

equalitynews

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WELCOME

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On behalf of the Board, I would like to welcome you to the Equality Authority's first edition of Equality News. This issue sets the agenda for future editions by outlining the aims, activities, aspirations and achievements to date of the Equality Authority.

It is our aim that this quarterly publication will inform readers on current events and actions within the Authority. Regular features will include developments in Ireland and abroad, and key European Union initiatives.

This is an exciting time, as we face new challenges to move forward and to implement practical policies and measures which promote equality at all levels. The increasing diversity of our society places a responsibility on all of us to create an integrated and inclusive Ireland, while accepting and respecting difference. The Employment Equality Act, 1998 affords the Equality Authority the broad functions of working towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. The Equal Status legislation, when enacted, will give our work an extra dimension. In carrying out its aims, the Authority is fortunate to have at its

helm Niall Crowley, who along with his excellent staff will undoubtedly make an impact on the equality agenda.

A key challenge as we move forward is to meet the high standards we have set ourselves. The three-year programme of work which we have set out in our recently published Strategic Plan is intended to enable the Equality Authority to perform its role in an insightful and creative way. The purpose of this newsletter is to clarify and offer guidance on issues relating to discrimination in Irish life. I hope readers will find Equality news thought provoking, informative and interesting.

The policies formulated by the Equality Authority will be all the more effective because of the combined knowledge and the experience of the dedicated Board members with whom I am fortunate to serve. The expertise each individual Board member brings to the task is invaluable, and will in the long-term be extremely beneficial in helping us combat discrimination and create a more equitable society.

Kate Hayes, Chair



EQUALITY AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS



Top row, from left: **Ulltan Courtney, Leonard Hurley, Carol Fawsitt, Kate Hayes, Noreen Byrne, Anne Arthur O'Brien** Bottom row, from left: **Dr. Anne Clune, Joan Carnicheal, Marie Moynihan, Thomas McCann, Shane Broderick, Paddy Keating**

COMMENCEMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT, 1998 AND THE OPENING OF THE NEW OFFICES FOR THE EQUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

On 18th October 1999, The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. John O'Donoghue, T.D., signed the Order bringing the Employment Equality Act 1998 into operation at a function to mark the commencement of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and to officially open the offices of the new equality infrastructure at Clonmel Street. The new building will be home to the Equality Authority and the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations.

The Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, T.D., who officially opened the new offices, said that "Equality legislation will work if Irish people want it to work. And those of us in leadership, the media, in public life - in all of society- need to understand that. We all need to accept our responsibility to make sure that it does work and brings about change and an end to discrimination."

speaker at the function, was warmly welcomed by her counterpart in the South, Ms. Kate Hayes, Chair of the Equality Authority. Mr. Niall Crowley, Chief Executive of the Equality Authority and Ms. Melanie Pine, Director of Equality Investigations outlined the medium term work programmes for their two organisations.

Mr. Crowley commented that "the new Equality Authority will support those who are experiencing discrimination in a practical way by providing information, advice and a free legal representation service. We will also work in an accessible way to accommodate different requirements and to be relevant to different needs. The Authority will promote equality through developing new commitments and new approaches to achieving equality outcomes."



Minister John O'Donoghue referred to the substantial financial allocation of £3.7 million provided for the equality infrastructure this year. The fine premises at Clonmel Street and the 70 or so staff that will work in it, approximately 45 in the Equality Authority and 27 in the Office of Director of Equality Investigations, are evidence of my serious commitment, and that of the Taoiseach, to the Act and to the equal status legislation. Ms. Joan Harbison, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland, a keynote

The services to be provided by the new Office of Director of Equality Investigations will have a major impact in insuring the effectiveness of the new legislation. Melanie Pine, the newly-appointed Director, sees her first task as that of building the Office into an organisation that will deal with individual claims in an effective, accessible and timely way. She also has her eyes firmly fixed on the strategic role of the Office under the legislation. Explaining her vision, she says "of course we must provide the best possible service for people who are claiming redress for past discrimination."

OUR FIRST SIX MONTHS

BY NIALL CROWLEY

The Equality Authority has completed its first six months. Over this period, solid foundations have been laid and initial agendas have been advanced. Most importantly a Strategic Plan and a Customer Service Action Plan have been published.

The Strategic Plan sets out the mission, objectives and activities of the Equality Authority. The mission is defined as:

'The Equality Authority is committed to realising positive change in the situation of those experiencing inequality by:

1. Promoting and defending the rights established in equality legislation and
2. Providing leadership in:
 - Building a commitment to addressing equality issues in practice
 - Creating a wider awareness of equality issues
 - Celebrating the diversity in Irish society
 - Mainstreaming equality considerations across all sectors.

The Customer Service Action Plan sets valuable standards of efficiency and accessibility for our work. We hope adequate customer feedback will ensure these standards are met and even bettered.

The core challenge over this period has been to lay foundations that will carry us through the three year span of our Strategic Plan. Five such foundations have been developed:

- A committed staff team is being built who come from a wide range of experiences with an exciting diversity of skills. Currently the staff complement stands at 30 and provision is being made for this to rise to 50 over the coming year.

- Human and financial resources will be the key to the Equality Authority realising its mandate. A core budget of £2.75 million has been secured and this is likely to be significantly enhanced through the National Development Plan.
- A high profile is needed for the Equality Authority so that people know what we have to offer and so that people know where to come for assistance. We have received over 3000 queries in the first five months which is testament to the profile secured.
- Knowledge development is another important foundation needed to underpin new activities being initiated. In-service training, briefing sessions and the commissioning of background papers have greatly assisted in this regard.
- Finally the creation of an administration section has ensured the necessary internal systems for the smooth functioning of the Equality Authority.

These foundations have allowed us to advance some of our initial agendas. These can be grouped in terms of our roles in enforcement, development and communication.

The large quantity of queries have dominated the enforcement role. These are gradually evolving into a number of complaints and the first cases under the new legislation have been approved for support. The gender ground predominates and this is likely to continue. Under the new grounds those that have emerged with the greatest speed are the age and disability grounds followed by the sexual orientation and race grounds. This is a profile that is likely to alter significantly following the introduction of the Equal Status legislation.

John O'Donoghue, Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, pictured with Niall Crowley, CEO and Kate Hayes, Chair at the Launch of the Strategic Plan 2000-2002



The communications challenge has been posed in terms of:

- Securing a profile for the Equality Authority.
- Promoting a consciousness of rights and obligations under the new legislation.
- Generating debate around the equality agenda.
- Ensuring our capacity to hear the perspectives of the full range of equality interests.

Within our developmental role two advisory committees have been established - one to report on the equality agenda for lesbians, gays and bisexuals and the other to report on the equality agenda for older people. A programme of work is being developed with the state sponsored sector to respond to the report on equal opportunities within this sector. Meetings to discuss this have already been held with all the organisations concerned. Family friendly practices are emerging as a significant focus within our work. An EU funded research project on family friendly practices within the SME sector is being completed and will set out the parameters for further work in this area. Our concern with data deficits has stimulated the development of a working relationship with the Central Statistics Office alongside the commissioning of a background paper to set out the issues. This paper will shortly be published.

A contract has been agreed with the NSSB (future Comhairle) to support an outreach strategy for the Equality Authority. This should allow a presence for the Equality Authority in locations around the country. An interactive website is currently being put in place. Presentations have also been made to a wide range of seminars and groups.

This work has relied on the widespread participation of equality organisations, business bodies, trade unions, academics and community organisations. This participation is demanding but it has been the basis for the Equality Authority to define its goals and to pursue activities to realise these goals. A vibrant Equality Authority will continue to depend on this participation and we take this opportunity to thank you for the great contribution made to date.

EQUALITY AND RIGHTS

BY MARY ROBINSON

UN High Commissioner
for Human Rights

The word equality is in danger of becoming synonymous with legalistic, or policy mechanisms to reorganise and readjust decisions or amend laws. The debate is often about how the process of policy making can sort out the problem of inequality. We need to reclaim the core value.

I suppose the question to be asked is why the equality debate is not naturally and instinctively recognised as a rights debate? Certainly a mechanistic debate does not address the basic construct which creates and sustains inequality i.e. power relationships. Those who experience inequality: people caught in a poverty trap, ethnic minorities, those with disabilities, essentially have decisions made for and around them, and which by their nature marginalise their condition i.e. they are not made by them or about them. No one consults them, asks their opinion, reacts to their views and experience.

The most important tool in tackling inequality is to enable those experiencing it to remedy the power relationship, to take some control. This is a concept of rights that requires that those who are furthest from the cabinet table own the rights that inhere to them by virtue solely of their humanity. Ownership of this kind enables



them to describe their condition, then to challenge it, and then to ensure that any decisions taken in the organisation and the ordering of their lives are made "by and with" them, not "about and for" them.

The ability to participate in decisions which affects one's life is now being conceptualised as a right, and there is a growing understanding that this approach is crucial to creating an equal and fair society. Without effective participation by all of the people in society, society as a whole cannot be either fair or equal. Only participation allows one to assert and to embed one's rights. The information technologies, including the internet, expand these possibilities of participation, which is why access to them is crucial.

Similarly the concept of rights is crucial to the concept of participation. People should not be just docile subjects of rights: rights are never "given" to people. Rights must be asserted, and they must be asserted on one's own behalf and on behalf of all other human beings, without distinction.

So what links the concept of equality to the practice of rights? I would suggest that the concept, practice and understanding of participation is a basic right. This is core to an understanding of active citizenship, and an understanding of how the relationship between the body politic and the individual enables the individual or group to dialogue with the powerful on some basis of equality. That is at the core of this issue.

In the NESC report, 'Opportunities, Challenges and Capacities for Choice', there is an attempt to come to grips with an understanding of the ability to participate. It is linked to a definition of rights as standards, rather than justiciable rights. This is a welcome start as at least it links the understanding of policy making to a set of clear standards, including the rights of the individual or group to participate, and it ensures that outcomes will be measured against agreed benchmarks.

If the conversation is to be equalised, it has to be underscored by the right of the individual to participate, the right of the individual to be heard, the right of individuals to help shape the policies which affect their lives, and their right to contribute to the setting of criteria which will measure impact and outcomes.

At the heart of this debate is the belief and understanding that those experiencing inequalities are ready, willing and able to participate in changing the construct which has diminished their lives. They do not want it changed for them, no matter how well-meaning the decision-maker is. Fundamentally, the link between equality and rights is the right to participate, since participation denotes that

you are a full and equal partner in the decision making process which will allow you to change your condition rather than having that change made dependant on someone else.

The opening article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says "All human beings are born free, equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience". The powerless individual is not recognisable in this description. He and she must acquire the ability to name the right to be heard, and then work for laws, concepts and policies which enshrine standards of behaviour which turn the aspiration of the Universal Declaration into reality. What fundamentally changes the situation is the ability of the individual to challenge their own condition and, in so doing, command the respect and dignity which is at the heart of equality - and which fundamentally is also at the heart of any relationship based on a dialogue of equals.

EQUALITY PROOFING

The new national agreement, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, contains an important commitment to Equality Proofing. Reference is made to the report on Equality Proofing produced as part of the previous Partnership 2000 agreement. A commitment is made to developing and resourcing a learning phase for Equality Proofing.

Equality Proofing involves placing equality considerations at the centre of decision making. Policy design, planning, implementation and review include a focus on equality outcomes whether in the public sector or the private sector.

Equality in this context refers to the agenda established in the new equality legislation. This is an agenda that embraces the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Equality Proofing is a central element in the process of mainstreaming equality. Mainstreaming goes beyond proofing in that it involves not only the integration of an equality focus into policy but also the mobilisation of all policies behind the objective of achieving equality.

The Equality Authority has defined its mission in terms of contributing to this mainstreaming of equality. As such we hope to make a constructive input into this important commitment to Equality Proofing. This is a commitment that is immeasurably strengthened by the consensus that has now been mobilised behind it.

Importance

The key elements within a mainstreaming approach are:-

- Establishing the needs, aspirations, context and characteristics of each of the groups covered by the new equality legislation.
- Developing equality objectives and targets based on this analysis that can be inserted in a relevant manner into all policy and provision.
- Proofing decisions so that they are informed and shaped by equality considerations.

Mainstreaming equality has a particular potential to promote innovation given that in essence it involves doing things differently so that outcomes are realised for all. It mobilises the full range of possibilities to meet the challenge of realising equality. It combines strategies to resolve already existing problems with preventive strategies that ensure such problems do not arise in the first place.

The potential in this has been recognised in the new statutory duty on the public sector in the north to promote equality. The Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires designated public authorities to draw up equality schemes which have to be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Such equality schemes must cover the grounds of religion, political opinion, race (including membership of the Traveller community), age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and family status.

A statutory duty is now being developed in Britain so there is a clear momentum behind such an approach. It is interesting that a survey of large companies carried out as part of a review of British anti-discrimination legislation indicated significant support for a statutory

duty to promote equality being placed on the private sector. Such a regime was seen as less adversarial and more capable of integration into planning and marketing techniques already in use.

Approach

The learning phase now to be developed in the Irish context is given detailed definition in the Equality Proofing report. This report is available from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The learning phase is based on a longer term vision of an integrated proofing system that brings together current initiatives on poverty proofing and gender mainstreaming with a wider focus on equality. This is a vision that embraces the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. It is rooted in a commitment to participatory policy making processes and could well require a statutory basis.

The learning phase that is now agreed would include:

- Piloting Equality Proofing within the Employment Action Plan, particular legislative initiatives, all County Development Plans, and selected Public Private Partnerships.
- Enhancing the focus on inequalities that lead to poverty within the Poverty Proofing Guidelines that are already in place.
- Developing a proofing capacity within the Strategic Management Initiative through work being done on Human Resources and on quality Customer Service.
- Taking initiatives to address the data deficits that exist in relation to the new grounds covered under equality legislation.

Conclusion

The Equality Authority has already initiated work in this area. A joint research project with the Combat Poverty Agency has been commissioned. This will explore the links between inequality and poverty and establish a methodology for the exploration of this within the Poverty Proofing Guidelines.

A valuable working relationship has been developed with the Central Statistics Office to support their pilot initiative exploring the inclusion of a focus on ethnicity and on disability within the next census. This relationship will also include a focus on how the overall census data output programme resources the new equality agenda.

Finally the Equality Authority has been included in a very constructive manner in the Quality Customer Service focus of the Strategic Management Initiative. We are currently convening a subgroup focusing on the challenge of serving a diverse customer base.

These initiatives will hopefully contribute useful foundations to the equality proofing learning phase that is now to be embarked upon. The Equality Authority hopes to further build on this contribution given the importance of this work.

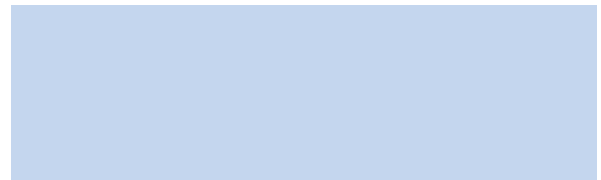
TRUE COLOURS

In November 1999, the Equality Authority continued to support the interest of diversity by participating in True Colours, a two week programme organised by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism. The aims of the two weeks were to highlight the challenge of cultural diversity, identify the steps for building an inclusive, intercultural society, and address issues such as racism and discrimination experienced by ethnic minorities in Ireland.

As part of the programme, the Equality Authority hosted two symposia to share their expertise on equality and diversity. The first of the seminars was given on the 10th of November 1999 by Carol Ann Edwards, solicitor in the Equality Authority. Entitled 'How can Equality legislation address the situation of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups,' Ms. Edwards referred to the discrimination experienced by such groups in their everyday lives. In a legal context, such discrimination is outlawed in the workplace and is illegal in reference to the provision of goods and services, with the enactment of the Equal Status legislation. A core duty of the Authority is to provide the means whereby minority groups in Irish society have a knowledge of their rights and a confidence to assert these rights. "Equality legislation in the form of the present Employment Equality Act and the Equal Status Bill will address the situation of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups," stated Ms. Edwards. This new equality infrastructure "will pave the way for an equality conscious and equality based society in Ireland," concluded Ms. Edwards.

The second symposium on the 17th of November 1999 was presented by Mr. Niall Crowley, Chief Executive Officer of the Equality Authority. 'What contribution can the Equality Authority make to Building an

Intercultural Society' was explicitly outlined by Mr. Crowley. The building of such a society is indeed the responsibility of all. However, the Equality Authority is a resource to all who seek to realise their rights and realise equality outcomes. The focus on outcomes requires policy makers, employers, service providers and professional groups to examine diversity and culture. The equality agenda is obliged to accommodate diversity and cultural difference. Mr. Crowley challenged those in attendance to mainstream equality and celebrate diversity. "Mainstreaming equality is about ensuring equality considerations are a factor in decision making in all sectors. Celebrating diversity is about giving a new visibility to those who experience inequality, their aspirations, and their agendas for change," he explained.



20TH ANNUAL EAP CONFERENCE

The 20th annual Employee Assistance Programmes Conference was held on the 29th and 30th of September 1999, inviting employers to contribute in the development of family friendly initiatives in the workplace. For the last few years, the conference has focused on work-related stress. However, after recognising that it is often the conflict between personal and professional lifestyles that create a great amount of said stress, this year's conference, held at the Stakis Hotel, in Charlemont Place, Dublin, focused more on how to balance work and family lives for the benefit of all involved. With eleven speakers, the conference provided a distinct definition for such initiatives, looked at the practice of such policies currently in place, and identified the new challenges of Ireland's rapidly changing work environment.

Brian Merriman, of the then Employment Equality Agency, gave his insights on the development of family friendly practices. The last few years have seen a dramatic change in the composition and demography of the Irish workforce. Mr. Merriman began his presentation by challenging common definitions of work and workers. By recognising that the workplace is a rapidly evolving and changing institution, he highlighted the importance of a proactive response. For instance, the labour force has expanded to be over 40% female. The average worker is no longer the principal breadwinner male with a spouse at home to care for family responsibilities. Workers are now "male or female, young or old, Irish or any other race, religious or not, able bodied or have a disability, married, separated, in a second relationship, a lone parent, or single, a traveller or settled, gay, lesbian or heterosexual." The extreme diversity in the labour force must be reflected in employment practices and opportunities of all kinds.



In order to continually take advantage of our flourishing Celtic tiger, we must integrate flexibility into our work practices and eliminate prejudice. Mr. Merriman outlined family friendly practices as an inexpensive, flexible solution to wastage, as well as an incentive to attract the best employees by creating a competitive edge in recruitment. The costs of losing employees due to inflexible and unworkable conditions are too great not to actively pursue more creative options in business. By taking advantage of new technologies, a business can use teleworking, job sharing or flexitime hours, to name a few. The benefits of such practices far outweigh their costs of implementation. For example, two employees sharing a job increases productivity by 50% at no additional cost to the employer. When the employer is flexible, they offer greater incentives in recruitment and will retain more experienced workers for a longer term.

In his analysis of current business practices, Mr. Merriman commended the work of small business employers. The close relationship with their employees and the interest taken in their personal lives is accommodating and compassionate and has created a sense of family among the workers. Over time, employers will find a greater sense of loyalty and dedication to the business.

More importantly, for those attending the conference, the essential need to implement such policies was made abundantly clear. In order to remain at your most competitive, profitable, and productive, family friendly initiatives will have to be a part of all human resource agendas.

**Copies of Conference papers available at
EAP Institute, Waterford - 051 855733**

In December 1999, an Equal Opportunities Awareness Week was held in the Cork Institute of Technology. The aim of the week was to raise awareness of equal opportunities among staff and students in Cork Institute of Technology. The awareness week was an initiative of the CIT Equal Opportunities Forum and supported by the management of the college.

In 1997, after much consultation with senior management, the various union bodies, staff and students, the CIT Equal Opportunities Policy was approved by the CIT Governing Body. The E.O. Forum believed that the E.O. Awareness Week provided the perfect opportunity to formally launch the policy. Mr. Patrick O'Leary from the Equality Authority was invited to launch the policy. Mr. O'Leary stated at the launch that 'this is indeed a key stage in Ireland's equality history, as we embark on drafting a framework and setting the agenda for the future. It is a time of change, a time for hope and ambition. However, the responsibility and challenge does not simply rest with the Equality Authority. The onus is on all to secure a society that accommodates different identities, different requirements and makes provision that is appropriate to different needs.' Mr. O'Leary commended Cork Institute of Technology for the foresight to develop a policy document that is strongly supportive of the nine grounds covered in the legislation but also includes areas such as socio-economic background and political belief. He believed that this was both a progressive and proactive step, for which CIT should be congratulated.

During the week, there were a number of seminars to highlight various issues concerning equal opportunities. A Disability Awareness workshop was presented by Mr. Brian Manning. Brian has worked for over three years in the youth and community sector.

The Disability Awareness workshop involved demonstrations on how attitudes impact on the way people relate to people with disabilities. It also highlighted the relevance of language and introduced participants to core interactive skills. Gender equality was also addressed at the CIT Equal Opportunities Awareness Week. Prof. Jane Grimson, President of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland, delivered a seminar on the theme "Science and Engineering is not for Girls." Prof. Grimson is the first female President of the Institution of Engineers in Ireland.

Exhibition stands to raise awareness of equal opportunities in CIT were assembled in the College lobby. The Welfare Office, Students Union, the Higher Education Equality Unit, the Combat Poverty Agency, and the Educational Opportunities Centre, CIT were all represented. Other events that took place in the college included staff and student equal opportunities quiz, and a daily e-mail and poster campaign with a 'thought for the day.'

The week long programme of events was very timely especially with the launch of the recent Employment Equality Act and the impending Equal Status Bill. The first CIT Equal Opportunities Awareness Week proved to be very successful with many staff and students of the Institute becoming involved in the various activities.

For further information on the Equal Opportunities Awareness Week, please contact:

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Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium

More than ever before, Irish employers need a workforce which will be flexible and responsive to the rapidly changing needs of a modern business. Employees are also increasingly seeking a more balanced approach to reconciling their work and their family lives. These issues are to the forefront of peoples concerns as the economy makes greater demands on the lives of employees and employers alike.

The Equality Authority has a pivotal role to play in the development of work life balance. The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, recently accepted by the Social Partners, underscores the importance of family friendly policies in the workplace by a commitment to developing better systems of work organisation.

The recognition in Ireland of the importance of this issue is mirrored throughout the Member States of the EU, who are adopting a variety of creative approaches to the matter. The Equality Authority's first initiatives in this area have been significant. They include:

- The commissioning of a report into Family Friendly Work Arrangements in Small and Medium sized Enterprises in Ireland
- An application to the European Commission for assistance for a project under the Fourth Action Programme for Equal Opportunities between men and women.

The main objectives of the research project, which has been carried out by Hugh Fisher of Training Connections and is close to completion, are as follows:

- (i) To identify family friendly work arrangements in SMEs.
- (ii) To examine how they work in practice.
- (iii) To compare and contrast their operation in the SME Sector.
- (iv) To look at similar arrangements in other E.U. Member States.
- (v) To make recommendations for the implementation of such arrangements more widely in the SME sector.

This project will be completed, published and disseminated by the end of June and will make a very valuable contribution to the body of work which is already available in Europe on this topic. An important element in the project is a comprehensive survey of company practice and an assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of the practices from the employers viewpoint. This may be the first time such a survey has been undertaken in the S.M.E. Sector and it represents a very practical contribution to our knowledge of how family friendly policies operate on the ground.

Our application for assistance under the EU's Fourth Action Programme, relates to a proposed project on the establishment of a dedicated web site on family friendly initiatives, the establishment of a help desk based in the Authority and the publication of an information manual.

Both of these initiatives are merely the beginning of active involvement by the Authority in the issue of work life balance. It is expected that the Authority will play a role in the development of such policies in the future, in partnership with Government Departments and the social partners.

EQUALITY AUTHORITY JOINS FORCES WITH CITIZENS INFORMATION CENTRES

The Equality Authority and Comhairle have agreed to pursue a strategy of information provision in respect of the:

- Employment Equality Act 1998;
- proposed Equal Status Act 2000;
- Maternity Protection Act;
- Parental Leave Act; and
- promotional development and advisory functions of the Equality Authority.

This partnership will help the Authority to develop an information strategy, which will impact on both a national and regional basis. The Authority will enter into partnerships with organisations with a proven track record of effectively disseminating information on a regional basis. Comhairle was an obvious partner given its record, experience and the links with a nationwide network of Information Centres.

Comhairle will also benefit from the proposed partnership as the scope of legislative changes in relation to equality issues is considerably broadened. There will be a consequent increase in the public demand for information on these changes.

It has been the experience of the Equality Authority that demand for information on the implications of the coming into operation of the Employment Equality Act 1998 is extensive. The numbers of queries in respect of the operation of the Maternity Protection Act and the Parental Leave Act also continue to rise.

This demand will be increased by the enactment of the Equal Status legislation. The scope of this Act and its potential impact on the statutory responsibilities of all those who provide goods facilities and services in the State will obviously trigger a further substantial increase in information being sought.

As a first step in developing this strategy, a pilot project is being undertaken in Cork, involving a clinic style service to be provided by Authority and C.I.C staff whereby public demand for equality information will be generated and the capacity for dealing with the information sought will be assessed. In addition, a series of regional training events is being arranged which will be devised and provided by the Equality Authority for the benefit of staff of Citizens Information Centres (C.I.C's) and other information providers. The aim is to familiarise the staff of C.I.C.s with the provisions of the recent legislation. The first of these to be held before June 2000 and the remainder prior to the end of this year.

A NEW DIMENSION FOR EQUALITY

Evelyn Collins, the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, looks to the challenges ahead.

I feel very honoured to have been selected as Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, which I believe has an enormously important role to play in working for equality in Northern Ireland. The job presents considerable challenges and I am looking forward to working with Commissioners and staff in helping to create a more equal and inclusive society in Northern Ireland. A great many of our staff are already well versed in developing the equality agenda through their work with the predecessor Commissions. One of my priorities will be to ensure that, together with staff filling additional posts dealing with our new responsibilities in respect of disability and the public sector equality duty, we can build a dynamic and forward-looking organisation, committed to the continued delivery of a high quality public service across the full range of the Commission's duties.

Through my own work with the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, and with the European Commission in Brussels, I know the great potential which exists for change in our society, as well as the great need for it. The creation of the Equality Commission, arising as it does from the priority placed on the equality agenda in the Agreement of April 1998, offers an unprecedented opportunity to make a real impact on the levels of inequality which still bedevil so many aspects of life here.

Just by bringing together all the previous equality bodies dealing with disability, gender, race, religion and politics, the Equality Commission stands out as a unique venture in terms of United Kingdom equality practice.

When that is coupled with the Commission's responsibilities in respect of the new public sector statutory duty on equality, it is clear that the period ahead carries momentous implications for the development of an equality culture. It is a remit which requires a continuing focus on the specific and individual aspects of discrimination and inequality, and that retains a central importance for the Commission. However, it also provides the opportunity, and the challenge, of developing a more inclusive, and a more positive, agenda - promoting good relations and respect for diversity, and working to put equality at the heart of all aspects of civic, cultural, economic, political and public life.

The new statutory duty on public authorities carries a great opportunity to effect real change in Northern Ireland. Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities are required to pay due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity when discharging their functions. It is notable that as well as dealing with disability and differences of religion and politics, sex, or race, this requirement also extends to people of different ages, of different sexual orientation and to those with or without dependents.

We will be working to ensure the effective implementation of the duties and trust that this will lead to better, more participative decision making.

In combating unlawful discrimination in Northern Ireland, in addition to tackling sex discrimination, unequal pay and fair employment issues, we will be working to ensure the effective implementation of relatively new or extended domestic legislation in a number of areas. We will shortly have the full range of enforcement powers to provide assistance under the Disability Discrimination Act, a key function which we will need to gear up to. There are also new elements in the Fair

A NEW DIMENSION FOR EQUALITY (CONTD.)

Employment and Treatment Order governing the provision of goods, facilities and services.

In addition, the Race Relations Order has been operational in Northern Ireland only since 1997. A feature of that Order is the specific classification of members of the Traveller community as an ethnic group, subject to the protection of the law. The difficulties and obstacles faced by members of that community impeding access to services such as health, social security, education and policing, have been common to our society in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. So also, unfortunately, has been a degree of complacency regarding attitudes to race and the extent of racial discrimination existing in this society.

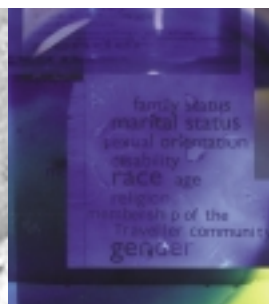
These new elements in our equality legislation provide new constituencies with whom we have already established contact. Consultation with the widest possible range of groups and interests within the community is an essential part of our programme. That includes other statutory bodies, private employers, trade unions and the voluntary and community sector. We are shortly to embark on wide consultation on our draft strategic plan, the development of which has been a key priority over recent months.

In dealing with inequalities in Northern Ireland, we are very conscious that, particularly arising from the Agreement, many equality issues are increasingly seen in the context of the island of Ireland as a whole. The central importance of European initiatives in the field

of equality and rights brings to elements of our work a common dimension which we share with the Equality Authority. Already we have had discussions on a number of practical measures which could be taken to build on our good relationship and our common goals. Through possible joint initiatives funded by the European Structural funds, programmes of joint research on issues of mutual concern, I hope we may begin to address some of these issues jointly. I also believe there is great scope for exchanges of experience and information, between staff and Commissioners, and hope we may explore these soon. We are dealing, on both sides of the border, with recently augmented legislation and new opportunities, as well as many common challenges. I know we can help each other in realising the full potential, both of our two organisations, and the people of Ireland, both north and south.

Reminder:

A North/South equality Conference is being planned for the end of the year. It will involve the social partners, the Equality and Human Rights institutions in both jurisdictions. Details of the proposed conference will be included in a later edition of Equality News.



EU DEVELOPMENTS

European Union launches two directives, action programme against discrimination.

The European Commission has moved swiftly to exercise new European powers against discrimination. Last May, Article 13 of the new Treaty of Amsterdam came into effect, giving the Union the authority to take action against discrimination. Now the Commission has put forward a three-pronged package to begin the process of implementing article 13.

These are:

Directive prohibiting discrimination in employment

Directive to prohibit discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin

£94m action plan for 2001-6 to support the directives.

At this stage, these are Commission proposals. They are formally entitled: *Draft Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on certain Community measures to combat discrimination.* They now go to these bodies for approval. They are the most substantial initiative to be launched so far by the new Social Affairs Commissioner, Anna Diamantopoulou. The process of approval could take some time, because substantial legislation is involved (a directive is the equivalent of an Act of Parliament). There is a formidable amount of paperwork to be processed - the outline, the two directives and the action programme come to over 100 pages.

The Communication states at the start that the package 'is a clear signal that discrimination is not acceptable within the European Union'. The first directive, on employment, will ban discrimination in the labour market on all grounds referred to in Article 13, with the exception of sex, which is already well covered by existing Community law dating back to the early 1970s.

The text of Article 13

Without prejudice to the other provisions of this treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred upon it by the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The second directive will ban discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin in society as a whole. The action programme is intended to complement the two directives by funding initiatives and activities to ensure their effectiveness. Action on sex discrimination will be funded separately by the new, forthcoming programme on equality between men and women which will run from 2001 to 2006.

Member states will be expected, within a set period of time, to draw up their own legislation to put the principles of Article 13 into effect. According to the Communication, 'The proposals intend to set a limited number of requirements based on a number of general principles, allowing member states considerable

discretion in how they choose to implement them.' The impact of the directives will clearly vary considerably between, for example, Greece, which has no anti-discrimination law and Ireland, where legislation has been enacted very recently. Each of the three elements of the package is now analysed in turn.

The exceptions

Genuine occupational requirements

Organizations providing ideological, religious or educational guidance

Age, if objectively and reasonably justified
e.g:

- Protection of older or younger workers
- Minimum age for benefits
- Need for minimum training or period in post
- Requirements for length of professional experience
- Age limits for legitimate labour market objectives

First directive:

Discrimination in employment

The first directive is entitled: *Council directive establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation*. It has 16 articles, which:

Define the areas covered - access to employment, occupation, promotion, vocational training and membership of certain bodies. The directive does not include discrimination on grounds of sex, though it does include discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Entitlements for married couples will not be affected.

Outline its concept of discrimination: it includes both direct and indirect discrimination, as based on the past case law of the European Court of Justice. Apparently neutral work requirements will, if it can be proved that they affect one group more than another, be considered discriminatory. In the

case of people with a disability, the directive requires the removal of barriers in such a way that a person with a disability may reasonably be expected to perform his or her duties. Harassment in the workplace is also defined as a form of discrimination.

Outline the scope of the legislation to include occupation, promotion, advancement, training and the criteria to be taken into account in making appointments. The legislation will cover professional bodies, workers and employers and their benefits.

List exceptions. The phrases used here are quite lengthy and complex. These allow differences of treatment where a characteristic constitutes a genuine occupational qualification for a job or the context in which it is carried out. They permit organizations with religious, educational or ideological values to make requirements so that those duties may be carried out (and, conversely, permit them not to employ someone not sharing these values). Differences of treatment on grounds of age only where they are objectively justified, necessary and proportionate.

Permit positive action measures, or legislation or administrative measures which will address inequalities, within the bounds of current European case law.

Uphold the general right of a wronged person to pursue a claim through an administrative or judicial procedure, even after the relationship has ended and permit organizations to exercise a claim on behalf of a victim.

State that once a complainant has established factual evidence of less favourable treatment, then the burden of proof falls on the defendant. Victims are protected against retaliation as a result of making a complaint or taking an action.

Provide for the dissemination of information on equal rights and encourage agreements between the social partners for provisions



against discrimination and monitoring practices in the workplace. The directive is to be implemented in national law within two years. The directive is accompanied by an impact assessment form explaining the likely impact on small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). This explains how enterprises will have responsibility to modify the workplace environment to suit people with disabilities, short of undue hardship on employers. When it comes to recruitment and promotion, companies will have to put in place procedures which ensure that decisions are not taken on a discriminatory basis. Some American data are cited to estimate the costs of adapting the workplace (the mean cost was around \$992). The Commission states that it does not believe that employers will be faced with frivolous claims under the legislation.

Second directive: equal treatment

The second directive is entitled Council directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Its aim is to provide a minimum framework to prevent unlawful discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, to set a minimal level of legislative protection and to provide a common minimal level of redress. Here, the 16 articles:

Define the principle of equal treatment, including protection from indirect discrimination or harassment on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. The legislation takes in employment, self-employment, membership of organizations, training, education, social protection and social security. Benefits of public or private organizations must be given on a non-discriminatory basis (e.g. cultural events, concessionary travel, subsidised school meals). Decisions about supplying goods or services must not be made on a racial or ethnic basis.

Provide for an exception in the case of genuine occupational qualifications. Such a requirement is expected to be exceptional (e.g. provision of

welfare services to a particular ethnic group or the needs for authenticity in a dramatic performance).

Permit member states to authorise legislative measures to prevent and correct situations of inequality (positive action)

Enable people who believe they have suffered discrimination to pursue their claims through a judicial or administrative procedure. Organizations may exercise such a right on behalf of a victim. Once the complainant has established factual evidence of discrimination, the burden of proof shifts to the defendant. There is protection from victimisation;

Lay down a framework for member states to set up independent bodies to promote equal treatment, be they at national, regional or local level. They may be specialised agencies or part of wider human rights bodies. These independent bodies are expected to receive and pursue complaints from individuals, start investigations or surveys and publish reports and make recommendations on issues related to discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin.

Void contracts or agreements which are contrary to the principle of equal treatment (this applies, for example, to internal rules of profit-making or voluntary organizations);

Require member states to apply penalties on those who infringe the directive; and

Require the directive to be transposed into the legislation of each member state within two years. Within a further period of two years, member states must report to the Commission on the application of the directive.

Definition of discrimination in the second directive:

Direct discrimination shall be taken to occur when one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been, or would be treated on grounds of racial or ethnic origin.

Indirect discrimination shall be taken to occur when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice is liable to adversely affect a person or group of persons of a particular racial or ethnic origin, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim which is unrelated to the racial or ethnic origin of a person or a group of persons and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary. Harassment of a person or group of persons related to racial or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive or disturbing environment shall be deemed to be discrimination.

As was the case with the first directive, this legislation includes an impact statement outlining the implications for small and medium-sized enterprises. All such enterprises will be affected, it states. The Commission believes that this directive will have the effect of ensuring that people from such minorities are now hired on their merits, which will lead to a more effective workforce and economy. It will ease the conditions for the creation of businesses by people of different racial or ethnic origins. Companies will need to reform their recruitment, promotion and training practices to be certain that they do not discriminate.

Third part: the action programme

The third part of the package is an action programme designed to underpin the foregoing two directives. It is entitled: *Council decision establishing a Community Action Programme to combat discrimination, 2001-6*. The Commission stresses that it will focus on interventions with key groups, such as policy makers, independent bodies, non-governmental organizations, social partners, research institutes, the media, opinion-formers, social service providers, the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. It will not fund activities which member states should carry out in any case; nor small-scale, local actions or projects.

There will be three strands, as follows. The overall budget will be £98.4m, starting with £12.3m in 2001, rising to £18m in 2006. Strand 2 is much the largest, taking over half the overall budget.

- 1) Analysis and evaluation: improving understanding through information, measurement, evaluation, statistics, benchmarking and analysis. There will be annual reports, thematic studies and comparable statistics. £24.8m
- 2) Capacity building: core funding of European networks active in the struggle against discrimination; transnational exchanges. £50.5m
- 3) Awareness-raising: publicising the programme, campaigns, conferences, seminars, events, prizes, publications, internet sites, databases, actions focussed on opinion-formers. £23.1m

The budget for the first year shows the Commission planning, under strand 1, to fund a number of statistical studies, undertake thematic reports, set up a database and begin the process of evaluation (£3.5m). Under strand 2, there will be between 12 and 20 transnational actions, costing £2.5m. Between five and six European networks may expect to receive funding of between £600,000 and £800,000 each. Under strand 3, there will be four to five large conferences, 15 to 20 grants for national conferences or events, media campaigns and the publication of a quarterly magazine (£2.8m).

VIEWPOINT

The Quality of Equality



In recent years equality has become a bit of a buzz word in Ireland. But what do we really mean when we heatedly discuss the virtues and vices of equality? On the face of it seemingly everyone knows the meaning of equality and that knowledge appears to be taken for granted.

It is as if equality is a widely understood and agreed upon concept and that we aren't display ignorance by asking questions about the possible differences in the understanding and the interpretations of equality either in general or in specific contexts.

Although the aim of achieving greater equality is to combat growing inequality, there is considerably less focus and discussion on inequality. While disadvantage, exclusion and even poverty - all resulting from and in inequality - are on both the policy and funding agenda, the central measurement for the widening gap between rich and poor seems itself a marginalised topic in the public discourse in Celtic Tiger Ireland. Such surface treatment of socio-economic division reminds me of the proverbial doctor, prescribing remedies for symptoms, rather than attempting to cure the root of the disease.

It appears, therefore, not only logical, but crucial and essential that we foster the understanding of the roots and the dimension and consequences of inequality for the lives of a still rather large proportion of the population in Ireland. This section is made up of the majority of the members of a number of social groups:

- Semi and unskilled workers
- Stay-at-home mothers with only one income
- Lone parents
- Disabled people
- Older people
- Children
- The unemployed
- Travellers
- Refugees
- Migrant workers

All of these are living at the lower end of the income distribution scale. It is certainly true to say that absolute poverty has become more rare in Ireland today. But it is probably also true to say that relative poverty has increased and is still on the increase. The links between the health, psychosocial well-being of the population of a country and poverty - both relative and absolute - arising from large unequal income differentials, have been amply demonstrated by researchers the world over. In Ireland - compared with our other EU-neighbours - high rates of cardiovascular diseases, substance abuse - amongst an array of other mental and physical conditions - would indicate that not all is well in the distribution of income and wealth in our Celtic Tiger Economy.

A deeper understanding of the root causes of inequality, achieved through social education and a vast increase in the research of the causes of inequality in Ireland, is likely to highlight the need for fostering a growing equality culture and a more appropriate response with equality measures, borne out of self-enlightened interest. Even a growing number of economists will now admit that a more equal society is not only a healthier, but also a socially and politically more stable society in the long-term.

by Rita Kwiotek

Undoubtedly, the new equality legislation is a first and welcome step in the right direction, but it also shows that we have still a long way to go. The fact that a ground as fundamental as class and/or social origin was not taken into account, when deciding on the grounds for outlawing discrimination is a serious omission. With the new equality infrastructure in place, there should, however, be hope for the deepening, widening and broadening of our equality consciousness and our understanding of the root causes of inequality along with the equality remedies to combat growing inequality in Ireland. Everyone who has a sound understanding of both equality and inequality will also know that much more than legislation will be required. Ultimately the extent of equality in society determines the society we want to live in.

Rita G. Kwiotek, M. Equality Studies
(Equality Studies Centre, NUI Dublin)

Rita is a member of the Council of the Forum of People with Disabilities. She has lectured on disability issues at conferences and seminars, both nationally and internationally. She co-ordinates and lectures on disability equality issues at the Equality Studies Centre, UCD. Presently she works as an Equality Consultant, providing equality services - training, policy development, equality proofing, research etc to a wide range of bodies and organisations in the areas of disability, gender equality and ethnicity.

THEKLA BEERE

1902-1991

an appreciation by Clare Eager (MA)

The daughter of a Church of Ireland Rector, Thekla Beere was born in Streete, Co. Westmeath in 1902. Her early education was provided at home. From about the age of fourteen, she was educated at Alexandra School and College and later studied at Trinity College, Dublin, where she was awarded a Moderatorship in Legal and Political Science and LL.B between 1919-23. Beere entered the Irish Civil Service as a Grade 111 Temporary clerk on 23rd. April 1924 and was assigned to the Statistics Branch of the Department of Industry and Commerce as a Grade 11 clerk on 27th. October 1924. In 1925 she was awarded a two-year leave of absence to accept the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Fellowship that enabled her to pursue her studies in America before resuming her career in the Civil Service.

Upon her resumption, Thekla Beere believed that if she were promoted it would be to "soft" options like health or social welfare. She was, instead, when promoted to Assistant Principal, moved from statistics to the transport and marine portfolio within the Department. This assignment predated the drift towards war in 1939 when Ireland's "emergency" status brought extra pressures to bear upon the civil service administration. Under the direction of Sean Lemass and John Leydon at the Department of Supplies, Beere was associated, as one historian commented, with the 'feeding, fuelling and supply of goods to the people of an island nation'. By the time she was appointed

Principal Officer, on 13th. December 1943, she was the acknowledged expert on transport and marine issues, and on labour affairs in general.

Beere's career spanned the rise of a new breed of civil servant, and a new era in political life in Ireland. Her expertise was recognised in the post-war years when she was promoted to Assistant Secretary in 1953 with continued responsibility for transport issues. She was appointed Secretary of a separate Department of Transport and Power, under the political leadership of Erskine Childers, on August 1st. 1959. Thus, in a year that is best remembered for the election of Eamon de Valera as President of Ireland, and appointment of Sean Lemass as Taoiseach, Thekla Beere quietly shattered the male-dominated hierarchy within the Irish civil service.

Beere's influence extended into many other spheres of public life in Ireland and she came into her own following her formal retirement from the civil service in 1967. She was appointed to the Public Services Organisation Review Group (1966-9) under the chairmanship of Mr. Liam Devlin. This group reported to government in 1969 and was largely responsible for providing a blueprint for a radical overhaul of the administration of the Irish public service. Following that appointment, Beere was nominated to Chair the Commission on the Status of Women, in 1970, the first commission to set the tone, and agenda, for the elimination of discrimination against women. It is a great testimony to her and the work of the First Commission that government implemented most of its conclusions.

Throughout her life, Beere valued the twin virtues of speed and efficiency, without sacrificing quality of service to the Irish public. Her contemporaries recall that in most things she was a pragmatist and sought consensus in her day-to-day working relationships. In her private life, she undertook and performed a very public duty in seeking to improve the role of women in both the public and private

sphere, without alienating men. She was also interested in a wide range of issues. She was a founder member and President of An Oige, and President of both the Irish Film Society and of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland. Beere also served as Governor of the Rotunda Hospital and became a Governor and Director of the Irish Times Trust on its establishment in 1974. She wrote on the revival of native languages in Nordic and Celtic countries. She retained an interest in labour affairs, and sought equality for women in both the public and private sphere. Her pastimes included music and golf. Such was her influence and reputation, by 1976, that her name was suggested as a possible contender in the Presidential election of that year.

Thekla Beere died on 19th February 1991. There are no memorials to her and no statues have been erected in her honour. There are no summer schools established in her name and her biography is unwritten. She had made a significant contribution to the public service.

Clare Eager is a Higher Executive Officer in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. She is a graduate of UCD and presents research papers on the history of women.

EU UPDATE

COMMISSION PROPOSES NEW ACTION PLAN ON EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The Commission has given further details of its proposed new 5th action plan on equality between men and women. The current document is entitled 'Proposal for a new Community programme on gender equality, 2001-5.' Cornerstones of the programme, says Commissioner Diamantopoulou, are to remedy important gender gaps in Europe, building on the rights enunciated by the Treaty of Amsterdam and mainstreaming gender in all Community policies.

Under the new approach, all Commission services will be invited to identify their activities to promote gender equality including mainstreaming policies and or concrete actions targeted to women (specific actions). The new programme will be the umbrella for all Community policies that can make a contribution to the goal of achieving gender equality (be it education, employment, research or structural policies). The new programme will have the overall goal of 'bringing about the structural change required for achieving gender equality in practice.'

There will be seven strategic objectives:

- 1) Equality in economic life
- 2) Equal participation and representation
- 3) Equality in social life
- 4) Changing gender roles and stereotypes
- 5) Equality in civil life
- 6) The promotion of gender equality in development
- 7) The promotion of gender equality in the accession process

The programme will be formally proposed by the Commission by the end of May and will be adopted by the Commission at the end of June. The opinion of the European institutions will be sought in the autumn, with adoption by the Council of Ministers in December 2000 or early 2001.

FORMAL OPENING OF MONITORING CENTRE

President Prodi recently opened the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna on 7th April. The centre has been operating for two years, but was never formally opened.

QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS

In a resolution adopted on international women's day, the European Parliament voted for quotas to ensure the equal participation of women in political parties and on electoral lists. Parliament urged the governments of the Union to introduce the principle of the balanced participation of men and women on EU bodies as an outcome of the intergovernmental conference. Responding to the debate, Commissioner for Social Affairs Anna Diamantopoulou said the Commission was committed to a 40% participation rate by

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

24th May is set as the opening day for the new European Employment Committee, set up on foot of the Treaty of Amsterdam (the new chapter on employment). Its aim will be to advise the Council of Ministers on jobs, employment and labour market policies; to monitor the situation in the member states; and to contribute to the preparation of work in the Council and the Commission. Each member state is invited to contribute two delegates. The committee will be important in shaping equal opportunities aspects of these policies.

UPCOMING EVENTS

24 May 2000: Challenges for the Millennium. A vision for higher education. International Conference, Dublin Castle

29 May 2000: Data Protection in Ireland-How will it affect you and your organisation? Stakis Hotel, Dublin

8-10 June 2000: The Woman's World Show 2000- RDS Simmonscourt, Dublin

May / June 2000: A Series of Information Seminars on Developments on Equality Policy at EU Level. Places are limited, so please confirm attendance with Catherine McManus, tel: (01) 417 3356; fax: (01) 417 3377.

12 May: "Combating discrimination with Article 13 - A new rights-based approach at EU level" with Mary Banotti MEP and Adam Tyson, European Commission. The Equality Authority, Clonmel Street, 2pm - 4pm.

9 June: "Promoting Equality with the assistance of EU-level policies and funding mechanisms" with Brian Crowley MEP and Maire Ni Chuir, European Commission. The Quality Shandon Court Hotel, Shandon, Cork, 2pm - 4pm.

16 June: "Inequalities, discrimination and social exclusion - developing a coherent response at EU level" with Proinsias de Rossa MEP and Denis Crowley, European Commission. The Equality Authority, Clonmel Street, 2pm - 4pm.