02/2013	P00079/12	Refusal of a Section 44 application (Revocation of Planning) by Galway Co. Council Planning and Development Act 2000
13/02/2013	P00055/12	ICS Ltd complaint against the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
13/02/2013	P00030/12	Discrimination in law against those convicted of capital murder prior to 1990
13/02/2013	P00026/12	Failure of National Roads Authority to inform interested parties of its intentions in relation to the N28
30/01/2013	P00071/12	Height of leylandii trees
30/01/2013	P00070/12	Overhanging Trees
30/01/2013	P00061/12	National campaign for Suicide Prevention in Ireland
30/01/2013	P00050/12	Height restriction on trees in suburban gardens
30/01/2013	P00034/12	Rejection of an application for a Disadvantage Area Scheme (DAS) grant by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



Members of the public view the Dáil Chamber as part of a tour of Leinster House during Culture Night.