

Written Answer

Tuesday, 11 October 2011

192. Deputy Micheál Martin asked the **Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform** the specific initiative he will take as a result of his meeting with the Croke Park agreement implementation group; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [18838/11]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): The Taoiseach and I met with the Implementation Body for the *Public Service Agreement 2010-2014* on 29th June last. We had a constructive engagement on the key issues relating to driving the reform agenda across the public service. While we welcomed the tangible progress that has been made in the first year of the Agreement, as outlined in the Body's first progress report published on 15th June last, we were clear that there has to be an acceleration of progress over the coming months. We emphasized the need to build on the flexibilities already agreed to in the Croke Park Agreement. We also made it clear that the Government wishes to honour the commitments given in the Agreement. However, this will only be possible if the Agreement is implemented in full.

On foot of our interaction, the Implementation Body has, over recent weeks, undertaken a series of meetings with senior managements from the key sectors of the public service. The purpose of these meetings has been to consider how progress can be accelerated on implementing sectoral Action Plans and how to ensure that priority measures are delivered on over the remainder of 2011, in light of the challenges ahead.

I will continue to monitor developments closely and, in that regard, I look forward to the outcome of the second phase of progress reporting on the implementation of the Action Plans under the Croke Park Agreement which is underway at present. Sectors are due to submit updated progress reports to the Implementation Body during October. It is expected that Action Plans will need to be revisited later in the year when decisions have been taken by Government on the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure.

Written Answer

Wednesday, 12 October 2011

76. Deputy Simon Harris asked the **Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform** the position regarding the Croke Park agreement; if he has received implementation plans for this agreement from each Government Department and State agency; the status of these implementation plans; the discussions he has had with the EU-IMF regarding the agreement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [29063/11]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): Under the *Public Service Agreement 2010-2014*, detailed action plans have been developed across each sector of the public service to underpin the change and reform process envisaged by the Agreement. The Action Plans were first developed in October 2010 and subsequently

revised in January 2011. Public service bodies in each sector were required to prepare their first detailed report on the progress being made in implementing their Action Plans last May and this formed part of the first annual review of the Agreement undertaken by the Implementation Body.

The second phase of progress reporting on the Agreement is underway at present. Sectors are due to submit updated progress reports to the Implementation Body during October. These sectoral reports will be examined by the Body and published on its website (www.implementationbody.gov.ie). It is expected that Action Plans will need to be revisited later in the year when decisions have been taken by Government on the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure.

The Government has indicated that the Public Service Agreement represents a key enabler to meeting its fiscal targets under its obligations under the EU/IMF Joint Programme of Assistance. The quarterly returns made to date by the Government under the Programme on public service numbers and the pay bill have indicated that the numbers of public servants are falling and we are on track to meet the existing target of 302,000 public service posts by end 2011. Similarly, the Exchequer pay bill return for the first six months is in line with the 2011 pay bill targets. The Government has indicated that it wishes to honour the commitments given in the Public Service Agreement. However, this will only be possible if the Agreement is implemented in full.