
IRISH PM EXPECTED TO SAY THIS WEEK WHEN HE WILL RESIGN

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Ireland's finance minister said on Monday (20 February) that he expects Prime Minister Enda Kenny □ who has already said he will not lead his party into an election due next year □ to say on Wednesday (22 February) when he will step down.

With calls increasing for Kenny to spell out his plans, his spokesman said he would not comment until a meeting of his Fine Gael party on Wednesday.

Finance Minister Michael Noonan said he assumed Kenny would provide a timetable at the meeting.

Kenny, prime minister since 2011, leads a minority government that has become increasingly unstable and only narrowly survived a vote of no-confidence last week over its handling of a policing scandal.

One of the two top contenders to take over the centre-right party said on Sunday that a new leader should be chosen after Kennys trip to Washington for the annual meeting with the U.S. president to mark St. Patricks Day on 17 March.

I think after that visit you will see, I hope, an orderly and quite a quick transition to new leadership within Fine Gael, Housing Minister Simon Coveney told national broadcaster RTE.

Irish PM warns of 'vicious' Brexit negotiations, says May committed to 'no hard border'

Brexit negotiations between Britain and the EU could turn vicious, Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny warned on Wednesday (2 November) during a meeting with politicians and business leaders to discuss the divorce.

Calls for such a transition that would head off a possible vote of no confidence in Kennys leadership have gathered pace since support for the party slumped. Fine Gael fell to second place in an opinion poll on Sunday (19 February), eight points behind its main rival Fianna Fail.

Kennys government, which includes a number of independent lawmakers, relies on Fianna Fail to abstain in key votes to govern.

Fianna Fails leader warned last week that the arrangement was under serious strain and a frontbench spokesman on Monday called on Fine Gael to deal quickly with the leadership issue.

Kenny, who has led his party since 2002, is expected to hand over to a much younger leader. The

main contender other than 44-year old Coveney is 38-year-old Social Protection Minister Leo Varadkar.

Once endorsed by parliament, Kennys successor would also lead Irelands negotiations within the European Union over Britains departure from the European Union, a two-year process due to begin at the end of next month.

Ireland is considered the EU economy most at risk from its key trading partner and near neighbours decision to quit the bloc.

Referendum on Irish reunification is a 'possibility' after Brexit

Enda Kenny, the Irish prime minister, said on Sunday (18 July) that Northern Ireland could vote to become part of a united Ireland if they want to stay in the European Union. But the topic is highly divisive. EurActiv's partner La Tribune reports.

BACKGROUND

Support for Ireland's main opposition surges amid Brexit uncertainty

Support for Ireland's main opposition party Fianna Fail has surged since its decision to back Prime Minister Enda Kenny's minority government from opposition, resulting in a nine percentage point lead, an opinion poll showed on Thursday (7 July).

Kaynak/Source: