

# Building Momentum takes first step towards acceptance

## ANDY PRENDERGAST & COLMAN HIGGINS

**The proposed revision to the public service agreement, Building Momentum, has gained an important step towards approval, with the recommendation for acceptance by four of the largest public sector unions.**

The Fórsa, SIPTU, INTO and INMO unions have all recommended acceptance to their members, of the proposed Building Momentum agreement 2021-2023, drawn up at the WRC last week (see [IRN 31/2022](#)).

The proposal to revise Building Momentum involves a new 6.5% basic pay increase, over 2022 and 2023, on top of the already-agreed 2% in pay increases for 2022, resulting in a 8.5% lift for the two years (or a 9.5% lift if including the first 1% pay increase of BM, paid in October 2021).

The new deal is, once again, geared to be more favourable for public and civil servants who are on salaries below €50,000; some of whom will stand to gain between 12% and 13% in basic pay increases between 2021 and 2023.

The leadership of the first four unions to have backed acceptance of the deal all have key negotiators on the public services committee (PSC) of ICTU: Chair Kevin Callinan (Fórsa general secretary); John King (SIPTU deputy general secretary); John Boyle (INTO general secretary); and Phil Ni Sheaghda (INMO general secretary).

The WRC's proposed revision to Building Momentum carries a stipulation that the parties recommend the deal for acceptance.

## **MORE UNIONS EXPECTED TO SAY 'YES'**

The backing of the four major public service unions is likely to materialise in 'Yes' votes in ballots of each of the four unions, meaning the new deal will be passed by the ICTU, in its aggregate vote on October 7 – regardless of the outcomes of the other 16 or so ICTU unions' ballots.

However, it is expected that some of the smaller unions – which are traditionally 'yes' unions to public service deals – will also recommend acceptance and carry the deal over the line.

This leaves open the possibility for some ICTU unions to vote 'No' to the new deal, but still accept the aggregate 'Yes' result. This approach has been witnessed in previous public sector agreements.

Second-level teacher unions ASTI and TUI have both put the proposals out to ballots of their members without a recommendation for or against. Both unions have voted against public service agreements in the past – and at times have recommended members reject such deals. In recent years, even if voting against a deal, they have allowed themselves to be encompassed by the aggregate majority ICTU vote for the agreement.

The Garda Representative Association (GRA) has deferred a decision on balloting the new pay proposals until its executive meeting on September 16-17. It is not part of ICTU, so is not part of the Congress delegate vote on October 7.

PDFORRA, which represented enlisted Defence Forces personnel, has recommended that its 6,500 members vote in favour of the agreement in the coming weeks. It was part of the ICTU group in the talks for the first time on this occasion, in its new capacity as an associate member.

The terms of the new deal will apply to the membership of ICTU and non ICTU unions and associations which “notify the WRC of their intention to comply with the Agreement.”

*For further insight and analysis of the [Building Momentum proposal](#) see [News Analysis in this issue](#).*