



Minutes of the 421st NESC Council Meeting, 19th June 2015

The meeting took place in The Clock Tower, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St, at 10 am.

Attendance: John Shaw (Chair), Mary Daly, Maria Graham, Frank Allen, Pat Smith, Gavan O'Leary, John McHale, Michael Ewing, Mary Walsh, James Doorley, Bríd O'Brien, Karen Murphy, Seán Healy, David Hegarty, Tony Donohoe, Ian Talbot, Shay Cody, Manus O'Riordan, and Barry Vaughan.

Secretariat: Rory O'Donnell, Larry O'Connell, Anne-Marie McGauran, Jeanne Moore, Helen Johnston, Damian Thomas, Noel Cahill and Richard Holland.

Apologies: Patricia King, Anna Davies, Seán Ó Riáin, Michael O'Sullivan, Oisín Coghlan, Danny McCoy, Karin Dubsy, John McCarthy, Edgar Morgenroth, and John Murphy.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting of May 2015** were approved.
2. **Ireland in Reconstruction: Anxieties, Choices and Challenges Discussion:** The meeting began with an overview of the Paper from the Director Rory O'Donnell.

There was broad agreement that Ireland has to engage in a process of making hard policy choices, or risk repeating the mistakes of the past and undermining the prospects of securing a more sustainable recovery. It was noted that a 21st state will have to rely on new ways of connecting with individuals; interest groups and society in general and establish new ways of doing business.

There was a wide ranging debate on the Irish system of tax and expenditure, including how it compared to other Member States in the EU as well as selected OECD states. Members discussed how to more clearly identify the linkages between what services society wants and how we pay for them.

The Council were of the view that a focus on Reconstruction was preferable to recovery as this captured the idea of doing things differently in the future. NESC's perspective of consistency on policy was seen as appropriate as past experience demonstrates that a failure to address inconsistent claims can store up problems which are more damaging.

The Council highlighted the importance of demographic trends and indicated that the Reconstruction project needs to consider the types of policy challenges and choices that such trends generate. Members also highlighted the challenge of quality services and associated systems of governance and administrative reform.

Other Business:

The next meeting was set for Friday, 17 July (but was subsequently cancelled due to the National Economic Dialogue).