

PRESS RELEASE: DEMAND REFORM

On 5 June 2009, the Irish people will elect 1 627 councillors. Each of these will receive a representational payment, a fixed annual allowance and expenses. Those who fail to get reelected will receive a retirement gratuity.

Each of the 29 County Councils, five City Councils, five Borough Councils and 75 Town Councils has its own bureaucracy. Not one elected councillor has executive power. This situation is not tenable.

Councils are in a state of financial crisis, yet there is no debate about how essential local services are to be maintained. Who will be responsible for drinking water, roads, libraries, recreational facilities, and other services? How are they to be held to account by the people of this republic?

Of the councils' 33 000 staff, will those on contracts providing front line services be sacrificed first to maintain the status quo? Are we using our increasingly scarce resources wisely by duplicating and re-duplicating management across local authority areas that no longer make any sense?

Should local government be carried out by an Assembly in Munster, Leinster and the West? Shouldn't executive authority rest with elected representatives? Should we have directly elected mayors with executive functions in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford?

Six weeks before European elections there is no debate on European issues, just more misinformation and confusion. To date no politician has argued the Lisbon Treaty, and the European Union on their respective merits. Isn't it time for an argument about the ideas, not the personalities and peccadillos of those involved?

Reform.ie has been set up as a forum for robust debate on the issues, and about Ireland's place in Europe. We hope to secure the commitment of candidates, both local and European, to propose and deliver the reforms so urgently required if elected.

The oxygen of democracy in any country is accountability. If this basic tenet of democracy is forgotten in Ireland, it may have frightening repercussions in the current circumstances.

Contact us on 086 0842159 or at info@reform.ie

reform.ie is an internet-based political platform that advocates the reform of local government in Ireland and the continuing reform of the European Union with Ireland at its core. We believe that these objectives are shared by a large proportion of the Irish electorate and we aim to provide a forum for debate and to register this. We hope to enlist the support of candidates who will pledge to sponsor the reforms so urgently required if elected. We also hope to secure the commitment of candidates, both local and European, to propose and deliver the reforms so urgently required if elected. reform.ie is not linked to any existing political party or movement in Ireland or elsewhere, nor are we funded by any political or economic entity.