

## KASPress Ireland



### News Summary

#### Politics

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Welcome to **KASPress Ireland**, our weekly summary of relevant and interesting news from the Irish press.

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- The Roscommon-South Leitrim TD, Michael Fitzmaurice, claimed Taoiseach Enda Kenny and the Minister for Jobs had travelled around the country making announcements on jobs, but these had gone to other regions but not to Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, where 4,000 jobs had been lost since 2013.
- The latest Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll for the Irish Times has Fine Gael up 2pc to 30pc - the third consecutive poll in which the party has hit 30pc or more. However, the coalition appear unlikely to win a second term without support from Independents, as support for Labour falls 1pc to 7pc - this would give the coalition parties a combined total of 37pc.

Sinn Fein is up two points to 21pc, Fianna Fáil has dropped one point to 19pc and Independents or others are down two points to 23pc.

In a further boost for Fine Gael, Taoiseach Enda Kenny is the most popular party leader with an approval rating of 33pc.

- Boundary changes and an overall reduction in the number of constituencies and seats have made the outcome of the General Election even more difficult than usual to call. The number of Dáil seats has been reduced from 166 to 158 and the number of constituencies from 43 to 40.
- According to recent polls, the only possible coalition would be Fine Gael/Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael/Sinn Fein. Fianna Fáil has ruled out the former, and the latter option won't happen. Fianna Fáil believes that it would be destroyed by becoming the junior coalition partner of Fine Gael in a coalition, solidifying Fine Gael as the number one party in Ireland and leaving the field empty for Sinn Fein to become the main opposition.

The other seemingly far-fetched option is for Fine Gael to form a single party government. The received wisdom that a party needs to cross the 41pc threshold in order to secure an overall majority doesn't apply this time, as the field is so fragmented. With 36pc of the vote in 2011, Fine Gael came within seven seats of a majority. With support spread even more thinly this time around, 36pc could well be enough. With around 30pc at the moment, Fine Gael aren't far short of this mark.

- Tánaiste Joan Burton has warned that Ireland is not ready for a single-party Fine Gael government which may target "low and middle incomes" after a new opinion poll suggested this result is the least unlikely outcome.
- Taoiseach Enda Kenny has told a parliamentary party meeting that he would convene a citizen led body to examine the Eighth Amendment, which gives equal right to life to a mother and her unborn child. Mr Kenny has also said that he would give Senators and TDs a free vote on the body's proposal.
- The government is set to vote against a bill which opposition party, Fianna Fáil, claims will confront paramilitary gangs in the border region. The Cabinet has agreed that the bill is redundant in the wake of agreement between the British and Irish governments to establish a high-level task force to tackle organized crime in the border regions.
- 74.6pc of Irish voters want the UK to remain in the European Union, according to the latest Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll. The results of the poll also show strong support in Ireland for the demands of British Prime Minister David Cameron for changes in the way the EU operates.

### Economy

- Ireland, along with eighteen other EU countries, has been flagged by the European Commission as having potential economic problems and needing further analysis. The European Commission is assessing macroeconomic imbalances among EU member states, the aim of which is to solidify the EU's fragile economic recovery and reduce historically high levels of unemployment.
- While the euro zone limps along, growing in the third quarter by 0.3%, the economy in Ireland is resurgent. Following growth of 5.2pc in 2014, GDP increased by 7pc in the first half of 2015, when compared with the same period the previous year.
- The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC) in its assessment of the Coalition's pre-election spending, said that it was not kept fully informed by the Government of its plans for a large supplementary budget. IFAC chair, Professor John McHale told reporters that there was certainly a strong similarity between what happened this year and what happened during the boom years. The watchdog said its role was to

inform the public about Government spending decisions so as to prevent fiscal mistakes from being repeated.

### Society

- Gardaí have placed “under review” a video purportedly released by Islamic State, in which the Irish Tricolour is included among the flags of 60 countries, including the UK, France, Russia and the US, under the headline “The Global Coalition against the Islamic State”. The video’s authenticity is yet to be verified.
- President Michael D Higgins will address the annual seminar of the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBC), organised in partnership with the National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWC) and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). President Higgins will deliver the opening address at the event in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.
- Under new laws aimed at targeting 'sham marriages', couples must be interviewed by registrars as part of a series of tests to ensure the relationship is legitimate. Couples where one partner is from outside the EU are being prevented from getting married because of an industrial dispute involving civil registrars.

## **Headlines**

(Irish Times) [Independent TD accuses Taoiseach of not doing enough for western counties](#)

(Irish Times) [Fine Gael on course to be biggest party by far after election](#)

(Irish Times) [Constituency changes see electoral map of Ireland redrawn](#)

(Irish Independent) [A single-party, Fine Gael government looks 'least unlikely'](#)

(Irish Examiner) [‘Ireland not ready for one party in power’ warns Joan Burton](#)

(Irish Times) [Fine Gael may hold free vote on repealing Eighth Amendment](#)

(Irish Independent) [Coalition to reject FF plan for new border crime agency](#)

(Irish Times) [Irish Times poll: Most Irish voters want UK to stay in EU](#)

(Sunday Business Post) [European Commission says Ireland still has economic imbalances](#)

(The Economist) [Celtic phoenix](#)

(Irish Examiner) [Coalition's overspend of €1.5bn in budget compared to the boom years by budget watchdog](#)

(Irish Independent) [Gardaí review Isil video that includes Ireland among enemies](#)

(Irish Times) [Conference on gender violence seeks to transform men's attitudes:](#)

(Irish Independent) [Dispute halts interviews to block sham marriages](#)