

The Irish Times
No party has mandate to coerce, says Kenny

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Dail Eireann Has never set an
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The general election result means that "no party or group has any mandate to instruct, force, direct or coerce anybody to do anything they do not want to do", Taoiseach Enda Kenny told the Dáil.

In his acceptance speech following his election as Taoiseach, Mr Kenny said the result meant "we must all work together in the best interests of all our people".

Mr Kenny, who was elected by 59 votes to 49, with 49 abstentions, said "it is my great honour to accept the nomination of Dáil Éireann for the position of Taoiseach".

While he contended the previous administration fulfilled its "core mandate to move the country back from the edge of an economic cliff", he acknowledged that many people "have not felt the benefit of a recovering economy in their daily lives".

Improving the quality of the lives of people "must and will be" the priority of the new Government, he said. "That fundamental principle will be the bedrock of our policy programme."

The Taoiseach said the new Government "will be a very different kind of administration" and he would play an active role in implementing comprehensive reform of the Dáil and Seanad.

The first Fine Gael leader to lead his party to a second term in office, the Taoiseach paid tribute to the Labour Party. "They know what it means to act in the national interest come what may."

Country

He said the talks in the past weeks "have demonstrated that a very significant number of deputies are willing to try to make the current political configuration work in the interest of our people and the country".

Mr Kenny - the longest-serving TD in the Dáil, having been elected in 1975 - said he had seen days in the chamber "filled with hope and indeed days that were seared with despair". He said there had been years of difficulty, years of bloodshed and, thankfully, years of precious peace.

"Recent years saw sovereignty lost and then our sovereignty regained," he said.

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