

OECD report confirms Action Plan for Jobs is working but opportunities for further development – Minister Bruton

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD, today welcomed the publication by the OECD of its Review of the Action Plan for Jobs (APJ), which concludes that the plan is working while recommending adjustments in the future to maximise its potential.

With 60,000 jobs created in the past year, Ireland has the fastest employment growth rate in the OECD.

In his foreword to the report, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría says: “The *APJ*’s most striking innovation in the Irish public policy context is a coordination mechanism that ensures high-level political buy-in and oversight, whole-of-government engagement and the establishment of quarterly targets underpinned by a robust monitoring system. These are important steps towards addressing long-standing gaps that undermine successful policy implementation”.

Among the conclusions of the report are:

- The Action Plan for Jobs was “a most welcome and important initiative when launched in February 2012”.
- The *APJ*’s focus on private sector-led, export-oriented job creation by getting framework conditions right and continually upgrading the business environment is a sound approach
- The focus on building and strengthening linkages between the domestic SME and multinational sector is also welcome
- The concerted whole-of-government policy implementation with political buy-in, oversight and direction at the highest level is a significant positive development in Irish public governance – this “marks an important innovation in Irish governance”
- The rigorous quarterly monitoring and reporting system is another such significant positive development in Irish governance
- Future improvements should include introducing a comprehensive performance assessment framework to measure progress towards achieving its strategic objectives
- Future improvements should also include ensuring oversight for strategy-setting, policy execution, and performance monitoring by the Economic Recovery and Jobs Committee

Welcoming the report, Minister Bruton said:

“When we came to office in 2011 after 300,000 jobs had been lost in the previous 3 years we pledged to make job-creation our top-priority. We immediately commenced implementing our plan to return jobs growth to the economy, and in February 2012 we launched the first Action Plan for Jobs to marshal the efforts of all Government Departments and dozens of Agencies towards this single goal. The leadership of the Taoiseach and his Department have been crucial in this. Since then the unemployment rate has fallen from 15.1% to 11.8%, and in the past year 60,000 jobs have been added across the economy. The plan is working.

“Given the scale of the jobs challenge we face, it is crucial that we continually learn lessons and improve our efforts in this area. That is why we asked the OECD, the globe’s foremost policy think-tank with decades of experience in providing policy recommendations to Governments around the world, to examine the Action Plan for Jobs and provide an assessment of how well it is working and how we can improve things.

“The OECD’s broad conclusion that the plan is working is very welcome. However they also provide important conclusions on areas where we can make improvements and recommendations for how we can do that. We will be taking these recommendations on board as part of Action Plan 2014 and 2015”.

The Government’s expert advisory body on enterprise, Forfás, has been crucial to the development and implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs, and the Agency’s CEO Martin Shanahan also welcomed the publication:

“I welcome today's publication of the OECD review. It welcomes the broad approach that underpins the Action Plan for Jobs, the central aim of which is that we make it easier for businesses to do business and in turn create sustainable employment. The evidence shows that implementation of the Plan is working, but significant work remains to drive competitiveness, sustain employment growth and ensure that those on the Live Register can benefit from the opportunities that will arise.”

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