



Pensions Commission
Department of Social Protection
Floor 1, Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street, Dublin 1
By email to: ConsultPC@PensionsCommission.gov.ie

15 March 2021

Dear Members of the Pension Commission

I am writing to you in respect of the pension situation of spouses and partners of officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs who undertake postings abroad. It is widely acknowledged that the work of spouses and partners abroad, undertaken on a voluntary basis, supports the Department's efforts to further Irish interests abroad.

Many spouses and partners relocate multiple times over the course of officers' careers. In addition to the burden of multiple moves and the disruption to family life, it is often not possible for spouses and partners to work for a variety of reasons including the support being provided to the officer on a voluntary basis (arranging events, hosting in the home etc.).

Unlike other groups (e.g. voluntary development workers), spouses and partners of officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs posted abroad do not currently receive credited contributions towards the Contributory State Pension for periods undertaking voluntary work abroad. To ensure that such spouses and partners are not disadvantaged in view of the voluntary work they undertake on behalf of the State, it is recommended that they should receive credits for periods of time spent abroad in a specifically tailored scheme.

Should you require additional information in the course of your deliberations, I would be happy to oblige.

Yours faithfully

Anne-Marie Callan

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Director of HR Abroad