

SFA Chair & National Council Report 2017

SFA Annual General Meeting 2017



The Voice of Small Business

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SFA Vision

Ireland – the most vibrant small business community in the world – supporting entrepreneurship, valuing small business and rewarding risk takers

SFA Mission

The Small Firms Association is the trusted partner of small businesses in Ireland. Its mission is to deliver business-focused advice and insights to member companies, influence government policy to the benefit of small businesses and connect its members in a thriving community.

SFA Lobbying Priorities 2017



Safeguarding Competitiveness in the era of Brexit
Reforming the tax environment
Vision for small business in Ireland

1. Safeguarding Competitiveness
2. Brexit Response
3. Taxation and social welfare reform
4. Access to/cost of finance
5. Access to Public procurement

Key Council Meetings

Action Plan for Jobs – Karen Hynes PO DJEI

Government Approach to Brexit

Eamon Molloy, Asst.Sec. Gen Dept. Taoiseach

Prompt Payment Code – DJEI

Public Expenditure Priorities and Constraints

Robert Watt – Sec.Gen. Dept Public Exp. & Reform

Work Programme of JOC/ JEI – Mary Butler Chair

Tax Policy – Oliva Buckley Irish Tax Institute

Member Input

- Member surveys: business sentiment, Brexit, pay trends, conditions of employment
- Opportunities to contribute into policy submissions
- 732 direct consultations with members
- National Council: meets 6 times per year
- Focus groups - Affiliates Group meetings

Voicing Small Firm Priorities to Government

- Meetings with Ministers, opposition party spokespeople, Data Protection Commissioner, senior department officials, TDs and Senators
- Participation in the National Economic Dialogue, Oireachtas Symposium on Brexit and All Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit
- Presentations to Oireachtas Committees
- ‘Backbencher’ newsletter to all Ministers, TDs, Senators and MEPs
- Member Business Europe

Voicing Small Firm Priorities to Government



- 12 written submissions to government in 2017. Topics include:
 - Budget 2018
 - Action Plan for Jobs 2018
 - National Minimum Wage
 - SME Test for new legislation
 - Costs of doing business
 - Brexit
 - National Planning Framework
 - Employment law / Social Welfare
- SFA represented on over 30 policy committees, incl:
 - Advisory Group on Small Business
 - SME Working Group on Public Procurement
 - Retail Consultation Forum

Voicing Small Firm Priorities in the Media

- 30 press releases
- 596 TV/radio interviews and media mentions (international, national, local, online)
- Special supplements in the Irish Independent (SFA National Small Business Awards) and the Sunday Business Post (SFA Annual Conference)

2017 SFA Policy Wins for Small Business

- Recent Budget an increase in **Earned Income Tax Credit** for the self-employed increased to €1,150
- **Increase in entry point** to the higher rate of income tax
- Introduction of **Key Employee Engagement Programme (KEEP)**
- **Labour Law** withdrawal of Dept. SP proposal on reimbursement of social welfare payments arising from cases of unfair dismissal
- Cost of doing business/red tape **top of political agenda**
- **Central Brexit Role** meeting with Michel Barnier – direct access to Government for companies - €300m Brexit loan scheme announced

Thank you



Chair's Report – SFA AGM 2017
29/11/2017