

Election 2020 Briefing

PEOPLE AND PARTICIPATION



The present situation

On Demographic Change

- There are currently 4.9 million people living in Ireland.
- Fertility rates are declining, while life expectancy has increased, reaching 79.3 (males) and 83.3 (females) in 2015.
- The dependency ratio is increasing, so that by 2051, there will be just 1.5 people of working age for every one person aged 0-14 and 65+.

On Diversity and Migration

- 3.4% of the population are from outside the EU, and 12.7% are non-Irish nationals.
- Net migration has been positive since 2015, with more people entering the country than leaving it.
- 26.7% of total immigrants to Ireland in 2019 were from within the EU (excluding Ireland and the UK), and 34.5% were from the rest of the World.
- Over two-thirds of immigrants to Ireland have a third-level education.
- 60% of emigrants from Ireland were employed and a further 25% were students.

On Social Exclusion, Racism and Human Trafficking

- Membership of an ethnic minority presents a barrier to social inclusion¹.
- There is a strong correlation between membership of an ethnic minority and NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- Despite recent improvements, Ireland needs to address hate speech and hate crimes; ethnic profiling; gender identity; the needs of Travellers; asylum seeker application processes; and discrimination against those in Direct Provision².

¹ McGuinness et al. (2018): *Profiling Barriers to Social Inclusion in Ireland, The Relative Roles of Individual Characteristics and Location*, ESRI, Dublin

➤ Ireland is still yet to ratify a number of international treaties on the elimination of racial discrimination.

➤ 64 suspected human trafficking victims were identified in 2018. Of these, 27 were exploited in sex trafficking, 35 in labour trafficking, and two in forced criminality.

On Asylum and Direct Provision

➤ Between January and October 2019, there were 4,198 applications for international protection received to Ireland's International Protection Office, an increase of 39% on the same period in 2018.

➤ 5,028 people were deported or otherwise removed from the State in 2019, an increase of 27% on 2018.

➤ 6,252 people were living in Direct Provision centres across Ireland at the end of 2018.

➤ Direct Provision centres were almost at full capacity as at November 2018 (95.5%).

➤ Human Rights organisations, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality have all recently called for an overhaul to, or abolition of, Direct Provision.

On Participation and Democracy

➤ The Community & Voluntary Sector is the only one not to have funding restored since the Recession.

➤ The estimated value of volunteering work is €648.8 million (using the minimum wage), based only on organisations required to register with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

➤ Public Participation Networks (PPNs) have been established in every Local Authority area and now have over 15,000 member organisations.

➤ The National Economic Dialogue is welcome, but insufficient to address the full range of issues.

² European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2019): *ECRI Report on Ireland (fifth monitoring cycle)*, ECRI, Strasbourg

How can we become a more inclusive society?

A society which ensures that all people from different cultures are welcomed in a way that is consistent with our history, our obligations as world citizens and with our economic status, and that every person has a genuine voice in shaping the decisions that affect them.



Things a new Government can do to develop and support a just and inclusive society

- Invest in the retention of young graduates and programmes to assimilate skills obtained while abroad.
- Fully implement the recommendations of the Commission for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination within a reasonable timeframe.
- Fully implement the recommendations of the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report.
- Reinstate funding for Traveller-specific initiatives pending the outcome of the Joint Oireachtas Committee hearings on Issues Affecting the Traveller Community.
- Adequately resource the Public Participation Network (PPN) structures for participation at Local Authority level and ensure capacity building is an integral part of the process.
- Promote deliberative democracy and a process of inclusive social dialogue to ensure there is real and effective monitoring and impact assessment of policy development and implementation using an evidence-based approach at local and national level.
- Increase funding to the Community and Voluntary Sector.
- Implement the Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities Strategy.
- Resource an initiative to identify how a real participative civil society debate could be developed and maintained.