

2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

A national strategy for Ireland

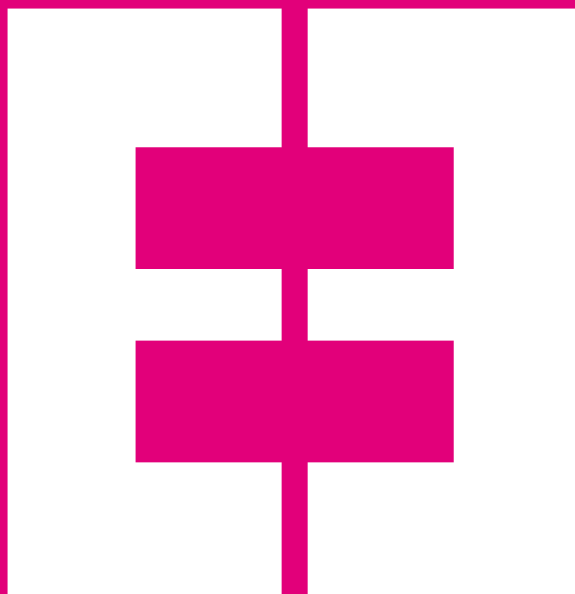
Equality Authority



2007 — European Year of Equal Opportunities for All



THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS



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by

The Equality Authority
2 Clonmel Street
Dublin 2

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PLAY YOUR PART

The European Year in Ireland

2007 has been designated as “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All” by Decision of the EU Council and European Parliament as part of a concerted effort to promote equality and non-discrimination in the EU. The European Year is the centrepiece of a framework strategy designed to ensure that discrimination is effectively tackled, diversity is celebrated and equal opportunities for all are promoted.

The European Year in Ireland will be a year to celebrate progress made in promoting equal opportunities for all and combating discrimination, to acknowledge significant inequalities that persist and to renew commitment to a more equal society.

01

National context: the challenges to be met

A review of the national context for equality and diversity suggests three key challenges to be met within the longer term legacy from the European Year:

- to build on progress made in promoting equality;
- to ensure that persistent inequalities are addressed;
- to share and pursue a new ambition for equality.

Progress made

Ireland has made progress in relation to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. A strategic framework for action on equality is in place and progress has been made in developing the various elements of this framework.

This includes:

- Legislation, which encompasses the enactment of the Employment Equality Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2004, the significant body of case law

that has been established under this legislation, the Social Welfare (Misc. Provisions) Act 2004 as regards occupational pensions and the European Equal Treatment Directives.

- Institutions, involving the establishment of the Equality Authority and the Equality Tribunal, and a growing capacity in leading organisations in the public and private sectors to promote equality, take account of diversity and combat discrimination.
- Mainstreaming, which includes the development of gender mainstreaming within the National Development Plan, the development of multi-ground equality proofing initiatives under the national agreements and the application of a broad equal opportunities horizontal principle within the National Development Plan.
- Targeting, where resources have been targeted on groups experiencing inequality through initiatives such as the Equality for Women Measure of the National Development Plan, the National Disability Strategy, a range of Traveller specific programmes and the National Action Plan Against Racism.
- Participation, where those who experience discrimination and inequality and their representative organisation participate in the national arenas of social partnership and in new structures developed as part of the reform of local government such as the City and County Development Boards.
- Monitoring, where the gathering and analysing of data in relation to those groups experiencing inequality and discrimination has been an area of significant development particularly by the Central Statistics Office.



In relation to this progress made, the first key challenge for the European Year will be to secure a legacy that will further enhance this strategic framework for action on equality.

Inequalities persist

The situation of groups within the nine grounds covered by the Irish equality legislation continues to demonstrate significant inequalities across all of the grounds covered under equality legislation – gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community. Many of these groups continue to experience inequality and discrimination in relation to the workplace and in accessing goods and services, education and accommodation. By way of example:

- Women's hourly wages are 85% of those of men.¹ Older women are at a particular risk of poverty.
- Only 40% of those reporting a long-standing or chronic illness or disability were in employment compared to 70% for other adults of working age.²
- People with third-level education have the highest probability of getting jobs. However, few older people have third-level education and most older people entering jobs (71%) have only primary or lower second-level education.³
- Carers experience significant difficulties in reconciling paid employment and caring responsibilities.⁴

- Lone parents have a low employment rate, with fewer than half (44.7%) in employment.⁵
- The life expectancy of Travellers is considerably below the national average and infant mortality rates among the Traveller community are over twice those of the settled community.⁶
- Health services to provide a treatment path for transsexual people are underdeveloped.⁷
- Early school-leaving rates are higher among boys than among girls.⁸
- Young people surveyed in a recent report see their institutional relationships with adults as for the most part unequal, troubled and rooted in stereotypical ideas about their attributes and abilities.⁹
- Few of the rights, responsibilities, commitments and benefits assigned to married heterosexuals are available to same-sex couples.¹⁰
- Some 21% of migrants who are entitled to work in Ireland say they have been denied credit or a loan from a financial institution.¹¹

During 2005 the Equality Authority worked with the Central Statistics Office in developing a special survey on equality. This Central Statistics Office survey found that 12.5% of the population

¹ *Women and Men in Ireland 2005* Central Statistics Office, Stationery Office, Dublin, 2005

² Gannon and Nolan (2004) *Disability and Labour Market Participation*, Equality Authority, Dublin

³ Russell and Fahey (2004) *Ageing and Labour Market Participation*, Equality Authority, Dublin

⁴ Cullen, Delaney, Duff (2004) *Caring, Working and Public Policy*, Equality Authority, Dublin

⁵ *Quarterly National Household Survey Quarter 1 2006*, Central Statistics Office, Stationery Office, Dublin, 2006.

⁶ *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*, Dublin, 1995

⁷ Collins and Sheehan (2004) *Access to Health Services for Transsexual People*, Equality Authority, Dublin

⁸ Lodge and Lynch, (eds) (2004) *Diversity at School*, Equality Authority, Dublin

⁹ Devlin (2006) *Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People*, Equality Authority, Dublin

¹⁰ *Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals*, Equality Authority, Dublin, 2002

¹¹ McGinnity, O'Connell, Quinn and Williams (2006) *Migrants' Experience of Racism and Discrimination in Ireland*, The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

aged 18 years and over had experienced discrimination within the last two years on the specified and other grounds - 5.1% had experienced work related discrimination and 9% had experienced discrimination in accessing services. Six out of 10 of those who had experienced discrimination had taken no action in response. However 29.9% had taken verbal action, 7.2% had taken written action and 9.2% had made an official complaint or had taken legal action (with some people responding in more than one way). Over one in four (27.6%) of all those aged 18 or over said that they had a good understanding of their rights under equality legislation. However, one in five (19.8%) said they had no understanding. The remaining 52.7% said they had 'a little' understanding.

During 2005 the Equality Authority dealt with 3,094 queries under the Employment Equality Acts and 1,603 queries under the Equal Status Acts. In the same year the Equality Authority had 359 casefiles under the Employment Equality Acts, 358 casefiles under the Equal Status Acts and 37 casefiles under the Intoxicating Liquour Act. The numbers of these casefiles are not a measure of the amount of discrimination. However, they do provide an important indicator of the significant scale and of the patterns of discrimination.

The ground of race was the largest category (32%) of Equality Authority casefiles under the Employment Equality Acts, the gender ground was the second largest (19.5%), followed by the grounds of disability (15%) and age (12.5%). The largest area where discrimination was alleged related to working conditions followed by access to employment and dismissal.

Under the Equal Status Acts, the Traveller community ground was the largest category (29.1%) of Equality Authority casefiles, followed by the grounds of disability (26.3%), race (13.7%), gender (10%) and age (6.7%). A total of 118 of these casefiles

related to the provision of goods and services by public entities such as government departments, state agencies and local authorities. Under the Equal Status Acts, 64 casefiles involved claims against educational establishments, in particular primary schools (37 claims) and secondary schools (18 claims).

In relation to the persistence of inequalities the second key challenge for the European Year will be to secure a legacy that ensures that these inequalities are addressed and eliminated.

An ambition for equality

The Equality Authority has set out an ambition for equality in terms of achieving full equality in practice for groups that currently experience inequality, in:

- access to resources, including employment and income as well as social goods such as education, health and accommodation;
- access to decision-making and having an influence on plans, policies and practices that impact on them alongside the resources to organise and build a capacity to participate in this decision-making;
- access to recognition, status and standing for their distinct identity, experience and situation alongside practical initiatives to take this diversity into account; and
- access to relationships of respect, trust, care and solidarity with the wider society.

In relation to achieving full equality in practice, the third key challenge for the European Year will be to secure a legacy where this ambition for equality is widely shared and pursued.



The national strategy and priorities defined for the European Year

02

The national strategy and priorities defined for the European Year

This Irish national strategy sets out six priority areas of activity. These areas of activity should establish a legacy from the European Year that meets key challenges:

- to build on progress made in promoting equality;
- to ensure that persistent inequalities are addressed; and
- to share and pursue a new ambition for equality.

Priority 1: Information and advocacy

Activities within this priority emphasise initiatives to enhance the provision of information on rights to those groups experiencing inequality.

Priority 2: Equality mainstreaming

Activities within this priority emphasise the need to build an institutional infrastructure to ensure equality is a consideration in planning and policy making.

Priority 3: Equality competence

Activities within this priority emphasise the need for institutional change to ensure organisations are effective in combating discrimination, making adjustments for diversity and promoting full equality in practice.

Priority 4: Equality debate

Activities within this priority focus on engaging key stakeholders in a national debate on issues of equality, diversity and discrimination.

Priority 5: Burning issues

Activities within this priority emphasise the need to make progress in addressing key issues of inequality.

Priority 6: Multiple discrimination

Activities within this priority emphasise the need to focus on the identity, experience and situation of those groups at the intersections of the grounds covered by equality legislation.

The Decision adopted for the European Year has defined four specific objectives. These are defined in terms of rights, representation, recognition and respect.

1. Rights

This objective defined for the European Year is to further raise awareness of the right to equality and non-discrimination and of the problem of multiple discrimination.

The national strategy's first priority will advance this objective through a focus on information and advocacy. Actions developed under the strategy will include:

- working with agencies or organisations that have a role in providing information to the public in exploring and developing new approaches to this role;
- working with specific NGO organisations to develop more effective information channels for people experiencing inequality;
- developing a profile for the European Year and its objectives.

The sixth priority of the national strategy will also advance this objective through a range of actions that focus on multiple discrimination and the intersection between the different grounds.

2. Representation

This objective defined for the European Year is to stimulate debate on ways to increase the participation in society of groups that are victims of discrimination and to ensure balanced participation among men and women.

The national strategy's second and third priorities will advance this objective through building a dialogue on institutional change and equality competence, and on policy making and equality mainstreaming or equality proofing. Institutional practice and national policy that are more attuned to equality consideration will underpin an enhanced participation in society of groups that experience inequality. Actions developed under the strategy will include:

- developing equality competence within organisations in both the public and private sectors so that they have the capacity to accommodate diversity, promote equality and combat discrimination in employment and service provision;

- supporting equality mainstreaming within policy-making of government departments by ensuring that equality objectives are built into policy at design stage and that groups experiencing inequality are supported to participate in equality proofing exercises designed to underpin equality mainstreaming;
- developing data initiatives to support progress in this priority area of activity.

3. Recognition

This objective defined for the European Year is to facilitate and celebrate diversity and equality, emphasising the positive contribution that people, irrespective of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, can make to society as a whole, in particular by accentuating the benefits of diversity.

The national strategy's fourth priority will advance this objective with a focus on generating debate about equality and diversity and about our commitment to a more equal society. Action developed under the strategy will include:

- developing a public debate on equality issues in order to build a deeper commitment to equality and diversity through the media, through events hosted by key institutions in Irish society and through conferences held as part of the European Year.

4. Respect

This objective defined for the European Year is to promote a more cohesive society.

The national strategy's fifth priority will advance this objective through a focus on making progress on key equality issues for groups experiencing inequality. Progress on these issues will require solidarity by the wider society with groups experiencing inequality and will create a context for enhancing relations between groups experiencing inequality and the wider society. Actions developed under the strategy will include:

- supporting activities to address burning issues under each of the grounds covered by the equality legislation. These activities will focus on those equality issues identified during the consultation process as a core priority.

Gender mainstreaming

The Decision on the European Year establishes the importance of gender mainstreaming for the achievement of the objectives defined for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

The national strategy's sixth priority, with its focus on multiple discrimination will underpin a practice of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the strategy. The key action in this regard developed under the strategy will be:

- the development of a framework to explore multiple discrimination experienced by women and the identification of key issues for women under each of the other grounds covered by equality legislation.

Coherence with national policy

This strategy has been developed having regard to commitments made in the *Towards 2016* national agreement between the

Government and the social partners. The activities selected should also contribute to the implementation of the broad range of national action plans developed in relation to groups experiencing inequality. These include the:

National Women's Strategy (forthcoming);
 Disability Strategy;
 National Action Plan Against Racism;
 National Anti Poverty Strategy;
 National Development Plan;
 Carers Strategy (proposed);
 Traveller Education Strategy;
 Traveller Health Strategy;
 Traveller Accommodation Programme.

This strategy will be implemented in parallel with a strategy for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in Northern Ireland. The Equality Authority and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland will work to make appropriate links between the two strategies.

The existing links between the Equality Authority and the "For Diversity against Discrimination" campaign of the European Union will be built on as part of this strategy. Links will also be made with the EQUAL Community Initiative in Ireland.

The Equality Authority is exploring ways in which the National Forum on Europe can participate with the Equality Authority in the European Year.

Action at a national level is the emphasis in this strategy given the resources that are available. However the actions involve organisations with significant membership at local level. This provides the opportunity for national level action to have significant local level impact.

This strategy reflects a broad commitment to the European Year in that the budget requirement of the EU to provide 50% matching funding has been well exceeded with specific commitments from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Equality Authority. This has allowed an identified budget of €462,000 to be allocated to the European Year. Thirty three individual activities make up this strategy, fifteen of which will be funded through this budget. It is important to note that the strategy includes a wide range of initiatives being developed by organisations other than the Equality Authority and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform which involves further funding from the resources available to these organisations.



Consultation with civil society and stakeholders

In preparation for the drafting of this strategy for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, a wide ranging consultation exercise was implemented by the Equality Authority.

National non-governmental organisations with expertise and experience on equality issues, government departments, state agencies, media organisations and social partner organisations were all involved in the consultation. These organisations (as listed in the Appendix) were contacted in July 2006 to seek meetings to discuss the Year.

The Equality Authority arranged meetings with the NGO sector in July and August 2006. National non-governmental organisations, as set out in the Appendix, were involved. The aim of the meetings was to discuss the European Year and to explore their priorities for the European Year. As a result of these meetings, a number of ideas and priorities emerged which helped form the basis of this strategy to advance the objectives of the Year.

A consultation event was organised by the European Network Against Racism for the NGO sector. The Equality Authority was present at this event and made one of the presentations.

In October 2006, the Equality Authority held a roundtable consultation meeting for national non-governmental organisations that had been met with, to provide feedback on the consultation process and to discuss a working paper on the strategy for the European Year. The working paper included a list of six priorities that had emerged through the consultation process. One of these priorities was the 'burning issues' priority. At this roundtable the 'burning issues' priority was a particular focus for discussion.

A specific document on the 'burning issues' priority was prepared for comment and the national non-governmental organisations involved were invited to respond to this document.

The Equality Authority made contact with the secretary generals of eight government departments in July 2006 seeking a meeting in relation to the European Year. Meetings were held with senior officials from these departments during August and September 2006. The aim of the meetings was to inform departments of the European Year's objectives and to explore potential areas for collaboration during the European Year. These meetings focused in particular on the equality mainstreaming priority in the strategy.

The Equality Authority met with ten state agencies to discuss the European Year and to explore their potential involvement in actions to mark the European Year. These included organisations providing key services as well as those agencies with specific responsibilities in relation to issues of poverty, equality and rights. These meetings focused in particular on the equality competence priority and on the priority for stimulating the equality debate.

National media organisations were contacted by the Equality Authority to seek support for the European Year. A number of meetings were held with the national broadcaster, RTÉ, to discuss ways of raising public awareness of the European Year and of embedding a focus on equality in radio broadcasting. A meeting was held with one of the main national newspapers, the Irish Independent, to explore ways of raising public awareness of the European Year and of the priorities in the strategy.

The Equality Authority met with eight social partner organisations from the business and trade union pillars to discuss the European Year and their involvement in the European Year. A particular focus in these meetings was the involvement of the social partners in the priorities within the strategy on information and advocacy, equality competence and equality debate.

Finally, a draft of the strategy was circulated to all groups involved in the consultation for comment before its completion and submission to the European Commission.



Implementation of the national strategy and priorities for the European Year

Priority 1: Information and advocacy

1.1 Action: To carry out a research exercise on approaches by statutory bodies in other jurisdictions to the provision of information on rights and to create a forum for statutory information providers with a rights focus to share approaches and pool resources as appropriate.

Action Leaders: Comhairle, Ombudsman, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

1.2 Action: To develop an initiative to train Threshold (a housing non-governmental organisation) staff with responsibilities for information provision in order to develop their ability to provide information on rights under the Equal Status Acts and to develop support material to assist a focus within the work of Threshold on equality and the Equal Status Acts.

Action Leaders: Threshold, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

1.3 Action: To develop a profile for the European Year through:

- a public awareness campaign using outdoor advertising and local radio,
- preparation of materials on the European Year,
- a launch event and a closing event,
- a review exercise on the activities during the European Year and a publication to support a practical legacy from the European Year.

The public awareness campaign would build on previous campaigns run by the Equality Authority which have been valuable in raising awareness of the equality infrastructure, in challenging stereotypes and in mobilising support for new practice. The public awareness campaign will reinforce and broaden messages from previous campaigns with its focus on equal opportunities for all and on the European Year and through seeking a broad public commitment to participation in the activities of the European Year.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

1.4 Action: To organise an exhibition in the Dublin offices of the European Commission on the contribution of the EU to the promotion of equality at Member State level.

Action Leaders: EU Commission Office in Dublin

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

1.5 Action: To develop an initiative by the IMPACT trade union to assist migrant workers experiencing discrimination by preparing documentation and providing training to enhance the advocacy supports available to migrant workers. A current equality pack will also be updated along with the development of an equality section on the website.

Action leaders: IMPACT
Targeted Groups: Race ground

Priority 2: Equality mainstreaming

2.1 Action: To develop an equality mainstreaming infrastructure through the European Social Fund Operational Programme to support providers of vocational education and training to incorporate an equality focus in their work.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

2.2 Action: To develop a tool to support the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) and its member Vocational Education Committees in equality proofing key policies and plans at key moments in their design and development.

Action Leaders: IVEA, Equality Authority
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

Action 2.3: To develop an equality proofing initiative with three government departments. This will involve a small scale review of current policy making and programme design systems in the department or a section of the department to identify an effective

and practical approach to equality proofing and to build an agenda for action in this regard. This action will be implemented in the context of the equality proofing working group convened by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Action Leaders: Department of Health and Children, Department of Education and Science, Equality Authority, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

2.4 Action: To develop a data initiative by the Central Statistics Office. A special statistical release will be prepared which will provide summary demographic and participation data across the nine grounds.

Action Leaders: Central Statistics Office
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

Priority 3: Equality competence

3.1 Action: To develop an institutional capacity within public sector organisations to accommodate diversity, promote equality and combat discrimination by supporting institutions to be planned and systematic in their approach to equality for customers and employees.

This action will involve:

- creating a learning network of public sector organisations,
- organising a learning event,
- developing guidance material, and
- developing practical initiatives at institutional level in each organisation.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority, FÁS, Health Services Executive

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

3.2 Action: To support an institutional capacity within private sector organisations to accommodate diversity, promote equality and combat discrimination by supporting employers to be planned and systematic in their approach to equality for customers and employees. This approach to equality involves organisations in developing equality policies, preparing and implementing equality action plans, providing equality and diversity training for staff and carrying out equality audits. This learning network will have a particular focus on the race ground but will also approach this as part of a wider equality focus.

This action will involve:

- creating a learning network of private sector organisations,
- organising a learning event,
- developing guidance material,
- supporting practical initiatives within the organisations involved, and
- promoting the business case for diversity and equality.

Action Leaders: Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

3.3 Action: To organise an equality focus within the annual human resource conference of the Local Government Management Services Board in a context of their commitment to a planned and systematic approach to workplace equality in the *Towards 2016* national agreement.

Action Leaders: Local Government Management Services Board

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

3.4 Action: To establish a cross-company group in Pobal (a state company responsible for the funding of a broad range of social inclusion programmes) to develop current thinking within the organisation on social inclusion and to link this to conceptual frameworks for the advancement of equality. An in-house document will be developed by Pobal by June 2007 and this will be used as a basis for discussion with all programme beneficiaries.

Action Leaders: Pobal

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

3.5 Action: “Athlone Promoting Workplace Equality” will be explored and implemented as a project by Athlone Chambers of Commerce to support the further development of planned and systematic approaches to equality within local enterprises in Athlone. A partnership of local organisations will be developed to plan and support the project. A mapping exercise will establish the current approach and commitment within local enterprises to serve as a starting point for the project. Activities will be developed to build on the findings of the mapping project. Athlone Chambers of Commerce was identified as an action leader through the National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise. This committee is convened by the Equality Authority and involves IBEC and Congress.

Action Leaders: Athlone Chamber of Commerce, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

3.6 Action: An Inter University Equality and Diversity Group will meet on a regular basis to share learning and good practice on equality issues so as to further the equality agenda across the university sector. Some of the issues to be addressed will include equality data monitoring, access of disadvantaged and minority ethnic groups, disability services, positive action and mainstreaming equality training.

Action Leaders: University College Cork, National University of Ireland Galway, University of Limerick, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Dublin City University
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

3.7 Action: To develop and implement an equality module within the Annual HR Survey of Chambers Ireland to explore and analyse employer perceptions in relation to equality, diversity and the proactive promotion of workplace equality.

Action Leaders: Chambers Ireland, Equality Authority
Targeted Groups: All nine grounds

Priority 4: Equality debate

4.1 Action: To conduct a review exercise on the current roles and aspirations of the NGO sector in relation to representing the interests of groups experiencing inequality and to organise a conference on this theme.

Action Leaders: NGOs representing groups experiencing inequality, Equality Authority
Targeted groups: All nine grounds
 This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.2 Action: To organise a conference to mark thirty years of gender equality legislation in Ireland.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority

Targeted groups: Gender ground

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.3 Action: To develop a public awareness campaign in relation to issues for people with disabilities in the context of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Action Leaders: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: Disability ground

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.4 Action: To develop a public awareness campaign on ageism and older people.

Action Leaders: Health Services Executive, National Council of Ageing and Older People, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.5 Action: To develop a public awareness campaign on Work Life Balance in the context of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Action Leaders: National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Targeted Groups: Gender, family status, age, disability and race grounds

4.6 Action: To develop a programme of work with key media organisations to develop a focus on equality issues during the Year.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority, RTÉ, Irish Independent
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

4.7 Action: To stimulate debate within the political process.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

4.8 Action: To organise a colloquium on the promotion of equality within the life-cycle approach to policy-making and programme development. This life-cycle approach was developed in *Towards 2016* the Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership National Agreement 2006–2016. This is a new approach within which to address key social challenges by assessing risks and hazards which an individual person faces and the supports available to them at each stage of the life-cycle. The key stages of the life-cycle approach, as developed within *Towards 2016*, relate to children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities.

Action Leaders: Department of an Taoiseach, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the National Economic and Social Development Office and the Equality Authority
Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.9 Action: To develop a series of five policy papers to shape the position of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on issues relating to equality in the workplace. The following themes have been identified:

- access to the workplace and promotions;
- flexible working and work–life balance issues;
- equal pay;
- workplace culture – anti harassment, pro diversity;
- promoting equality – positive action, accommodating diversity.

A key theme for the Congress Biennial Delegate Conference in July 2007 will be that of Equal Opportunities. This will be supported by the five policy papers.

Action Leaders: Congress
Targeted Groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.10 Action: To organise a conference on Equality and the Irish Constitution to mark the seventieth anniversary of the current Constitution.

Action Leaders: Equality Authority, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Targeted Groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

4.11 Action: To incorporate a high profile equality theme as part of the annual conferences of Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI), Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) and Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO).

Action Leaders: TUI, ASTI, INTO
Targeted Groups: All nine grounds

Priority 5: Burning issues

5.1 Action: Activities developed under this theme will be at a national level. They will be led by non governmental organisations with expertise and experience on equality issues. A partnership approach involving relevant stakeholders will be encouraged. The non governmental organisations will be resourced through a fund developed as part of the budget for the year. Activities will include:

- developing new knowledge or understanding about the issue;
- securing a profile for and public debate on the issue;
- identifying and securing agreement on an agenda for change in relation to the issue;
- negotiating and implementing change to secure practical progress on the issue.

These issues were identified by the NGO sector during the consultation phase for the strategy. During the first quarter of the European Year a call for proposals from national non-governmental organisations will be issued by the Equality Authority. This call for proposals will be advertised through the NGO sector and using the Community Action Bulletin (a web based resource for the community and voluntary sector). Interested groups will be required to complete an application form stating which issue their proposal seeks to address along with information on the proposed activity. There has been €140,000 ring-fenced from the total budget of the European Year for this call for proposals and 14 projects will be funded at an indicative total of €10,000 per project. The projects will take place between January 1st and December 31st 2007. A sub-group

of the European Year Advisory Committee will be established as the selection committee for the projects and the National Implementing Body will be responsible for monitoring progress in relation to each of the projects.

Action Leaders: National NGOs with an expertise and experience on equality issues

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

The issues identified and selected are:

1. Gender ground

Caring equality

The focus for this issue will encompass the sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men, the status and standing of caring roles and those who play caring roles, and the role of the state in supporting caring through statutory leave entitlements and through the development of a caring infrastructure.

Men in gender equality

The focus for this issue will encompass an exploration and development of effective strategies for building an understanding of male gender conditioning in men and a focus on the role of men in the pursuit of gender equality.

Transgender people

The focus for this issue will encompass the need to achieve a visibility for and to accord recognition to transgender people in the gender with which they identify and the practical steps that could be taken in this regard.

2. Marital status

Family diversity

The focus for this issue will encompass building a knowledge base about and a profile for family diversity in Irish society and the implications of this for policy and provision.

3. Family status

Accommodation issues for lone parents

The focus for this issue will encompass policy and practice in the provision of accommodation and the capacity of such policy and practice to meet the needs of lone parents.

An equality strategy for carers

The focus for this issue will be the commitment to a national strategy for carers in the *Towards 2016* national agreement and the need for carer's organisations to gear up to engage with this commitment and to develop practical policy inputs to any such strategy.

4. Age

Combating negative stereotyping of young people

The focus for this issue will encompass practical steps required to combat and to prevent the negative stereotyping of young people and to address the impacts of this negative stereotyping.

The health status of older people

The focus for this issue will encompass addressing barriers to access to health services for older people, the development of health services to meet the particular needs of older people and the development of standards in and entitlements to health services for older people.

5. Disability

Institutionalisation

The focus for this issue will encompass current policy and practice in relation to people with disabilities in institutions, the experience of people with disabilities in institutions, standards and entitlements for people with disabilities in institutions and effective communication channels for and with people with disabilities in institutions.

Access

The focus for this issue will encompass the development of supports for service providers to ensure accessibility for their services to people with disabilities and to stimulate and inform a demand from people with disabilities for accessible services. This focus will have due regard to the disability strategy and the provisions of the equality legislation.

6. Sexual orientation

Partnership rights

The focus for this issue will encompass building commitment to and contributing to new policy and practice on partnership rights for same sex couples.

7. Race

Integration

The focus for this issue will encompass analysis, policy and practice on the integration of minority ethnic groups and on the emergence of an integrated intercultural society with a particular focus on access to public services for Black and minority ethnic groups.

8. Religion

Explore and address as appropriate majority community attitudes to Islam and the Muslim community.

The focus for this issue will encompass an exploration of majority community attitudes to Islam and the Muslim community alongside initiatives to address any issues identified in relation to these attitudes.

9. Travellers

Intercultural education

The focus for this issue will encompass practice at school level in creating inclusive schools that achieve educational outcomes for Travellers. This focus will have regard to the Traveller Education Strategy.

Priority 6: Multiple discrimination

6.1 Action: To produce a booklet to develop an approach to multiple discrimination in relation to women and to inform gender mainstreaming within the strategy for the Year. Further action by the Equality Authority will include convening representatives of a diversity of women to explore and debate this booklet.

Action Leaders: NGOs representing women and groups experiencing inequality, Equality Authority

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

This action will be in receipt of European Year funding.

6.2 Action: To inject a multiple identity dimension to the planning by Pobal (a state agency responsible for the funding of a broad range of social inclusion programmes) of a cross-programme conference on the theme of disability.

Action Leaders: Pobal

Targeted groups: All nine grounds

6.3 Action: To organise a seminar on diversity amongst older people focusing on the experience of migrants in Ireland as part of the 'Older and Bolder' Campaign (which supports equality for older people). This seminar will explore the experience of growing old in a country different from the one in which migrants grew up and how life can be made more positive for older migrants.

Action Leaders: Older and Bolder Campaign

Targeted groups: Age and race grounds

6.4 Action: To develop an initiative to develop a working policy position paper on disability and ageing to explore the interface between the age and disability grounds.

Action Leaders: National Council on Ageing and Older People and National Disability Authority

Targeted groups: Age and disability grounds

6.5 Action: To work on a project, including in particular a seminar to promote evidence based policy development, in the area of women and disability.

Action Leaders: National Disability Authority and National Women's Council Ireland

Target Groups: Women and disability grounds



05

Monitoring of the Year's implementation at national level

The Equality Authority will monitor and control the use of finances using our standard auditing procedures in accordance with the Department of Finance Public Procurement Policy Unit's Guidelines, which consists of monitoring visits and audits.

An advisory committee for the European Year will be established and convened on a regular basis during the year. The committee will be composed of representatives from:

- government departments (5);
- state agencies (3);
- statutory and advisory bodies with responsibilities that relate directly to the nine grounds (3);
- representative organisations for each of the groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds (12);
- media organisations (1);
- business and trade union interests (5).

The committee will:

- support the implementation of the strategy,
- guide the further development of the strategy,
- monitor the impact of the strategy, and
- promote a longer term legacy for the Year.

A non-governmental organisation's forum will be established to support the European Year. This will be convened by the Equality Authority. It will be composed of national representative organisations of groups that experience inequality from across the nine grounds. The forum will:

- bring forward a broad range of NGO perspectives to inform and support effective implementation of the strategy,
- support a longer term legacy from the European Year.

The Equality Authority as the National Implementing Body will be responsible for:

- driving the implementation of the strategy;
- implementing a number of actions within the strategy;
- convening the committee and NGO Forum for the European Year;
- management of the finances required for the Year; and
- liaison with the European Commission in relation to the European Year.

A review exercise will be commissioned to accompany and report on the implementation of this strategy. This will assess the actions carried out and their impact against indicators established and will develop a focus on the longer term legacy of the European Year.

06

Conclusion

This strategy is ambitious. It reflects the significant interest in and commitment to the objectives of the European Year demonstrated by a wide and diverse range of organisations during the consultation process for the strategy. This interest and commitment provides the key foundation for the successful implementation of this strategy.

Play Your Part is the core message within the various public awareness campaigns planned as part of this strategy. This reflects the importance of securing a broad involvement of individuals, groups, organisations and enterprises in the implementation and further development of this strategy for the European Year. This broad involvement will be one marker of success for the European Year in Ireland.

A further marker of success for the European Year should lie in a practical legacy from the European Year into the longer term future. This practical legacy should be evident in a renewed commitment to further enhance the strategic framework for action on equality that has been put in place, to address and

eliminate the significant inequalities that persist in Irish society and to establish an ambition for equality in terms of achieving full equality in practice that is widely shared and pursued.

If you can Play Your Part in building this legacy and need more information on the European Year please contact:

Carole Sullivan

European Year Co-ordinator
Equality Authority
2 Clonmel St
Dublin 2

Appendix

List of organisations met during consultation

NGOs

Transgender Equality Network Ireland
 National Youth Council of Ireland
 One Parent Exchange and Network
 National Women's Council of Ireland
 Irish Traveller Movement
 Pavee Point
 People with Disabilities in Ireland
 Forum of People with Disabilities
 Inclusion Ireland
 Age Action
 Age and Opportunity
 Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
 Caring For Carers Ireland
 The Carers Association
 Care Alliance Ireland
 Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
 European Network Against Racism
 Men's Development Network
 Threshold

Advisory body

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

Government departments

Health and Children
 Environment, Heritage and Local Government
 Social and Family Affairs
 Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
 Enterprise, Trade and Employment
 An Taoiseach

Justice, Equality and Law Reform
 Education and Science

State agencies

Combat Poverty Agency
 National Disability Authority
 National Council on Ageing and Older People
 Central Statistics Office
 Ombudsman
 Ombudsman for Children
 Comhairle
 Health Services Executive
 Pobal
 FÁS

Media

RTÉ
 Irish Independent

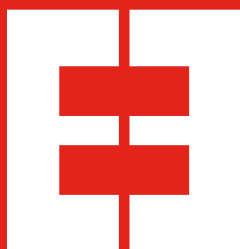
Social partners

IBEC
 Chambers Ireland
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 Irish Nurses' Organisation
 SIPTU
 ASTI
 TUI
 IMPACT
 INTO

European organisations

European Commission Office, Dublin
 National Forum on Europe

**PLAY
YOUR
PART**



The Equality Authority

2 Clonmel St
Dublin 2

Public Information Centre

Lo Call: 1890 245 545

Tel: (01) 417 3333
Business queries: (01) 417 3336
Text phone: (01) 417 3385
Fax: (01) 417 3331
Email: info@equality.ie
Web: www.equality.ie



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