



Council of the
European Union

148070/EU XXVII.GP
Eingelangt am 05/07/23

Brussels, 5 July 2023
(OR. en, ga)

11451/23

Interinstitutional Files:

2023/0138(COD)

2023/0137(CNS)

2023/0136(NLE)

ECOFIN 727

UEM 226

INST 256

PARLNAT 150

COVER NOTE

From:	Houses of the Oireachtans
date of receipt:	26 June 2023
To:	The President of the Council of the European Union

Subject: Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States [doc. 8778/23 ECOFIN 384 UEM 88 - COM(2023) 240 final]

Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION amending Regulation (EC) No 1467/97 on speeding up and clarifying the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure [doc. 8777/23 ECOFIN 383 UEM 87 - COM(2023) 241 final]

Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 [doc. 8776/23 ECOFIN 382 UEM 86 - COM(2023) 240 final]

- Opinion on the application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality

Delegations will find enclosed the opinion¹ of the Houses of the Oireachtas on the above.

¹ The translation(s) of the opinion may be available on the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange website (IPEX) at the following addresses: <https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/document/COM-2023-240>, <https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/document/COM-2023-241>, <https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/document/COM-2023-242>.



Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas

An Comhchoiste um
Airgeadas, Caiteachas
Poiblí agus Athchóiriú,
agus an Taoiseach

Teach Laighean
Baile Átha Cliath 2
D02 XR20
Guthán: (01) 618 3850
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financecommittee@oireachtas.ie

Joint Committee on
Finance, Public
Expenditure and Reform,
and Taoiseach

Leinster House
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26 June 2023

Ref: JCFPERT-I-0788

Thérèse Blanchet,
Secretary General,
Council of the European Union,

Issued to: natparl@consilium.europa.eu

RE: Package of proposals

- **COM (2023)240 Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1466/97;**
- **COM (2023)241 Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No. 1467 on speeding up and clarifying the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; and**
- **COM (2023)242 Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States to be significantly important to Ireland and the EU.**

Dear Secretary General,

The Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach ('the Committee') has considered the above proposals, COM(2022)240-242 inclusive, concerning changes to EU Fiscal Rules. The Committee agreed at its private meeting on Wednesday, 31 May, to forward the attached contribution for your consideration.

A copy of this contribution has also been forwarded to the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Minister for Finance as part of the political dialogue process with national parliaments.

Yours sincerely,

John McGuinness, T.D.
Cathaoirleach to the Committee

Cuirfear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge



**Tithe an
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Tithe An Oireachtais

An Comhchoiste Um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí Agus Athchóiriú, Agus Taoiseach

An Cion Polaitiúil i ndáil leis an

COM (2023)240 *Togra le haghaidh rialachán ó Pharlaimint na hEorpa agus ón gComhairle maidir le comhordú éifeachtach beartas eacnamaíochta agus le faireachas iltaobhach buiséadach agus lena n-aisghairtear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1466/97 ón gComhairle;*

COM (2023)241 *Togra le haghaidh Rialachán ón gComhairle lena leasaítear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1467 maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an nós imeachta easnaimh iomarcaigh a bhrostú agus a shoiléiriú; agus*

COM (2023)242 *Togra le haghaidh TREOIR ÓN gCOMHAIRLE lena leasaítear Treoir 2011/85/AE maidir le ceanglais do chreataí buiséadacha na mBallstát*

Houses Of The Oireachtas

Joint Committee On Finance, Public Expenditure And Reform, And Taoiseach

Political Contribution on

COM (2023)240 *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1466/97;*

COM (2023)241 *Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No. 1467 on speeding up and clarifying the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; and*

COM (2023)242 *Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States*

1. Introduction

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach ("the Committee") considers the package of proposals comprised of:

- **COM (2023)240** *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1466/97;*
- **COM (2023)241** *Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No. 1467 on speeding up and clarifying the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; and*
- **COM (2023)242** *Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States to be significantly important to Ireland and the EU.*

2. Scrutiny by the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach

The Committee held two public engagements to discuss the new proposals for the EU fiscal framework in anticipation of the new EU proposals.

The first engagement took place on 3 May 2023 with representatives of the Think-Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC) invited to appear before the Joint Committee to discuss their policy study report EU Fiscal Rules: Time for a Reboot¹. A transcript of the meeting is available [here](#)².

A second engagement on the topic of EU Fiscal Rules took place on 10 May with representatives of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council. The transcript of this meeting is available [here](#)³.

¹ [TASC Publications | TASC - Think-tank for Action on Social Change](#)

² [Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach debate - Wednesday, 3 May 2023 \(oireachtas.ie\)](#)

³ [Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach debate - Wednesday, 10 May 2023 \(oireachtas.ie\)](#)

The Committee formally considered COMs (2023) 240-242 on 24 May 2023. It has agreed to provide a Political Contribution in response to the proposals.

3. Decision of the Committee

On 14 June 2023 the Committee agreed to forward a copy of this Political Contribution to Michael McGrath T.D., Minister for Finance, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Roberta Metsola MEP, President of the European Parliament, and the President of the Council of the European Union.

4. Opinion of the Committee

New Proposals

4.1 The Joint Committee notes the main criticism of the existing EU Fiscal Rules including the following:

- Excessive complexity – it is generally acknowledged that the Fiscal Rules were extremely complex, were not sufficiently understood and as a result, there was difficulty to achieve buy-in.
Furthermore, the focus on debt reduction and debt limits have been demonstrated to encourage austerity policies and undermine social cohesion. This was particularly evidenced in the wake of the financial crisis and the impacts of these policies left societies more vulnerable to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic due to underinvestment in public services. Such policies have been demonstrated to have negative effects on different socio-economic groups and economic resilience, particularly in times of recession
- Weak compliance – the Excessive Deficit Procedure was breached on numerous occasions by Member States throughout its operation
- Procyclicality – the Rules lead to pro-cyclical policies by discouraging spending during slower and negative growth. Furthermore, a focus on debt reduction and debt limits may encourage austerity policies that can have negative effects on economic groups and job creation, particularly in times of recession.

The Joint Committee remains uncertain as to whether the new proposals would adequately address the issues set out above.

- 4.2 The Joint Committee welcomes the removal of the one-twentieth debt reduction rule which further enforced pro-cyclical policies. The Joint Committee believes that scenarios such as the Covid-19 pandemic provides evidence that counter-cyclical policies are needed to promote economic and societal wellbeing.
- 4.3 The Joint Committee is uncertain regarding the provisions relating to the excessive deficit procedure and the minimum annual adjustment of at least 0.5% GDP and recommends that greater clarification is provided by the EU Commission relating to this criterion.
- 4.4 The Joint Committee acknowledges that there is a high level of uncertainty attached to future forecasts and that debt sustainability analyses are sensitive to changes in assumptions.
- 4.5 The Joint Committee recommends that any analysis and supportive information relevant to the new Fiscal Rule proposals is provided to Member State parliaments and Member State Independent Fiscal Institutions. The Joint Committee believes that this requirement is essential for a transparent and sound assessment of the new proposals. The Joint Committee notes that the EU Commission has yet to publish simulations of the trajectories/spending caps, and so it is not known what these will imply for fiscal policy in each Member State nor how robust the underlying calculations are. The Joint Committee has written to the Department of Finance to request this information.
- 4.6 The Joint Committee highlighted a number of issues with regard to the 60% debt to GDP provision and 3% deficit, however, as they have a footing within the Treaties, these are not currently open to amending. However, the Joint Committee notes that given that the debt-to-GDP ratio is significantly higher

than 60% in many countries, continuing to use this as a target could lead to a significant burden and adjustment path for high debt countries.

Green Investment and Public Services Investment

- 4.7 The Joint Committee supports the concept of including a 'golden rule' – whereby obligations to reduce net expenditure would not include public investment – in the reform of the EU Fiscal Rules given the damaging impact of previous stringent application of short-term fiscal rules on long-term capital expenditure, social cohesion and the resilience and capacity of public services to respond to public emergencies such as Covid-19. The inclusion of a 'golden rule' would help ensure that public investment is utilised to strengthen social cohesion, public services and the ability of Member States to engage in climate mitigation and adaptation.
- 4.8 Further to paragraph 4.7 the Joint Committee is supportive of the goals within the new proposals of the EU Fiscal Rules in relation to simplifying the fiscal framework and strengthening the medium-term focus. However, this must be balanced with the requirement for investment into green and climate related measures. The Committee is concerned that there is no such measure contained within the new proposals to exclude investment related spending from the DSA and that, for some member states, the goal of reducing debt may be incompatible with prioritising green investment and public services investment
- 4.9 Further to paragraph 4.8, the Joint Committee also notes the importance of preventative spending – public expenditure undertaken now to ensure that there are not negative consequences in the medium to long-term (including fiscally) – in respect of climate action and social cohesion and supports the inclusion within reforms of the EU Fiscal Rules of provisions which would give Member States the power to engage in preventative spending."
- 4.10 The Joint Committee, in its submission to the EU Commission in December 2021 (See Appendix 1) noted that *"the reform of the economic governance framework should aim to introduce a 'golden rule' which revised the current*

investment clause. This revision could create the kind of flexibility that would exempt public investment, targeted at environmental and social concerns, from any fiscal debt/deficit considerations. In reality, fiscal and debt targets are negotiable constructs. Climate Change on the other hand does not negotiate and GHG emission reduction targets, based on hard science, must therefore be prioritised. Carbon budgets must therefore be treated not as an element within new economic governance policies, but as the frame within which economic policies must operate.”

Independent Fiscal Institutions

- 4.11 The Joint Committee notes the proposed enhanced role for Independent Fiscal Institutions. These proposed changes are likely to require legislative amendments via the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012 in relation to the funding and staff resourcing of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council.
- 4.12 The Joint Committee is of the opinion that a greater level of data availability should be made available between Departments of Government and Independent Fiscal Institutions i.e., the Fiscal Council in undertaking its new role and the Parliamentary Budget Office, in providing independent assessment to the Houses of the Oireachtas. This is essential if the new Fiscal Rules enhance the role for Independent Fiscal Institutions and may require a statutory footing.
- 4.13 Furthermore, the Joint Committee notes that if the proposed changes are implemented, further change may be required to the Budgetary Framework. The Joint Committee recommends that this area is examined by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform especially with regard to the timing of Draft Budget publications.

APPENDIX: Letter from the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach to the European Commission regarding the review of the EU's Economic Governance Framework

Ref: **JFPERT-I-0444**

Ms Ilze Juhansone
Secretary General
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
Wetstraat 200
1040 (postal office Box: 1049)
Brussels
Belgium

Issued by email to: ilze.juhansone@ec.europa.eu

Dear Ms Juhansone,

I have been requested by the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach to write to you regarding the review of the EU's economic governance framework. As members of the Irish Parliament's Joint Oireachtas Committee, we have an active engagement and interest in fiscal and monetary affairs. In this context, this letter is our contribution to the review of EU Economic Governance currently underway by the European Commission.

The Committee acknowledges the positive role played by the ECB during the course of the pandemic responding quickly, through its PEPP programme, to ensure member states could undertake the kind of sustainable borrowing needed to prevent the worst from happening.

Monetary policy is only one tool in what must be a two-pronged approach. Fiscal policy must be allowed to play its part. That is why the rapid activation of the General Escape Clause of the fiscal rules, at the pandemic's outset, was needed and welcome to allow member states to engage in vital countercyclical spending. It was

also further acknowledged that the rules, as currently constituted, are pro-cyclical and not fit for purpose.

The Committee welcomes the Commission's recent acceptance that the austere fiscal policies used to deal with the last crisis were, as EU economy commissioner Paulo Gentiloni said, 'a mistake'. The same goes for the acknowledgement that public investment is hugely important, and that its importance is not just in times of crisis.

It is equally true that member states need the kind of ongoing spending certainty that will permit them to undertake the public expenditure needed to recover ground and trust lost to austerity, renew public services, restore social cohesion, deliver transformative environmental policies and face the future with strength and ambition.

This nascent and constructive reformism we are seeing must be carried over to the reform of the economic governance framework itself. The Committee therefore wishes to concur with the concern of experts across the EU who have cautioned that the reintroduction of arbitrary debt and deficit ceilings could inadvertently undermine macro-economic stability, environmental sustainability, and European solidarity.

We do not believe that reintroduction of the previous rules of budget deficits below 3 per cent of GDP and a debt to GDP ratios below 60 per cent would be advisable or responsible in light of past mistakes and the current and future challenges facing the EU and its member states.

Our Committee recently heard the testimony of German macroeconomist Dirk Ehnts who outlined the origin of these thirty year old rules. The Committee was very surprised to learn that the rules did not emerge out of any empirical research, and there was little scientific discussion to support their use as an equilibrising or socially stabilising force.

We were informed that the 3 per cent rule was constructed by a junior employee of the French Treasury on the basis that in the 1980s France had a deficit of the 2.6 per cent, so a rule based on 3 per cent would give the French government further fiscal space. Similarly, the 60 per cent debt to GDP ratio was established on the arbitrary basis that this was an approximate average of the contemporary member states debt to GDP levels.

The Committee also received written submissions from Austrian macroeconomist Philipp Heimberger and the Better Europe Alliance. Dr Heimberger noted that the reintroduction of fiscal rules could have significant 'negative domino effects' for all member states, but in particular 'Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Ireland and others who rely heavily on export and who, due to their industrial structures, are strongly linked to the other EU member states'.

He offered three proposals to the Committee which were an easing of the debt reduction targets, reforming the 'Investment Clause' to allow greater flexibility which incentivised public investment for climate change and digitisation, and improving the estimate of the structural deficit to make it less pro-cyclical.

The Committee finds it regrettable that the European Semester process previously chose to elevate short-term compliance with largely unevidenced fiscal rules above other EU and national commitments and priorities, such as the long-term vision for 'Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth' set out in Europe 2020.

The failure to give sufficient weighting to that long-term vision was something highlighted by The Better Europe Alliance, a network of Irish civil society organisations, both in its submission to the Committee and throughout its long record of constructive engagement around the EU Semester process. It made a strong case for significant reform and reimagining of any new Semester process through the integration of reporting on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, alongside strengthened reporting on the European Pillar of Social Rights (2018) and European Green New Deal (2019).

It proposed that the fiscal rules be amended to 'better accommodate shift level increases in social and physical investment spending and to exclude that spending from the structural deficit target. It also contended that any reforms should 'exclude public investment in social infrastructure (in areas such as health, education, social housing and childcare) and in Just Transition from the 3% public deficit threshold.'

There has been some acknowledgment, through positive initiatives like the Recovery and Resilience Fund, that the constraints placed by short-term fiscal goals on public investment contributed to lower levels of preparedness in the public and health services of many member states when faced with the pandemic. However, those rules also constrained long-term public investment in areas like sustainability and

social inclusion and precious time and opportunity has been lost. Moreover, the attachment of the same fiscal formula to the Precautionary Conditional Credit Line has made that tool irrelevant and inaccessible for a majority of Eurozone countries.

Arbitrary debt and deficit ceilings are ill-suited to the real challenges that Europe faces. Therefore, the Committee is of the view that piecemeal reform of these unscientific rules, perhaps resulting in increases of the debt level to 100 per cent, will not be sufficient. Numerous Eurozone members had debt levels in excess of 100 per cent prior to the onset of the pandemic, and this has increased since

The Committee agrees with contention of Klaus Regling, head of the European Stability Mechanism, who said that countries can “comfortably live with” higher debt. We cannot, however, live with catastrophic climate change or with the loss of social cohesion or public services and national infrastructure which is unfit or inadequate for the challenges we collectively face.

The Committee believes that the reform of the economic governance framework should aim to introduce a ‘golden rule’ which revised the current investment clause. This revision could create the kind of flexibility that would exempt public investment, targeted at environmental and social concerns, from any fiscal debt/deficit considerations.

In reality, fiscal and debt targets are negotiable constructs. Climate Change on the other hand does not negotiate and GHG emission reduction targets, based on hard science, must therefore be prioritised. Carbon budgets must therefore be treated not as an element within new economic governance policies, but as the frame within which economic policies must operate.

President von der Leyen on the occasion of the adoption of the European Green Deal (GND) described this as Europe’s ‘man on the moon’ moment. This is an important comparative historical experience, one which we must learn from. In keeping with President von der Leyen’s analogy we must recognise that the efforts to put people on the moon came about through massive state expenditure, and public investment and public research has underpinned most significant historical shifts from the creation of the internet to the development of vaccines.

The Committee believe that the assumption within the discussion document provided by the Commission, that public or state investment should only be deployed in circumstances of 'market failure', is neither evidenced nor appropriate to the current moment. The state should not be artificially constrained to a role as actor of 'last resort', when in many circumstances, public investment may be the most efficient and cost-effective approach. This is particularly true in circumstances where major transformation is needed at speed and at scale, with returns which are long term, or may manifest in loss avoided rather than profit gained.

As such, the Committee recognises that the majority of the funding required for Europe to meet its climate targets, will come from the member state level. For example, in order for member states to help promote the use of clean energy they must become large-scale investors in green technologies and major producers or purchasers of clean energy itself. The Committee also recognises the importance of the Just Transition element of the GND, which will require spending related to social issues not merely climate related expenditure. This will be crucial to social cohesion. Outdated economic thinking often portrayed public investment as something which draws on a limited pool of savings, thus 'crowding out' private sector investment in times of stability. However, in reality public investment 'crowds in' private sector investment, giving certainty to the business sector that the state stands ready as a willing partner, creating synergy and raising confidence.

Currently there's an investment clause which provides scope for exempting investment that has "positive, direct and verifiable long-term effects on growth and on the sustainability of public finances". The Committee is of the view that this clause could and should be amended to give scope for member states to meet the coming challenges.

The Committee recognised that some would have concerns this would be abused but is of the opinion that appropriate checks and balances could be put in place. The maximum amount of investment that states could exempt under this clause could be limited to the size of their 'green' and 'social' investment gap, which could, for example, be set in consultation between member states and relevant EU authorities. It is also crucial that this clause, and the economic governance framework as a whole, reflect a different definition and understanding of 'sustainability',

commensurate with that set out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

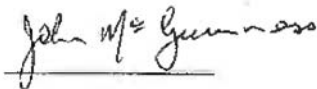
The Committee positively notes the commitment made by Commission to include the SDGs as part of any new Semester process. However, how this is done will be vitally important, the SDGs must not be treated as an aspirational add on, or simply a chart of rankings. Rather they should be recognised as a framework within which economic policy sits and the goals, targets and indicators should be translated into country specific recommendations which are qualitative as well as quantitative. It is crucial that any new annual Semester process contributes to cohesive rather than fragmented development and that, while driving necessary momentum on the transformations needed, it does not undermine long-term progress through excessive emphasis on short-term targets.

Europe has reached an important crossroads, and it is of the utmost importance that we do not let this moment of crisis and challenge go to waste. If the dreams of a strong social Europe, which acts as a leader and not a laggard on climate change, are to be realised, then the institutions that govern it must be suited to the realities of the 21st century.

Ireland, perhaps more than most member states, needs the kind of certainty that any reform of the rules will permit it to meet the coming challenges we face in terms of climate change, social cohesion and economic stability.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk to the Committee, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



John McGuinness, T.D.

Chair to the Committee



Tithe an Oireachtais Houses of the Oireachtas

Tithe An Oireachtais

An Comhchoiste Um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí Agus Athchóiriú, agus An Taoiseach

An Cion Polaitiúil i ndáil leis an

COM (2023)240 *Togra le haghaidh rialachán ó Pharlaimint na hEorpa agus ón gComhairle maidir le comhordú éifeachtach beartas eacnamaíochta agus le faireachas iltaobhach buiséadach agus lena n-aisghairtear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1466/97 ón gComhairle;*

COM (2023)241 *Togra le haghaidh Rialachán ón gComhairle lena leasaítear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1467 maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an nós imeachta easnaimh iomarcaigh a bhrostú agus a shoiléiriú; agus*

COM (2023)242 *Togra le haghaidh TREOIR ÓN gCOMHAIRLE lena leasaítear Treoir 2011/85/AE maidir le ceanglais do chreataí buiséadacha na mBallstát*

Houses Of The Oireachtas

Joint Committee On Finance, Public Expenditure And Reform, And Taoiseach

Political Contribution on

COM (2023)240 *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1466/97;*

COM (2023)241 *Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No. 1467 on speeding up and clarifying the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; and*

COM (2023)242 *Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE amending Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States*

1. Réamhrá

Déanann **Comhchoiste an Oireachtais Um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí agus Athchóiriú, agus an Taoiseach** (“an Coiste”) breithniú ar an mbeart tograí ina bhfuil:

COM (2023)240 *Togra le haghaidh rialachán ó Pharlaimint na hEorpa agus ón gComhairle maidir le comhordú éifeachtach beartas eacnamaíochta agus le faireachas iltaobhach buiséadach agus lena n-aisghairtear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1466/97 ón gComhairle;*

COM (2023)241 *Togra le haghaidh Rialachán ón gComhairle lena leasaítear Rialachán (CE) Uimh. 1467 maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an nós imeachta easnaimh iomarcaigh a bhrostu agus a shoiléiriú; agus*

COM (2023)242 *Togra le haghaidh TREOIR ÓN gCOMHAIRLE lena leasaítear Treoir 2011/85/AE maidir le ceanglais do chreataí buiséadacha na mBallstát*

2. Grinnchrúdú ag an gComhchoiste um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí agus Athchóiriú agus an Taoiseach

Thionóil an Coiste dhá sheisiún phoiblí chun plé a dhéanamh ar na tograí nua le haghaidh an chreat bhuiséadaigh AE in oirchill na dtograí nua AE.

Tionóladh an chéad sheisiún an 3 Bealtaine 2023 nuair a tugadh cuireadh d'ionadaithe an Ghrúpa Saineolaithe um an Athrú Sóisialach (TASC) teacht os comhair an Chomhchoiste chun a thuarascáil ar staidéar beartais ar a dtugtar Rialacha Buiséadacha AE: Is Mithid Tosú as an Nua a phlé. Tá trascribhinn den chruinniú ar fáil [anseo](#)⁴.

Tionóladh dara seisiún ar an topaic Rialacha Buiséadacha AE an 10 Bealtaine le hionadaithe ó Chomhairle Chomhairleach Bhuiséaach na hÉireann. Tá trascribhinn den chruinniú sin ar fáil [anseo](#)⁵.

⁴ [Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach debate - Wednesday, 3 May 2023 \(oireachtas.ie\)](#)

⁵ [Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach debate – Dé Céadaoin, 10 Bealtaine 2023 \(oireachtas.ie\)](#)

Rinne an Coiste breithniú foirmiúil ar COManna (2023) 240-242 an 24 Bealtaine 2023. Chomhaontaigh sé Cion Polaitiúil a sholáthar mar fhreagairt ar na tograí.

3. Breith an Choiste

Chomhaontaigh an Coiste an 14 Meitheamh 2023 cóip den Chion Polaitiúil seo a chur chuig Mícheál Mac Craith T.D., Aire Airgeadais, chuig Ursula von der Leyen, Uachtarán an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh, chuig Roberta Metsola CPE, Uachtarán Pharlaimint na hEorpa, agus chuig Uachtarán Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh.

4. Tuairim an Choiste

Tograí Nua

4.1 Tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire an cáineadh is mó ar Rialacha Buiséadacha láithreacha AE, lena n-áirítear iad seo a leanas:

- *Barraíocht castachta* – aithnítear go forleathan go raibh na Rialacha Buiséadacha thar a bheith casta, nár tuigeadh a dhóthain iad agus, gur dheacair tacaíocht a fháil ina leith, dá bhrí sin.
Thairis sin, is léir gurb é an bhéim ar fhiachas a laghdú agus ar theorainneacha fiachais ba chúis le beartais déine a chothú agus leis an mbonn a bhaint den chomhtháthú sóisialta. I bhfianaise air sin, go háirithe, ab ea an méid a tharla i ndiaidh na géarchéime airgeadais agus, is de bharr thionchair na mbeartas sin gur fágadh gur mhó a bhí sochaithe soghonta d'éifeachtaí phaindéim Covid-19 mar gheall ar thearc-infheistíocht i seirbhísí poiblí. Tá sé léirithe go mbíonn droch-éifeachtaí ag beartais den sórt sin ar ghrúpaí soch-eacnamaíocha éagsúla agus ar an athléimneacht eacnamaíoch, go háirithe in aimsir géarchéime
- *Comhlíonadh lag* – is amhlaidh go raibh an Nós Imeachta Easnamh Iomarcaigh á shárú roinnt uaireanta ag Ballstáit le linn dó bheith á oibriú
- *Comhthimthriallacht* – is as na Rialacha a eascraíonn beartais chomhthimthriallacha trí chur in aghaidh caiteachais le linn tréimhsí a mbíonn fás mall agus diúltach ann.

Thairis sin, féadtar beartais déine a spreagadh de bharr béim a bheith ar fhiachas a laghdú agus ar theorainneacha fiachais, ar beartais iad a bhféadtar droch-éifeachtaí a bheith acu ar ghrúpaí eacnamaíocha agus ar phoist a chruthú, go háirithe in aimsir géarchéime.

Nil an Comhchoiste cinnte fós an ndéanfaí leis na tograí nua aghaidh a thabhairt go leordhóthanach ar na saincheisteanna atá leagtha amach thuas.

4.2 Fáiltíonn an Comhchoiste roimh dheireadh a chur leis an riail maidir le fiachas a laghdú d'aon fhichiú, ar riail í lena ndearnadh beartais chomchiogalacha a fhorchur tuilleadh. Tá an Comhchoiste den tuairim gur fianaise atá i gcásanna amhail paidéim Covid-19 go dteastaíonn beartais fritimthriallacha chun dea-bhail eacnamaíoch agus shochoaíoch a chur chun cinn.

4.3 Nil an Comhchoiste cinnte maidir leis na forálacha a bhaineann leis an nós imeachta easnaimh iomarcaigh agus an coigeartú íosta bliantúil de 0.5% OTI agus molann sé go ndéanfaidh Coimisiún AE an critéar sin a shoiléiriú tuilleadh.

4.4 Aithníonn an Comhchoiste gur thar a bheith neamhchinnte atá aon réamhaisnéis amach anseo agus gur faoi thionchar athruithe ar thiomhdigh a bhíonn anailísithe ar inbhuanaitheacht fiachais.

4.5 Molann an Comhchoiste go ndéanfar aon anailís agus aon fhaisnéis tacaíochta is iomchuí maidir leis na tograí nua um an Riail Bhuiséadach a sholáthar do pharlaimintí na mBallstát agus d'Fhorais Bhuiséadacha Neamhspleácha na mBallstát. Creideann an Comhchoiste gur rithábhachtach atá an ceanglas sin chun measúnú trédhearcacah agus cóir a dhéanamh ar na tograí nua. Tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire go bhfuil ionsamhluithe ar na conairí/teorainneacha caiteachais fós le foilsiú ag Coimisiún AE agus, dá bhrí sin, ní fios go fóill cad a bheidh i gceist leis na tograí sin a mhéid a bhaineann le beartas airgeadais i ngach Ballstát ná cé chomh láidir atá na bunáirimh. Tá an Comhchoiste tar éis scríobh chuig an Roinn Airgeadais á iarraidh uirthi an fhaisnéis sin a fháil.

4.6 Dhírigh an Comhchoiste aird ar roinnt saincheisteanna maidir leis an 60% fiachais in aghaidh soláthar OTI agus 3% easnaimh, ach os rud é go bhfuil bonn leo laistigh de na Conarthaí, ní féidir iad sin a leasú i láthair na huaire. Ina ainneoin sin áfach, tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire, toisc go bhfuil an cóimheas fiachas OTI i bhfad níos airde ná 60% i roinnt mhaith tíortha, go bhféadfaí ualach mór agus conair choigeartaithe a bheith ar thíortha a bhfuil fiacha arda acu dá leanfaí den mhéid sin a úsáid mar sprioc.

Infheistíocht Ghlas agus Infheistíocht i Seirbhísí Poiblí

4.7 Tacaíonn an Comhchoiste leis an gcoincheap go mbeadh bunriail – is riail í ar léi nach mbeadh infheistíocht phoiblí san áireamh in oibleagáidí chun glanchaiteachas a laghdú – ar áireamh in athchóiriú ar Rialacha Buiséadacha AE, ag cur san áireamh an tionchar dochrach a bhain le cur i bhfeidhm daingean roimhe seo ar rialacha buiséadacha gearrthéarmacha maidir le caiteachas caipitil fadtéarmach, comhtháthú sóisialta, agus athléimneacht agus acmhainneacht seirbhísí poiblí chun freagairt d'éigeandálacha poiblí amhail Covid-19. Ba chabhair bunriail a áireamh chun a chinntiú go mbainfear úsáid as infheistíocht phoiblí ar mhaithe le comhtháthú sóisialta, seirbhísí poiblí agus cumas Ballstát páirt a ghlacadh i maolú agus oiriúnú aeráide a láidriú.

4.8 De bhun mhír 4.7, tacaíonn an Comhchoiste leis na spriocanna atá i dtograí nua Rialacha Buiséadacha AE i ndáil leis an gcreat buiséadach a shimpliú agus an bhéim meántéarmach a láidriú. Ach caithfear cothomaíocht a bheith idir sin agus an ceanglas maidir le hinfheistíocht i mbearta glasa agus bearta a bhaineann leis an aeráid. Is ábhar imní don Choiste nach bhfuil aon bheart den sórt sin sna tograí nua ina ndéanfaí caiteachas a bhaineann le hinfheistíocht a eisiáil ó Anailís Inbhuanaitheachta Fiachais agus, i gcás roinnt ballstát, nach mbeadh an sprioc chun fiachas a laghdú i gcomhréir le tosaíocht a thabhairt d'infheistíocht ghlas agus infheistíocht i seirbhísí poiblí

4.9 De bhun mhír 4.8, tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire freisin an tábhacht a bhaineann le caiteachas coisctheach – caiteachas poiblí a dhéantar anois chun a chinntiú nach mbeidh iarmhairtí diúltacha ann sa mheántearma agus san fhadtearma (lena n-áirítear i gcúrsaí buiséadacha) – maidir le gníomhú aeráide agus comhtháthú sóisialta agus tacaíonn sé le forálacha a áireamh in athchóirithe ar Rialacha Buiséadacha AE, is forálacha lena dtabharfaí cumhacht do Bhallstáit gabháil do chaiteachas coisctheach.”

4.14 Thug an Comhchoiste dá aire, san aighneacht a rinne sé do Choimisiún AE i mí na Nollag 2021 (Féach larscríbhinn 1), *“gur cóir é a bheith mar aidhm ag athchóiriú an chreat rialachais eacnamaíoch go dtabharfaí bunriail isteach lena ndéanfaí an clásal infheistíochta reatha a athbhreithniú. D’fhéadfaí leis an athbhreithniú sin an cineál solúbhachta a chruthú lena ndéanfaí infheistíocht phoiblí, a bheadh dírithe ar chúraimí comhshaoil agus sóisialta, a dhíolmhú ó aon cheisteanna fiachais nó easnaimh bhuiséadaigh. Déanta na firinne, is féidir spriocanna buiséadacha agus fiachais a athrú ach iad a phlé. Ní hionann sin agus athrú aeráide áfach, nach féidir a laghdú trína phlé agus, ar an ábhar sin, caithfear tosaíocht a thabhairt do spriocanna maidir le astaíochtaí GHG a laghdú, spriocanna atá bunaithe ar fhíricí na heolaíochta. Ní mór caitheamh le buiséid charbóin mar an creat ar laistigh de nach mór do bheartais eacnamaíocha oibriú seachas mar ghné de na beartais sin.”*

Forais Bhuiséadacha Neamhspleácha

4.15 Tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire an ról feabhsaithe atá beartaithe d’Fhorais Bhuiséadacha Neamhspleácha. Is dócha go gceanglófar leis na hathruithe beartaithe seo leasuithe reachtúla tríd an Acht um Fhreagracht Bhuiséadach, 2012 i ndáil le Comhairle Chomhairleach Bhuiséadach na hÉireann a mhaoiniú agus foireann a fhostú.

4.16 Tá an Comhchoiste den tuairim gur cóir leibhéal níos mó d’infhaighteacht sonraí a bheith ar fáil idir Ranna Rialtais agus Forais Bhuiséadacha Neamhspleácha ie. an Chomhairle Bhuiséadach agus í ag tabhairt faoina ról nua agus an Oifig Buiséid Pharlaiminteach, le linn measúnú neamhspleách a sholáthar do Thithe an Oireachtais. Is ríthábhachtach é sin má dhéantar leis na

Rialacha Buiséadacha nua an ról d'Fhorais Bhuiséadacha Neamhspleácha a fheabhsú agus d'fhéadfaí gur ghá bonn reachtúil a bheith leo.

- 4.17 Thairis sin, tugann an Comhchoiste dá aire gur amhlaidh, má chuirtear na hathruithe a bheartaítear i ngníomh, go mbeidh gá le hathrú breise ar an gCreat Buiséadach. Molann an Comhchoiste go ndéanfaidh an Roinn Airgeadais agus an Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí agsu Athchóirithe an réimse sin a scrúdú, go háirithe a mhéid a bhaineann le foilseacháin Dréacht-Bhuiséadacha a uainiú.

AGUISÍN: Litir ón gComhchoiste um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí agus Athchóiriú, agus an Taoiseach chuig an gCoimisiún Eorpach maidir leis an athbhreithniú ar Chreat Rialachais Eacnamaíoch AE

Tagairt: **JFPERT-I-0444**

Ilze Juhansone, Uasal.

Ard-Rúnaí

An Coimisiún Eorpach

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A Uasail Juhansone, a chara.

D'iarr an Comhchoiste um Airgeadas, Caitheachas Poiblí agus Athchóiriú, agus an Taoiseach scríobh chugat maidir leis an athbhreithniú ar chreat rialachais eacnamaíoch AE. Inár gcáil mar chomhaltaí de Chomchoiste an Oireachtais

(Parlaimint na hÉireann), tá páirt ghníomhach agus spéis againn i nithe buiséadacha agus airgeadais. Sa chomhthéacs sin, tá sa litir seo ár gcion san athbhreithniú ar Rialachas Eacnamaíoch AE atá á dhéanamh faoi láthair ag an gCoimisiún Eorpach.

Tugann an Coiste aitheantas don ról dearfach atá ag Banc Ceannais na hEorpa (BCE) le linn na paidéime agus é ag freagairt go tapa di, trína chlár Táirge Pinsin Phearsanta uile-Eorpaigh, chun a chinntiú go bhféadfadh na ballstáit gabháil don iasacht inbhuanaithe a raibh gá léi chun an baol ba mheasa a sheachaint.

Níl i mbeartas airgeadais ach gléas amháin i gcur chuige ba chóir is cóir a bheith ina chur chuige iltaobhach. Caithfear baint a bheith ag beartas buiséadach. Is é sin an fáth a raibh gá leis an gClásal Éalaithe Ginearálta de na rialacha buiséadacha a chur i bhfeidhm go tapa ag tús na paidéime agus gur fáiltíodh roimhe, sa dóigh is go mbeadh ballstáit in ann gabháil do chaiteachas fritimthriallach ríthábhachtach.

Aithníodh thairis sin go bhfuil na rialacha, de réir mar atá siad ar bun faoi láthair, ina rialacha comhthimthriallacha agus nach bhfuil siad oiriúnach don fheidhm atá leo.

Fáiltíonn an Coiste roimh an méid a chuir an Coimisiún in iúl le déanaí go n-aontaíonn siad (sa mhéid a dúirt coimisinéir eacnamaíoch AE Paolo Gentiloni) gur 'botún' a bhí sna beartais bhuiséadacha a úsáideadh chun déileáil leis an ngéarchéim is déanaí. Is mar a chéile a aithint gur ríthábhachtach atá an infheistíocht phoiblí agus nach in aimsir na géarchéime amháin a mbíonn tábhacht léi.

Ní féidir a shéanadh ach an oiread go dteastaíonn ó bhallstáit cinnteacht leanúnach a bheith acu maidir le caiteachas trinar féidir leo gabháil don chaiteachas poiblí is gá chun an bhris a thabhairt isteach agus iontaobhas a fháil ar ais a cailleadh de bharr na déine, seirbhísí poiblí a athnuachan, comhtháthú sóisialta a athbhunú, beartais eacnamaíocha chlaochlaitheacha a chur i gcrích agus aghaidh a thabhairt ar an todhchaí le misneach agus uaillmhian.

Caithfear an t-athchóiriú fiúntach úr seo a thabhairt isteach san athchóiriú ar an gcreat rialachais eacnamaíoch féin. Ar an ábhar sin, is mian leis an gCoiste comhaontú lena bhfuil san ábhar imní atá curtha in iúl ag saineolaithe ar fud AE a thug rabhadh acu go bhféadfaí, dá dtabharfaí isteach arís teorainneacha treallacha fiachais agus easnaimh, an bonn a bhaint de chobhsaíocht mhaicraeacnamaíoch, d' inbhuanaitheacht comhsaoil, agus de dhlúthpháirtíocht na hEorpa.

Ní chreidimid gur inmholta na rialacha buiséadacha roimhe seo maidir le heasnamh bhuiséid faoi bhun 3 faoin gcéad de OTI agus fiach in aghaidh cóimheasa OTI faoi bhun 60 faoin gcéad a thabhairt ar ais ná gur stuama a bheadh sé, i bhfianaise na mbotún a rinneadh roimhe seo agus na ndúshlán atá ann faoi láthair agus a bheidh ann amach anseo roimh AE agus a bhallstáit.

D'éist ár gCoiste le déanaí le fianaise ón maicreacnamaí Gearmánach Dirk Ehnts a leag amach cad ba bhun leis na rialacha seo atá ann le tríocha bliain. B'ábhar mór iontais don Choiste a fháil amach nárbh as aon taighde eimpíreach a d'eascair na rialacha, agus gur beag plé eolaíoch a bhí ann chun tacú lena n-úsáid mar fhórsa cothromaíochta nó mar fhórsa cobhsaíochta ó thaobh cúrsaí sóisialta de.

Cuireadh in iúl dúinn gurbh é fostaí sóisearach de chuid Stáitchiste na Fraince a chuir an riail 3 faoin gcéad ar bun, ar an mbonn go raibh easnamh de 2.6 faoin gcéad ag an Fhrainc sna 1980í, agus dá bhrí sin go ndéanfaí, le riail a bheadh bunaithe ar 3 faoin gcéad, breis spáis bhuiséadaigh a thabhairt do rialtas na Fraince. Sa tslí chéanna, bunaíodh an riail maidir le 60 faoin gcéad fiachais in aghaidh cóimheas OTI ar an mbonn treallach gur meán neasach é sin d'fhiachas na mballstát a bhí ann an t-am sin in aghaidh leibhéil OTI.

Fuair an Coiste aighneachtaí i scríbhinn freisin ó mhaicreacnamaí na hOstaire an tUas. Philipp Heimberger agus ó Better Europe Alliance. Thug an Dochtúir Heimberger dá aire go bhféadfadh éifeachtaí móra diúltacha a bheith ann do gach ballstát, ceann i ndiaidh a chéile, da dtabharfaí rialacha buiséadacha isteach arís, go háirithe an Ghearmáin, an Ostair, an Ísiltír, Éire agus tíortha eile nach iad atá ag brath go mór ar earraí a easpórtáil agus atá nasctha go láidir le ballstáit eile de chuid AE mar gheall ar a gcuid struchtúr tionsclaíoch'.

Rinne sé trí mholadh don Choiste arb iad na spriocanna laghdaithe fiachais a mhaolú, an 'Clásal Infheistíochta' a athchóiriú ionas go bhféadfaí níos mó solúbhthachta a bheith ann lena spreagadh le hinfeistíocht phoiblí ar son athraithe aeráide agus difigithe, agus an meastachán ar an easnamh struchtúrach a fheabhsú sa tslí is nach mbeadh sé chomh comhthimthriallach

Is cúis aiféala don Choiste gur roghnaíodh le próiseas an tSeimeastair Eorpaigh roimhe seo an comhlíonadh rialacha buiséadacha nach raibh mórán fianaise ina leith a ardú os cionn gealltanais agus tosaíochtaí AE agus náisiúnta, amhail an fhís

fhadtéarmach le haghaidh “Fás Cliste, Inbhuanaithe agus Uilechuimsitheach” a leagadh amach in Eoraip 2020.

San aighneacht a rinne sé don Choiste agus le linn na tréimhse fada a bhfuil teagmháil chuiditheach aige maidir le próiseas an tSeimeastair AE, dhírigh Better Europe Alliance, líonra d’eagraíochtaí na hÉireann ón tsochaí shibhialta, aird ar an ualú neamhdhóthanach a tugadh don fhís fhadtéarmach sin. Rinne sé cás láidir ar son aon phróiseas Seimeastair nua a athchóiriú agus a athshamhlú tríd an tuairisciú ar Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe NA a bheith mar chuid de, mar aon le tuairisciú ar Cholún Eorpach na gCeart Sóisialta (2018) agus Comhaontú Glas nua don Eoraip (2019).

Mhol sé go ndéanfaí na rialacha buiséadacha a leasú chun freastal níos fearr ar mhéaduithe sa leibhéal athraithe i gcaiteachas infheistíochta sóisialta agus fisicí agus chun an caiteachas sin a eisiáimh ón sprioc easnaimh struchtúraigh. Mhaígh se freisin gur cóir nach mbeadh in aon athchóiriú ‘infheistíocht phoiblí i mbonneagar sóisialta (i réimsí amhail sláinte, oideachas, tithíocht shóisialta agus cúram leanaí) agus in Aistriú Cóir ón teorainn easnaimh phoiblí de 3%.’

Tugadh roinnt aitheantais, trí thionscnaimh dhearfacha amhail an Ciste Téarnaimh agus Athléimneachta, gur mar gheall ar na srianta a cuireadh le spriocanna gearrthéarmacha ar an infheistíocht phoiblí gur lú a bhí roinnt mhaith ballstát ullamh ina seirbhísí poiblí agus sláinte agus iad ag iarraidh aghaidh a thabhairt ar an bpaindéim. Ní amháin sin áfach, ach is mar gheall ar na rialacha sin a cuireadh srian ar an infheistíocht phoiblí fhadtéarmach i réimsí amhail inbhuanaitheacht agus cuimsiú sóisialta agus is amhlaidh go bhfuil am luachmhar agus deiseanna curtha amú dá bharr. Thairis sin, is de bharr an fhoirmle bhuiséadach chéanna a chur ag gabháil leis an Líne Chreidmheasa Choinníollaithe Réamhchúraim go bhfuil an uirlis sin neamhábhartha agus nach féidir í a rochtain i gcás formhór na dtíortha sa limistéar Eorpach.

Níl teorainneacha treallacha fiachais agus easnaimh in oiriúint do na dúshlán atá roimh an Eoraip i ndáiríre. Ar an ábhar sin, tá an Coiste den tuairim nach leor athchóiriú de réir a chéile ar na rialacha seo atá gan bhunús eolaíoch, agus go bhféadfadh méaduithe go dtí 100 faoin gcéad ar an leibhéal fiachais a bheith mar thoradh orthu. Bhí leibhéil fiachais os cionn 100 faoin gcéad roimh thús na

paindéime ag roinnt mhaith tíortha is baill den limistéar Eorpach iad, agus go bhfuil méadú ar na leibhéil sin ó shin i leith.

Comhaontaíonn an Coiste lena bhfuil á mhaíomh ag Klaus Regling, ceann an tSásra Cobhsaíochta Eorpaigh, a dúirt gur féidir le tíortha “leanúint ar aghaidh” agus fiacha is airde acu. Ní féidir linn áfach, leanúint ar aghaidh faoi bhaol an athraithe aeráide thubaistigh nó gan aon chomhtháthú sóisialta ná seirbhísí poiblí agus bonneagar náisiúnta a bheith againn nach bhfuil in oiriúint, nó nach leor iad, do na dúshlán atá romhainn le chéile.

Creideann an Coiste gur cóir a bheith mar chuspóir le hathbhreithniú ar an gcreat rialachais eacnamaíoch bunriail a thabhairt isteach lena ndéanfaí an clásál infheistíochta reatha a athbhreithniú. D’fhéadfaí leis an athchóiriú sin an cineál solúbhthachta a chruthú lena ndéanfaí infheistíocht phoiblí, atá dírithe ar chúraimí comhsaoil agus sóisialta, a eisiáimh ó aon cheisteanna maidir le fiachas/easnamh buiséadach.

4.18 I ndáiríre, is féidir spriocanna buiséadacha agus fiachais a athrú ach iad a phlé. Ní hionann sin agus athrú aeráide áfach, nach féidir a laghdú trína phlé agus, ar an ábhar sin, caithfear tosaíocht a thabhairt do spriocanna maidir le astaíochtaí GHG a laghdú, spriocanna atá bunaithe ar fhíricí na heolaíochta. Ní mór caitheamh le buiséid charbóin mar an creat ar laistigh de nach mór do bheartais eacnamaíocha oibriú seachas mar ghné de na beartais sin.”

Agus í ag tagairt don tráth a glacadh an Comhaontú Glas don Eoraip, dúirt an tUachtarán von der Leyen gur chosúil leis an ócáid í nuair a cuireadh an chéad duine ar an ngealach. Is ócáid stairiúil í a bhfuil an tábhacht chéanna ag baint léi agus ar cóir dúinn ceacht a fhoghlaim uaithi. I gcomhréir leis an gcomparáid sin a rinne an tUachtarán von der Leyen, caithfidh a admháil gur theastaigh caiteachas ollmhór stáit chun duine a chur ar an ngealach, agus gurb iad an infheistíocht phoiblí agus an taighde poiblí a chuir taca leis na forbairtí stairiúla is mó suntas ón idirlín a chruthú go dtí vacsaíní a fhorbairt.

Creideann an Coiste, maidir leis an toimhde sa phlé-dhoiciméad a sholáthair an Coimisiún, arb é nár chóir úsáid a bhaint as infheistíocht phoiblí nó infheistíocht stáit ach amháin in imthosca ina mbíonn mainneachtain mhargaidh’ ann, nach bhfuil aon fhianaise ina leith sin agus nach bhfuil sé oiriúnach don staid ina bhfuil cúrsaí i

láthair na huaire. Ní cóir go mbeadh srian bréagach ar an stát sa tslí is go dtugtar ról dó chun gníomhú i gcás nach bhfuil an dara rogha ann, nuair is amhlaidh gur minic an infheistíocht phoiblí a bheith ina cur chuige is éifeachtúla agus is éifeachtaí ó thaobh costais de. Is fíor é sin go háirithe in imthosca ina bhfuil gá le claochlú mór go tapa agus de réir scála, le tuairisceáin atá fadtéarmach, nó a bheadh á léiriú mar chaillteanas a sheachaint seachas brabús a ghnóthú.

Mar sin, aithníonn an Coiste gur ó leibhéal an bhallstáit a thiocfadh formhór an mhaoinithe is gá don Eoraip chun a spriocanna aeráide a chomhlíonadh. Mar shampla, má tá ballstáit chun cabhrú le húsáid fuinnimh ghlain a chur chun cinn ní mór dóibh teacht chun bheith ina n-infheisteoirí mórsála i dteicneolaíochtaí glasa agus ina dtáirgeoirí nó ina gceannaitheoirí móra an fhuinnimh ghlain féin. Aithníonn an Coiste freisin an tábhacht a bhaineann leis an ngné sin den Chomhaontú Glas don Eoraip arb é an tAistriú Cóir é, agus lena mbeidh gá le caiteachas a bhaineann le saincheistanna sóisialta ina leith agus ní amháin caiteachas a bhaineann le haeráid. Beidh sé sin ríthábhachtach maidir le comhtháthú sóisialta. Is minic sa smaointeoireacht shainchaite faoi chúrsaí eacnamaíocha gur cuireadh i leith na hinfheistíochta poiblí gur rud é a bhíonn ag tarraingt ar chiste teoranta coigilteas agus gurb é is cúis le hinfheistíocht na hearnála príobháidí a bhrú amach in aimsir na cobhsaíochta. Ach i ndáiríre cabhraíonn an infheistíocht phoiblí le hinfheistíocht na hearnála príobháidí a bhrú isteach, á dheimhniú don earnáil gnó gur toil leis an stát bheith ina chomhpháirtí, rud a chruthaíonn sineirge agus a chuireann le muinín.

Tá clásal infheistíochta ann i láthair na huaire lena dtugtar scóip chun infheistíocht a dhíolmhú agus a bhfuil “éifeachtaí dearfacha, díreacha agus fadtéarmacha indeimhnithe maidir le fás agus inbhuanaitheacht airgeadais phoiblí” ag baint leis. Tá an Coiste den tuairim gur féidir agus gur cóir an clásal sin a leasú ionas go dtabharfaí scóip do bhallstáit aghaidh a thabhairt ar na dúshláin atá amach rompu.

D’aithin an Coiste go mbeadh imní ar roinnt daoine go mbainfí mí-úsáid as sin ach tá sé den tuairim go bhféadfaí rialuithe cuí a chur i bhfeidhm. D’fhéadfaí an uasmhéid infheistíochta a d’fhéadfadh stát a dhíolmhú faoin gclásal sin a theorannú do mhéid an bhearna ‘ghlais’ agus don bhearna ‘sóisialta’ atá acu, rud a d’fhéadfaí a shocrú, mar shampla, i gcomhairle idir ballstáit agus údaráis iomchuí AE. Tá sé ríthábhachtach freisin go léireofaí leis an gclásal sin, agus leis an gcreat rialachais

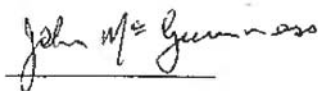
ina iomláine, sainmhíniú agus tuiscint éagsúla ar 'inbhuanaitheacht' a bheadh i gcomhréir lena bhfuil leagtha amach i Spriocanna Forbartha Inbhuanaithe (SFI) na Náisiún Aontaithe. Tugann an Coiste dá aire go dearfach an gealltanais a thug an Coimisiún maidir le SFlanna a áireamh mar chuid d'aon phróiseas Seimeastair nua. Ach is rithábhachtach an tslí a ndéanfar é sin sa dóigh is nach cóir caitheamh le SFlanna mar chuspóir a chuirtear leis nó mar chairt ranguithe. Ina ionad sin, ba chóir iad a aithint mar chreat ar laistigh de a shuíonn beartas eacnamaíoch agus ba chóir na spriocanna agus na táscairí a aistriú ina moltaí a bhaineann le gach tír go sonrach agus gur moltaí iad a bheadh cáilíochtúil agus cainníochtúil. Tá se rithábhachtach go gcuirfidh aon phróiseas nua Seimeastair bhliantúil le forbairt chomhtháite seachas forbairt scoilte agus nach ndéanfaidh sé, le linn an móiminteam is gá do na claochluithe a spreagadh, bonn a bhaint den chur chun cinn fadtéarmach tríd an iomarca béime a leagan ar spriocanna geartheármacha.

Tá uair an cinniúna sroichte ag an Eoraip, agus tá sé fíor-thábhachtach nach ligimid na maidí le sruth in aimsir seo na géarchéime agus na ndúshlán. Má táthar chun na mianta maidir leis an Eoraip a bheith láidir ó thaobh cúrsaí sóisialta de a shásamh, ina mbeidh an Eoraip chun tosaigh seachas ar gcúl san athrú aeráide, ansin ní mór do na forais a dhéanann rialú air a bheith oiriúnach dá bhfuil ann i ndáiríre sa 21ú haois.

Teastaíonn ó Éire, níos mó ná ó fhormhór na mballstát, a bheith cinnte go ndéanfar le haon athchóiriú ar na rialacha ligint di aghaidh a thabhairt ar na dúshláin a bheidh romhainn amach anseo maidir le hathrú aeráide, comhtháthú sóisialta agus cobhsaíocht eacnamaíoch.

Má tá ceist ar bith agat, ná bíodh drogall ort dul i dteagmháil le Cléireach an Choiste

Le dea-ghuí,



Seán Mac Aonghusa, T.D.

Cathaoirleach an Choiste