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IRISH

Transparency International says Ethics Bill amendment will increase risk of corruption in Ireland

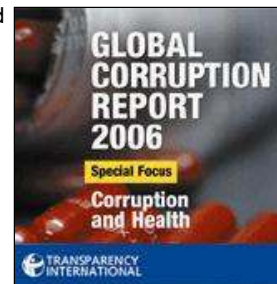
By Finfacts Team
Apr 25, 2007, 17:27

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Government proposals to raise the limit at which gifts and loans to Oireachtas members should be disclosed are disproportionate and will only increase the risk of corruption in political finance and government says anti-corruption organisation [Transparency International Ireland](#) (TI Ireland).

The current disclosure limit of €650 is planned to be increased to €2000 in any one year. This will allow politicians to treble the value of gifts or loans that they can keep secret. The increase is five times the combined rate of inflation over the period since the limits were first introduced.

'This is a significant step backwards and may further damage Ireland's reputation for political integrity. Ireland already has a poor reputation for what is known as "legal corruption". According to the World Bank, Ireland ranks behind some countries such as Malaysia and Ghana for levels of undue influence on politics.' said **TI Ireland's Chief Executive John Devitt**.



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TI says that a number of proposed reforms have yet to be implemented to reduce the risk of corruption and undue influence in politics. Political parties are currently not obliged to publish audited accounts on income other than that they receive from the State; while appointments to the boards of public bodies remain largely at the discretion of individual Ministers. In addition, a recent OECD report on safeguards against bribery criticised the lack of comprehensive whistleblower safeguards for employees in the private and public sector.

According to the **Global Corruption Barometer**, a survey published by TI in 2005, political parties are believed to be the most corrupt institutions in the State. *'Given the low level of public trust in politicians, it is regretful that Government is prepared to pass an Ethics Bill that actually increases the risk of corruption.'* added Devitt.



TI Ireland will publish a report on safeguards against corruption in Ireland later this year. The National Integrity System Study which is funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is due to be released this autumn.

Transparency International (TI) is the leading international non-governmental organisation dedicated to fighting corruption throughout the world. TI's campaign against corruption is supported through a range of information, education and research [programmes](#) around the world.

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