

The Interdepartmental Committee on Diaspora Policy

Purpose of the IDC

1. The Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Diaspora Policy was one of the key initiatives introduced by “*Global Irish – Ireland’s Diaspora Policy*” in 2015.
2. The IDC was set up to ensure that government works in a joined-up way to realise the objectives of the diaspora strategy, including addressing issues affecting the Irish abroad and those seeking to return. The Committee brings together key Government Departments and State Agencies and meets on a quarterly basis. It is chaired by the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development. The Department of the Taoiseach provides the Secretariat for the Committee.
3. Since its inception, the IDC has reviewed the activities and outcomes of various diaspora initiatives undertaken by D/FAT and by D/Taoiseach, including developing communications with the diaspora and increased local diaspora engagement as well as the outcomes of key forums held in Dublin - the Global Irish Economic Forum and Global Irish Civic Forum.

Recent developments

4. Recently the work of the IDC has focused on the issue of “barriers to returning emigrants”, that is, areas causing disproportionate difficulty to Irish people abroad that wish to return to live in Ireland. In the two meetings of the Inter-departmental Committee on the Irish Abroad chaired by Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D., discussion of reports of disproportionately challenging administrative burdens and other challenges facing Irish emigrants wishing to return home has been the focus of the agenda. Organisations working for those returning to Ireland who are supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support programme have been invited to present their findings to the Committee.
5. It was decided at the last meeting of the Committee on 30 March 2017 that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade would commission a detailed socio-economic report outlining what can be done to reduce 'red tape' and address other

obstacles facing returning emigrants. Tenders are currently being sought to give effect to this decision.

6. An additional meeting of the IDC, where some Departments were represented at ministerial level, was convened at the request of the Taoiseach on 27 April 2017. The Taoiseach requested this meeting to update him on the work of the IDC and in particular to detail what was being done on the area of barriers to return. He requested that a Report be brought to Government on the work of the IDC, and attached is the Memorandum to Government.

Next meeting

7. The IDC is required to meet on a quarterly basis. The next meeting of the IDC was scheduled for 15 June 2017, however, this was postponed pending new ministerial appointments and it is intended to hold the next meeting of the IDC in the coming weeks depending on Minister Cannon's diary.

Irish Abroad Unit

20 June 2017