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ROLE OF TAOISEACH & GOVERNMENT

The Taoiseach nominates the Tánaiste and the other members of the Government for the approval of the Dáil and assigns the particular Departments to the Ministers on their appointment by the President. The Taoiseach also nominates the Attorney General for appointment by the President. The Taoiseach also has the power to advise the President to accept the resignation of Ministers.

The Taoiseach, as head of the Government, is the central co-ordinator of the work of the Ministers and their Departments of State. The Taoiseach also advises and guides the other members of the Government when faced particularly with issues requiring the successful working of the Government as a collective authority responsible to Dáil Éireann. The Taoiseach will set broad Government policy. The Taoiseach keeps the President informed on domestic and international policy.

The Taoiseach has certain statutory responsibilities for the reform of the law, for official statistics and for the administration of public services which are not the responsibility of any other member of the Government.

The Taoiseach may decide that particular matters are of such importance or breadth that it is appropriate that they should come under the aegis of her or his authority and be brought under the responsibility of the Department of the Taoiseach. At present they would include the Strategic Management Initiative for the modernization of the public service; co-ordinating the contribution to government policy on Northern Ireland and on Irelands relations to the European Union; The National Economic and Social Council the National Economic and Social Forum; the Information Society Commission; the Government Press Service; the National Centre for Partnership and Performance and the coordination of relations with the social partners under the partnership agreements.

CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND - BUNREACTH NA hÉIREANN

Bunreacht na hÉireann, the Constitution of Ireland, is the basic law of Ireland. No law can be passed which does not agree with it. The Constitution can be changed only by a referendum in which every citizen of Ireland is entitled to vote. The Constitution was passed in a referendum on the 1st July 1937. It came into operation on the 29th December 1937. The present Constitution replaced Constitution of the Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann) which came into existence in 1922.

NATIONAL FLAG



The national flag of Ireland is a tricolour of green, white and orange. The flag is twice as wide as it is high. The three colours are of equal size and the green goes next to the flagstaff.

The flag was first introduced by Thomas Francis Meagher in 1848 who based it on the French tricolour

The green represents the older Gaelic tradition while the orange represents the supporters of William of Orange. The white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the 'Orange' and the 'Green'.



It was not until the Rising of 1916, when it was raised above the General Post Office in Dublin, that the tricolour came to be regarded as the national flag.

It is now enshrined in the Constitution of Ireland.

THE HARP



The Harp is exclusively an emblem of the State at home and abroad. It is always used by Government Departments and Offices. It appears on all Irish coins and it will continue to appear on the new Euro coins when they are introduced at the start of the year 2002.

The Harp is engraved on the seal of office of the President and it is also on the flag of the President of Ireland where it appears as a gold harp with silver strings on blue (azure).

The design of the harp is based on the fourteenth century 'the Brian Boru Harp' preserved in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem, called The Soldier's Song was written in 1907 by Peadar Kearney, an uncle of Brendan Behan. It was first published in the newspaper, Irish Freedom in 1912, but was not widely known until it was sung at the GPO during the Easter Rising of 1916.

The chorus was formally adopted as the National Anthem in 1926.

If you would like to play the music on a musical instrument you can read the music on the **image** below.

A section of the National Anthem (consisting of the first four bars followed by the last five) is also the Presidential Salute.

ABOUT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS - UPPER MERRION STREET, DUBLIN 2.



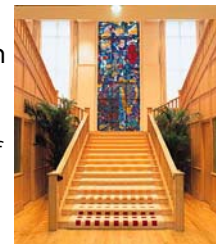
They started the building of 'Government Buildings' in 1904 and finished it in 1922.

For a long time the front of the building was used for government offices and the rear of the building was the College of Science. Since 1990 the whole building is used for government offices. Part of the building is used for the Department of the Taoiseach, part is used for the Department of Finance and part is used for the Offices of the Attorney General [the government's official lawyer]. The Taoiseach's office is on the first floor.

There are also conference rooms and offices for the Taoiseach's officials.

The statutes above the entrance were made by the famous Irish sculptor Albert Power. The statues by the main door are of two of Ireland's most famous scientists, Sir Robert Boyle and Sir William Rowan Hamilton.

The beautiful bright entrance hall has a ceremonial stairway from which can be seen the stained glass window by Evie Hone called 'My four Green Fields', made for the Irish government's pavilion at the 1939 New York World Trade Fair. It shows the emblems of four provinces of Ireland in a very artistic and interesting way.



Most of the materials used throughout the building were made in Ireland. Modern works of art works hang on the walls of the rooms and corridors.

In the basement there is a press centre, fully equipped with recording facilities, television broadcasting, simultaneous interpretation, autocue, and slide projection.

FAQs

WHEN WAS THE TAOISEACHS DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED?

When the Constitution of 1937 came in to operation (29 December 1937), the Department of the President of the Executive Council, became the Department of the Taoiseach.

WHO IS THE TAOISEACH?

The Taoiseach is Irelands Head of Government. He is Party Leader, Government Chairman and Chief Policy Maker. The Taoiseach is appointed by the President. Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D. Leader of the Fianna Fáil Party is the current Taoiseach.

WHAT DOES THE TAOISEACH DO?

As Head of Government, the Taoiseach co-ordinates the work of all Government Departments (fifteen in total). He chairs Government Meetings, directs their Agenda and business. The Taoiseach is answerable for Government policy as he is the States Chief Policy Maker. He presents Bills passed by the Dáil and Seanad to the President to sign in order for them to become law. The Taoiseach keeps the President informed on international and domestic policy matters. He nominates the Attorney General who the President then appoints. He nominates Government Ministers (also known as the Cabinet) and nominates the Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) from Government. He can request the resignation of Ministers. The Taoiseach nominates the Ministers of State (Junior Ministers), for approval by Government. The Taoiseach appoints eleven members of the Seanad also the Clerks and Clerks Assistants of the Dáil and Seanad, the Superintendent and Captain of the Guards for the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Finance must be members of the Dáil.

WHAT DOES THE WORD TAOISEACH MEAN?

Taoiseach is an old Irish title meaning Chieftain or Leader. Taoisigh is the plural of Taoiseach

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE TAOISEACH?

Phonetically the word is pronounced "teeshock" Taoisigh is pronounced as "teeshe"

HOW MANY TAOISIGH HAS IRELAND HAD?

The Taoiseach is the Head of the Irish Government. At different times in the past the Head of the Irish Government had different titles. Below is a list of the Heads of the Irish Government since it came into being in 1919.

- Cathal Brugha January 1919 - April 1919
- Eamonn de Valera April 1919 - August 1921
- Arthur Griffith January 1921 - September 1922
- Michael Collins January 1922 - August 1922
- W.T. Cosgrave August 1922 - March 1932
- Eamonn de Valera March 1932 - February 1948
- John A. Costello February 1948 - June 1951
- Eamon de Valera June 1951 - June 1954
- John A. Costello June 1954 - March 1957
- Eamon de Valera March 1957 - June 1959
- Sean F. Lemass June 1959 - Nov 1966
- Jack Lynch Nov 1966 - March 1973
- Liam Cosgrave March 1973 - June 1977
- Jack Lynch July 1977 - Dec 1979
- Charles J. Haughey Dec 1979 - June 1981
- Garret FitzGerald June 1981 - Jan 1982
- Charles J. Haughey March 1982 - Dec 1982
- Garret FitzGerald Dec 1982 - March 1987
- Charles J. Haughey March 1987 - Feb 1992
- Albert Reynolds Feb 1992 - Dec 1994
- John Bruton Dec 1994 - June 1997
- Bertie Ahern June 1997 - to date

Following the dissolution of a Dáil, the Taoiseach remains in office until the new Dáil meets and nominates a new Government.

Ireland has not yet had a female Taoiseach.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO THE TAOISEACH WHO WOULD RUN THE COUNTRY?

The Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) would act for the Taoiseach if he were to die or become incapacitated until the appointment of a new Taoiseach

WHAT ARE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS?

Article 28.4.1 of the Constitution, states that the Government shall be responsible to Dáil Éireann. One of the procedures of the Dáil is to have members of Government report on the management of their Department by way of reply to Parliamentary Questions (PQs). Any member of the Dáil can ask a question of any Minister. Questions must be addressed to the Minister with functional responsibility for the matter at issue.

These questions are listed at the start of the Dáil Order Paper. PQs can take the form of both Oral or Written question. The Taoiseach answers Oral PQs in the Dáil from 2.30 p.m. to 3.15 p.m. twice weekly (i.e. Tuesday and Wednesday). All other Ministers answer Oral PQs once every 6 weeks. Replies to written PQs are supplied to the Deputies through the General Office in Leinster House.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE TAOISEACH
YOUTH ZONE SCHOOL PACK**

The Taoiseach answers PQs relating to the activities of his Department and about his own schedule and activities (e.g. meetings with Heads of State, issues concerning Northern Ireland, EU and the President.) Where questions are appropriate to another Government Minister, they are transferred to his/her office for reply.

WHAT IS THE CABINET?

The Government is referred to as the Cabinet. It consists of not less than seven and not more than fifteen members. Matters discussed at Cabinet Meetings are confidential unless the High Court determines otherwise.

WHAT IS THE OIREACHTAS?

The Oireachtas is Ireland's national parliament. It consists of the President and two Houses, Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann. No person can be a member of both Houses at the same time. Sittings of each House are public except where emergency meetings are called and with majority agreement, these sit in private.

WHAT IS THE DÁIL?

Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) normally meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday, it can also have special sitting days. The work of the Dáil is concerned with debating social, economic, financial and budgetary matters. Its members draft, amend, vote on and examine proposals for new legislation, debate Bills and issues that are important to the country. The members are called Teactaí Dála (plural) and Teachta Dála, (singular), T.D.s for short. Currently the Dáil has 166 members. Dáil Éireann has its own Committee system which advises on legislation, economic and financial business. The Chairman of the Dáil is called the Ceann Comhairle, the Deputy Chairman is the Leas-Ceann Comhairle.

WHAT IS THE SEANAD?

Seanad Éireann (Senate) normally meets on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Its main business is revising legislation sent to it by Dáil Éireann. The Seanad can initiate legislation with the exception of financial legislation although it can make recommendations to Money Bills. The Seanad debates issues of social, economic and financial importance to the country. There are sixty members of the Seanad; 11 are nominated by the Taoiseach, 43 are elected by panels representing Culture and Education, Agriculture, Labour, Industry and Commerce and Public Administration, six members are elected by graduates of the National University of Ireland and by the University of Dublin. The members are called Seanadóirí (plural) and Senadóir (singular). The Chairman of the Seanad is called the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Cathaoirleach is the Deputy Chairman. Only two members of Government can be members of Seanad Éireann.

WHAT IS THE CONSTITUTION?

Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland), is the highest law of the country. The Bunreacht (Constitution) can only be changed with the vote of Irish citizens (aged eighteen and over) in what is called a Referendum. Changes to the Bunreacht are called Amendments. The present Bunreacht was passed by the people in a Referendum on the 1st July 1937. Its fifty Articles cover a wide range of subjects including the establishment of the State, the colours of the Flag, the rules governing the Office of the President, how the Government operates and the powers that Government has.

WHAT DO THE MINISTERS DO?

Each Minister is given a portfolio which gives him/her responsibility for a specific Department. In addition to having responsibility for their own Departments, Government Ministers are collectively responsible for all Departments. If a Minister is absent or indisposed for a given time, his/her responsibilities are given to another Minister, the Departments of Justice and Finance would be assigned to the Taoiseach in this situation. The Tánaiste acts in place of the Taoiseach during his absence.

The Taoiseach can reshuffle portfolios during the Governments term of office, titles and functions of Departments can also be changed. Ministers can attend and address both the Dáil and Seanad. If the Taoiseach resigns from office, Ministers are also deemed to have resigned, however they carry on their duties until their successors are appointed. Ministers of State assist Government Ministers in Parliamentary and departmental work. They are appointed by Government on the nomination of the Taoiseach. The maximum number of Ministers of State is seventeen.

CAN I HAVE THE TAOISEACHS AUTOGRAPH?

CAN I HAVE THE TAOISEACHS PHOTOGRAPH?

CAN I HAVE A SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE TAOISEACH?

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Ten Irish people have won noble prizes:

- William Butler Yeats (Literature)
- George Bernard Shaw (Literature)
- Ernest Thomas Sinton Walton (joint) (Physics)
- Samuel Beckett (Literature)
- Sean MacBride (Peace)
- Mairead Corrigan & Betty Williams (Peace)
- Seamus Heaney (Literature)
- John Hume & David Trimble (Peace)

2. Samuel Beckett wrote the worlds shortest play - *Breath* is 30 seconds long

3. Irelands highest mountain is Carrantuohill in County Kerry

4. Irelands longest river is the Shannon

5. Irelands longest lake is Lough Neagh

6. Powerscourt waterfall the highest in Ireland

7. The Ceide Fields in North Mayo is the most extensive Stone Age monument in the world

8. The coldest months in Ireland are January and February, July and August are the warmest, May and June are the sunniest

9. Ireland is the westernmost island in Europe

10. Irelands greatest length is (NS) is 302 miles (486 km) and greatest width (EW) 171 miles (275 km)

11. The total coastline of Ireland is 1,970 miles (3,169 km)

12. The Constitution of Ireland was enacted by the People on 1st July 1937

13. Ireland joined the EEC on January 1st 1973

14. Traditionally, there are eighteen letters in the Irish alphabet (abcdefghijklmnpqrstu)

15. 70 million people worldwide claim Irish ancestry

**DEPARTMENT OF THE TAOISEACH
YOUTH ZONE SCHOOL PACK**

16. Julius Caesar gave Ireland the Latin name Hibernia in the first Century BC
17. It is alleged that St. Brendan, an Irish monk, discovered America before Christopher Columbus
18. It is said that lynch-law owes its name to James Fitzstephen Lynch, mayor and warden of Galway who tried and executed his own son in 1493
19. Mike Quill from County Kerry was the founder and first international president of the Transport Workers Union of America (1934)
20. Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington whose military career culminated in winning the Battle of Waterloo, was born in Dublin in 1769.
21. James Hoban from County Kilkenny was the architect who designed the White House in 1792
22. Commodore John Barry from Wexford is referred to as the father of the US Navy
23. John Philip Holland from County Clare designed the submarine, which was later used by the US Government
24. John Tyndall from County Carlow (scientist) is best remembered for explaining, why the sky is blue
25. The first Dáil sat on 21st January 1919; the first Seanad sat on 11th December 1922
26. Mary Robinson was Ireland's first female President (3/12/1990-12/10/1997)
27. Mary McAleese is the first President of Ireland from north of the border (elected 11/11/1997)
28. The Book of Armagh is the earliest existing specimen of a continuous narrative in Irish prose. It represents Irish of the end of the seventh, or of the beginning of the eighth, century
29. Of the four Botanic Gardens established in Ireland between 1795 - 1827, the Dublin gardens remain, (the Belfast Garden is now a Public Park, the Ballsbridge Garden closed, as did the one in Cork)
30. The first public screening of a film was made in Ireland at the Star of Erin Theatre of Varieties on April 17th 1896
31. South Boston born James Brendan Connolly, whose parents were from Inis Mór, Aran Islands, was the first ever modern Olympic Champion, he won Gold in the Hop, Step and Jump (Triple Jump) in 1896

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32. James Joyce opened the Irelands first Cinema, The Volta, Mary Street, Dublin, on 20th December 1009
33. Trinity College Dublin was established in 1592
34. Temple Bar in Dublin housed the first Jewish temple built in Ireland
35. Radio Teilifis Éireann made its first public transmission on 31st December 1961
36. Radio 1 first broadcast in January 1926
37. Teampall Bheanain on Inis Mór, Aran Islands, County Galway is one of the smallest in the world measuring 10 feet x 7 feet
38. Irelands first railway from Dublin to Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) was built in 1834 and was the worlds first commuter line
39. Liam Cosgrave led the first Irish delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1956
40. Chaim Herzog, sixth President of the State of Israel, was born in Belfast in 1918
41. The paintings that attract most attention at the National Gallery, Dublin are The Taking of Christ by Caravaggio (1571-1610) and Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid by Vermeer (1632-1675)
42. Stephen Roche became the first Irishman to win the Tour de France and the World Professional Road Championship, he is the second rider in history to win the Giro d'Italia, Tour de France and the World Professional Championship in the same year.
43. Bill King was the first Irishman to sail alone around the world (1970/1973)
44. Pat Falvey from Cork was the first Irishman to climb all the great mountains of the world, including Everest, Kilimanjaro, Mount Vinson and Mount Aconcagua
45. Alan Humphries was the first Irishman to reach the North Pole (April 26th 1999 in the Aspirations 99 Dogsled and Ski Expedition)
46. Michael Collins was the first Irishman in space, he remained in lunar orbit while his Apollo 11 colleagues, Edwin Aldrin and Neil Armstrong walked on the moon (21st July 1969)
47. John Robert Gregg from County Monaghan invented the internationally used Gregg Shorthand System
48. Catherine Elizabeth McAuley from Dublin established the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in 1831

QUIZ

- 1. When did the present Government take up office?**
 - a) 17 May 2002
 - b) 6 June 2002
 - c) May 30 2002

- 2. What is the current maximum period for which a Dáil can continue in being?**
 - a) 5 years
 - b) 12 years
 - c) 7 years

- 3. Which Constituency does the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern represent?**
 - a) Dublin North
 - b) Dublin Central
 - c) Dublin North Central

- 4. The Oireachtas consists of**
 - a) The Dáil
 - b) The Dáil and Seanad
 - c) The Dáil and the Seanad and The President

- 5. How many Constituencies are there for Dáil elections**
 - a) 42
 - b) 32
 - c) 41

- 6. To be nominated to and retain the Office of Taoiseach, the Taoiseach needs the support of a majority of**
 - a) The Dáil
 - b) The Seanad
 - c) The People

- 7. How many Ministers of State are there**
 - a) 21
 - b) 17
 - c) 2

8. The Tánaiste is

- a) Deputy Prime Minister
- b) Cathaoirleach of the Seanad
- c) A member of the Presidential Commission

9. Name the Government Chief Whip

- a) Brian Lenihan T.D.
- b) Tom Kitt T.D.
- c) Seamus Brennan T.D

10.The Taoiseach's Department is located in

- a) Kildare Street, Dublin 2,
- b) The Phoenix Park, Dublin 8
- c) Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. 6 June 2002
2. 5 years
3. Dublin Central
4. The Dáil and the Seanad and The President
5. 42
6. The Dáil
7. 17
8. Deputy Prime Minister
9. Tom Kitt T.D.
10. Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2