

*(Supplementary Order Paper)*

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**DÁIL ÉIREANN**

*Dé Céadaoin, 12 Meitheamh, 2019*  
*Wednesday, 12th June, 2019*

10.30 a.m.

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**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

*Fógra i dtaobh Leasuithe ar Thairiscint: Notice of Amendments to Motion*

**222.** “That Dáil Éireann:

notes that:

- the approved strength of the Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) currently stands at 9,500;
- at the end of March 2019 there were 8,847 personnel, compared to 9,057 at the end of February 2018;
- 3,200 personnel left the PDF between 2014 and 2018, a figure which equates to 34.7 per cent of the average strength for those years, with 82 per cent of these being premature voluntary retirements;
- the turnover rate in the PDF now stands at 9 per cent overall, with a rate of 14 per cent in the Naval Service;
- there were 256 discharges in the first four months of 2019, by far the largest figure since the reorganisation of 2012; and
- in April 2019 alone, there were 86 discharges, a figure not previously matched in a single month;

further notes:

- the ongoing priority given, by Government, to costly recruitment policies;
- the absence of any retention policy for the Defence Forces;
- the underspend of €92.3 million from 2014 to 2018 in the Defence Estimate (Vote 36);
- the high turnover rate that is leading to the creation of a difficult and challenging training environment for remaining service personnel;
- that some personnel are double- and treble-jobbing in an effort to maintain operational output;
- that insufficient supervision and mentoring combined with poor trained manning levels is leading to unavoidable burnout;

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- that there are serious concerns for governance, and the ability to manage risk and ensure the wellbeing of personnel; and
- that recent surveys have illustrated the mental health difficulties, increased stress and low morale being experienced by PDF personnel;

accepts that:

- the impact of operating with reduced numbers is already being felt across the Defence Forces;
- the Army is struggling to fulfil its assigned tasks, domestically and internationally;
- ships are unable to go to sea and aircraft are not flying as a result of personnel shortages;
- defence capability is being seriously undermined; and
- reduced governance increases operational and personnel risk; and

calls for:

- the restoration of military allowances to pre-Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest levels, especially in view of the underspend from 2014 to 2018, to include the service commitment scheme for Air Corps pilots and fixed-period promotion for Special Service Officers;
- the restoration of the supplementary pension for post 2013 entrants;
- a review of the PDF organisation to provide for a training and overseas establishment, bringing the PDF personnel numbers up to 10,500 across all ranks and formations/services;
- a permanent and independent Defence Forces pay body to be established;
- Defence Forces representative organisations to be able to take up associate membership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions;
- greater military expertise in the Department of Defence, who have made some concerning and damaging decisions affecting the Defence Forces;
- the enhancement of the input and discretion of military management in decisions over current and capital spending;
- the implementation of the Working Time Directive, which the Government is currently not implementing properly;
- a clear and defined role for the Reserve Defence Forces, that would enable them to play a meaningful and worthwhile part in support to the PDF; and
- the undertaking of a comprehensive independent review (involving external and international expertise) of defence policy, the Defence Forces and the role of the Department of Defence.” — *Jack Chambers, Bobby Aylward, John Brassil, Declan Breathnach, James Browne, Mary Butler, Thomas Byrne, Jackie Cahill, Dara Calleary, Pat Casey, Shane Cassells, Lisa Chambers, Niall Collins, Barry Cowen, John Curran, Stephen Donnelly, Timmy Dooley, Sean Fleming, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Seán Haughey, Billy Kelleher, John Lahart, James Lawless, Marc MacSharry, Micheál Martin, Charlie McConalogue, Michael McGrath, John McGuinness, Aindrias Moynihan, Michael Moynihan, Eugene Murphy, Margaret Murphy O'Mahony, Darragh O'Brien, Jim O'Callaghan, Éamon Ó Cuív, Willie O'Dea, Kevin O'Keefe, Fiona O'Loughlin, Frank O'Rourke, Anne Rabbitte, Eamon Scanlon, Brendan Smith, Niamh Smyth, Robert Troy.*

*Leasuithe:*

*Amendments:*

1. (a) To insert the following after “experienced by PDF personnel;”:

- “— that the Defence Forces have been without an in-house psychiatrist since May 2018, due to the failure to replace an in-house clinician who retired at that time;
- that a greater gender balance is needed within our Defence Forces, with currently just 596 women serving out of a total of 8,847 and with just 33 women having joined and remained in the Defence Forces in the past four years; and
- that the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel has seen over 700 former members of the PDF pass through its homes since 2005;”;

(b) To insert the following after “currently not implementing properly;”:

- “— the establishment of a dedicated body within the PDF to monitor and mediate the long-term care needs (physical, mental and material deprivation) of current and former members, in particular those who have returned from service abroad;
- a commitment by the Government to fast-track the recruitment of psychiatrists to safeguard the mental health of present and former members of the Defence Forces;
- a review of conditions for female personnel within the Defence Forces to explain past recruitment failures and a recommitment to increasing gender balance in the PDF;” — *Brendan Ryan, Brendan Howlin, Joan Burton, Alan Kelly, Jan O’Sullivan, Willie Penrose, Sean Sherlock.*

2. To delete all words after “not previously matched in a single month;” and insert the following:

- “— it is estimated that up to 1,700 Defence Forces personnel could be eligible for the Working Family Payment;
- Defence Forces personnel were obliged to take a case to the European Committee of Social Rights in relation to the recognition of collective bargaining rights;
- the Defence Forces representative organisations have had a number of successful cases in the High Court, in relation to the application of the Working Time Directive for Defence Forces personnel with 35 additional cases awaiting hearing;
- representative organisations have reported significant difficulties in accessing the Lansdowne Road Agreement Oversight Body; and
- the reported strength of the Defence Forces is misleading as those who are on leave of absence or in training and unavailable for deployment are included;

further notes:

- the ongoing priority given, by Government, to costly recruitment policies;
- the absence of any retention policy for the Defence Forces;
- the underspend of €92.3 million from 2014 to 2018 in the Defence Estimate (Vote 36);
- the high turnover rate that is leading to the creation of a difficult and challenging training environment for remaining service personnel;
- that some personnel are double- and treble-jobbing in an effort to maintain operational output;
- that insufficient supervision and mentoring combined with poor trained manning levels is leading to unavoidable burnout;

- that there are serious concerns for governance, and the ability to manage risk and ensure the wellbeing of personnel;
- that recent surveys have illustrated the mental health difficulties, increased stress and low morale being experienced by PDF personnel; and
- that the Department of Defence chose not to participate in the review of the public service pension age undertaken in 2017, and no review of Defence Forces pension age has been commenced since that period;

accepts that:

- the impact of operating with reduced numbers is already being felt across the Defence Forces;
- the Army is struggling to fulfil its assigned tasks, domestically and internationally;
- ships are unable to go to sea and aircraft are not flying as a result of personnel shortages;
- defence capability is being seriously undermined and the ability to be an aid to the civil powers are curtailed or not available in times of humanitarian or extreme weather events, such as the recent snow storms or forest/gorse fires; and
- reduced governance increases operational and personnel risk; and

calls for:

- an immediate briefing for Defence Forces representative organisations and opposition TDs on the findings of the Report on the Public Service Pay Commission, given the leaks to the media on same;
- a review of the pension age of the Defence Forces to be commenced;
- the Minister for Defence to report to the Dáil on a bi-annual basis on the current strength of the Defence Forces, detailing those on leave of absence, training or on overseas deployment as well as the ‘strength in station’ figure;
- the restoration of military allowances to pre-Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest levels, especially in view of the underspend from 2014 to 2018, to include the service commitment scheme for Air Corps pilots and fixed-period promotion for Special Service Officers;
- the restoration of the supplementary pension for post 2013 entrants;
- a review of the PDF organisation to provide for a training and overseas establishment, bringing the PDF personnel numbers up to 10,500 across all ranks and formations/services;
- a permanent and independent Defence Forces pay body to be established;
- the full implementation of the decision of the European Committee on Social Rights in respect of the collective bargaining rights of Defence Forces personnel, including making provision for Defence Forces representative organisations to be able to take up associate membership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions;
- greater military expertise in the Department of Defence, who have made some concerning and damaging decisions affecting the Defence Forces;
- the enhancement of the input and discretion of military management in decisions over current and capital spending;
- the Government to engage fully with Defence Forces representative organisations and bring forward, within a six month period, legislation to provide for the implementation of the Working Time Directive, which the Government is currently not implementing properly;

- the implementation of the Resolution on Lariam passed by this House on 28th June, 2017;
- an immediate health review of all current and former members of the Air Corps to ascertain their level of exposure to dangerous chemicals while in the service;
- a clear and defined role for the Reserve Defence Forces, that would enable them to play a meaningful and worthwhile part in support to the PDF; and
- the undertaking of a comprehensive independent review (involving external and international expertise) of defence policy, the Defence Forces and the role of the Department of Defence.” —*Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Gerry Adams, John Brady, Pat Buckley, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Pearse Doherty, Dessie Ellis, Martin Ferris, Kathleen Funchion, Martin Kenny, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Jonathan O'Brien, Eoin Ó Broin, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Louise O'Reilly, Maurice Quinlivan, Brian Stanley.*

3. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“recognises:

- that the Irish people shares its great pride in our Defence Forces and the contribution made by the Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) and the Reserve Defence Forces (RDF);
- Ireland’s long and well respected history of participating in overseas missions under United Nations (UN) mandates and acknowledges that the Defence Forces have played a vital role as peacekeepers all over the world, in Europe, Africa and the Middle East in UN and UN-mandated peace support missions and, today, some 673 members of the PDF are serving overseas in various parts of the world;
- those members of the Defence Forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the State, including those on overseas peacekeeping missions;
- the dedication and professionalism of the Defence Forces;
- the ongoing implementation of the Government’s White Paper on Defence; and
- the challenges that are faced in relation to recruitment and retention in the Defence Forces;

notes:

- that the Department of Defence has civil and military branches, consistent with its constitutional and statutory mandate;
- that the Secretary General heads the civil element while the Chief of Staff heads the military element of the Department of Defence;
- that both civil and military elements provide supports to the Minister for Defence, and that the Chief of Staff has direct and independent access to the Minister for the provision of military advice;
- that ultimately command and management of the Defence Forces is by the Minister for Defence, on behalf of the Government, ensuring appropriate oversight of defence and of the Defence Forces;
- the importance of the White Paper on Defence, which was prepared by joint civil and military steering and working groups, in providing a defence policy in keeping with Ireland’s defence requirements for the period to 2025 and comprehending a developmental and strategic approach to defence provision, including the ongoing modernisation of defence equipment;

- that the finalisation of the White Paper in June 2015 included, at the arrangement of the Minister for Defence, Dáil statements which provided members with an opportunity for final inputs and that, furthermore, there has been engagement with the relevant Oireachtas Joint Committee on any or all aspects of the White Paper as might be desired by Committee members;
- that a key feature of the White Paper is the provision for future-proofing of policy and capabilities through a new process of fixed cycle defence reviews with a Strategic Defence Review to commence in early 2021, while a White Paper Update commenced last year and is being overseen by a joint civil-military steering group;
- that the Government's commitment to the Defence Forces capability is evidenced through a 2019 provision for gross expenditure of some €1,007 million, an increase of €60 million or 6.4 per cent over 2018, while the capital allocation has increased to €106 million, an increase of 38 per cent on the 2018 allocation;
- that a significant portion of the Defence budget is delegated to the Chief of Staff, to facilitate the exercise of his functions;
- that all major investment decisions are made via joint civil-military work and approved through a joint, co-chaired, civil-military forum and that this collaborative civil-military approach operates successfully within the Department of Defence;
- that this investment will see the replacement and upgrade of significant equipment platforms over the life-time of the White Paper, including an upgrade of the Army's fleet of armoured personnel carriers (APCs), enhancement of the capabilities of the Army Ranger Wing, replacement of the Air Corps' Cessna fleet, CASA Maritime Patrol Aircraft and the Naval Service's flagship LÉ Eithne;
- that there is a sustained programme of investment in barracks infrastructure to improve accommodation and other facilities across the country;
- the range of actions in place for the development of Defence Forces human resources, training, education, family friendly and a range of other supports;
- the development of flexible and adaptive military capabilities as a pragmatic approach to dealing with future uncertainty and the roles assigned, and that capability commitments outlined in the White Paper include maintenance of a PDF establishment of at least 9,500 personnel;
- that specific shortages in specialist areas are being addressed and that work is underway aimed at addressing these particular challenges;
- the efforts to accelerate the rate of recruitment to the RDF within means and resources;
- that in relation to the Working Time Directive, legislation is currently being considered by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and civil-military work is underway to achieve a graduated solution which respects the unique operational requirements of a military force; and
- that membership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) by Defence Forces representative associations, as recommended in a recent review of the Defence Forces C&A Scheme, is now under consideration, and that the discussion with ICTU is considering feasibility, taking account of the need to recognise the prohibition on the right to strike, the tasks that Government may require the Defence Forces to undertake, and the necessity that command and control arrangements and military discipline are un-impinged; and

further notes that:

- the focus of pay increases under the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 has been those on lower pay and that by the end of the current Agreement, the pay scales of all public servants (including members of the Defence Forces), earning

under €70,000 per annum, will be restored to pre-Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest levels;

- public sector pay policy is determined centrally by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, having regard to public sector pay agreements, and that independent sectoral pay determination bodies, such as one for the Defence Forces, is not consistent with this approach;
- public service pension provisions are laid down in statute and apply across the public service; and
- the Public Service Pay Commission has examined recruitment and retention issues in the defence sector and that its report will be considered by Government and form the basis of engagement with parties to the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020.” — *Pól Mac Eochaidh, Aire Stáit ag an Roinn Cosanta.*