

## **Department of the Taoiseach**

SMEs employ 60% of the workforce, but have no representation in industrial relations matters with Government.

We require pro-rata representation on the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) and on the Low Pay Commission.

## **Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment**

Calculation of the minimum wage must reflect the fact that 48% of the workforce are employed by public service or multinationals, which enjoy far higher wages than the rest of us. At a minimum, public sector pay must be disregarded from calculations. Future increases in the NMW must not exceed CPI.

All the workplace research into NMW-setting shows that large increases in minimum wages reduce employment and hours worked, particularly for the low-skilled.

All legislation affecting labour and overhead costs for SMEs must be subject to the SME Test and regulatory impact assessment.

President Trump's promises to US business mean Corporation Tax receipts cannot be guaranteed into the future. Ireland's industrial policy must reflect this. We must grow our indigenous enterprise base.

## **Department of Finance**

The 8.8% rate of PRSI must apply to the entirety of the National Minimum Wage.

The food service and grooming sectors require the permanent establishment of a 9% VAT rate.

Our 23% standard VAT rate is too high and should revert to its historical 21% rate.

The cost of accommodation and living crisis cannot be addressed by forcing up the National Minimum Wage. It can only be fixed by increasing the supply of accommodation and tackling consumer costs. The tax system must be used to stimulate the provision of rental accommodation by the private sector.

Ireland must not be the most expensive State in the eurozone in which to live. We should aspire to be the most affordable. This means looking critically at our standard and reduced rates of VAT, energy costs, insurance costs, legal costs and labour costs.

Our personal tax rates are not high, but the income at which workers pay the TOP rate of tax is below the average industrial wage. We must stop removing workers

from the tax net, we depend too much on the tiny number of high earners in the state; all workers must make some level of contribution.

DFIN does not appear culturally attuned to the development of indigenous enterprise: Output is all based on conformance, not performance; rules are optimised for large business; tax law discourages scale in favour of sale.

### **Department of Justice**

The legal system is the roadblock to infrastructure development, affordable housing, affordable family law, free speech, timely commercial dispute resolution, and is discouraging inward investment by FDI. For how much longer do we protect this sector from the IMF reform proposals?

Reform of the legal cost issue cannot be postponed. The Minority report of the Kelly Review provides the template for progress.

The Defamation (Amendment) Bill without a serious harm test has been described by a senior legal academic as a “legislative dead letter.” At an absolute minimum, the bill must include a serious harm test, and must reinstate the provision for “transient retail defamation.” Telling the retail and hospitality sectors they can avail of a qualified privilege defence is a practical nonsense aimed at preserving legal incomes, and will not be tolerated.

The Unified Patent Court (UPC) is essential for the affordable protection of Irish intellectual property in Europe. The referendum for the ratification of the agreement on the UPC, which was postponed last April, must be held early in the lifetime of the next Government.

The Law Society protocol on solicitor referrals to doctors is so broad that there are no non-permissible cases. We want the Legal Service Regulation Act amended to outlaw referrals to medical professionals which do not originate from a medical professional for stated medical need.

### **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

Ireland must resource higher levels of infrastructure and housing spend, as well as address risks identified in our National Risk Assessment. This will limit expenditures elsewhere. The private sector can help if it is incentivised to do so.

### **Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform**

State services need to expand for a larger population. But they must be efficient and effective. Outcomes for citizens will not improve without reform, no matter how much money we spend. ISME has recommended the formation of a standing commission on public sector pay, and a standing commission on public expenditure to address this.

## **Department of Social Protection**

The social insurance fund is €350bn underfunded to meet its liabilities, yet Irish workers pay some of the lowest social contributions in Europe. We recommend a 2% PRSI rate to be applied to ALL earnings up to the current cut-off of €424 per week, and 6% on the balance. This would reduce PRSI payments for all full-time workers earning up to €848 per week.

## **Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**

Our workers and business owners require upskilling to scale, to digitalise, to decarbonise, and to export. Employers fund the National Training Fund through the 1% PRSI levy. Spend that money on the Irish workforce, as originally intended.

## **Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications**

SMEs and the public will not make the green transition without adequate, reliable economic incentives in place to do so. Ireland must stop tinkering with tax incentives on electric vehicles and building retrofit, and give confidence and clarity on what incentives will be in place and for how long.

## **Department of Health**

A minority of medical professionals are accepting requests for diagnostics and or treatment which do not originate from medical practitioners and are not based upon medical need. We want the Medical Practitioners Act amended to penalise doctors who accept referrals for diagnostics or treatment which do not originate from a medical practitioner, or which are not grounded in the medical needs of the patient.