

STATEMENT BY EAMON GILMORE TD

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade

Monday 26th May 2013

At 10.30 am this morning, I informed the General Secretary of the Labour Party that I intend to stand down as Leader of the Party, with effect from the election of my successor.

I have asked that the Executive Board of the Party immediately make arrangements for the election of a new Leader of the Labour Party before the end of this Dáil term.

I have had the honour and privilege to lead the Labour Party for seven years.

In 2011, following our most successful ever General Election result, I asked the party to take on the responsibility of Government during the worst economic crisis in the history of the State.

I did so because I believed then, as I do now, that as citizens, and as a party, we had a duty to put the country first. To address the crisis, to get out of the bailout, to reverse the loss of employment, to get the economy to recover, and to do so in as fair and just a manner as humanly possible.

I still believe that was the right decision, and I am proud of the progress we have made in achieving those objectives.

But it was a course which carried a high political risk, and Labour has paid the price for that in the local and European elections. I deeply regret the loss of good public representatives and the defeat of outstanding Labour candidates last Friday.

I have already spoken of the necessity for renewal. The Party and the Government must move on to a new phase and look to the future. Where we have had successes, we must build on them. Where we have fallen short, we must do better. Where new problems are arising, we must find solutions for them. We must, and we will, continue to put the country and the needs of the Irish people first. And in doing so, we must hear, heed and act on the clear message we received last Friday.

There is work to do, and I intend to be part of it, but I believe that the work of renewing the Party is best done under new leadership.

I wish to thank all the members of the Party, all of our public representatives and candidates, the Party Staff, and especially my own staff, who have worked so hard with me and for me over the past seven years.

As I have said many times, I am immensely proud of the courage shown by those members of the Labour Party who, over the past three years, put their country first. Who recognised that real politics is about finding real solutions, and who put loyalty and country before everything else. It has been an honour to lead you, and I look forward to working with you for a long time to come.

Thank You.