

TO ALL NEWS PAPERS
FROM: Joseph Dirwan,
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Sir,

It is now time for the Government to acknowledge it has made a mistake in making special concessions to our highest earning civil servants in relation cuts in public service pay. By reversing this decision it would be taking an important first step towards restoring people's faith in its commitment to equity and fairness. Otherwise it will further undermine its own credibility.

Refusing to treat senior civil servants like everyone else will also make the job of the gardai more difficult. Justice has to be seen to be done in order for people to respect the law and this is another example of how people at the top of Irish society are being given preferential treatment while others are paying for the crisis with pay cuts, negative equity, loss of their job and reductions in public services.

The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No 2) Act was rushed through the Oireachtas on the basis that pay cuts would be imposed across the public service fairly. It was very clear on the need for proportionate pay cuts for each income group and explicitly provided for higher cuts at the top, including 12 per cent for those earning from €65,000 to €200,000. It had been assumed that the discretionary provisions would be used to deal with anomalies and protect the weakest and most vulnerable elements in the public sector. Instead the cuts at the top of the public service range from a mere 1.8 per cent to four per cent. How can this happen? Even more importantly, how can such a departure from the Government's own stated policy be maintained in defiance of fair play, good sense and common decency?

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