

Statement by Enda Kenny TD, Taoiseach and Leader of Fine Gael

Last year I indicated that I would not lead the Fine Gael Party into the next General Election. I have decided to implement that decision today. Therefore I will retire as Leader of Fine Gael effective from midnight tonight, 17th May 2017.

I will continue to carry out my duties as Party Leader in an acting capacity, until my successor is elected through the Fine Gael Leadership election process.

I have asked that the Fine Gael Executive Council expedite this process and to have it concluded by close of business on Friday June 2nd.

I want to assure people that throughout this internal process, I will continue to carry out my duties and responsibilities as Taoiseach in full.

I intend to provide a brief but appropriate period for my successor to engage with groups and members supportive of Government, and with other Parties in the Dáil regarding provision of Government for the future.

I would like to stress the huge honour and privilege that it has been for me to lead our party for the past 15 years, in opposition and into Government on two successive occasions.

I thank all our members, past and present for that privilege.

I thank all my loyal constituents and supporters in Mayo for their unstinting loyalty since 1975, and for their support for my family previously in providing unbroken service to the County in DáilÉireann since 1954.

I thank my personal staff for their commitment over many years to their duties.

I especially want to thank my wife Fionnuala, our children, my siblings and their families for their understanding of my work, and indeed for accepting the many intrusions of politics into family life in the interest of building our Country. I could not have engaged as I did without that base.

Thank you.