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| Lead topic: Public Service Pay and Industrial Relations | Sub-topic: An Garda Síochána and Defence Forces | Contact: Tom Clarke |
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Q&A'S

Q1. Were the Garda and Defence Forces representative associations involved at the recent public sector pay talks?

Yes, these associations were provided with full parity of esteem with the ICTU affiliated unions at the recent public sector pay talks and were fully involved at all stages of the process under the auspices of the WRC. The executives of the Garda and Defence Forces Associations are currently considering the proposals that have emerged from the public sector pay talks.

Q2. What progress has been made in relation to Government commitments on the review of industrial relations structures in An Garda Síochána?

- The resolution of the Garda dispute late last year included a commitment to the introduction of legislative change to give the Garda Associations the right of access to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and the Labour Court.
- On 20 December last the Government approved the preparation of the heads of a Bill to provide the Associations with access to the WRC and the Labour Court. Providing access to the WRC/Labour Court does not of itself imply the removal of either the prohibition on members of the Garda Síochána joining trade unions or the constraints on industrial action.
- In order to progress matters, An Tánaiste established a Working Group, chaired by Mr John Murphy, the recently retired Secretary General of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, to consider some of the technical and practical issues that will arise. The Working Group has identified a number of key issues that will require consideration including:
 - Whether the Garda Associations should become full Trade Unions,
 - The question of constraints on industrial action,
 - The range of matters on which access is to be provided to the WRC and Labour Court,
 - What internal processes are required to be in place and be exhausted prior to issues being brought to the WRC, and, more generally,
 - How industrial relations should operate within An Garda Síochána when access to the WRC and Labour Court has been provided.

The Working Group is to report on these substantive issues, to An Tánaiste, shortly.