

Press Release

21 March 2007

Productivity is Key to future Improvements in Living Standards

The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Micheál Martin TD, today (21 March 2007) launched the 'Perspectives on Irish Productivity' book at Trinity College Dublin. This book contains 25 short, accessible papers, written by some of the leading economic and management thinkers in Ireland and overseas, each focusing on a specific aspect of Ireland's productivity challenge.

"Over the last decade or so Ireland has successfully addressed the challenge of providing paid employment to those that want it, thereby ending the unemployment and emigration crises of the 1980s. Indeed, our employment performance is largely responsible for the improvement in Ireland's living standards in recent years. With employment rates in Ireland now above the EU average, Ireland's ability to sustain its competitiveness and improve national living standards will depend heavily on increasing the productivity of those already at work," said Minister Martin at the launch.

At the launch of the book, Martin Cronin, Chief Executive, Forfás, commented "Ireland faces two key productivity challenges going forward: how do we drive productivity growth in the non-exporting sectors of the economy, and how do we maintain an attractive business environment for high-productivity exporting firms, whether Irish-owned or otherwise? It is critical that we create greater flexibility in the workplace, develop greater competition in all areas of the economy, and further invest in human resources to drive Irish productivity growth in the future."