



Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin, D02 WK12

22 January 2021

A Chairde,

Update to Members of the Defence Forces

As I am sure you are aware, the Government has established an independent Commission on the Defence Forces. The Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney TD, announced the membership and the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Commission on the 15th December 2020 and asked that it report to him by the end of December 2021.

Our TOR require that the Commission's overall approach will be guided and informed by both the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019, which set out Ireland's overall Defence Policy. This is against a backdrop of the high-level Defence goal, which is to provide for the military defence of the State, contribute to national and international peace and security, and fulfil all other roles assigned by Government. This fits within the broader context of the protection of Ireland's defence and security interests nationally and internationally.

The Commission had its first meeting on the 22nd December 2020, and this was addressed by Minister Coveney. He underlined the importance of our work for the future of the Defence Forces, ensuring that they are fit for purpose and adequately resourced out to and beyond 2030. On 15th January 2021, the Commission met again and invited the Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM and the Secretary General of the Department of Defence, Ms Jacqui McCrum, and their colleagues, to brief us and to outline the key issues they wish to see the Commission address under the main headings of capability, structures and staffing. We also received updates on the range of work being undertaken by civil/military teams on the implementation of White Paper projects, many of which are highly relevant to our TOR.

The Commission's intent is to visit military installations across the country and to engage with Defence Forces personnel of all ranks in a transparent and candid manner. Clearly, our ability to do so is currently constrained by the need for strict adherence to Covid restrictions. In the interim period, video conferencing calls will be used to initiate the Commission's work, while a public consultation process has also just commenced which will hopefully elicit a considerable and informed response in relation to all aspects of Commission's Terms of Reference.

I, and the other Commission members, very much look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible in the coming months. I regret that we cannot commence our visits to military installations sooner, but rest assured we will begin doing so at the earliest safe opportunity. Additional information in relation to the Commission is available at www.gov.ie/codf and keep an eye on our Twitter handle [@IRLCoDF](https://twitter.com/IRLCoDF).

Yours sincerely,

Aidan O'Driscoll
Chair



Terms of Reference of the Commission on the Defence Forces

In addressing the detailed tasks as provided for in its Terms of Reference, the Commission will have regard to immediate requirements while also seeking to develop a longer term vision for beyond 2030. This is against a backdrop of the high-level Defence goal which is to provide for the military defence of the State, contribute to national and international peace and security and fulfil all other roles assigned by Government. This fits within the broader context of the protection of Ireland's defence and security interests nationally and internationally. The Commission's approach should aim to ensure that the Defence Forces will remain agile, flexible and adaptive in responding to dynamic changes in the security environment, including new and emerging threats (such as from climate change) and technologies.

It is understood that recommendations of the Commission may require legislative changes.

In arriving at its findings and recommendations for arrangements for the effective defence of the country, the Commission will have regard to the level of funding provided by Government for Defence.

The following Terms of Reference, and the Commission's overall approach will be guided and informed by both the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019, which set out Ireland's extant Defence Policy, including the current Security Environment Assessment, as set out in the White Paper Update.

- The Commission will take account of Ireland's particular defence requirements, including its strong international commitment in the overseas domain as well as the particular roles of the Defence Forces in the domestic security environment which itself continues to evolve.
- The Commission will consider and recommend the appropriate structure and size of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and the Reserve Defence Force (RDF). This will encompass consideration of appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing for the Army, and its brigade structure, the Air Corps and the Naval Service along with the appropriate balance and disposition of personnel and structures across a joint force approach in the land, air, maritime, cyber, intelligence and space domains.
- With regard to the RDF, the Commission will consider a wide range of options and will make recommendations to better leverage the capabilities of the RDF in their supports to the PDF and to make service in the RDF a more attractive option.
- The Commission will examine the structures in the Defence Forces as well as the work of the White Paper Command and Control project to date. In that context, the Commission will consider the most appropriate governance and effective high-level command and control structures in the Defence Forces.

- The Commission will examine the evolution of all remuneration systems and structures currently in place in the Defence Forces noting what the Programme for Government states in relation to a future Permanent Pay Review Body. Upon completion of the Commission's work, the Minister for Defence will consult with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on the establishment of a permanent pay review body, reflecting the unique nature of military service in the context of the public service. All recommendations by the Commission or the successor body and their implementation must be consistent with national public sector wage policy.
- The Commission will set out a strategic perspective on HR policies, and associated strategies, including grievance processes and consideration of appropriate structural flexibility, to fulfil the requirements of military capabilities for a more agile and adaptive Defence Forces in a manner congruent with modern society, and in light of the prevailing dynamics of the labour market, while consistent with public sector pay and personnel policy.
- The Commission will consider and recommend appropriate turnover and retention approaches, having regard to work undertaken to date, and international best practice, to deliver the capabilities required of a modern military force. In addition, it will recommend approaches to recruitment, including identifying military career options that could create a more diverse, gender-balanced, flexible and responsive force, with a system of career progression to meet the recommended force structures and disposition.

Membership of the Commission on the Defence Forces

1. Chairperson Aidan O'Driscoll

Aidan O'Driscoll joined the civil service in 1977 as an Administrative Officer and subsequently trained as a Policy Analyst in the Department of Finance. He served in a variety of posts in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine including Chief Economist from 1995 to 2001 and Assistant Secretary from 2001 to January 2015 for EU Affairs, Economics and Climate Change. He was appointed Secretary General in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in January 2015 and subsequently to the Department of Justice and Equality from where he retired in 2020. Aidan also worked in Africa and Asia in a variety of roles and was Chair of the Committee on World Food Security 2000-2002.

2. Peter Brazel

Peter Brazel is a retired civil servant who worked in a number of departments, including at senior level in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, with significant experience of public service policy, including on personnel and remuneration matters.

3. Admiral Haakon Bruun-Hanssen (Retd.)

Haakon Bruun-Hanssen is a retired Norwegian Chief of Defence (2020) and formerly Chief of the Armed Forces Joint Operations and Inspector General of the Norwegian Navy.

4. Shay Cody

Shay Cody was General Secretary of Fórsa, Ireland's second largest Trade Union. He served on the Executive Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Union's Executive and also on its General Purposes Committee. As Chair of the ICTU Public Services Committee he was the lead negotiator in several rounds of public service talks. He has served as a member of the National Economic and Social Council and the National Competitiveness Council and was also a member of the Board of the Workplace Relations Commission. He is currently a member of the Central Bank Commission.

5. Professor Maura Conway

Maura Conway is Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University; visiting Professor of Cyber Threats at CYTREC, Swansea University; and coordinator of VOX-Pol, a global research network on violent online political extremism.

6. Marie Cross

Marie Cross is a retired Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, former Ambassador to the European Union Political and Security Committee (PSC), member of the Board of the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA) and Chair of its Defence and Security Committee. She was a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group for the White Paper on Defence (2015).

7. Professor Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen

Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen is a Danish researcher and security policy expert. She is Director of the Institute for Strategy at the Royal Danish Defence College and Professor (part time) at the Center for Social Security and Risk Management at the University of Stavanger. She is former head of the Department of Preventive Security in the Police Intelligence Service. In June 2020 she was appointed to the advisory group to the NATO Secretary General on NATO 2030. She is an affiliate at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation and holds a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

8. Dan Harvey

Dan Harvey retired from the Defence Forces with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in June 2017 following 40 years' service. He is now a full time military history researcher and author, and has established his own publishing company, H-Books Cork Concepts Limited. Much of Dan's military service involved a wide and far reaching involvement in overseas military peace keeping/enforcing, including operations in South Lebanon, Central Africa, the Balkans and the South Caucasus with the United Nations, EU, NATO/PfP, and the OSCE. Dan's academic qualifications include a Masters in Management, Leadership and Defence Studies (NUIM) 2007, and he is currently pursuing a PhD from Caen University, France. He is the author of a number of military related publications, most recently HOB0 - A History of Irish Defence Forces Bomb Disposal in September 2020.

9. Caitríona Heini

Caitriona Heini is Executive Director at the Azure Forum for Contemporary Security Strategy, Ireland and Adjunct Research Fellow at the School of Politics and International Relations at UCD.

10. John Minihan

John Minihan is a former Senator and retired Captain in the Defence Forces. He was Chair of the 2015 White Paper Ministerial Advisory Group.

11. Lieutenant General Conor O'Boyle (Retd.)

Lieutenant General Conor O'Boyle retired as Chief of Staff of Óglaigh Na hÉireann, Defence Forces Ireland in September 2015 having been appointed by the Government in August 2013. Lt. Gen. O'Boyle joined the Defence Forces as a cadet in 1970 and on commissioning in 1972 was assigned to the Artillery Corps. Over subsequent years he served in a variety of senior appointments and in October 2009 he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and appointed General Officer Commanding the Defence Forces Training Centre. In March 2012 he was promoted to the rank of Major General and appointed Deputy Chief of Staff (Support). Lt. Gen. O'Boyle has extensive overseas experience, having served in the Middle East for two years with UNTSO and three tours of duty to Lebanon. In 2003 he was appointed as the Deputy Irish Military Representative at the Irish Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels where he served for three years.

12. Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen

Esa Pulkkinen has served as Director General of the Defence Policy in the Ministry of Defence of Finland from 2011 – 2016 and from 2020 to date. A specialist in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU, he served as Director General of the EU Military Staff (EUMS) for four years from 2016 – 2020 where he was responsible for early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning for EU military missions and operations. In 2017, he also assumed responsibility as Director of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EUMS. Esa joined the Finnish Armed Forces in 1977 and, after graduating from the Military Academy in 1980, he served in a wide range of leadership positions. He has an extensive background in National Defence and served as the Assistant Chief of Staff in the Plans and Policy Division of the Finnish Defence Command.

13. Geraldine Tallon

Geraldine Tallon is a graduate of UCD. She was a career Civil Servant in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, where she worked in many capacities, including as Secretary General in the period from 2007 to 2014. She is also former Chair of the Department of Defence Audit Committee (2014-2019).

14. Dr. Gerry Waldron

Gerry Waldron currently works as a medical doctor and Director of Slándáil (National Security Summit Ireland). He previously served as an officer in the Defence Forces for 16 years in a variety of roles at home and overseas with the United Nations.

15. Jane Williams

Jane Williams is Managing Partner, Sia Partners, Strategy and Organisational Change consultancy. Clients include public and private companies across a wide range of commercial sectors, government departments and agencies, sports and voluntary organisations. Immediate past Chairwoman of TLAC, Pensions Authority, Small Business & Services Forum and a medical device company. In addition to top civil service appointments, member or chair of selection processes for top judiciary, police and military positions. Jane is Board member of over 20 boards and committees in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Her qualifications include BBS, (Trinity), Banking (Institute of Bankers), MA Psychology (Columbia University, NY). Worked BNP Parisbas, then IDA in Dublin in financial analysis, followed by marketing in IDA, New York. Moved to animation production before establishing Sia Partners. Research interests:- Organisational behaviour, Change management, Gender in organisations.