

# Donations to Political Parties

**2020**

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



**Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí**  
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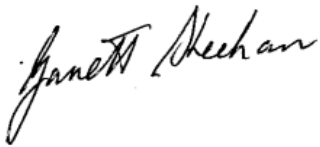
**November 2021**

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## Foreword

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended, I am pleased to furnish this report to the Ceann Comhairle. The report relates to annual donation statements/certificates of monetary donations and statutory declarations, in respect of 2020, furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission by political parties, pursuant to section 24 of the Act.



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Garrett Sheehan  
Chairperson  
Standards in Public Office Commission  
November 2021

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Not later than 31 March each year, all registered political parties are required to furnish to the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Commission) a donation statement covering the preceding calendar year, disclosing certain donations to the party. The party must also provide a statement of any political donations account it maintains in a financial institution covering the reporting year. Finally, the party must provide a certificate of monetary donations.

All political parties registered in 2020 were obliged to furnish these documents to the Commission by 31 March 2021. During 2020, there were 24 political parties registered and obliged to furnish returns.

A list of registered political parties required to file a donation statement is available at Appendix 1.

## Chapter 2: Donations disclosed by political parties

Political parties may receive donations from a variety of donors – individuals resident in Ireland, Irish citizens living abroad, and registered or unregistered corporate donors. These donations are subject to statutory limits and disclosure thresholds. The Electoral Act 1997, as amended (the Act) also prohibits certain types of donations, including those over allowable limits, and donations from outside Ireland other than in certain specified circumstances.

Where a party receives a donation valued over €100, it must open and maintain a political donations account in a recognised financial institution, into which that and all future donations must be lodged.

The maximum total value of donations that a political party may accept from the same donor, individual or corporate, in the same calendar year is €2,500.

A party may not accept a corporate or business donation in excess of €200 unless the donor is registered with the Commission on the Register of Corporate Donors. A political party is also precluded from accepting foreign donations, in any amount, from an individual (other than an Irish citizen) who resides outside the island of Ireland, or from a body corporate or an unincorporated body of persons that does not keep an office in the island of Ireland.

Each year, the responsible officer for a political party must provide to the Commission:

- a donation statement, disclosing any donations received in the preceding calendar year valued at more than €1,500 (including donations from the same source with an aggregate value of more than €1,500). Disclosed donations should include the name, description and postal address of the person by whom or on whose behalf the donation was made, and
- where applicable, a statement from the financial institution where the party's political donations account was opened, specifying the transactions that have taken place in relation to the account during the preceding year (bank statement), and
- a certificate signed by him/her, stating that all monetary donations received during the preceding year were lodged to the account and that all amounts debited from the account were used for political purposes (Certificate of Monetary Donations), and
- a statutory declaration signed by him/her stating that, to the best of the person's knowledge and belief, the certificate is correct in every material respect and that all reasonable action has been taken in order to satisfy him/herself as to the accuracy of the certificate.

A nil return is still required where a party has not received any donations or does not have a donations account.

While parties may also receive donations of lesser amounts, only those above the statutory declaration threshold fall to be disclosed to the Commission. The amounts set out in this report, therefore, only reflect donations received that were above the declaration

threshold, and are not an accounting of all donations received by a party during the reporting year.

## Amount of declarable donations disclosed by political parties

The total value of declarable donations disclosed by political parties during 2020 was €152,686. Appendix 2 shows in detail the donations disclosed by political parties.

Fourteen of the 24 registered parties missed the original reporting deadline of 31 March. However, as all parties are now substantively in compliance, the Commission has decided not to refer non-compliance to the Director for Public Prosecutions.

The Commission reviewed donation statements and accompanying documentation, and queried lodgements over the allowable donation threshold or where the donor's identity was unclear. There was no evidence of non-compliance with the Act's provisions. One party, the Irish Freedom Party, proactively disclosed two prohibited donations from anonymous donors, and remitted the amounts in full to the Exchequer. Another party, the Labour Party, included in its statement three donations that fell below the declaration threshold.

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

<b>Party</b>	<b>Total Donations Disclosed €</b>
Fine Gael	46,168
Green Party	11,500
Labour Party*	17,950
National Party	2,500
Sinn Féin	70,668
Workers and Unemployed Action	1,500
Workers Party	2,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>152,686</b>

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

*\*Donation statement included three donations totalling €2,700 that fell under disclosure threshold.*

## Chapter 3: Accounting units

An “accounting unit” is defined in the Electoral Acts as a branch or other subsidiary organisation of a political party that, in any particular year, receives a donation the value of which exceeds €100.

As is the case with the parent political party, an accounting unit that receives a monetary donation of more than €100 must open and maintain an account in a financial institution and must lodge that donation, and any further monetary donations received, of whatever value, to that account.

The “responsible person” of an accounting unit, namely the treasurer or any other person responsible for dealing with donations to the unit, must furnish to the Standards Commission by 31 March each year:

- a statement from the financial institution where the political donations account was opened, specifying the transactions that have taken place in relation to the account during the preceding year (bank statement), and
- a certificate signed by him/her, stating that all monetary donations received during the preceding year were lodged to the account and that all amounts debited from the account were used for political purposes (Certificate of Monetary Donations), and
- a statutory declaration signed by him/her stating that, to the best of the person's knowledge and belief, the certificate is correct in every material respect and that all reasonable action has been taken in order to satisfy him/herself as to the accuracy of the certificate.

It is an offence under Section 25(1)(c) of the Act for the responsible person of an accounting unit to fail to comply with this requirement.

The Commission received each of the above documents from all accounting units for the calendar year 2020. However, there were eight accounting units who submitted either an unsigned Certificate of Monetary Donations or an unwitnessed statutory declaration or both. In addition, queries to two accounting units about the bank statements submitted were still outstanding at the time of printing of this report. These outstanding matters continue to be pursued.

The Standards Commission notes that a number of accounting units have continued to flag difficulties that they have had in complying with the legislation. The difficulties largely related to the requirement to provide statements from financial institutions.

Issues identified included:

- accessing bank statements for the preceding calendar year in time for the 31 March deadline;
- retrieving political party bank account statements due to a change of responsible person; and

- lengthy delays with bank procedures to open political donations accounts.

Accounting units have reported that the process of opening a political donations account may be protracted and can lead to a delay in the lodging of the donation, as required by the Electoral Act.

## Funds held by accounting units in 2020

The aggregate closing balance held by accounting units in relation to 2020 was €544,721.59.

Accounting units are not required to submit a donation statement to the Commission. As noted in previous reports, this makes it difficult for the Commission to ascertain the source of monies held in the political donation accounts of accounting units and to oversee compliance with the donation provisions of the Act.

Again this year, the Commission reiterates its view that further refinement of the legislation is required to ensure that there is full transparency in respect of accounting units. No donation statement is required from accounting units.

Table: Number of accounting units, by political party

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Total number of accounting units</b>
Fine Gael	39
Fianna Fáil	36
Labour Party	32
Green Party	23
Solidarity – People Before Profit	12
Social Democrats	9
Sinn Féin	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>



## Chapter 4: Publication of statutory documentation

In accordance with section 24(7)(a) of the Act, the Commission has today laid the donation statements/statutory declarations furnished by political parties before each House of the Oireachtas. The documents are available on the Oireachtas website at [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie) and on the Commission's website at [www.sipo.ie](http://www.sipo.ie).

Section 73 of the Act requires these documents to be made available for public inspection at its offices at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission's offices are closed to callers. Once restrictions are lifted, in-person inspection will resume. It is advised to ring ahead to ensure the office is open to callers. Where it is not possible to provide for in-person public inspection, copies can be made available on application to the Commission via email at [info@sipo.ie](mailto:info@sipo.ie) or by telephone at (01) 639-5666.

## Appendix 1: Registered Political Parties in 2020

Aontú
Communist Party of Ireland
Direct Democracy Ireland
Fianna Fáil
Fine Gael
Fís Nua
Green Party
Human Dignity Alliance
Identity Ireland
Independents 4 Change
Irish Democratic Party
Irish Freedom Party
Kerry Independence Alliance
Labour Party
National Party
Party for Animal Welfare
RENUA Ireland
Right to Change Party
Sinn Féin
Social Democrats
Solidarity – People Before Profit
United People
Workers' Party
Workers and Unemployed Action

## Appendix 2: Details of donations disclosed by political parties for 2020

### Fine Gael

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Brophy Colm, TD	Individual	1,558.82
Bruton Richard, TD	Individual	1,511.91
Burke Colm, TD	Individual	1,546.91
Burke Paddy, TD	Individual	1,625.73
Clune Deirdre, MEP	Individual	1,787.64
Coveney Simon, TD	Individual	1,505.00
D'Arcy Michael	Individual	2,096.91
Donohoe Paschal, TD	Individual	1,571.91
Doyle Andrew	Individual	1,558.93
Durkan Bernard, TD	Individual	1,863.37
English Damien, TD	Individual	1,520.73
Farrell Alan, TD	Individual	1,528.82
Feighan Frankie, TD	Individual	1,576.91
Fitzgerald Frances, MEP	Individual	1,586.91
Griffin Brendan, TD	Individual	1,553.82
Harris Simon, TD	Individual	1,906.46
Humphreys Heather, TD	Individual	1,571.91
Kearney Mary Seery, Senator	Individual	2,251.57
Kelly Seán, MEP	Individual	1,646.91
McEntee Helen TD	Individual	1,546.91
McHugh Joe, TD	Individual	1,516.91
Murphy Eoghan, TD	Individual	1,721.91
Naughton Hildegarde, TD	Individual	1,521.91
O'Donnell Kieran, TD	Individual	1,631.91
O'Donovan Patrick, TD	Individual	1,583.82
Phelan John Paul, TD	Individual	1,553.82
Varadkar Leo, Tanaiste	Individual	1,571.91
Walsh Maria, MEP	Individual	1,747.64
<b>Total</b>		<b>46,167.91</b>

## Green Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Cuffe Ciarán, MEP	Individual	2,500
Kinsella Christopher	Individual	2,500
McGeeney Kevin	Individual	2,500
O'Sullivan Grace, MEP	Individual	2,500
Sykes Mark	Individual	1,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,500</b>

## Labour Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Bacik Ivana, Senator	Individual	1800
Bolger Margherite	Individual	1000
Howlin Brendan, TD	Individual	2400
Humphries Kevin, TD	Individual	1800
Kelly Alan, TD	Individual	2200
Nash Ged, TD	Individual	2250
O'Sullivan Jan, TD	Individual	2400
McCullough Eoin	Individual	1000
Sherlock Seán, TD	Individual	2400
Smith Duncan	Individual	700
<b>Total</b>		<b>17,950</b>

## National Party

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Clancy Patrick	Individual	2500
<b>Total</b>		<b>2500</b>

## Sinn Féin

Name of donor	Description of donor	Value of donation €
Andrews Chris, TD	Individual	2,300.00
Carthy Matt, TD	Individual	2,496.00
Conway-Walsh Rose, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Cronin Reada, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Daly Pa, TD	Individual	2,499.97
Doherty Pearse, TD	Individual	2,288.00
Donnelly Paul, TD	Individual	2,272.70
Doyle Dawn	Individual	1,600.00
Ellis Dessie, TD	Individual	2,499.96
Farrell Mairéad, TD	Individual	2,499.97
Gavan Paul, Senator	Individual	2,460.00
MacLochlainn Pádraig, TD	Individual	2,460.00
McDonald Mary Lou, TD	Individual	2,500.00
McManus Chris, MEP	Individual	2,499.93
Mitchell Denise, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Munster Imelda, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Mythen Johnny, TD	Individual	2,272.70
Ó'Laoghaire Donnchadh, TD	Individual	1,845.00
Ó'Murchú Ruairí, TD	Individual	2,499.93
O'Reilly Louise, TD	Individual	2,460.00
O'Rourke Aaron	Individual	2,450.00
O'Rourke Darren, TD	Individual	2,272.70
Ó'Snodaigh Aengus TD	Individual	2,500.00
Quinlivan Maurice, TD	Individual	2,460.00
Ryan Patricia TD	Individual	2,222.16
Stanley Brian, TD	Individual	2,499.96
Tully Pauline, TD	Individual	2,500.00
Ward Mark, TD	Individual	2,222.16
Warfield Fintan, Senator	Individual	2,500.00
Wynne Violet Anne TD	Individual	1,666.62
<b>Total</b>		<b>70,667.76</b>

### Workers & Unemployed Action

<b>Name of donor</b>	<b>Description of donor</b>	<b>Value of donation €</b>
English Pat, Cllr	Individual	1,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,500</b>

### Workers Party

<b>Name of donor</b>	<b>Description of donor</b>	<b>Value of donation €</b>
Hughes Sean	Individual	2,400
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,400</b>