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EU Regulation on Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising (TTPA)

April 2026 – Not to be taken as legal advice



OVERVIEW

Government policy plays a critical role in shaping the future of Ireland's economy and society. As digital transformation accelerates across every sector, policymakers must ensure that frameworks are adaptable, inclusive, and innovation-led.

A modern policy approach should balance economic competitiveness with social responsibility, ensuring that growth benefits businesses, communities, and individuals alike.

What Counts as Political Advertising?

Political advertising is any paid-for (or in-house) message that:

- Is produced by, for, or on behalf of a political actor (unless purely private or commercial); or
- Is designed to influence an election, referendum, voting behaviour, or a legislative/regulatory process at EU, national, regional, or local level.

This includes leaflets distributed by volunteers where a political actor arranged distribution, and display advertising paid for by a public representative, even if the content appears non-political.

Who Is Covered?

Sponsors — the person or organisation on whose behalf a political ad is prepared or disseminated.

Providers — parties supplying political advertising services (excluding purely ancillary functions).

Publishers — providers who publish, deliver, or disseminate political advertising through any medium.

Key Obligations

Sponsors must:

- Supply providers with accurate campaign information: sponsor identity, contact details, and funding source (public or private; inside or outside the EU).

- Confirm whether targeting or ad-delivery techniques have been used.
- Confirm EU entity status when procuring services in the three months before an electoral campaign.
- Update providers promptly if any information changes.

Providers must:

- From three months before an election or referendum, only accept political advertising from EU-based sponsors. For the upcoming bye-elections, this cut-off was end of February 2026.
- Require sponsors to correct obviously incorrect information.
- Retain records of campaign details, services provided, amounts paid, funding source, and sponsor identity for seven years.
- Forward any updated information to publishers without delay.

Publishers must:

- Attach a Transparency Label to every political advertisement, clearly stating: it is political advertising; the sponsor's name and controlling entity (if applicable); the relevant electoral event; and whether targeting based on personal data was used.
 - Provide a link or Quick Response (QR) code to a Transparency Notice containing full campaign and funding details, publication period, aggregate costs, and reach data where applicable.
 - Upload each advertisement and its Transparency Notice to the EU repository — immediately for Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs); within 72 hours for all other publishers.
 - Provide a free, accessible mechanism for the public to report non-compliant ads. In the final month of a campaign, VLOPs/VLOSEs must review complaints within 48 hours.
 - Retain Transparency Notices for seven years after an ad's last publication.
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Regulatory Responsibilities in Ireland

Statutory Instrument 474/2025 designates three competent authorities:

Authority	Remit
Data Protection Commission (DPC)	Targeting and ad-delivery techniques in online political advertising
Coimisiún na Meán	Broadcast media, streaming, search engines, and online platforms
An Coimisiún Toghcháin (the Electoral Commission)	All other media (print, outdoor, posters, non-platform websites); National Contact Point for the TTPA in Ireland

The three regulators will operate under co-operation agreements to ensure consistent enforcement across all media types.

Sanctions

Breaches may result in financial penalties of up to **6% of the sponsor's or provider's annual income, budget, or worldwide turnover** (whichever is higher). An Coimisiún Toghcháin and Coimisiún na Meán may also:

- Issue warnings and order cessation of infringements.
- Require corrective action and steps to ensure compliance.
- Publish the identity of the responsible party and the nature of the breach.

The TTPA is now law. All sponsors, providers, and publishers must ensure compliance — non-compliance carries financial and reputational risk.

Stakeholders are encouraged to consult the Electoral Commission's guidance materials and engage proactively with the regulatory framework ahead of all future electoral events.

ANNEX: EXAMPLES

Example no.1 : leaflets distributed free of charge

- Scenario:
- The leaflets are distributed free of charge by local volunteers.
- While the distribution is not "paid-for", as leaflets can be distributed through a paid service, such distribution would fall within the scope of the TTPA.
- In this example, the political actor arranged for distribution of the leaflets which makes the political actor the publisher. This means that the leaflets remain within scope.



Example no.2(a): best wishes from a public rep who also owns a business



- As the display is paid-for by "a political actor", and is not private or commercial in nature, it is a "message" and therefore within the scope of the TTPA.

- Therefore, it does not matter whether the message that has been paid for by a political actor is political in nature. This is also the case if the representative owns the billboard space.

Example no.2(b): business information from a public rep who also owns a business



- The sponsor is not identified as a local representative, the display, while "paid-for", is commercial in nature and therefore excluded from the scope of the TTPA.*

- *This could vary if the sponsor were a candidate within an election campaign period.