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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX**

14 May 2013

Case document No. 4

European Confederation of Police (EUROCOP) v. Ireland
Complaint No. 83/2012

**FURTHER RESPONSE
OF THE GOVERNMENT**

Registered at the Secretariat on 10 May 2013



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
Dublin 2

8 May 2013

by e-mail only

Régis Brillat
Executive Secretary of the European Committee of Social Rights
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg CEDEX
France

European Confederation of Police (EUROCCOP) v Ireland, complaint No 83/2012
Our file ref: 530/1004

Dear Mr Brillat

I refer to the above matter and your letter of 28 March 2013 inviting the Government to file any additional observations on the admissibility and the merits of the above complaint.

In its observations on the admissibility and merits of the complaint (dated 27 September 2012), the Respondent drew to the Committee's attention that in the context of the negotiations on a Public Service Agreement for the period 2010-2014 (the Croke Park Agreement), Garda Representative Associations were fully involved in those discussions.

In February this year the Government invited staff representatives from across the public service, including the Gardaí, to discussions on a revised Public Service Agreement (Croke Park II). The purpose of these discussions was to identify measures which would reduce the public service pay and pensions bill by €300m in 2013 and by €1bn by the end of 2015. These cuts are critical and unavoidable given the current economic difficulties facing Ireland and are necessary measures for economic recovery. The Croke Park II discussions were facilitated by the Labour Relations Commission. All participants in the talks process, again, which included all the Garda Associations, were dealt with in exactly the same manner – ie the management side and staff side engaged in discussions which were facilitated by officers of the Labour Relations Commission.

On receipt of a number of proposals on options to reduce expenditure on pay and pensions in the Garda Síochána, the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors ("AGSI") decided to withdraw from the process on the basis that, in their own words at that time, "*removing AGSI from the talks was in the best interest of members to protect core pay which includes allowances*". Similarly, the Garda Representative Association ("the GRA"), also discussed in the Respondent's observations, withdrew from the process on receipt of proposals. In the words of its executive, it "*rejected all such proposals that included a cut in Garda pay and decided [it] would not participate in any process that proposed such cuts*". Despite repeated calls from the Government, AGSI and the GRA refused to re-enter the talks.

The talks on a new Public Service Agreement concluded on 25 February 2013 and the Labour Relations Commission issued recommendations which the participating Unions and Representative Associations were asked to put to a ballot of their members.

On Wednesday 17 April 2013, those proposals were formally rejected by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU – an affiliation of trade unions). It is the Government's understanding that neither AGSI nor the GRA conducted a ballot among its members regarding the proposals. The Government is reflecting on the outcome of the ICTU ballot. It has reaffirmed the requirement for €300m of pay and pension bill savings in 2013 and €1bn by 2015 and has asked the Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission to make contact with the parties, including the Garda Associations, to establish whether or not there is a basis for a negotiated agreement to meet the budgetary targets.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter White". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter White
Agent for the Government of Ireland