



News Release

For release Monday, July 6th 2009

NEW TASC SURVEY SHOWS 85 % BELIEVE THAT WEALTH IS DISTRIBUTED UNFAIRLY IN IRELAND

Same proportion (85 %) believes Government should take active steps to reduce income inequality

A survey released today (Monday, July 6th) by independent think-tank TASC shows that 85 per cent of respondents believe that wealth is distributed unfairly in Ireland – a 15 percentage point increase over last year's figures. The same survey indicated that 85 per cent of respondents believe the Government should take active steps to reduce the gap between high and low earners.

The survey, carried out by market research agency Behaviour & Attitudes on behalf of TASC, also showed that 77 per cent of respondents were concerned at high levels of wealth inequality in Ireland.

Launching the survey results, TASC Director Paula Clancy said:

"Economic inequality is endemic in Ireland. According to the most recent available figures, the top 1 per cent of the Irish population owns 20 per cent of the nation's wealth, and last year the disposable income of the top 10 per cent was nearly 13 times that of the bottom 10 per cent.

"It is clear from our survey that the vast majority of Irish people not only believe that wealth is unfairly distributed in Ireland, but are also concerned at high levels of wealth inequality. We asked the same questions in our 2008 Inequality Survey, and it is noteworthy that – as the recession bites and people become increasingly concerned about their own economic future – there has been a significant increase (15 percentage points) in the number of people who feel wealth is distributed unfairly", Ms. Clancy said.

"It is also clear that public awareness of, and concern at, high levels of economic inequality is mirrored by a desire to address the issue: 85 per cent of those surveyed agreed with the proposition that the Government should take active steps to reduce the gap between high and low earners.

"Our survey results show that the public is not content to accept high levels of economic inequality. The challenge now is to devise – and then implement – measures which reduce income and wealth inequalities, while marrying the twin goals of social justice and economic development", Ms. Clancy concluded.

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Notes for editors:

1. The survey was carried out between May 1st and May 10th, and survey results are based on a sample of 1,000 respondents. Interviewing was conducted on an in-home, face-to-face basis. The survey findings can be deemed to be accurate to within plus or minus 3 percentage points.
2. TASC will be presenting the results of the survey, as well as some of the data in the attached document (The Solidarity Factor: Public Responses to Economic Inequality in Ireland) at a seminar to be held during the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference in Tralee at 1 p.m. on Thursday, July 9th.