

Minister Donohoe signs enforcement provisions for Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

Monday, July 11, 2016

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D., today (Monday, July 11, 2016) signed the Commencement Order for the enforcement provisions for the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015. The enforcement provisions will take effect from 1st January 2017.

The decision to delay commencing the enforcement provisions until 2017 was made to allay any concerns that stakeholders may have had about inadvertent non-compliance with the provisions of the Act and to allow those lobbying a period of time to become familiar with their legal obligations and the registration system.

Minister Donohoe said: 'Given the success of the system, and the high levels of compliance, it is my intention to commence these provisions from January 1st 2017. It is clear that the work undertaken by my Department and the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) in building awareness and understanding of the Regulation of Lobbying Act has been effective and I am confident that this momentum will be maintained as this work continues.'

The Register, which may be viewed at www.lobbying.ie, is overseen by the Standards Commission. The website, which includes the online register, also has a suite of information tools designed to help lobbyists, designated public officials and the public to fully understand the Act and its obligations.

Ends

Notes for Editors

The purpose of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 is to deliver appropriate transparency on 'who is contacting whom about what' and this was achieved by the establishment of a web-based register of lobbying activity.

Commencement of the penalty provisions was deliberately delayed to allow everyone an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the requirements and ease concerns about inadvertent non-compliance. The Standards Commission will continue to provide information, guidance and advice to lobbyists.

The Act provides that the Commission may serve fixed payment notices of €200 where an offence has been committed in relation to the late filing of returns. It also provides that a lobbyist who is guilty of an offence other than late filing of a return is liable on summary conviction to a class C fine (the Fines Act 2010, Section 3, provides that a class c fine means a fine not exceeding €2,500) or if convicted on indictment to a fine or imprisonment or both. Any term of imprisonment cannot exceed two years.

Part 4 of the Act contains the enforcement provisions and comprises sections 18 to 21. Section 18 sets out the contraventions relevant to the Act. Section 19 gives the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Standards Commission) the power to investigate possible contraventions. Section 21 allows the Standards Commission to levy fixed payment notices for certain contraventions of the legislation. Finally, Section 20 of the Act gives the Standards Commission the authority to prosecute offences.

<http://www.per.gov.ie/en/regulation-of-lobbying/>