

Key Green Party achievements

January – July 2010 legislative term



In 2010 the Green Party has been delivering key, progressive policies that are creating jobs and improving our society, economy and environment.

1 Reforming planning to suit Ireland in 2010

Aimed at ensuring the end of crony capitalism and making ghost estates a thing of the past, the Planning Bill is one of the Green Party's most important achievements in 2010. It makes community-focused, sustainable planning a legal requirement. The bill, enacted in July 2010 will ensure transparency, openness and democratic involvement in the planning process to avoid rezoning disasters of the past.

2 Civil Partnerships Legislation

The Civil Partnership Bill passed all stages in Oireachtas Éireann on 8 July 2010. The will be of real importance to gay and lesbian citizens and give protection to tens of thousands of cohabiting couples, gay or straight. The new laws allow same-sex couples to register their civil partnership. It contains provision for succession rights, protection of a home that couples share, plus maintenance rights in the event of a separation.

3 Help for mortgage holders

At the Green Party's insistence, an expert group was established in February 2010 to look at how state-supported banks could help the tens of thousands of people with difficulty paying their mortgages. The Group recommended that: no penalty interest or arrears charges should apply; you should not lose your tracker mortgage if you agree a deal with your bank (longer maturity, interest only, payment holiday, etc); and that all lenders develop a specialist unit to deal with those in arrears. The Government said it would implement immediately the recommendations.

4 Cervical cancer vaccinations

In May 2010, the previously stalled HSE programme to vaccinate teenage girls against cervical cancer got underway. This was one of the important measures sought by the Green Party in negotiations for the renewed Programme for Government in October 2009. Approximately 30,000 secondary level students will receive the human papilloma virus vaccination in the first year of the programme.

5 Ongoing record investment in water services

The Water Services Investment Programme for 2010-2012 provides for crucial water infrastructure in the next three years, which will sustain public health; protect the environment and support economic development. It includes several hundred in-progress and planned water conservation projects with a value of nearly €3bn. 4,000 jobs will be supported through infrastructure repair and upgrade. €93m was also allocated to rural water schemes.

6 Action to tackle homelessness prioritised

Funding for programmes tackling homelessness has continued to be ringfenced despite great pressure on all government spending. The budget for homeless accommodation and related services was increased by 5% in 2009 to €62m. This funding has been maintained in 2010.

7 Improving animal welfare standards

Two new pieces of legislation have improved standards for Irish deer and dogs. The Wildlife (Amendment) Legislation 2010 and

the Dog Breeding Establishment Legislation 2010 are significant steps forward in the campaign for better animal welfare standards.

8 Ireland now second in Europe for renewable energy

We have doubled the amount of wind energy on the national grid since 2007. Our targets for 2010 have already been surpassed, with over 15% of electricity from renewable sources – making us second in Europe for wind power, and pushing to be first. We are also on course to exceed our targets for 2020. The Carbon Revenue Levy Bill, enacted in June 2010, will recover from power generators a substantial portion of the unearned carbon windfall gains they currently receive.

9 Inquiry into banking collapse

The Green Party in January insisted that the Government establish an independent, thorough and cost-effective inquiry into the collapse of the banking sector. Having already demanded the appointment of outside regulators, the Party was pleased that reports by Klaus Regling and Max Watson, and Professor Patrick Honohan got to the heart of the collapse. They Party will insist that an open and public inquiry must now follow.

10 Clampdown on premium rate ripoffs

Under a new law introduced in March 2010, broadcasters will be responsible for any premium rate services they advertise. To avoid scams and ripoffs, TV stations and service providers will have to apply for a licence to broadcast competitions or phone-in contests. The new law also regulates premium rate phone lines selling ring tones, sports results, traffic reports and psychic services. Failure to comply will result in fines, or broadcasters having their licences cancelled.