

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions participates on the national strategic monitoring group of the plan, which serves to provide strategic direction. The intercultural framework underpinning the national plan includes the five objectives of protection, inclusion, provision, recognition and participation.

Office for Integration

A new Office for Integration was established in 2007 with a Minister of State with responsibilities in the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; Education and Science and Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The new Office incorporates much of the integration responsibilities of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). RIA continues to exist but is now focussed on the reception of asylum-seekers.

Why have guidelines combating racism?

- Ireland is an increasing multi-cultural society, which is reflected in the workplace,
- Migrant workers are now a permanent feature in the Irish workplace,
- Irish workplaces must embrace cultural diversity and adapt to reflect this diversity,
- Discrimination on the grounds of race and membership of the travelling community is prohibited by law,
- Anti-racism initiatives have rewards for all,
- Migrant workers bring economic, social and cultural benefits to the workplace and to the Union,
- The CWU guidelines are our commitment to being an open and inclusive Union.

CWU Action against Racism

The CWU has always expressed zero tolerance for racism in the workplace and within our membership. We must support those effected by racism and we must continue to create awareness of cultural diversity.

The CWU is committed to preventing racism in the communications sector, where we are organised, and to promoting more diverse workplaces.

We can carry out these aims by developing, implementing and monitoring Union policies and practises, as well as putting in place various programmes, initiatives and activities that supports inclusion.

The CWU is committed to the following actions:

- Encouraging participation of minority ethnic members within the Union,
- Supporting workers seeking redress for discrimination on the race and traveller grounds,
- Building links with anti-racist support groups,
- Conducting focus groups with members from minority backgrounds so as to determine what they need from the CWU,
- Providing training and development for minority workers, as required,

- Putting in place joint agreements with employers on cultural diversity in the workplace,
- Supporting the annual anti-racist workplace week,
- Producing relevant Union communications in languages that reflect our members from different ethnic backgrounds,
- Ensuring that the impact of collective agreements on the working conditions of members are fully considered,
- Mainstreaming anti-racism awareness sessions in all Trade Union education programmes.

Working with Employers

The Union will seek a partnership approach with employers to combat workplace racism. When negotiating with employers, the Union will seek:

- Effective diversity policies, which deal with issues of harassment and discrimination,
- Anti-discrimination measures that promote inclusion,
- Initiatives to be put in place in work areas so as to promote cultural diversity,
- The inclusion of diversity and equality training on induction programmes,
- Training for managers on diversity and equality issues,
- The production of multi-lingual communications appropriate for the workforce,
- Support language training initiatives for migrant workers, as required.

What our Local Branch Representatives can do:

- Be aware of the needs of all members in their Branch, including those from ethnic minorities,
- Be approachable to all members,
- Acknowledge all complaints and follow through on them,
- Ensure that all members are aware as to when local meetings are taking place,
- Consider accessibility requirements and members' needs when planning meetings,
- Challenge in a respectful way racist remarks, jokes or any other perceived racist behaviour,
- Promote Anti-Racist Workplace Week in their own area,
- Work with local managers to create diversity awareness.

What our Members can do:

- Participate in any anti-racist activities promoted by the Union,
- Develop awareness by contacting anti-racist support groups,
- Welcome work colleagues and fellow members from different ethnic backgrounds,
- Be a "buddy" for new recruits from different ethnic backgrounds,
- Become active within your Union to support the fight against racism.

More Information

Members experiencing discrimination and/or harassment of ANY kind in the workplace should contact their Trade Union Representative for advice.

For further information, contact your Branch Secretary directly or Carol Scheffer, National Officer, in Union Head Office, CWU, 575 North Circular Road, Dublin 1.

Below are some of the other organisations that deal with intercultural issues:

Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 00353 1 4173333 LoCall: 1890 245 545 Email: info@equality.ie www.equality.ie	NCCRI, 3rd Floor, Jervis House, Jervis Street, Dublin 1 Tel: 00353 1 8588000 Email: info@nccri.ie www.nccri.ie
Irish Trade Union Trust, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1. Tel: 00353 1 878 7272 Email: itut@ireland.com	ICTU, 31-32 Parnell Square, Dublin 2 Tel: 00353 1 8897777 www.ictu.ie

Other Useful Websites

Comhlamh www.comhlamh.org	Irish Refugee Council www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie
Pavee Point TravellerCentre www.paveepoint.ie	Integrating Ireland www.integratingireland.ie
Irish Traveller Movement www.itmtrav.com	National Action Plan Against Racism www.diversityireland.ie
Refugee Information Service www.ris.ie	UN High Commissioner for Refugees www.unhcr.org

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CWU



Guidelines for Combating Racism and Promoting Cultural Awareness



Introduction

It is recognised that Ireland has an increasingly diverse workplace, with a continued need for migrant labour to maintain economic success. This diversity includes coloured and ethnic minorities as well as those from the travelling community.

Distinct cultural and religious communities have been in existence in Ireland for a long time. Specifically, the travelling community, with their unique culture, has contributed greatly to the fabric of Irish society. However, this community has faced their own challenges while living in Ireland.

Racism, discrimination and the intolerance of others are societal problems as well as workplace problems. Trade Unions face many challenges in their efforts to combat racism and to build an intercultural membership base. Trade Unions also have a responsibility to engage in measures to raise awareness and change attitudes.

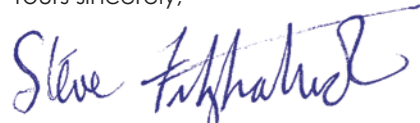
Across the European Union, 2008 is being promoted as European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The year is an opportunity for us all to consider the challenges faced by our more diverse society and the *CWU Guidelines for Combating Racism and Promoting Cultural Awareness* has been produced to acknowledge the year. Guidelines have also been issued by the International Trade Union Confederation towards combating racial discrimination.

Our guidelines will serve as a starting point for our Union to integrate our increasingly diverse membership. Through these guidelines, it is the aim of the CWU to stamp out racism and promote an intercultural Union, where members from all races and ethnic backgrounds are made to feel welcome.

On a national level, we need to re-examine our approach to dealing with racism and the rights of migrant workers, when taking into consideration the level of activity involved in securing rights for Irish workers abroad.

In our workplaces, and in our Trade Union, there must be a willingness to open our minds and integrate with others from different backgrounds. Granted it is a challenge, but also an opportunity for our Union, which we will faithfully take on.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Fitzpatrick
General Secretary
May 2008

Defining Racism, Interculturalism & Cultural Diversity

Racism

Racism has many definitions, the most common being that members of one racial group consider themselves superior to members of other racial groups. Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by cultural and ethnic minorities, be it in the workplace, by institutions or when accessing goods and services.

This results in certain individuals or groups being denied the right to participate fully in society and to have their cultures denied.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity includes the cultural differences that exist between people, such as language, dress and traditions. Everybody has a cultural identity, which is made up of customs, beliefs, phrases, song, dance and values.

Cultural diversity also encompasses different concepts of morality and religion, and the way different groups interact within society. Cultural diversity therefore underpins the way we learn, think and behave.

It also recognises that "one size does not fit all" and that by embracing cultural and ethnic diversity, everyone will benefit. By appreciating cultural diversity, we are acknowledging a broad range of perspectives and outlooks.

Interculturalism

Interculturalism is about sharing exchanges between different cultural groups so that everyone embarks upon an understanding of each other. Interculturalism is also about developing an inclusive society where opportunities are developed for positive interaction through an equal environment that fosters dignity, respect and understanding.

Interculturalism seeks to enhance integration by merging various cultures, which leads to open dialogue and social inclusion.

Equality Legislation – General Provisions

Racial discrimination is about treating people differently through a process of social division. Racial discrimination is illegal under equality legislation. Specifically, the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004, provide protection in employment from discrimination and harassment on 9 distinct grounds, which includes race i.e. those of a particular race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

The Traveller community ground is another one of the 9 grounds where discrimination is prohibited. People, who are commonly called Travellers, are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

Several aspects of employment are covered under these grounds, including access to training and development, promotion or re-grading opportunities, equal pay, unfair dismissals and collective agreements.

It is clear that the number of cases taken on the race ground is increasing.

Court findings have emphasised that there is a need for employers to take into consideration the needs of employees from different ethnic backgrounds. However, it is clear that legislation alone should not be relied upon to eradicate discrimination. In that regard, robust policies and procedures need to be implemented in various employments.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as less favourable treatment. A person is deemed to be racially discriminated against when they are treated in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation due to his/her race, ethnicity, nationality or ethnic background.

There are different types of discrimination covered by the Acts, including indirect discrimination, discrimination by imputation and discrimination by association.

Indirect Discrimination

Individuals can be the victims of indirect discrimination when a practice, policy or workplace provision has a negative impact on an individual of a specific ground in comparison to others.

Discrimination by Association

This type of discrimination occurs where a person associated with another person (belonging to a specified ground) is treated less favourably because of that association.

Harassment

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment for the person.

Victimisation

Victimisation is the unlawful penalisation of an individual on foot of making a complaint, or for taking an action pursuant to the enforcement of their rights under the legislation.

Positive Action

These are actions that can be taken so as to ensure full equality in practice between all individuals. A positive action measure can be taken in respect of any of the 9 grounds governed under equality legislation.

Asylum-seekers and Refugees

The UN Refugee Convention defines who is a refugee and supports the right to seek asylum, which is a basic right of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This UN Refugee Convention has been ratified in Ireland.

Refugee

A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their home country through a legitimate fear of persecution. They are unable to return to their country for reasons related to race, nationality, religion, political opinion, sexual orientation or membership of a particular social group.

A refugee is an individual who has been given a legal right to remain in the State.

Asylum-seeker

An asylum-seeker, who has entered the country and lodged an application seeking asylum, has a legal entitlement to stay in the country until it can be concluded whether or not he/she can be classified as a refugee. Once an asylum-seeker has been given refugee

status, then he/she will be allowed to stay in Ireland and will be given rights under Irish law, which are similar to those of Irish citizenship. If an asylum-seeker is not given refugee status, then the State has the right to deport the person. However, the Minister for Justice has the authority to allow an asylum-seeker, who is not given refugee status, leave to remain in the country on humanitarian grounds.

Raising Awareness of Refugees & Asylum-seekers

It is recognised through past experience in Ireland, that for refugees, returning home to safety and dignity is the best solution for them. However, those who are unable to return home, are working and contributing to Ireland's economic growth.

On the other hand, asylum-seekers are not allowed to work by law, even though they may wish to do so. Only recognised refugees can take up employment. It is a general belief that asylum-seekers should have the right to work, as Ireland and Denmark remain the only countries yet to sign up to the EU's 2003 convention on the treatment of asylum-seekers, which includes the right to work.

Asylum-seekers are also not allowed to go on public housing lists but instead are housed in accommodation centres around the country. Respondents to a survey carried out on asylum-seekers described the system as being "tantamount to an open prison", with many expressing feelings of "hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, poverty, social exclusion and complete dependence on the State".

When recognised, refugees must move from their accommodation centres and if they are unable to pay for accommodation, can apply for assistance or public housing. They will then be put on the waiting list, the same as Irish Nationals.

Asylum-seekers and refugees are naturally obliged to uphold the law. There is no evidence that crime is higher amongst them as opposed to the population as a whole. Nonetheless, asylum-seekers and refugees are also victims of crime, including harassment and/or assault.

Finally, it must be noted that the numbers seeking asylum in Ireland are decreasing, with asylum-seekers being the smallest category of migrants entering Ireland.

Economic Migrant

Unlike refugees or asylum-seekers, economic migrants are people who have voluntarily moved to Ireland with a work visa for the sole purpose of taking up employment in the State.

Anti Racism on a National Level

The National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR)

The NPAR was launched by the Government in January 2005 and reaffirms the Government's commitment that racism has no place in Irish society. This commitment to developing the NPAR has been encompassed in successive partnership agreements and most recently in "Towards 2016".