



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Statement from Minister Seamus Brennan

Minister for Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan TD, today expressed concern with the opinion of the Advocate-General of the European Court of Justice in the case of the European Commission versus Ireland relating to the Government decision to extend the payment delivery services contract with An Post.

Minister Brennan said that whereas the European Court of Justice agrees with the opinion of the Advocate-General in the majority of cases, this is not always so and we must be careful not to pre-empt that decision. Minister Brennan will inform the Government of the position and has asked departmental officials to examine the detail of the Advocate-General's opinion with particular reference to how it might impact on the future delivery of payment services. The Department expects to receive the Court's judgment in the coming months.

Minister Brennan wishes to reassure all our customers that they will continue to receive their payment as normal.

Today's opinion followed the Government's decision in 1999 to extend the An Post contract for the delivery of social welfare payment for a further 3 years. This decision was referred to the European Commission on the grounds that it did not comply with community public procurement law. The Department has always maintained that no breach of European Community regulations had taken place.

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