

Top-level Remuneration Committee announced, focus on CSBs

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A promised 'Senior Posts Remuneration Committee' – announced last year – is expected to be established soon in order to examine top level posts across the public sector, with an immediate focus on CEO salaries in the commercial state companies.

DPER Minister Paschal Donohoe announced on Wednesday the establishment of the Senior Posts Remuneration Committee, which will first conduct a review of pay rates of CEOs of Commercial State Bodies (CSBs).

The Minister also confirmed that the term length for Civil Service Secretary General posts will be seven years, which reflects current procedures, with a possible extension of up to two additional years where necessary.

The new Senior Posts Remuneration Committee is to be chaired by chartered accountant Maeve Carton, and also includes Bernie Gray (management consultant), Liam Kelly (former DG of the WRC), Mary Connaughton (Director of CIPD Ireland) and Ultan Courtney (Chair of the Low Pay Commission).

IRN reported last year that the Government had given the green light to the establishment – on a legal basis – of a new Committee to advise it on pay arrangements for top level posts in the public service and for CEOs in the commercial semi-states.

The decision on the top pay committee was agreed by Government on June 27, 2023, “to progress the establishment of the Senior Posts Remuneration Committee on a statutory basis, in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Review Panel on senior public service recruitment and pay determination processes”.

Minister Donohoe welcomed the members of the Senior Posts Remuneration Committee to their new role as they commence work on this important area, adding that they are “all highly qualified and experienced, and I look forward to receiving their advice in due course.”

“In addition, in addressing the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Review Panel in respect of the term and arrangements for these very senior posts Government is enhancing clarity, consistency and transparency for all stakeholders while retaining an ability to preserve experience within the system”, he added.

AGREED CHANGES FOR TOP CIVIL SERVANTS

The Government has now agreed a number of changes to the term length and end of term arrangements for Secretary General posts and Heads of certain Civil Service Offices at Secretary General level, as follows:

- Confirming a seven-year term, and agreement to a possible extension of up to a further two years, for a maximum of nine years subject to Government agreement.
- On completion of this term, and as set out in the draft Heads of Bill:
 1. Appointment to a role at Assistant Secretary grade or (where relevant) at the grade level that they occupied immediately prior to their appointment as Head of Department, whichever is the higher, at the appropriate remuneration for this grade, or
 2. A one-time end-of-term payment equivalent to up to one year's salary*.
- In addition, Government may appoint a Secretary General at the end of their term into a post at equivalent level for a period of up to five years where it is considered appropriate. This post would be outside the Civil Service Departments and Offices encompassed above.

*The end-of-term payment of up to one year's salary is in line with current policy and was found by the Independent Review Panel (IRP) to be appropriate.

As noted in the earlier IRP Report, this is in line with the restrictions on employment put in place by the Standards in Public Office (SIPO) Civil Service Code of Standards. Designated officials under the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour, which includes Secretaries General, are prohibited for a period of 12 months from taking up certain employment or contracts. This is where "the nature and terms of such appointment or engagement could lead to a conflict of interest..."

This end-of-term payment will amount to either one year's salary or a pro-rata value scaled to minimum pension age, whichever is the lesser. Where the individual is at or above their minimum retirement age, superannuation benefits will be payable but no end of term payment will be made.