



**International Convention on  
the Elimination of All Forms  
of Racial Discrimination**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports  
submitted by Ireland under article 9 of the  
Convention, due in 2024<sup>\*</sup>, <sup>\*\*</sup>**

[Date received: 28 February 2025]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.  
\*\* The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## **I. General**

### **A. Introduction**

1. This document combines the tenth to twelfth periodic state reports (the ‘State Report’) to be submitted by Ireland under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (the “Committee”). This State Report outlines the measures that the Government of Ireland is taking to give effect to its undertakings under the ICERD.
2. As recommended by the Committee in its concluding observations on Ireland’s fifth to ninth reports, Ireland has combined its tenth to twelfth reports. Unless otherwise stated, references to paragraphs in this State Report are to paragraphs in the concluding observations on the combined fifth to ninth reports of Ireland (CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9).
3. This State Report is an update of Ireland’s previous periodic report, to which reference is made, namely the combined fifth to ninth reports (CERD/C/IRL/5-9), submitted on 3 October 2018, and attached at Appendix I. Reference is made to CERD/C/IRL/5-9, Ireland’s Common Core Document (HRI/CORE/IRL/2019), attached at Appendix II) or other reports where the information previously supplied was deemed relevant, where it still applies and for the ease of reference for the Committee.
4. In drafting this State Report, each recommendation in the concluding observations (CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9) was answered under what was deemed to be the most relevant Article of the Convention, with recommendations grouped thematically where appropriate. The intention of this structure is to present a holistic view of Ireland’s current progress in implementing ICERD. The information included in this State Report was primarily gathered in the latter half of 2024, and therefore for the most part represents the State position at that time, with some updates made where possible and appropriate.
5. Information on follow-up to recommendations 20 (b) and (c) (racist hate speech), 22 (a) and (e) (racist hate crime) and 44 (legal aid) was submitted to the Committee by Ireland 15 February 2022 (CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9).
6. This State Report covers the period 2018–2024 and was drafted by the Anti-Racism Policy and Funds Administration Unit in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). This State Report will be published on DCEDIY’s website on submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

#### **Consultations with civil society (paragraph 54)**

7. A targeted stakeholder consultation was held in-person on the 19th November 2024 in Dublin. This brought together representatives from civil society groups and experts in anti-racism and issues related to Ireland’s implementation of the ICERD. An online survey was opened in tandem with the in-person consultation, and six written submissions were received.
8. A draft State Report was shared with attendees in advance of the consultation, which was based on a range of inputs from relevant Government Departments and public bodies and sought to respond to the recommendations made by the Committee in their concluding observations (CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9). A report of the consultation is attached at Appendix III. This State Report was revised prior to submission to the Committee in light of the issues raised during the consultation process.
9. The consultation for this State Report builds on consultations that have been underway to inform the development of the new national strategy for migrant integration. A public consultation concluded on November 30th 2023, and a targeted consultation with migrant communities concluded more recently in November 2024. The aim of the consultations for the new national strategy is to gain insights into the migrant experience in Ireland, and to better understand the challenges, needs, and opportunities for supporting and promoting migrant integration.

## B. General Context

10. This State Report is being submitted to the Committee approximately 5 years since the concluding observations on Ireland's combined fifth to ninth report was adopted by the Committee in 2019. The period covered by this State Report (2018–2024) has been a time of significant change in Ireland in terms of our economic, political and societal landscape. Key developments include the following.

### 1. COVID-19 and emergency conditions

#### *State response to Covid-19*

11. The Irish Government enacted emergency public health measures in early 2020. A stay-at-home order was implemented on 27 March, including the closure of retail and education facilities, with only essential workers allowed to attend their workplaces, and a 2km limit on movement for most of the population. Physical and social distancing measures were also introduced, with phased restrictions on retail, education and employment sectors, with these measures being adapted as circumstances evolved. A Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) was introduced, which was a social welfare payment made available to those aged 18–66 who had lost their job as a result of COVID-19.

12. Generally, the population in Ireland demonstrated a strong adherence to public health measures during this time, and Ireland's COVID-19 vaccination programme had high levels of adoption, with 96% of the adult population receiving their primary vaccinations.

#### *Particular impact on marginalised/racially minoritised communities*

13. It is widely acknowledged that the restrictions enacted, up to and including the full lockdowns had wide ranging impacts on society. Children and young people were particularly impacted by the closure of educational facilities. Remote learning was not equally accessible to everyone, given the unequal technology and digital resources available to some based on their socioeconomic status and background.

14. Research both nationally in Ireland and internationally has demonstrated that Covid-19 had a particular impact on marginalised groups, including those from an ethnic minority background or members of a racialised group. In terms of health impacts, research from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has found that areas with higher proportions of ethnic minorities exhibited higher rates of ICU admissions due to Covid-19, and infection rates were higher in areas with higher shares of Irish Travellers, and people racialised as Black, noting that it is probable that this reflects pre-existing health inequalities for these groups.

15. In relation to employment impacts, in general it has been found that jobs with lower salaries were more vulnerable to being impacted by restrictions, and people were therefore more likely to lose their job or be unable to work remotely. It was also more likely that more fluctuations of uptake of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) would occur in more deprived areas, given that people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to experience job disruption as a result of government restrictions.

16. Recent research from the ESRI on the Equality Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Irish Labour Market highlights, however, that the data used is not disaggregated by ethnicity. As discussed in this State Report, improving the disaggregation of data based on ethnicity is a priority for Ireland, and measures to address this in a general sense are included in the National Action Plan Against Racism (see paras 41–43 and 45 in this document) and the forthcoming National Equality Data Strategy (see paras 46–48 in this document).

#### *Comprehensive evaluation of how Ireland managed Covid-19*

17. The Government has agreed to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of how the country managed COVID-19. The evaluation will provide an opportunity to learn lessons from our experiences in dealing with a pandemic. It will include a review of the

whole-of-government response to the pandemic and how we might do better and be in a stronger position if another pandemic or other similar type event were to occur.

18. It will include consideration of the health service response covering hospitals, the community and nursing homes, along with the wider economic and social response, including the impact on education and businesses. It is intended to have a public element to hear the lived experiences of all society.

19. Terms of reference for the evaluation were approved and published by Government on the 30th October 2024,<sup>1</sup> and Professor Anne Scott was appointed to oversee the evaluation, which will be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary panel with relevant expertise.

## **2. Economy**

20. Between 2018–2022 the economy continued to grow in Ireland. However, 2023 saw slower growth than previous years following a strong post-pandemic recovery. Economic activity and employment increased again in 2024. According to the Central Bank's Quarterly Bulletin (Q4 2024) the Irish Economy is set for steady growth out to 2027. Ireland's unemployment rate has averaged at 4.5% for the last three years and is expected to remain around 4.5% until 2027. Inflation has eased in 2024 and is forecasted to return to sustainable levels over the next 3 years. Growth in residential construction slowed in 2024 but should pick up in 2025 based on the large number of housing commencements registered this year.

## **3. Society**

21. The ethnic, national and cultural diversity among the population has continued to grow in the past few years. In Census 2022 the number of non-Irish residents stood at 631,785 (12% of the population) up from 535,475 (11% of the population) in 2016. This figure includes Irish people born abroad or in Northern Ireland. Indian, Romanian and Brazilian citizens were the groups which increased by the biggest numbers since 2016.

22. Several legislative provisions relevant to migration were introduced in Ireland during 2022, with many relating to facilitating access to rights for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, adding grounds for accelerated procedures for International Protection Applicants, and changing employment permit lists, among others. As of 22 September 2024, there have been 110,439 temporary protections granted in Ireland. The number of asylum applications continues to trend upwards in 2023. In 2023 2,872 applications for refugee status were granted and 235 subsidiary protections were granted, as well as further Permission to Remain grants. The main countries of origin for applications for asylum for 2023 were: Nigeria (2,084 applications), Algeria (1,462), Afghanistan (1,106), Somalia (1,097) and Georgia (1,065). There has also been significant increases in occupancy rates in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) – in 2021 there were 7,244 residents, increasing to 19,104 in 2022, 26,279 in 2023 and 32,702 in 2024 (figures are at 31st December each year).

23. According to the 2023 Annual Report on Migration and Asylum (EMN Ireland 2023), there were 88,595 first resident permits issued in 2023. This is a 3% increase from 2022 (85,793), and a significant increase since the last peak in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to 2022, education was the most common reason for issuing a permit (45%), followed by employment (27%), other reasons (23%) and family (5%). In total, 30,981 employment permits were issued in 2023. This was a 29% decrease from 2022 (39,995) but still represents an increase relative to the last ten years.

24. According to the CSO, the number of newly arriving immigrants from April 2022 to April 2023 was 141,600 which was a 16-year high. Of those immigrants, 29,600 were returning Irish citizens, 26,100 were other EU citizens, and 4,800 were UK citizens. The remaining 81,100 immigrants were citizens of other countries including almost 42,000 Ukrainians.

<sup>1</sup> [gov.ie](https://gov.ie) – Government appoints chair and agrees terms of reference for evaluation of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4. Public Policy and Legislation

##### *National Action Plan Against Racism*

25. Of particular significance since the previous State Report submission is the adoption of Ireland's National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR), a copy of which is attached at Appendix IV.

26. Ireland's NAPAR is a key component in demonstrating the State's commitment to continue to give effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action (para 53). It is through realising this commitment that Ireland can truly build a society where every member is valued equally and free from racial discrimination and intolerance.

27. Paras 22–24 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9 highlighted the ongoing work of the National Anti-Racism Committee in developing the NAPAR. This work successfully concluded, and Ireland's NAPAR was launched on 21 March 2023, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

28. The NAPAR represents a national level, State-led, co-ordinated approach to eliminating racism in all its forms in Ireland. This includes antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism that impacts the Traveller and Roma people and communities, and racism affecting people of African Descent. Ireland is taking a broad approach to this issue, by considering all facets of racism. Please see paras 58–64 in this document for further information.

##### *Migrant Integration Strategy*

29. Work is currently underway to develop a new national strategy for migrant integration, to succeed the 2017 'Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future'. The new strategy will be a central part of Ireland's approach to giving effect to the Durban Declaration (para 53). Please see paras 67–69 in this document for more information.

30. NAPAR precedes the new strategy, and it addresses many of the same issues and, to a great extent, the same target population as the new national strategy for migrant integration. This new strategy will complement the NAPAR and equality strategies that are in development, namely gender equality, LGBTI+ and disability.

##### *Public Sector Duty*

31. Under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the 'Public Sector Duty') as set out in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, all public bodies in Ireland have the responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. Public bodies must integrate the Public Sector Duty into their strategic plans and annual reports.

32. A range of initiatives are underway across the civil service and public sector, working towards implementing obligations under the Public Sector Duty. Many public bodies have undertaken assessments of their obligations under the Public Sector Duty and created action plans. Please see paras 275–296 in this document for further information on implementation of the Public Sector Duty.

### C. Census of Population 2022

#### 1. Remarkable diversity in Ireland 2022

33. The 631,785 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland in April 2022 originate from almost 200 nations. While the vast majority of these people were from a small number of nationalities, there was remarkable diversity in the range of nations identified in Census 2022. Almost half of people with non-Irish citizenship (312,909) were EU citizens, an increase of 2% since Census 2016. The number of citizens from European countries outside the EU increased by 131% to over 25,000. This large increase was mainly driven by immigration from Ukraine.

34. 15 countries, each with over 10,000 citizens, accounted for 72.3% of all non-Irish citizens in 2022. A further 41 countries with between 1,001 and 10,000 residents in Ireland accounted for a further 20.9% of the total. The number of Polish citizens fell from 122,515 in 2016 to 93,680 in 2022. The number of Indian citizens increased from 11,465 in 2016 to 45,449 in 2022.

35. Between 2016 and 2022 the number of people who identified as Black or Black Irish-African was 67,546, up 17% from 57,850 in 2016. Since 2016 there was a 38% increase in the number of people who identified as Asian or Asian Irish-Chinese (26,828).

36. The Traveller population was enumerated at 32,949 in Census 2022, which represents an increase of 6% compared to the 2016 census. Following a 2017 consultation, four new categories were added to the ethnic category list on Census 2022, including Roma. The number of people who identified as Roma in Census 2022 was 16,059.

## **2. Religious Diversity**

37. Ireland's religious diversity continues to increase. The proportion of the population normally resident in the State identifying as Roman Catholics continued to decline to reach its lowest point at 69 per cent in Census 2022. The number of people who reported having no religion increased to 736,210, 14.5% of the population. This was an increase of 63% since 2016 and 187% since 2011. There were 124,749 members of the Church of Ireland in April 2022, an increase of 2% since 2016. The Orthodox (Greek, Coptic, Russian) grouping accounted for 100,165 people, an increase of 128% since the 2011 Census.

## **3. Language other than English or Irish spoken at home**

38. In 2016, a question on foreign languages was included for the first time in the Census. In 2022, 751,507 people in Ireland spoke a language other than English or Irish at home, representing an increase of 23% from 612,018 in 2016. The number of people speaking Polish at home declined by 9% to 123,968 but continues to be the most commonly spoken foreign language. The fastest growing language spoken was Ukrainian with an increase of 165%.

39. Please see Appendix V for further relevant statistical information.

## II. Updated Information on the Implementation of Articles 1–7

### A. Article 1

#### 1. Definition of racial discrimination

40. As outlined in paras 135–146 of CERD/C/IRL/3-4, and confirmed at para 177 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, Ireland complies with the provisions of Article 1 via the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2008, the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2015, and the Pensions Acts 1990 to 2004.

41. Paras 135–136 of CERD/C/IRL/3-4 outlines the definition of discrimination, which includes on the ground of race. Ireland’s NAPAR, which was approved by Government in February 2023, includes explanations of terminology that is used throughout the plan.

42. This terminology sets out the context of how the State is seeking to address racism, including on a systemic basis. This includes the below explanation of the term ‘racism’. This terminology was devised by the National Anti-Racism Committee in developing the NAPAR, and was devised to be closely aligned with the understanding of racism as included in ICERD.

- “In this plan, the term ‘racism’ refers to a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”, (NAPAR p. 8).

43. Ireland’s NAPAR also includes an explanation of the term ‘structural racism’:

- “Racism occurs in many areas of society and affects many aspects of people’s lives. As recognised in the UN Durban Declaration on Racism and Programme of Action (DDPA), the principles of which have informed the development of this plan, racism is a structurally embedded phenomenon of domination and power, which is reflected through and reproduced by institutional arrangements, and is experienced by groups and individuals. This interplay between structure and institutions in the reproduction of racism, is referred to as ‘systemic racism’. Systemic racism is manifest in the ways that it prevents people from enjoying their rights across many domains, including their economic, social and cultural rights, as well as their civil and political rights. Racism is present whether the exclusion is intentional or not. For many people living in Ireland, racism, in one form or another, is part of everyday life. Racial discrimination interacts with other forms of discrimination” (ibid).

#### 2. Definition of antisemitism

44. On the 16th January 2024, it was announced that Ireland has endorsed the non-legally binding Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism. This decision has been taken in the context of Ireland’s longstanding commitment to supporting freedom of religion or belief, equality and non-discrimination. This commitment has been expressed over many years, including at the UN and the OSCE and as a member of the EU. Ireland is also a long standing member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. These issues are an integral part of Ireland’s human rights policy work. This endorsement complements Ireland’s robust anti-discrimination legislation, including the NAPAR which seeks to address a wide range of issues which affect minorities.

#### 3. Data collection and disaggregation

##### *National Action Plan Against Racism*

45. A key objective of Ireland’s NAPAR is Objective 4, ‘Being Counted – Measuring the impacts of racism’. A range of possible data sources are included in the NAPAR, but it is noted that very few of these sources are currently disaggregated by ethnicity and that addressing this will be essential to measuring progress. Action 4.1 in the action plan relates

to determining data sources that can be used to monitor racial equality, and the forthcoming National Equality Data Strategy will be key in addressing this in the coming years.

*Equality Data Strategy (paragraph 6)*

46. Led by the Central Statistics Office and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the National Equality Data Strategy is being developed on a cross-Government basis and is currently being finalised. The strategy will put in place a tactical approach to improving the collection, disaggregation and use of equality data.

47. It is intended that the strategy will provide a general approach for identifying and filling current gaps in equality data, as well as develop standard practices in classification. The strategy is designed to improve the collection of all equality data and will improve the ability of public bodies to monitor the impact of policies and initiatives, while complementing the Equality Budgeting initiative led by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

48. In developing the strategy, a working group was established which brought together a range of stakeholders from across Government, as well as civil society and research bodies. The working group conducted a consultation on the draft strategy in 2023. The strategy will set out the overall goal of improving the collection, disaggregation and use of equality data in Ireland, and will outline various actions under these headings.

**4. Review of the Equality Acts (paragraph 12(a) and (c))**

49. Please see paras 31–35 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9 on the ongoing review of Ireland's Equality Acts. This includes a review of current definitions for all equality grounds. See paras 55–57 and 262 in this document for further information on this review.

**5. Data on Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons, (paragraph 36 (b) and 38 (d))**

50. In 2020, responsibility for provision of accommodation for persons seeking international protection in Ireland transferred to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Department regularly publishes data in respect of accommodation provided, the numbers of people availing of accommodation and the type and location of accommodation.<sup>2</sup>

51. Statistics on numbers of residents in IPAS are published on a weekly basis, which includes occupancy breakdown by a range of characteristics. Data is disaggregated by gender, by adults/children, if people are in a couple, and by lone parents. Occupancy is also broken down by nationality, by county and by local authority. Trends are analysed and included in the weekly report.

52. IPAS are not always in a position to offer accommodation immediately and statistics on International Protection Applicants (IPAs) not offered accommodation are published on a twice-weekly basis. A system of triage of adult males has been implemented to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are prioritised for the provision of accommodation. The figures published detail the numbers of IPAs who were not offered accommodation and have been offered a contingency payment until accommodation is available; the numbers accommodated following a vulnerability triage; and the number of previously unaccommodated people offered accommodation.

53. In relation to recommendation 38 (d), statistics in relation to the deaths of residents in IPAS provided accommodation have been published. IPAS has compiled statistics on the deaths of persons in International Protection accommodation from 2002 of which IPAS has been notified. The statistics provide collated information based on available records. The collation of the information was carried out with assistance from the HSE using Central Statistics Office definitions.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07027-ipas-statistics/>.



## B. Article 2

### 1. Legislative framework for the elimination of racial discrimination

#### *Incorporation of the Convention into the domestic legal order (paragraph 8)*

54. As affirmed by Ireland at the 2785th meeting of Committee, where the combined fifth to ninth periodic reports were considered, Ireland's position with regard to the incorporation of the Convention into domestic law remains unchanged. This position was outlined in paras 19–21 of the addendum to the third and fourth report (CERD/C/IRL/CO/3-4/Add.1), and still applies.

#### *Review of the Equality Acts (paragraph 12 (b))*

55. As part of the review of Ireland's Equality Acts the operation of the Acts is being examined from the perspective of a person taking a claim under its redress mechanisms. It is further examining the degree to which those experiencing discrimination are aware of the legislation and whether there are practical or other obstacles which preclude or deter them from taking an action.

56. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth invited written submissions to a public consultation from July 2021–December 2021, and was pleased to receive an extensive response to the consultation. The public were asked for their views on the functioning and accessibility of the acts; the scope of the current grounds; whether existing exemptions should be modified or removed; and whether the legislation adequately addresses intersectionality. Submissions were analysed by the Research and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and a report was published in July 2023. A General Scheme was approved by Government in Q4 2024, and has been published.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Effective remedies for victims of discrimination (paragraph 12 (d))*

57. As part of the review of the Equality Acts consideration has been given to ensuring that the Acts provide for effective remedies for victims of discrimination. This has included an examination of the redress available to ensure that it meets the threshold of 'effective, proportionate and dissuasive'.

### 2. The policy and institutional framework for the elimination of racial discrimination

#### *National Action Plan Against Racism (paras 14 (a), (b) and (e))*

58. Ireland's NAPAR was developed by an independent Anti-Racism Committee, and the actions in the plan are not specifically focused on any particular group affected by racism or discrimination in Ireland; rather, they relate to a wide variety of groups. It is intended that the actions will give effect to Ireland's commitments under the Durban Declaration. The plan is part of Ireland's response to the UN's call for global action to eliminate racism, and part of the wider effort to tackle racism and its impacts across the European Union.

59. The plan acknowledges the intersectionality between racism and all other forms of oppression, including oppression experienced by people based on gender, socio-economic circumstances, disability, sexuality, religious beliefs and gender identity. The differential impact on women was called out in the plan and recommended that all implementation and monitoring data for the plan should be disaggregated by gender as well as ethnicity.

60. The first NAPAR Implementation Report has been published, (see Appendix VI). The NAPAR Implementation Report provides updates on the progress of NAPAR actions across the multiple Government Departments and Agencies identified as implementing bodies. These Departments and Agencies are represented on an interdepartmental co-ordination

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/340c9-general-scheme-of-the-equality-miscellaneous-provisions-bill-2024/>.

committee which was established as part of the monitoring and oversight framework. The second implementation report will be published in early 2025.

61. A Special Rapporteur on Racial Equality and Racism was appointed on 1 July 2024. The Special Rapporteur will monitor progress towards the objectives of the NAPAR and will make an annual report to the Minister, this will also be submitted to the relevant Oireachtas Committee. To support this work, an Advisory Committee on Racism and Racial Equality, chaired by the Special Rapporteur, has been established with membership from a cross section of society. This Committee is also tasked with monitoring and helping to progress the implementation of the NAPAR, and will their provide knowledge and expertise and support the development and implementation of policies in this area.

62. The Ireland Against Racism Fund (IARF), was first launched in May 2023, and is an important element in supporting the implementation of the NAPAR. It arose in response to a DCEDIY Policy Action of NAPAR, action 2.14.

63. The objective of this fund is to provide funding for national and regional projects, as well as local initiatives, that aim to combat racism and foster racial equality and community cohesion. The IARF reopened for funding for 2024 with €1.1m being made available to 28 NGOs and community organisations, with grants of up to €100,000 allocated.

64. Subject to the usual approvals under Ireland's annual Budget process, it is intended to run the IARF each year for the lifetime of the NAPAR.

*Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (paragraph 14 (c))*

65. Please see paras 25–26 in CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

66. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 sets out the functions of the Commission at section 10. These functions include i) to protect and promote human rights and equality, and ii) to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses, discrimination and prohibited conduct.

*Migrant Integration Strategy (paragraph 14 (d))*

67. The 'Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future' was published in February 2017. It has been the central policy framework adopted by Government to promote the integration of all migrants who are legally residing in the State. It envisaged a whole-of-government approach to enhance diversity, inclusion and equity for migrants across all aspects of Irish society through increased focus on social inclusion measures, improved access to public services and targeted action to address racism and xenophobia.

68. The primary focus of the strategy was ensuring the equitable provision of public services within a mainstreamed system. Government departments and agencies were identified as key to service delivery, but an important method of delivering the strategy was to also work closely with non-governmental delivery partners. The interim 'Migrant Integration Strategy: 2017–2020 Progress Report to Government' was published in June 2019 and the Strategy was extended to the end of 2021. An independent evaluation on the processes for implementation the Migrant Integration Strategy and two other equality strategies (the National Strategy for Women and Girls and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy) was published in July 2023. The findings from the evaluation will inform the development of a new migrant integration strategy.

69. Work is currently underway to develop a new national strategy for migrant integration; this will build on the momentum of its predecessor and address emerging needs in supporting and promoting migrant integration in Ireland. A public consultation concluded on November 30th 2023, and a targeted consultation with migrant communities concluded more recently in November 2024. It is intended to publish the new strategy in early 2025.

## C. Article 3

### Condemnation of racial segregation and apartheid

70. Please see para 204 to 207 of CERD/C/IRL/3-4, and paras 179 – 184 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9. There is no racial segregation or apartheid in Ireland, and the State continues to unreservedly condemn these practices and any policy, practice, or ideology that is conducive to racial intolerance or hatred.

### *Migrant Integration Policy*

71. Please see paras 67–69 in this document for information in relation to the successor to the Migrant Integration Strategy 2017–2020.

### *Integration Monitoring and Research*

72. Further to para 185 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, a research programme on integration and equality<sup>4</sup> is funded by DCEDIY. This programme is carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). The programme model has allowed researchers to build up a substantial body of research on migrant integration, supplementing the biennial Monitoring Report on Integration with in-depth focused reports on topics of interest.

73. A new programme was agreed and began in July 2024 with an expanded remit to include migration (Research on Integration, Migration and Equality, RIME). This provides an opportunity to support joined-up policy on migration and integration, drawing from the wide range of expertise within the ESRI.

## D. Article 4

### 1. Condemnation of all racist propaganda and organizations

74. Please see paras 186–94 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

### 2. Reservation to Article 4 of the Convention (paragraph 10)

75. As noted at paras 72–73 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, Ireland signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1968 and ratified it in December 2000 whereupon it became binding on Ireland in international law. At the time of ratification of the Convention, a reservation/interpretative declaration was entered in relation to Article 4 of the Convention.

76. The declaration:

- Notes that the measures described in Article 4 (a), (b) and (c) shall be undertaken with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights set forth in Article 5 of the Convention, and states that Ireland considers that, through the measures described in Article 4, the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly and association may not be jeopardised.

77. At the 2785th meeting of Committee, where the combined fifth to ninth periodic reports were considered, Ireland recognized that further action was required to strengthen legislation on hate speech and hate crime, and that once legislation had passed the Government would revisit its reservation to article 4 of the Convention.

78. As detailed at paras 81–87 in this document, the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024 was signed into law by the President on 29th October 2024, and a commitment has been made to introduce separate legislation to fulfil obligations to update the law on incitement to violence and incitement to hatred.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.esri.ie/current-research/integration-and-equality-research-programme>.

### 3. Mandate of the Electoral Commission (paragraph 20 (e))

79. The current Programme for Government does not commit to providing a role for the Electoral Commission (An Coimisiún Toghcháin) in the area of hate speech. The regulation of hate speech is provided for under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. Please see paras 86–87 in this document for further information regarding amendments to this Act.

80. The legislation that established the Electoral Commission provides for a regulatory framework to protect the integrity of elections and referendums against the dissemination or publication of online disinformation, online misinformation and manipulative or inauthentic behaviour online.

### 4. Racist hate speech (paragraph 20 (a)–(c)) and racist hate crime (paragraph 22(a)–(c), (e) & (f))

81. Please see paras 4–11 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9, and paras 65–70; 195–198 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

#### *Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024*

82. The Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024 (the ‘Act’) was signed into law by the President on 29th October 2024.

83. The Act creates specific, aggravated forms of certain existing criminal offences, where those offences are motivated by hatred of a protected characteristic, or when hatred was demonstrated at the time of committing the offence. The aggravated offences generally carry an enhanced penalty, compared to the ordinary offence, and the record of any conviction for such an offence would clearly state that the offence was motivated by prejudice (i.e. that it was a hate crime).

84. The new offences also carry a provision for an alternative verdict, where the ‘hate’ element of the offence has not been proven. In such cases, the person can be found guilty of the ordinary version of the offence, rather than the aggravated version.

85. There is a further provision for any other criminal offence (where a specific hate-aggravated form of the offence has not been created, but where the court finds the offence was motivated by hatred). In these cases, the court must consider the hate motive as an aggravating factor at sentencing, and this must be placed on the formal record.

86. The list of protected characteristics in the Act reflects those in the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, with the addition of descent, sex characteristics, gender, and disability as new protected grounds.

87. The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 remains in law and it will continue to be an offence to incite hatred on the basis of the protected characteristics listed in the Act. Please see para 65 in CERD/C/IRL/5-9 for more information.

88. The Minister for Justice has committed to introducing separate legislation to fulfil obligations to update the law on incitement to violence and incitement to hatred which will be progressed at the earliest opportunity.

89. In relation to para 16 (f), on legislation to declare illegal and prohibit racist organizations, please see paras 93–94 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

#### *Establishment of a New Media Commission – Coimisiún na Meán*

90. With reference to paras 20 (b) and (c), which were emphasised by the Committee, Coimisiún na Meán (An Coimisiún) was established in March 2023. This was under the provisions of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 (OSMR Act).

91. An Coimisiún’s work is central to addressing concerns about online safety and the prevalence of hate speech online, and includes the implementation of a new regulatory framework for online safety. As part of this framework, An Coimisiún has developed and adopted an Online Safety Code and Online Safety Guidance Materials, which will help to protect users of designated online services from some of the most serious forms of illegal and harmful online content. This includes incitement to violence or hatred directed against a

group of persons or a member of a group based on any of the grounds referred to in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which encompasses racist hate speech.

92. A failure to comply with an online safety code could lead to the imposition of sanctions against a designated online service, including financial penalties of up to €20m or 10% of relevant turnover, whichever is higher. In addition, in certain cases of continued non-compliance, An Coimisiún may pursue criminal liability for senior management within those services.

93. The Online Safety Code is part of an Coimisiún's overall Online Safety Framework, which also includes functions under the Digital Services Act and the Terrorist Content Online Regulation, and sets binding rules applying to video-sharing platforms which have their EU headquarters in Ireland, including in relation to complaints handling. The overall framework makes digital services accountable for how they protect people, especially children, from harm online. The Code, combined with the other parts of the Online Safety Framework, will deliver on the objectives of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act, leading to safer online experiences for people across Ireland.

94. In addition, An Coimisiún has powers to issue a Content Limitation Notice, pursuant to the regulatory framework under the OSMR Act. Where it appears to the Commission, either in the course of an investigation or otherwise, that content available on a designated online service is harmful online content, the Commission may notify the designated online service to remove the content, disable access to it, or to limit the availability of the content.

95. The OSMR Act was developed in line with international human rights standards in that the Act sets out clear legal standards, pursues a legitimate aim and sets out explicit proportionality requirements regarding its implementation and enforcement, including in relation to consultation requirements, factors that An Coimisiún must consider when making decisions, and appeal mechanisms.

96. A further landmark development is the application of the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA), which applied in full from February 2024. The DSA requires larger online services to submit risk assessments and take risk mitigation measures to tackle illegal online content, including illegal hate speech. Sixteen of the 26 designated Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) are located, or have their EU headquarters, in Ireland, meaning that the Irish Digital Services Coordinator plays a key role in the oversight of compliance with the DSA.

97. An Coimisiún has established a user contact centre, which provides the public with information about their rights online and how to make a complaint if platforms are not meeting their legal obligations.

#### *Online reporting of hate crime*

98. In 2021, An Garda Síochána designed and developed a non-emergency online Hate Crime reporting mechanism which can be accessed via [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie). Hate Crime can be reported to An Garda Síochána in a safe and secure way which allows for the appropriate response and support to be provided. This service has increased accessibility to the Garda Service, for victims of Hate Crime, who may have previously been reluctant to report to An Garda Síochána. All reports will be examined by dedicated members of the GNDU, who ensure appropriate action is taken to record and respond to reports.

#### *Third party reporting of hate crime*

99. Reports/complaints of racist incidents are received, in the Garda National Diversity Unit, from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) CSOs, community representatives and members of the public on a regular basis via email, telephone call, etc. and are actioned accordingly. This is in addition to reports received via the An Garda Síochána online hate crime reporting service.

100. An Garda Síochána has developed a 'Third-Party Referrals' process on behalf of hate crime victims. The third-party referrer may be a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Civil Society Organisation (CSO) or Diversity Community Representative. This step has placed a structure on what has been an informal practice between the Garda National Diversity Unit and these groups over many years.

*Recording of hate crime*

101. Please see paras 111–122 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

102. An Garda Síochána records details of crime incidents on a central database (referred to as PULSE). This system was revised in October 2020 to improve the recording of hate crime, as advised in para 15 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9. This update ensures that all hate crimes recorded on PULSE are specifically recorded as such. Mandatory Discriminatory Motives (and sub motives) are required. The update also allows for the recording of hate incidents (non-crime) with associated discriminatory motives.

103. In 2022, An Garda Síochána began annually publishing hate crime data. A breakdown of crime categories and discriminatory motives can be accessed at <https://www.garda.ie/en/information-centre/statistics/>.

104. Overall figures for Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents (non-crime) for 2021, 2022 and 2023 are as follows:

<i>Hate Crime Figures</i>					
2021		2022		2023	
Total		Total		Total	
448		582		651	
<i>Hate Crimes</i>	<i>Hate Incidents</i>	<i>Hate Crimes</i>	<i>Hate Incidents</i>	<i>Hate Crimes</i>	<i>Hate Incidents</i>
389	59	510	72	548	103

105. The online hate crime reporting service, launched in July 2021, provides a new reporting mechanism, and are included in the overall annually published hate crime data.

106. The overall number of reports received by An Garda Síochána's online hate crime reporting facility continues to rise, with Q1 2024 seeing the biggest increase to date – 147% higher than in the same period in 2023. The percentages of reports received that are hate related are as follows:

- 20% of overall reports in 2021 (Q3 and Q4).
- 28% of overall reports in 2022.
- 29% of overall reports in 2023; and
- 25% of overall reports in 2024 (Q1).

*Training on identifying, registering, investigating and prosecuting racist incidents and racist hate crimes*

107. For information on the training of judges please see paras 12–13 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9, para 265 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, and paras 233–241 of CERD/C/IRL/3-4, and for information relating to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) please see paras 17–19 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9.

108. In 2021, Garda Policy and Procedures on Responding to Hate Crime and Non-Crime Hate Incidents were published. An internal Hate Crime communications programme included the circulation of guidelines on the principles of Hate Crime, perception-based recording and reporting, recording, investigating and prosecuting Hate Crime.

109. A mandatory online hate crime training course was delivered to the entire organisation in 2022. This training was designed in conjunction with international experts (CEJI and Facing Facts) and with the assistance of INAR (Irish Network Against Racism). The course included:

- Understanding the hate crime concept and its impact, understanding and implementing the new policy and procedures for responding to hate crimes and (non-crime) hate incidents;

- Understanding key targeted groups and communities in Ireland utilising video interviews with affected communities, short readings based on research findings;
- Using bias indicators to identify and record evidence of bias/hostility/prejudice, according to the hate crime definition and policy;
- Identifying potential victims, encouraging hate crime reporting utilising video interviews with people with experience of hate crime victimisation and examples of good practice;
- Issues to consider when taking statements and other investigation issues;
- Partnership working with Civil Society Organisations using filmed interviews with leading national CSOs/Non-Governmental Organisations; and
- Prosecuting cases of hate crime using case studies.

110. In addition to the above mandatory training, additional training was provided to Garda Information Services Centre (GISC) call takers / reviewers / quality control teams, 999 call takers, Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) administrators (district PULSE reviewers), Victims of Crime Office staff and Divisional Protective Services Units. Separately, mandatory diversity and cultural awareness training has been developed and will be available online in Q4 2024.

*Racist hate crime against people of African descent (paragraph 24 (c))*

111. Policy and Procedures on Responding to Hate Crime and Non-Crime Hate Incidents were issued to the Garda organisation along with guidelines on the identification, recording, investigating and prosecuting of hate crime. Mandatory Hate Crime training has been completed by 90% of the Garda organisation. Additional training has been provided to specialist Garda sections to assist with the recording and investigation process.

112. Garda Diversity Officers can now be added to Hate Crime PULSE incidents. The Garda National Diversity Unit contact the investigating member of every Hate Crime / Incident recorded on PULSE. There are 586 Garda Diversity Officers who are trained, developed and supported to actively engage with and attend to the concerns of all minority, diverse and hard to reach communities – providing reassurance, building trust, extending the accessibility of the Garda Service and working in collaboration with local Garda Victim Service Offices to prioritise victim needs. There is a Garda Diversity Inspector in every Garda division.

## **5. Public Awareness on racist hate speech (Paragraph 20(f))**

*Public Transport Anti-Racism Campaigns*

113. The National Transport Authority (NTA), which has responsibility for Transport for Ireland (TFI), has conducted a number of anti-racism campaigns over the past ten years, with an objective of raising awareness and support for staff and customers.

114. In partnership with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the 2023 campaign celebrated the growing diversity within Ireland's public transport services and aimed to ensure people of all backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs are treated with respect. The 2024 campaign sought to promote the TFI network as a welcoming and inclusive environment for all passengers. Like in 2023, the campaign ran across public transport vehicles, outdoor advertising, digi-shelters, social media and digital audio, involving operators such as Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead Ireland, Iarnród Éireann, Luas, TFI Local Link and taxis.

115. In March 2025, the NTA plans to run a campaign to coincide with the EUs 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination' to show a collective commitment to eradicating racism. The campaign will follow the same core message of promoting TFI public transport as a safe space for everyone to use and enjoy.

*Public awareness building in the National Action Plan Against Racism*

116. Action 5.3 of the NAPAR is to ‘Carry out a programme to raise public education and awareness in support of the objectives of this plan’. As the coordinating Department, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is in the preliminary stages of creating a plan to carry out a comprehensive programme to raise awareness, with the intention that a full programme will be developed to be carried out in 2025.

*An Garda Síochána awareness campaign*

117. A hate crime awareness campaign is planned for Q4 2024 (postponed from Q2 due to delay with Hate Crime Legislation). This campaign is aimed at encouraging the reporting of hate crime to An Garda Síochána. In addition, a nationwide engagement initiative with all International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) centres is ongoing – to inform residents of reporting mechanisms for hate crime.

**E. Article 5****1. Equality before the law and enjoyment of particular rights***Constitutional Protection — Specified Rights*

118. Please see para 86 of Ireland’s Common Core Document (HRI/CORE/IRL/2019).

*Constitutional Protection — Unspecified Rights*

119. Please see paras 87–88 of Ireland’s Common Core Document (HRI/CORE/IRL/2019).

**2. People of African Descent (paras 24 (a), (b), and (d))***International Decade for People of African Descent in Ireland (paragraph 24 (d))*

120. Further to paras 166–168 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, Ireland has been committed effect to the International Decade for People of African Descent in Ireland (IDPADI).

121. Throughout the lifetime of the Decade, work has continued to meet the obligations as set out under the three overarching themes of Recognition, Justice and Development. Decade specific activities began on 25 February 2019, where the Government began engaging stakeholders and members of the African and African Descent Community to discuss the IDPADI and its implementation.

122. In March 2019 a Steering Committee was formed which consisted of organisations working within the African community. The Steering Committee engaged in discussions with the Government on the implementation of the Decade and sought to mobilise the African community and public in Ireland to support the IDPADI.

123. A public Stakeholder Consultation on the Decade was facilitated by the then-Department of Justice and Equality later in 2019. A report of this consultation, which was subsequently published, highlighted key themes that emerged, such as unemployment/underemployment among people of African descent in Ireland, social inclusion and visibility and limited awareness of African culture, diversity and heritage, and that this has led to barriers in equality and inclusion.

124. The then-Department of Justice and Equality provided grant funding to the IDPADI Steering Committee on their establishment. In 2021, and again in 2023, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth granted the IDPADI Steering Committee €65,000 to advance the celebration of the International Decade for People of African Descent in Ireland.

125. Whilst activities carried out under the Decade were impacted by Covid-19, the Steering Committee has been active in working towards the implementation of the IDPAD. Seven subcommittees were formed, with themes relevant to the overarching IDPAD themes of Recognition, Justice and Development.



126. In 2023, an IDPAD funding call was launched, with almost €170,000 made available for projects to host events to mark and celebrate the decade. Grants of up to €5,000 were allocated<sup>5</sup> to successful organisations, with 35 projects funded that celebrate the diverse culture and heritage of people of African descent.

127. Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in 2021, and wholly supports the recent proclamation of a Second International Decade on December 17th 2024.

#### *Primary and Post-primary Education*

128. Ireland is committed to inclusive education for all and has pledged to create safe and supportive environments in schools that are welcoming and inclusive for every student.

129. Across both primary and post-primary schools, the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum supports pupils' learning in the areas of inclusion and diversity. It seeks to foster in the learner attitudes and behaviours that are characterised by understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. It addresses equity and human rights and the principle that rights have associated responsibilities. Concepts of empathy, respect and inclusiveness are nurtured through the learning experiences offered and through the attitudes and practices inherent in the organisational structures of the classroom and the school.

#### *Higher Education*

130. In 2021, the Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the Higher Education Authority (HEA) conducted the National Race Equality Survey across all Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The findings were published in the Race Equality Report later that year. The HEA is dedicated to actively addressing racial and ethnic discrimination in higher education.

131. After extensive consultation with stakeholders, the HEA launched the Race Equality Implementation Plan (2022–2024) in September 2022. Additionally, in March 2023, the Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions were introduced. These principles respond to recommendations from the Race Equality Report, urging HEI leadership to foster a culture of racial equality within their institutions. The launch coincided with the first National Race Equality Conference, which gathered key stakeholders to explore the historical, structural, and institutional aspects of racism that have influenced HEIs and broader society. The Presidents of 21 HEIs have signed and endorsed the Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions<sup>6</sup> (the 'Principles'). The Principles recognise the definition of racism as expressed by the Anti-Racism Committee that developed the National Action Plan Against Racism in their Interim Report to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on 30th November 2020.<sup>7</sup> The Principles contain values which will ensure institution leaders take responsibility, accountability and ownership of race equality issues within their institution.

132. An Advisory Group was formed to advance race equality in higher education, by implementing the recommendations from the Race Equality Report and executing actions outlined in the Race Equality Implementation Plan. This Advisory Group, chaired by the HEA, consists of representatives from relevant higher education stakeholder groups, external specialist agencies, and experts in race equality. The group will provide policy advice to the HEA on tackling racism in HEIs and promoting race equality as part of the strategic priorities and culture of these institutions. The group will advise on issues related to students, staff, postgraduate students, and post-doctoral researchers.

<sup>5</sup> [gov.ie – Minister Joe O'Brien announces 35 projects to be funded under the International Decade for People of African Descent Funding Call.](https://www.gov.ie/en/news/2023/03/minister-joe-obrien-announces-35-projects-to-be-funded-under-the-international-decade-for-people-of-african-descent-funding-call/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2022/03/Anti-Racism-Principles-for-Irish-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/132151/ed3f39e2-4aa1-4991-aa06-52beae8310db.pdf#page=null>.

133. There are 9 actions in the Race Equality Implementation Plan. There are 5 national actions – 2 are complete, 3 are ongoing/planned. There are 4 actions for HEIs – all 4 are ongoing.

#### *Employment*

134. Ireland operates an employment permits system which is highly responsive to areas of identified skills needs and labour shortages across the economy. The system is, by design, vacancy led requiring the offer of employment (underpinned by a formal contract of employment) by an employer. It does not differentiate between African nationals and other non-EEA nationals. The number of employment permits issued to nationals of African countries increased to over 4,300 so far in 2024. This represents an increase of 30% on the 3,300 issued in the same period of 2023, and in line with wider increases in employment permits issued. Overall, approximately 14% of all permits issued are in respect of nationals of African countries.

135. Under the Employment Permits Act 2024, the period under which an employment permit holder is required to remain with their employer on their first employment permit before they can move to a different employer has been reduced to 9 months (previously 12). In instances where there has been a breakdown of the employment relationship (which would include instances of racial discrimination), this minimum period would be waived.

### **3. Business and human rights (Paragraph 48 (a)–(e))**

#### *The National Plan on Business and Human Rights*

136. Ireland's Second National Plan on Business and Human Rights is currently being developed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The new plan will be structured to align with the 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' framework of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The relevant Government Departments are currently reviewing issues related to access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses, including in the context of the 'Review of Access to Remedy in Ireland' report (2020) commissioned under the first National Plan on Business and Human Rights.

137. As part of developing the Plan, a public consultation took place in September 2023. Feedback from stakeholders suggested that Ireland's second National Plan should ensure that responsibility for all actions is clearly assigned, with specific and measurable targets, to aid effective implementation.

138. Ireland's first National Plan was supported by an 'Implementation Group', comprised of civil society, academic and business representatives' groups who engaged throughout the lifetime of the plan. Feedback from the consultation process for the second National Plan suggested that the terms of reference for this group should be revised, to ensure that key stakeholders, such as civil society and business representative groups, have a clear consultation and oversight role, including with respect to implementation of the National Plan.

139. Action points related to the transposition and implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) Directive will be included in the Second National Plan for Business and Human Rights, further integrating the CSDD into the domestic sustainability agenda. See paras 144–148 in this document for further information on this Directive.

140. As part of the development of the Second National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, a particular focus has been given to the implementation of the plan once it is published. It is envisaged that the implementation of the plan will be overseen by a multistakeholder oversight group and an interdepartmental implementation group.

141. Both of these groups will be chaired by senior officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to ensure there is a link between them. The membership of the multistakeholder oversight group will be made up of participants from civil society, business and academia, while the interdepartmental

group will be composed of representatives from Departments who have actions within their remit.

142. In addition, it is intended to produce a mid-term progress report on the implementation of the actions in the plan. This will assist with monitoring the implementation of the actions.

*The Cerrejón mine complex (para's 48 (a) and (b))*

143. Procurement of coal is a matter for the Electricity Supply Board (ESB). It is intended that the ESB will cease burning coal at Moneypoint by the end of 2025 and is actively progressing plans to achieve that objective. ESB is not anticipating any further shipments of coal from Cerrejón to Moneypoint.

144. ESB has used its membership of Bettercoal to ensure activities at Cerrejón are assessed and monitored on an ongoing basis against 12 key principles. Bettercoal continues to assess and monitor activities at Cerrejón against these principles on an ongoing basis, through its Colombia Working Group.

*Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) Directive (paragraph 48 (d))*

145. The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) Directive was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 5 July 2024 (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2024/1760) and came into force 20 days after the date of publication. Member States have two years to give effect to the Directive with obligations applying on a phased basis from 26 July 2027.

146. The CSDD creates legal obligations on companies within scope to address the adverse environmental and human rights impacts arising from their own operations, their subsidiaries' operations and their chain of activities.

147. Companies which are within scope are EU companies with a €450m net worldwide turnover and 1,000 employees and non-EU companies with €450m net turnover within the Union. SMEs do not fall within scope but may still be indirectly affected if involved in the chain of activities of in scope companies.

148. Companies must conduct risk-based human rights and environmental due diligence to identify actual or potential adverse impacts and prevent/mitigate/minimise the extent of such impacts.

149. Member States must designate one or more national supervisory authorities to ensure compliance. Companies within scope can be held liable for situations where the company, its subsidiaries or direct business partners failed in their due diligence obligations, provided their conduct was intentional or negligent, and it gave rise to an adverse impact occurring which caused damage to a person. Civil society organisations and trade unions have been given the standing to take proceedings on behalf of victims. Financial sanctions of 5% turnover can be levied for non-compliance.

#### **4. Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons**

150. Whilst delivery of housing and supports to people seeking international protection has been impacted by increased numbers of people arriving, there have been a range of improvements under the 'integration from day one' principle. People seeking international protection now have access to bank accounts and driving licences, access to the labour market, and integration supports. Please see paras 155–157 in this document in relation to the system of vulnerability assessments that is now in place.

151. Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) have been set up in all local authorities. Their purpose is to help coordinate the different kinds of support available for people who are applying for international protection, refugees, and others in similar situations. Community Integration Forums have also been established in local authorities, which help agencies that support new communities co-ordinate their responses.

*Applications for international protection (paragraph 36 (a))*

152. The timely consideration of international protection applications continues to be a priority for Ireland, with a number of measures in place to continue to increase the capacity of the International Protection Office (IPO) to process applications efficiently and effectively.

153. Measures taken to address the processing times include:

- There are currently 208 Panel Members contracted by the IPO, of which 107 are fully trained and 72 are at an advanced stage in their training. In September 2024, a round of interviews from the 2023 campaign was held, with 18 successful applicants. A new Panel Member competition will be launched by the IPO in Q4 of 2024.
- A significant number of additional staff were recruited for the IPO throughout 2023, and that recruitment will continue in 2024. IPO staff levels have increased to 541 at 23 September 2024, an increase of 155.18% on staff levels at 2022 year end.
- The ambitious modernisation programme in the IPO is continuing with near end to end digitalisation, over 17,000 legacy physical files digitalised and digital applications for all new applicants with systems and processes re-engineered to optimise resources and new systems launched to further streamline processing.
- Reviews of existing designated Safe Countries have been carried out and a number of other countries have been considered to be designated as a Safe Country bringing the total number to 15 designated Safe Countries. Applicants from all designated safe countries now have their applications prioritised and accelerated.
- In April 2024, a decision was made to prioritise and accelerate (under Section 73 (2)(1) of the International Protection Act 2015), applicants from the country with the largest number of applicants. In July 2024 a further decision was made to prioritise and accelerate cases from the top 2 countries of origin with the highest number of applications in the previous three months and since 29th July, applications from Nigerian and Jordanian nationals fall under this category of accelerated processing.
- Maximising the use of interview rooms has been effective in increasing the number of interviews that can take place. In August 2024, 1,732 interviews were scheduled (compared to 1,021 in August 2023), a 70% increase in interviews scheduled. In 2024 there were 11,570 interviews scheduled to end of August (an 84% increase on 6,286 interviews scheduled in 2023 for the same period).
- In order to make it easier for applicants who are living outside of Dublin to attend their personal interview, in order to increase the overall number of personal interviews held and in order to allow international protection applicants to be invited to interview faster, the IPO has undertaken a pilot of online interviews. The initial pilot interviews went ahead successfully, and a review is currently underway, in order to continue holding some interviews online.

154. All of these measures are having an impact. The number of first-instance decisions made by the IPO continues to increase, with 1337 made in August 2024 (a 70% increase compared to 787 decisions made in August 2023) with total decisions to date in 2024 at 9540 (as of the 24th September 2024), an increase of 55.5% on the 6135 decisions in the same period in 2023. The median processing times for accelerated cases remains efficient, currently standing at 12 weeks.

155. Alongside these measures and the impact that they are having, the number of new applications being made continues to increase and remains exceptionally high. In April 2024, 2,024 applications were made, the highest number of applications made in a single month with total applications to date in 2024 now at 15,336 (as of the 24th September 2024), an increase of 78% on the same period in 2023 and surpassing the total number of applications received in any one year to date in the State. This is having an impact on the overall processing times, with the median processing time for standard cases now being 79 weeks.

*Vulnerability assessments (paragraph 36 (c))*

156. As of November 2024 a new vulnerability assessment service has commenced under the auspices of DCEDIY. All families with children seeking international protection now receive a vulnerability assessment on day of arrival in the State. The assessment determines whether a person has a special reception need, within the meaning of the Reception Conditions Directive as transposed into Irish law.

157. Single men who arrive in the State receive a vulnerability triage on the date of their arrival, with the most vulnerable persons prioritised for accommodation.

158. The vulnerability assessment process will be extended to all applicants and the triage process concluded in quarter one of 2025.

*Eligibility for employment waiting periods (paragraph 36 (e)), Remove barriers to obtaining employment (paragraph 36 (f))*

159. ‘Pathways to Work 2021–2025’, the national employment services strategy, includes a specific strand on ‘Leaving No One Behind’, which sets out measures to support people from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds in gaining sustainable employment. This includes measures to support migrants and other groups who face discrimination and racism.

160. Traveller and Roma participants are not subject to any waiting period before accessing employment schemes, a positive measure to encourage participation.

161. Employment and training services are funded to a greater extent than for the general population, but it has not been possible to provide financial assistance with travel costs. Payment of costs associated with travel would lead to taxation issues for participants. It is expected that the ‘top up’ payment associated with employment programmes is used to support such additional costs.

162. All persons who seek international protection and who are above the legal working age in Ireland are entitled to apply for labour market access after they have been in the State for six months and do not yet have a first instance decision on their application. Eligible persons have access to training provided by the Education and Training Boards and the services provided to job seekers by the Department of Social Protection through the Intreo Offices.

163. Access to the Public Employment Service (PES) is available to International Protection Applicants (IPAs) on a voluntary basis. Where an IPA has a secured permission to work the PES will work with them on an individual basis to match them to suitable employment or support them to become job ready.

164. An IPA granted permission to work is eligible to access further education and training (FET) programmes and to a Training and Support Grant which is a grant designed to fund quick access to short term training that can support individual jobseekers seeking employment to access work opportunities.

*International Protection Accommodation Services (paras 38 (a)–(d))*

165. The Department is committed to improving standards within all accommodation centres. Availing of accommodation is voluntary, although the Department recognises the significant financial burden of securing private accommodation for many applicants.

166. Length of time spent in an accommodation is determined by a number of factors, including the time taken to conclude the application process and the option to secure alternative accommodation once the applicant has received a positive decision on their application. The Department has a contract in place with two NGO services specialising in combatting homelessness to assist residents with a permission to remain in Ireland to progress into the community. Since 2020, and as of October 2024, 8,979 people have progressed to alternative accommodation outside of IPAS under this process.

167. National Standards for Accommodation for Persons in the International Protection Process were approved by the Minister in 2019. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) was appointed to monitor and inspect IPAS accommodation centres

against the National Standards. Inspections commenced in January 2024 and reports of the inspections are published by HIQA on their website. Centres not included in the HIQA monitoring and inspection regime are inspected by an independent company contracted by the Department. Reports of all inspections are shared with IPAS to ensure compliance with IPAS policies and procedures.

168. Further to paras 25–26 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9, the Comprehensive Accommodation Strategy (CAS) was approved by Government on 27 March 2024, superseding the 2021 White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service. The CAS considered the changed and changing issue of migration, whilst recognising the ongoing commitment under the 2020 Programme for Government to replace the current system of accommodation and supports for International Protection (IP) applicants.

169. CAS implementation entails sourcing of suitable sites, establishing frameworks for construction and delivery methods, legal and compliance considerations, approval of capital funding, and significantly, community engagement.

170. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is working intensively with colleagues across Government, State and private entities to ensure that immediate and long-term accommodation is delivered with regard to risks and limitations from the market, compliance, and social cohesion considerations.

171. The principles and methodologies of recording and reporting of deaths of those resident in International Protection Accommodation are set out in the ‘Policy on the Recording & Reporting of Deaths of Residents in International Protection and Accommodation Centres’, a copy of which is available on the International Protection Accommodation Services webpage. This policy is intended to balance the need for openness and transparency in all State organisations in the provision of information to the public, with the expectation of privacy and consideration of the sensitive nature surrounding the death of any individual for their family and friends. Reports of the number of deaths of persons resident in IPAS accommodation are published on the IPAS gov.ie webpage.

## **5. Gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, domestic violence, sexual and gender-based violence, and female genital mutilation (paras 40 (a)–(e))**

### *National Strategy for Women and Girls*

172. Please see paras 158–60 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

173. As the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020 has concluded, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has begun the development of its successor strategy. It is intended that this successor strategy will build upon the progress made by its predecessor, further expanding the ability of women and girls to participate as fully equal members in Irish society.

174. The consultation phase for the development of the next National Strategy for Women and Girls has started. The consultation includes an online survey, public in-person consultations, online consultations with marginalised and hard to reach groups, and a National Youth Assembly on Gender Equality.

### *Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2022–2026)*

175. Zero Tolerance: Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2022–2026, published in June 2022 is a whole-of-government strategy to combat domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV). The overarching purpose of the strategy is that of zero tolerance in Irish society for DSGBV, delivering an enhanced understanding of the root causes and impacts of DSGBV across society, ensuring significant and ongoing reduction in the incidence of DSGBV and supporting changes in behaviour.

176. The strategy also recognises and acknowledges the need to provide support for all victims/survivors of DSGBV so that Ireland becomes a place where victims and survivors receive quality supports and justice.

177. The strategy was developed in partnership with the DSGBV sector to ensure it is targeted, comprehensive and effective in achieving its goals. It is structured around the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention – Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Policy Coordination.

178. It recognises the need to reflect the lived experiences of particular cohorts of victims/survivors, including migrants, Travellers and Roma, people with disabilities and LGBTI+ people, and acknowledges the additional risks factors created by overlapping forms of discrimination.

179. Political oversight of the strategy will be provided by the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Equality. A monitoring and reporting framework for the implementation of the strategy will set out clear reporting processes to the Minister for Justice and all other stakeholders. This structure will be underpinned by the principle of co-design. Where necessary, local structures will be resourced to connect at the national level.

#### *Establishment of Cuan*

180. A central element of the strategy was the establishment of a statutory agency to work in collaboration with the NGO and DSGBV services sector to ensure that the best possible services are in place to meet the needs of victims and survivors. With the establishment of An Ghníomhaireacht um Fhoréigean Baile, Gnéasach agus Inscnebhunaithe, or Cuan, it now has a key role in supporting the tracking of progress.

181. Cuan was established in statute via the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency Act 2023, and its first corporate plan was published on the 8th November 2024.<sup>8</sup> The Act sets out a range of statutory functions for Cuan which can be summarised as follows:

- Delivering excellent services to victims of DSGBV, including delivering on the number of safe and accessible accommodation spaces available, as well as ensuring that helpline and other supports are available to anyone requiring them.
- Putting in place a robust set of national service standards and governance arrangements to ensure adherence to the appropriate standards for such supports.
- Leading on consistent and ongoing research to inform DSGBV policy development, working with others such as the CSO who have data projects underway.
- Leading on awareness-raising campaigns designed to reduce the incidence of DSGBV in Irish society as well as ensuring that all victims know how to access the supports they require.
- Coordinating all Government actions set out in the Third National Strategy and reporting on their delivery to the Minister for Justice. Political oversight of the strategy will be provided by the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Equality.

#### *Judicial training*

182. The Judicial Council is an independent body, and its Judicial Studies Committee is responsible for the delivery of judicial training. While the provision of training for Judges is a matter for the Judiciary, the Judicial Appointments Commission Act 2023 now requires the Judicial Appointments Commission to consider what training or continuous professional development all candidates for judicial office have undertaken in making recommendations to Government regarding their appointment to judicial office.

183. To highlight an example of training provided in recent years, we understand that the Judicial Council has reviewed and extended an Unconscious Bias programme in 2022 when it featured a module in relation to court translation for serving judges.

184. The Access to Justice report on the Travelling Community has been disseminated to all participants and to all new judges since the report was published and is discussed at all courses. The aim of this training programme is to help judges to identify potential areas of

<sup>8</sup> [gov.ie - Cuan, the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency, launch 2025-2027 Corporate Plan](https://gov.ie/en/cuan-the-domestic-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-agency-launch-2025-2027-corporate-plan).

unfair bias, to question and contradict stereotypes and develop a deeper understanding of people whose experiences are different from theirs. The course forms part of the Induction Programme for nominee judges.

185. The programme was updated again in 2023 using material from the Judicial Council of California and introducing participation from members of Traveller Culture Awareness Training, one of whom delivered the main presentation at the most recent course.

#### *Training in An Garda Síochána (AGS)*

186. All Gardaí are trained as first responders, so they are equipped to deal with victims, including those of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Within the Foundation Training Programme Trainee Gardaí cover Domestic Abuse including AGS Policy, relevant legislation, developments arising from the National Strategies on the prevention of domestic violence and to comply with the Istanbul Convention and the EU Victims Directive (2012/29/EU). Delivery of this training is done by way of online lectures, classroom-based workshops with an overriding learning pedagogy of Problem Based Learning. Continuous Professional Development for sworn members of An Garda Síochána and Garda Staff is also provided.

187. Divisional Protective Service Units (DPSUs) have been established in every Garda division across the country and led on investigations of specialised crime types, including sexual crime, child abuse and domestic abuse. This ensures that vulnerable victims of crimes, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, presenting to Gardaí are met with a consistently high standard of specialist, sensitive, professional and expert assistance. Officers attached to DPSUs receive a range of specialist training. Training provided to DPSU personnel is being tailored further and an updated programme will be rolled out in 2024/2025.

188. To further the work on domestic violence training of or professionals, the 2024 Domestic Violence Third National Strategy implementation plan provides that Cuan will conduct a benchmarking exercise to map the levels of domestic violence and trauma informed content in both core training and CPD for relevant frontline professionals and support staff. They will produce a gap analysis and recommendations for the development of trauma informed domestic violence modules suitable for delivery across a range of platforms and audiences.

#### *Female Genital Mutilation*

1. Please see para 64 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

189. In relation to raising awareness of FGM, Operation Limelight commenced in Dublin Airport on the October 2023 Bank Holiday – chosen as victims of female genital mutilation tend to be more likely to travel during the holidays. A similar operation was put in place in Kerry Airport in December 2023. In Ireland, all ages and genders were targeted, with leaflets, talking screens and QR codes to be scanned.

## **F. Article 5 (a)**

190. Please see paras 231–234 of Ireland’s first and second reports (CERD/C/IRL/CO/2) and para 86 of Ireland’s Common Core Document (HRI/CORE/IRL/2019).

### **1. Racial profiling (Paras 16(a)–(e))**

2. Please see paras 75–92 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

191. There is no legislation in place in relation to the prohibition of racial profiling. Diversity / hate crime training that is in place in An Garda Síochána was independently reviewed in 2020. Please see paras 181–187 in this document for further information on training regarding racial discrimination issues, and paras 106–110 in this document for information on hate crime training.



## 2. Garda Diversity and Integration Strategy 2019–2021

192. An Garda Síochána launched the Garda Diversity & Integration Strategy 2019–2021 in October 2019. The strategy had a significant focus on enhancing the identification, reporting, recording and investigating of hate crimes. It contained a working definition for hate crimes and (non-crime) hate incidents in line with best international practice, recognising the current and emerging diversity of our communities. The strategy was fully implemented over its lifetime, with the most notable achievements below:

- Independent review of Garda diversity training.
- Establishment of Garda National Diversity Forum.
- Daily monitoring of hate crime.
- Review of Garda Diversity Officer (GDO) Network (formerly ethnic liaison officers).
- Revised role profile for GDOs.
- Publication of updated GDO list on the website of AGS.
- Establishment of National Diversity Forum with NGOs / CSOs / Community Representatives.
- Publication of hate crime definition.
- Introduction of perception-based recording for hate crime.
- Daily monitoring of hate crime.
- Pulse Update in October 2020.
- Introduction of Online Hate Crime Reporting Service.
- Hate Crime publicity campaign.
- Publication of hate crime leaflets in 18 languages.
- Development of hate crime training.
- Review of effectiveness of strategy.
- Introduction of third-party referrals for hate crime.
- Revised training for Garda Diversity Officers.
- Compulsory Hate Crime Training for all Garda personnel (almost 90% participation rate).
- Training included collaboration with CSOs, victims, community representatives and INAR.
- Development of Hate Crime Policy and Procedures.
- Changes to Garda uniform policy to include hijab, turbans, beards etc.

## 3. Mother and baby homes (paragraph 18)

### *Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters*

193. Further to paras 36–40 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9, the Commission of Investigation undertook an independent and thorough investigation into the experiences of vulnerable women and children in the selected institutions during the period 1922 to 1998. That work was conducted independently of the Government. The Terms of Reference of the Commission of Investigation specifically included an examination of the extent to which any group of residents may have been subject to systematically different treatment including on the basis of religion, race, Traveller identity, or disability.

194. The Final Report expressly considered issues of discrimination in a standalone “Discrimination” chapter, (Chapter 31) including racial discrimination. While the Commission identified certain instances of bias and racism among individuals working in the Homes and acknowledged that a small number of witnesses had described experiences which

it noted reflected unthinking racism on the part of some people, the Commission did not find that there had been clear evidence of a pattern or system of racial discrimination and/or systemic racism within the Mother and Baby Institutions.

195. Since the final report of the Commission on Mother and Baby Homes was published in January 2021, the Government has made significant and sustained progress in responding to its findings and recommendations. After a full State apology to survivors, Government committed to a suite of 22 actions aimed at addressing the priority needs and concerns of former residents, survivors and their families. To date six of the seven main commitments have been implemented, with the seventh, the National Centre, well underway. Key commitments that have been delivered to date include:

- The passing of legislation – the Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022 – guaranteeing access to birth and early life information and an accompanying birth info and tracing service;
- The opening in March 2024 of a payment scheme underpinned by legislation (the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Act 2023) to provide financial payments and health supports in recognition of harms endured in these institutions;
- The appointment in March 2024 of a Special Advocate for survivors of institutional abuse. This role is to promote the collective interests of survivors, as expressed by them, and to amplify their voices as a central input to Government policy on matters that affect them;
- The provision of funding to support survivor-centred advocacy organisations in commemorating their experiences;
- The appointment of a Director of Authorised Intervention to lead an intervention at the site of the former Mother and Baby Institution in Tuam, Co. Galway. His office continues its preparation for the excavation of the site and the recovery of human remains;
- The creation of a scholarship in memory of children who died in Mother and Baby Institutions, to fund research in the area of childhood disadvantage;
- Agreement at the September 2024 meeting of the North South Ministerial Council that officials from both Administrations would work closely on common issues, given the cross-border nature of these institutions and this chapter of our shared heritage.

196. In addition, a key commitment concerns memorialisation and Government has approved plans to develop a National Centre for Research and Remembrance. This will stand as a national memorial and site of conscience to honour equally all those who were resident in Industrial Schools, Magdalen Laundries, Mother and Baby Institutions, Reformatories and related institutions.

## **G. Article 5 (b)**

### **Human trafficking (paras 42 (a)–(d))**

#### *National Referral mechanism*

197. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Act 2024 was enacted on 17 July 2024. Part 3 of the Act was commenced on 31 August which puts a revised National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in place for the identification and support of victims of trafficking. This new approach will make it easier for victims of trafficking to come forward, be identified and access advice, accommodation and support. The legislation will be underpinned by detailed Operational Guidelines and is expected to come into effect by the end of 2024.

198. The Act will allow a designated Competent Authority (defined as specified Government Departments and agencies) or Trusted Partner (civil society organisations supporting victims of trafficking) to refer applications to an Operational Committee for a determination that the person is a victim of human trafficking. The Operational Committee

will comprise representatives of the Competent Authorities and Trusted Partners. This new strategy will take the sole competent authority role for recognising victims of Human Trafficking away from An Garda Síochána and lead to a multiagency approach to identification across state bodies and ‘trusted partners’.

199. The new NRM will make a significant difference to Ireland’s capacity to identify and support harder-to-reach human trafficking victims. The majority of victims are from countries with weak state structures and a poor relationship between citizens and the police. They also tend to be from specific ethnic groups or minorities within those countries. The victims tend to be undocumented and in fear of contacting official bodies or reporting crimes committed against them.

200. By partnering with civil society organisations, the new NRM should make it easier for victims to come forward, to be officially recognised as victims of human trafficking, and to receive the appropriate supports. The Act provides for the sharing of information between agencies to identify victims. Accommodation, medical services, legal aid and advice and other supports will be provided to the victim. The Act also provides that a victim of trafficking will not be deported for immigration offences committed whilst being trafficked or prosecuted for their role in their own trafficking.

201. The Third National Action Plan to prevent and combat human trafficking was published on 13 November 2023. The Plan aims to work towards ending human trafficking in the State as a key element of building stronger, safer communities. A number of government departments, An Garda Síochána, TUSLA and the HSE all have significant roles to play in the implementation of the Action Plan to combat this criminal activity and support victims.

202. In 2024, greater alignment between the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and the new Human Trafficking Action Plan has been developed through improved collaboration with persons involved in the sex trade. This includes the continuation of safeguarding checks of persons and premises known for involvement in the sex trade. It also involved participating in national and internationally co-ordinated days of action targeting organised prostitution, brothel-keeping and the purchase of sex.

203. An Garda Síochána are fully utilising the powers conferred under the Criminal Justice (Human Trafficking) act 2008 as amended. An Garda Síochána are also utilising related legislation to bring perpetrators to justice. An Garda Síochána are working closely with the office of the DPP in this regard. There are currently a number of cases before the courts awaiting trial under this legislation.

#### *Blue Blindfold website*

204. The issue of human trafficking has been publicly highlighted through various means. The ‘Blue Blindfold’ website, [www.blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie), provides a user-friendly overview of how the crime of human trafficking manifests in Ireland, how members of the public can spot and report possible trafficking incidents, and how the State supports trafficked victims. The Blue Blindfold website was updated in 2020 with a new user-friendly interface, providing revised and updated information and contact details. Further contact information for NGO frontline service providers in the domestic and sexual violence sector were also added.

#### *Rosa’s Place*

205. A priority action of the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence was the establishment of a dedicated accommodation shelter, Rosa’s Place, for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. This centre is operated by the International Protection Accommodation Service with support from dedicated NGOs and opened for referrals in November 2023.

206. It is an 8-bed accommodation unit, providing specialist, individualised support for women who are identified as victims of trafficking, including those trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In addition to the supports provided by the Health Service Executive

Anti Human Trafficking Team, each service user will have an assigned case worker providing individualised assessment and psychosocial supports.

207. International Protection applicants who are eligible for accommodation via the International Protection Accommodation Service, who do not meet the criteria for Rosa's place are accommodated within the broader IPAS accommodation network. Accommodation is assigned to best meet the needs of individuals within the network, depending on availability at the time. When made aware that a person is a victim of trafficking and is recovering from sexual violence IPAS will do its best within its resources to utilise single gender accommodation for this cohort and will also consider the geographical proximity of specialised anti trafficking services.

## **H. Article 5 (c)**

### **1. Participation and representation in political and public life (paragraph 26)**

208. Please see paras 206–214 in CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

#### *Participation in local and national politics*

209. Please see para 56 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9, regarding Traveller participation in political processes.

210. Research funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and conducted by the Immigrant Council of Ireland, examined the experiences of migrants in the 2019 elections. This research has assisted in identifying both the barriers that face potential candidates from migrant communities and what are the effective supports which would enable them to become involved in politics.

211. This research has also informed the annual calls for funding which DHLGH has issued since 2019. Under these schemes, the Department invites local authorities and political parties to apply for funding to support projects aimed at increasing gender balance and diversity in local government decision making and structures. Applications in response to the sixth call to local authorities are currently being assessed, and it is anticipated that funding will be allocated before the end of 2024.

212. DHLGH has also engaged with the Taskforce on Safe Participation in Political Life. On foot of a recommendation from the Taskforce, the Department will be reviewing the security allowance scheme to ensure that it sufficiently meets the requirements of elected members of local authorities.

#### *Electoral Commission Research Programme*

213. An Coimisiún Toghcháin, the Electoral Commission, is an independent body reporting to the Oireachtas. The Electoral Reform Act 2022 provides that An Coimisiún 'may commission or conduct research on electoral policy and procedure, including on matters relating to the discharge of its functions... and may, arising from that research, make such recommendations to the Minister and the Government as it considers appropriate.

214. An Coimisiún published its first Annual Research Programme on 10 July 2024. Strand D of this Research Programme focusses on Education, Public Engagement and Inclusion and specifically in 2024 and 2025 commits to research regarding political participation and democratic engagement of under-reached and under-represented groups. In addition, as part of its voter engagement and education functions An Coimisiún is engaging with under-served, under-reached, and under-represented groups with a view to supporting increased electoral and democratic participation and this will also be a core focus of An Coimisiún's planned education and public engagement strategy.

#### *Reflecting the population in the Civil Service*

215. In 2022 a Traveller and Roma internship was launched in the Irish Civil service, which was developed in partnership with Traveller and Roma representative groups. Eight interns in total completed a yearlong internship in one of four participating Government Departments.

Four former interns are now permanently employed in the civil service; the other four interns have returned to education or secured employment outside of the CS. The second iteration, which is likely to commence in 2025, is in development with a 200% increase in internship places available (from 8 to 24 places).

216. In September 2023 and February 2024 respectively, the eligibility criteria for employment in the civil service was expanded (from EEA nationals) to include Stamp 4 and 5 permit holders. Stamp 4 indicates permission to stay in Ireland for a specified period, subject to conditions, and stamp 5 indicates permission to stay in Ireland without change to conditions on the time you can remain here, subject to other conditions.

217. An increase in applications received from candidates with an ethnic minority background (3.9% in 2021, to 7.5% in 2023/24) was recorded during the recruitment process for civil service jobs and a corresponding increase in assignments into roles across the public sector (1.8% vs 4.3).

218. The Irish civil service conducts an employee engagement survey every three years. In 2023 for the first-time, equality monitoring data was collected through this survey. Approximately 1.7% of respondents self-identified as having an ethnic minority background (note: this not migrant background, but ethnic minority background).

**2. Investigate and prosecute racist hate speech, including by politicians during election campaigns (paragraph 20(d)), and investigation and prosecution of racist hate crime, and access to remedies (paragraph 22(d))**

219. Please see paras 81–87 for information on the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill.

**I. Article 5 (d)**

220. Please see paras 215–225 in CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

**J. Article 5 (e)**

**1. Right to Work**

221. Please see paras 226–244 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

222. Please see paras 237–240 in this document.

**2. Right to Housing (paragraph 28 (a)–(e))**

*Local Authorities*

223. In Ireland, local authorities (LAs) provide hundreds of services ranging from roads; planning; housing; economic and community development; environment, recreation, and amenity services; libraries and fire services. LAs collaborate with community-based organisations, advocacy groups and grassroots initiatives that work directly with marginalised communities affected by racism. These partnerships can facilitate outreach, service delivery and community empowerment efforts. LAs work with key stakeholders towards implementing community outreach programmes to actively engage with marginalised groups experiencing racism and provide them with information about available housing resources, rights and support services.

224. The Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme is available for people who have been granted leave to remain in Ireland. LAs work with the NGOs who are contracted to support people seeking to avail of the homeless HAP supports.

*Measures to address discrimination against Travellers and Roma in the private rental sector*

225. The Residential Tenancies Acts 2004–2024 are silent with regard to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability and apply to all tenants and landlords in a tenancy of a dwelling covered by those Acts, regardless of same.

226. The Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 ('the Acts'), prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. This can be on the basis of the nine grounds of - gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. Please see paras 55–57 in this document in relation to the review of the Equality Acts.

227. In addition, the Acts prohibit discrimination in the provision of accommodation services against people who are in receipt of rent supplement, housing assistance, or social welfare payments. Further information with regard to redress where discrimination occurs is available on the website of the Workplace Relations Commission.<sup>9</sup>

*Traveller-specific accommodation and supports*

228. Please see paras 28–30 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9, which advised that the full Traveller-specific accommodation budget for 2020 and 2021 was fully utilised.

229. Ireland is continuing to make improvements to the provision of appropriate accommodation for Travellers, including the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation in line with the cultural preferences of the Traveller community. Ireland has undertaken a number of measures to improve the quality and quantity of Traveller-specific accommodation:

- In 2020, the allocation process for capital funding for Traveller-specific accommodation was amended to facilitate ease of access. All local authorities are now able to apply for and draw down funds at any time throughout the year. This process has been actively encouraged, and capital funding, primarily for the refurbishment and provision of halting sites and group housing schemes, has been fully drawn down by local authorities in the last five years.
- The key delivery framework for delivery of housing for Travellers is through the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and through delivery under Housing for All, which is the Irish Government's housing plan to the year 2030. The Act provides for accommodation measures specifically for the Traveller Community which is above and in addition to the full range of housing supports which are fully accessible to Travellers.
- Capital funding for Traveller-specific accommodation, primarily for the refurbishment and provision of halting sites and group housing schemes was fully drawn-down by local authorities in the past five years. This improvement in the drawdown of funding has led to an investment of €14.5 million in 2020, €15.5 million in 2021, €21.1 million in 2022, €29.7 million in 2023, and €21 million in 2024.
- A Programme Board, with an independent Chair, has been established to oversee the implementation of recommendations of the Traveller Accommodation Expert Review and is driving continuous improvement for Traveller accommodation.
- A Traveller Identifier has been introduced on the social housing application form, which supports monitoring and planning purposes.
- In 2022, a new preferential and affordable pilot Caravan Loan Scheme for Traveller families was rolled out as a nationwide pilot across local authorities, which has led to over 160 discounted loans for caravans for Traveller families.
- On a continuous basis, local authorities plan for the accommodation needs of Travellers through their Traveller Accommodation Programmes. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 requires each local authority to draw up, adopt and implement 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) to accelerate

<sup>9</sup> [www.workplacerelations.ie](http://www.workplacerelations.ie).

the provision of accommodation for Travellers. The fifth round of programmes were adopted in 2019 and will run until 2024. The TAPs provide a pathway for the delivery of a range of accommodation solutions for Travellers including halting site bays, group housing schemes, acquisition of homes, social housing and rental assistance schemes.

- Guidance has been provided to local authorities to assist them in planning the next round of Traveller Accommodation Programmes, which will run from 2025 to 2029.

### **3. Legislative and policy framework for Travellers and Roma (paragraph 32)**

#### *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy*

230. The legislative basis for the prohibition of discrimination is through the Equality Acts, which prohibit discrimination across nine equality grounds, including membership of the Traveller community. The legislation prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination in the areas of employment and access to goods and services, including housing, healthcare and education (also see ‘Review of the Equality Acts’ paras 55–57 in this document).

231. The Government of Ireland is committed to improving the lives of the Traveller and Roma Community in Ireland. The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021 (NTRIS), represented a whole of Government approach to bring meaningful change and progress for the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland.

232. The 2020 Programme for Government committed to carrying out a review of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy to ensure that the successor strategy had a stronger outcomes focused approach, a robust implementation structure and clear key performance indicators.

233. An independent evaluation on the processes for implementation of the NTRIS and two other equality strategies was completed, and a report was published in July 2023. The learning from this evaluation informed the development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028 (NTRIS II). The successor strategy was developed in collaboration with relevant Government Departments and in consultation with Traveller and Roma organisations and was published on 31 July 2024 along with an associated Action Plan.

234. The new Strategy provides for improved oversight structures to ensure greater clarity and accountability for the delivery of key actions. A high-level Steering Committee comprising of representatives from the Traveller and Roma communities, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and chaired by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, will oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

235. There will be transparent quarterly public reporting on progress in delivering actions under NTRIS II across all Departments, State Agencies, and Traveller and Roma organisations charged with delivering such actions.

236. An annual forum will be arranged at which the Traveller and Roma communities and their representatives will be able to raise questions and to seek further information on the delivery of the actions under the strategy.

### **4. Economic, social and cultural rights of Travellers and Roma**

#### *Employment (paragraph 34 (a))*

237. Pathways to Work 2021–2025, the national employment services strategy, includes a specific strand on ‘Leaving No One Behind’, which sets out measures to support people from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds in gaining sustainable employment. This includes measures to support members of the Traveller and Roma communities.

238. Following the formation of a Traveller & Roma Employment Services Consultative Forum in 2022, which comprises community representatives, proactive engagement has continued in 2024. The aim of this consultation forum is to improve access to employment services in Ireland, establish the effectiveness of current employment services supports for

these communities; identify barriers to employment; support communities in identifying routes to employment; and, if required, develop additional targeted interventions.

239. Under the Community Employment (CE) scheme, community development projects are funded with the stated aim of providing specific employment opportunities for Travellers and Roma. These specific schemes offer special incentives for their participation in work programmes. The eligibility criteria for participants are more favourable than those applying for the general population in terms of reduced minimum entry age (18 instead of 21) and less time registered as a jobseeker (eligible to apply after one week in receipt of a payment, as compared to 12 months for others). Additional resources are provided to CE schemes with Traveller/Roma participants. The training grant per participant is double the norm and the supervision ratio is reduced from 1:25 to 1:10 in recognition of the additional needs of participants.

240. JobsPlus is an active labour market scheme designed to provide eligible long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in employment. Traveller and Roma jobseekers are eligible for the higher rate of the JobsPlus recruitment subsidy. The subsidy is payable to employers who hire a Traveller or Roma jobseeker from the Live Register, subject to the jobseeker satisfying qualifying payment and payment duration conditions.

#### *Health (paragraph 34 (c))*

241. The National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022–2027 (NTHAP) sets out to address significant inequalities in Traveller Health, including mental health, over the five year period 2022–2027. The plan is underpinned by the principles of Traveller inclusion and community development (social justice, human rights, participation and collectivity). The vision is for a health service in which Travellers can achieve their full potential in respect of their physical, mental and social wellbeing and where the wellbeing of all Travellers is valued and supported at every level. The vision is underpinned by one in which Traveller families have equitable outcomes in health resulting in a healthy and resilient Traveller community. The NTHAP contains six specific actions on Mental Health, which are being delivered – along with other actions relating to Traveller mental health – through the HSE’s National Service Plan and overseen by a National Traveller Mental Health Working Group, established in 2023, chaired by the HSE with membership drawn from Traveller organisations, the Department of Health and the National Office for Suicide Prevention.

242. There is a strong emphasis in the Plan on implementation and accountability. The Plan includes a framework for implementation, including mainstreaming, targeting, monitoring, using a social determinants approach to health and partnership working. In 2023 the National Traveller Health Implementation Group (NTHIG) was established to drive, support and monitor the regional and national implementation of the NTHAP. The HSE National Traveller Mental Health Working Group is represented in the NTHIG and supports implementation of the NTHAP mental health Actions.

243. Key to the success of the Plan is establishing a system of Ethnic Equality Monitoring across HSE data sets. The HSE National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) has carried out a programme of work to develop and support ethnic equality monitoring within a range of health services.

244. In 2024, the NTHIG prioritised the strengthening of Traveller health infrastructure through resourcing of additional staff, training and standardising of good practice. Funding has been allocated for the establishment of two new primary healthcare for Traveller projects (PHCTPs), in east Limerick and in Drogheda, Co Louth, and for 14 full-time community health worker posts across 7 Traveller Health Unit areas. The HSE National Mental Health Service has supported the funding of seven community health workers to signpost Travellers to mental health services. It has also funded the adoption of culturally appropriate mental health training for PHCTP staff.

#### *Education (paragraph 34 (b)&(d))*

245. The Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) 2024–2030 was published on 16 July 2024, alongside the initial plan for implementation and action for 2024–2026. This



strategy sets the strategic direction for Traveller and Roma education policy over the next six years, encompassing educational pathways from early years through to higher education.

246. The TRES acknowledges that Travellers and Roma are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in Ireland. It also highlights the fact that educational outcomes for members of these communities significantly lag behind those of the general population.

247. The strategy was developed in collaboration with the Traveller and Roma communities and other stakeholders and aims to improve educational outcomes and address barriers faced by these groups. The strategy was informed by an extensive consultation process.

248. TRES contains a number of actions grouped under four themes which include Participation and Experience, Access and Outcomes, Partnership and Delivering Change. Some of the key actions under TRES will include increasing the number of young people remaining in school to 6th year and achieving a Leaving Certificate, promoting training on inclusion and diversity through teacher professional learning, developing more targeted cultural competence training, promoting diversity in the education sector workforce, teaching Traveller culture and history through the curriculum.

249. Under the Strategy, two further Plans for Implementation and Action 2026–2028 and 2028–2030 will be developed and a Traveller and Roma Education Forum will be established. A TRES Oversight Group will be established which will include membership from the Traveller and Roma organisations.

250. In the 2017 Migrant Integration Strategy, one of the key elements of the strategy's vision is for migrants, and particularly their children, to benefit fully from the education system. Education related actions relevant under the strategy continue to be progressed, and education will be a key pillar in the strategy's successor which is currently under development.

251. As a teaching resource, in February 2023 a research report was published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in collaboration with members of the Traveller community and Traveller representatives. The NCCA is finalising a suite of videos exemplifying approaches to teaching of Traveller history and culture, which will be available on the NCCA's website. These initiatives are part of the NCCA's commitment to developing resources and materials about Traveller culture and history in early childhood settings and schools.

252. The Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018 (para 34 (d)) is a Private Members Bill which proposed to amend the Education Act 1998 to provide for the inclusion of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum taught by recognised schools in the State. The Bill was introduced in the Seanad on 3 July 2018. Government proposed amendments to the Bill in the Seanad, and the amended Bill was passed in the Seanad on 16 October 2019. The Bill passed Second Stage in the Dáil on 1 July 2021. As a non-Government Bill, the issuing of a money message was required to facilitate the Bill to progress to Committee Stage. This money message was issued by Government on 7 December 2022, allowing the Private Members Bill to progress to Committee Stage, for which a date has yet to be set.

## **K. Article 5 (f)**

253. Please see para 245 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

## **L. Article 6**

### **1. Effective protection and remedies**

254. Please see paras 246–251 in CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

## 2. Legal aid (paragraph 44)

### *Review of the Civil Legal Aid scheme*

255. Please see paras 20–21 of CERD/C/IRL/FCO/5-9. Further to this, Ireland is pleased to advise that in June 2022 a Civil Legal Aid Review Group was established. The purpose of this group is to review the current operation of the Civil Legal Aid Scheme and make recommendations for its future. The Review Group is chaired by former Chief Justice Frank Clarke, and the membership is drawn from legal practitioners, academics, Department of Justice officials, those who work with marginalised groups, and representatives from the Legal Aid Board, which administers the statutory scheme.

256. The Review Group is currently considering a number of aspects of the existing Civil Legal Aid Scheme, including financial eligibility, the categories of civil law for which legal aid and advice is available, the modes of delivery of legal aid and advice available under the Civil Legal Aid Scheme, as well as the types of legal determination for which legal representation should be provided.

257. As part of the review, a comprehensive multi-phased process of consultation has been conducted to ensure that as wide a range of views as possible is captured. Part of this consultation centred on hearing from stakeholders and groups who are traditionally hard to reach, such as members of the Roma and Traveller community and those from migrant backgrounds. Bespoke focus groups captured the views of these communities in terms of their own experiences accessing the Scheme and the barriers they have faced in accessing justice. The Review Group is considering the results of all phases of the consultation process.

258. The Review Group's work is progressing well and is expected to be completed in 2024. The completed work will include a submission of the Report of the Independent Group reviewing the Civil Legal Aid Scheme, which will then undergo consideration by the Minister for Justice with regard to its recommendations and next steps.

### *Legal Aid Board Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service*

259. The Legal Aid Board Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service provides legal advice to Travellers subject to a means test, and legal representation subject to a merits test, and provides services:

- In cases related to discrimination in accessing licensed premises or clubs under Section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003, subject to provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (as amended) and Regulations 1996–2021. While legal representation is not available before the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), legal advice can be provided to Travellers by the Legal Aid Board in discrimination cases arising under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018.
- To Travellers dealing with accommodation issues, such as those under risk of eviction, persons in situation of homelessness and applicants for social housing, subject to provision of the Legal Aid Act (as amended) and Regulations.
- To Travellers experiencing difficulties in private rented accommodation regarding issues with their tenancies, potentially involving the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). While legal representation is not available before the RTB, advice can be provided by the Legal Aid Board.

260. Additionally, the Legal Aid Board Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service can provide legal advice and representation in relation to other matters coming within the scope of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (as amended) in the areas of: Equality, Equity, Housing, Nuisance, Tort, Ejectment Proceedings and Enforcement of Court Orders.

261. The Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service does not provide legal advice and representation in Family Law cases involving Travellers. Members of the Traveller community who wish to apply for legal advice and representation in Family Law cases can apply in their local Law Centre of the Legal Aid Board.

### 3. Access to licensed premises (paragraph 46)

262. As part of the review of the Equality Acts being undertaken by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Integration, consideration was given to section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003, and whether discrimination in licenced premises should fall instead under the purview of the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018. This issue was the subject of a number of submissions to the public written consultation. A General Scheme, which included proposals along these lines, was approved by Government in Q4 2024, and has been published.<sup>10</sup>

## M. Article 7

### 1. Measures in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information

263. Please see paras 268–282 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

### 2. Education of minority children (paragraph 30)

264. Please see paras 252–259 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

*Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018*

### 3. Please see paras 155–157 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

265. The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 (the ‘Act’) gives greater confidence to parents that the admission criteria laid down by schools and the procedures used by them are legitimate, reasonable and fair.

266. Under the Act, all school admissions policies must accept all applicants, unless the school is oversubscribed. Every school must include an admission statement in its admission policy stating that the school will not discriminate in its admission on any of nine specified grounds, including race and religion.

267. Section 11 of the Act provides for a review of the operation of the amendment to the Education Act 1998 that removes the use of religion as a selection criterion in all primary schools. The policy aim is to create a fairer and more equitable school admissions process that does not discriminate based on an applicant’s religion. A review has found that these policy aims have been achieved, highlighting that no primary school is using religion as a selection criterion in admitting students, and that the protections in place for minority religions are working effectively.

268. More generally, the Act, while including provision for single sex schools and denominational schools to reflect in their admission policy the exemptions applicable to such schools under equality legislation, ensures that every school must be welcoming of every child regardless of their colour, their abilities or disabilities, or their sexual orientation. In schools where there are more applicants than places available, a selection process will be necessary. This selection process and the enrolment policy on which it is based must be non-discriminatory and must be applied fairly in respect of all applicants.

269. In the event that the Department of Education becomes aware of a school with an admissions policy that contravenes the provisions of the act, the Department will contact the school so that the necessary arrangements are taken by the school to be compliant with the Act. Admission policy templates have been published by the Department to ensure consistency and compliance with the act.

270. Separately under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of a school to refuse admission.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/340c9-general-scheme-of-the-equality-miscellaneous-provisions-bill-2024/>.

*Intercultural Guidelines for primary and post-primary schools*

271. More generally, as part of the National Action Plan Against Racism, The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has reviewed and is updating Intercultural Guidelines for primary and post-primary schools to support the further integration of intercultural education in the curriculum. The updated materials will be completed and published at the end of 2025. The guidelines will be devised as an online toolkit, with interactive features including key downloadable supports, glossary, curriculum case studies, whole school planning templates, adaptable exemplars and external links. It is proposed that revision of the 2005 and 2006 intercultural education guidelines can support curriculum responses to racism.

### 3. Human rights and equality training for public officials (paragraph 50)

272. Please see paras 127–130 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

*The Public Sector Duty*

273. The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the ‘Public Sector Duty’ places equality and human rights at the heart of how a public body fulfils its purpose and delivers on its strategic plan. Its legal basis is Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights & Equality Act 2014, or the ‘IHREC Act 2014’.

274. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) has a mandate to give guidance to, and encourage public bodies in developing policies and good practice in relation to human rights and equality, as provided under section 42 of the IHREC Act 2014. IHREC has developed Guidance on Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and delivered events and information sessions for public bodies.

*Further Education and Training relevant to implementation of the Public Sector Duty*

275. In 2022 IHREC developed an eLearning module, called Equality and Human Rights in the Public Service, to support and enable staff within public bodies to understand and meet their obligations under the Public Sector Duty. IHREC have also been working with key stakeholders in the local government sector since 2022. This strategic programme of work is intended to maximise the unique position of local authorities through building the capacity of the key stakeholders to meet the statutory obligations of the Duty.

276. Developed by the Institute of Public Administration and IHREC, the Professional Diploma in Human Rights and Equality is a one-year, part-time programme. It is a Level 8 (Special Purpose award) on Ireland’s National Framework of Qualifications and seeks to give public servants and others a better understanding of the place that human rights and equality occupy in public management and administration. The responsibility to devise policy, deliver services, and follow processes that protect human rights and further equality has become explicit since the introduction, via legislation, of the public sector duty in this area. This programme provides instruction in the most relevant laws and in their implications for the civil and wider public service.

277. Courses offered under OneLearning, the digital learning and development ecosystem run by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), are a key support in helping the Civil Service implement the Public Sector Duty. The courses promote participation in the civil and public service by offering subjects like Managing for an Inclusive Workforce; Equality and Human Rights: Understanding Your Role; and Authentic, Inspiring and Inclusive Leadership.

278. A staged approach will be undertaken to offer OneLearning courses to the wider public sector. By 2027, the IPA plans to have extended the reach of OneLearning courses to around 20,000 staff in non-commercial State agencies and local authorities, significantly broadening the potential audience for courses in EDI-related matters. Efforts to increase participation in these programmes will be identified in collaboration with all partners.

279. In Q2 2024 public jobs, the centralised recruiter for the civil and public sector, rolled out intercultural competency training for Assistant Principal (AP) and Principal Officer (PO), in order to better equip them to manage both their diverse teams and the increasingly diverse range of candidates who apply for roles through the PAS.

280. In 2022 One Learning, the training platform for all 45,000+ civil servants, in conjunction with IHREC, launched a training course on the Public Sector Equality Duty. A total of 5,901 employees have undertaken this training to date (as of Q3 2024).

281. The classroom based, trainer led Equality and Human Rights: Understanding your Role (Level 1) training has been completed by 375 employees to date, and the Equality and Human Rights in the Public Service e-training has been completed by 5,526 employees across the Civil Service.

*Implementation of the Public Sector Duty in the Irish Prison Service*

282. The Irish Prison Service (IPS) is responsible for the safe secure custody of all those committed to it by the courts. While it is the duty of the Service to enhance public safety by holding securely those committed by the courts, the IPS is committed to ensuring that those deprived of their liberty are treated with dignity and with humanity. Prisoner care and rehabilitation is a core aim of the Service and it strives to achieve a balanced approach in the effective performance of the care and custody functions.

283. Awareness of international instruments, as well as an appreciation of the ethical context within which prisons must be administered, form part of the training for recruited prison officers and the continuous professional development of established staff. Training programmes emphasise the need to treat prisoners as individuals, with humanity and respect and to act within the law at all times, and the concepts of humane treatment and awareness of international human rights instruments are embedded through elements of Irish Prison Service training programmes.

284. In this regard the Service worked with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to develop bespoke human rights training for prison staff. The Irish Prison Service College also delivers training on disability awareness to Irish Prison Service staff as part of recruitment training and continuous professional development. In addition, the organisation runs an ongoing No to Racism campaign.

*Training for police officers with regard to racial discrimination issues*

285. Please refer to paras 106–109 in this document for information regarding training on hate crime in An Garda Síochána.

286. The Garda National Diversity Unit (GNDU), under the remit of the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau (GNCEB), has a national responsibility for developing and disseminating hate crime policy, training, awareness and best practice. The GNDU regularly engages with European bodies such as the European Union (EU) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Radicalisation Awareness Network to ensure that its expertise is in line with international best practice. Learning and developments are filtered down through the Garda Divisions, and this approach allows for a consistency of standards and approach across the organisation.

287. The first An Garda Síochána Human Rights Strategy issued in 2019. This strategy sets out a human rights infrastructure to enhance our understanding, knowledge, training, policy and service delivery capacity in this area.

*The Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland programme*

288. In 2021, a FETAC Level 8 course was developed in conjunction with the University of Limerick (UL), known as the ‘Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland’ programme.

289. The programme provides participants with an introduction to the workings and jurisprudence of the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly as it relates to policing in Ireland. The course topics include:

- Human Rights and Equality.
- Human Rights and Stop, Search and Entry.
- Human Rights and Arrest and Detention.

- Surveillance and Privacy.
- Use of Force.
- Diversity and Human Rights.
- Hate Crime and Policing.
- Rights, Public Order and Protest.
- Positive and active engagement with all vulnerable communities.
- Unconscious bias.

290. The programme is delivered by academic, Garda and community of practice presenters, and is open to all Garda Personnel. The programme has been undertaken by 4,000 Garda Members and Garda Staff across all ranks and grades, and related policing and other public sector bodies such as the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, the Policing Authority, the Garda Inspectorate, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Irish Defence Forces. Due to levels of interest, the programme was extended to include Garda Reserves and interns from the An Garda Síochána Diversity Internship Programme.

291. The initiative has also garnered international interest. Various intakes have included Garda Liaison Officers and their colleagues in Paris, Lisbon and Washington (the United States Drugs Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Homeland Security). Recent intakes have included Gardaí attached to the Irish Embassy in Columbia and their colleagues from the Colombian National Police. There has been interest from Finland, Icelandic and Tanzanian Police forces to enrol in the course. Intake 8 is due to commence in September 2024 with external participants enrolled from Tanzania, the FBI Academy and Fairfax, Virginia Police.

#### *Human Rights Champions*

292. Upon completion of the *‘Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland’* programme, all participants become a ‘Human Rights Champion’. These individuals form a network of human rights advocates who are committed to promoting and advocating on human rights issues within An Garda Síochána.

293. Human Rights Champions are encouraged to promote and protect the human rights of all persons they encounter and to lead by example in their working environment by carrying out their duties in a human rights compliant manner. Additional bespoke online learning sessions are made available to Human Rights Champions on a range of topics such as unconscious bias, neurodiversity, mental health and suicide prevention and intervention.

294. The Human Rights Champion initiative emerged from the Garda Síochána Human Rights Strategy 2020–2022 which set out under the goal of ‘Embedding’ a requirement that An Garda Síochána “establish a network of Human Rights Champions”. The Human Rights Champions are an essential initiative for An Garda Síochána in complying with the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, the Garda Human Rights Strategy 2020–2022, the Garda Human Rights Strategy 2022–2024 and An Garda Síochána’s Public Sector Duty under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

### **III. Other Recommendations**

#### **A. Ratification of other treaties (paragraph 51)**

4. Please see paras 161–162 of CERD/C/IRL/5-9.

295. Ireland keeps the ratification of international human rights treaties under constant review. It is the responsibility of the relevant Government Departments to progress the ratification of treaties whose policy areas pertain to their remit of responsibility.

296. Ireland ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention on Violence and Harassment (C190) on 12 January 2023. The Convention recognises the right of everyone to

a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Ratification of the C190 was an action identified in the Implementation Plan for the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

**B. Amendment to article 8 of the Convention (paragraph 52)**

297. The State party wishes to clarify that when Ireland ratified CERD on 29 December 2000, this included the amendment to Article 8(6) of the Convention.<sup>11</sup> This was acknowledged by the Committee in 2005 at paragraph 7 of its concluding observations on Ireland's first and second periodic reports (CERD/C/IRL/CO/2).

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<sup>11</sup> [www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/260939/e4b3dfd2-982f-4290-8714-d8e590cdbdb5.pdf#page=null](https://assets.gov.ie/260939/e4b3dfd2-982f-4290-8714-d8e590cdbdb5.pdf#page=null).