



**Minister Says Measures Targeted At Pensioner Poverty, Children, Lone Parents & Disability Are Delivering Results As More Are Lifted Out Of Hardship**

***Brennan Welcomes Latest Results From EU Survey On Income And Living Conditions***

The Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., today gave a broad welcome to the latest results from the EU Survey on Income Conditions (EU-SILC) for 2005, published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Minister Brennan particularly welcomed the survey findings of a substantial drop in the number of older people at risk of poverty, the significant decrease in consistent poverty rates for lone parent households, a further drop in poverty levels for those with disabilities and the fact that less than 2 per cent of people at work were experiencing consistent poverty.

The survey found that the percentage of older people below the 60 per cent median income threshold has reduced from 27 per cent to 20 per cent in just one year. This does not include the impact of the major pension increases provided for in 2006. The impact of employment in ensuring that people achieve a good standard of living is reflected in the finding that only 1.7 per cent of people at work experiencing consistent poverty. By contrast, people without jobs remain vulnerable to poverty, particularly in households with children. While 27.2 per cent of lone parent families were experiencing consistent poverty this number has dropped from 31.1 per cent in 2004. This further downward trend for one of the most vulnerable groups demonstrates the success of targeted policies and supports. . The percentage of ill and disabled persons experiencing consistent poverty fell by 4.3 per cent from 21.7 per cent to 17.4 per cent between 2004 and 2005.

Minister Brennan said "This survey clearly shows that policies and support measures that are being targeted at those who are most vulnerable, older people, children and



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

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those with disabilities, are helping more and more people to escape poverty. In less than a decade more than 250,000 people, including 100,000 children, have been lifted out of hardship and deprivation. While I retain my criticism of the EU relative poverty measurement, I do welcome the further drop in the number of people categorised as being at risk of poverty. While consistent poverty levels have fallen significantly amongst lone parent households, workers and those with disabilities, the overall rate has more or less remained unchanged. This appears to be due mainly to a core of households where income levels result in some form of deprivation being reported.

Our targeted anti-poverty measures are making a solid impact on poverty levels amongst the most vulnerable. We are now focusing on finishing the job by rooting out poverty where it still exists. The survey identifies some children as being at particular risk of living in some form of consistent poverty. This is to be found mainly in lone parent households and that is why we are preparing to embark on a major set of reforms and initiatives designed to support and encourage lone parents in increasing their incomes through employment. The survey findings are a timely reminder that we still have a distance to travel to rid 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland of poverty, and these findings will be taken into account during the Budget welfare considerations over the coming weeks.”

**ENDS**