

An Employee and Employer Advisory Committee under Section 18

The letter from Patricia King, General Secretary of ICTU (6th May 2016), proposes the establishment of an advisory committee under Section 18 of the IHREC Act composed of employee and employer representatives.

Patricia noted our Strategic Plan Goal 4 "Making equality and human rights real" and its commitment to "having a strong collaboration with workers and employer groups to drive equality and human rights". She noted Goal 2 commitment to "effectively monitor equality and human rights compliance in employment and service delivery". She referred to the fact that worker and employer participation on the Equality Authority "proved to be very productive for all concerned". As a former Board member of the Equality Authority I can confirm that IBEC and ICTU members made a great and positive contribution to both the employment equality and equal status functions of the Authority.

As you may know the Working Group on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (of which I was a member) was advised that replicating the Equality Authority model of having two employee and two employer nominees on the Board of the new Commission would not comply with the Paris Principles. Recognising the need to retain the great contribution of the employer and employee bodies, the Working Group recommended that the legislation should allow IHREC to establish subcommittees to act in an advisory capacity as now proposed by ICTU (see link below). I think it is essential now for us to redress the balance and the deficit and to engage in a structured way with the employer and employee bodies.

Employer and employee bodies can make a huge and essential contribution to the achievement of IHREC's statutory remit and our Strategic Plan Goals. Both bodies have considerable influence, power, and 'reach' geographically and socio/economically, for example ICTU represents 800,000 working people. Both are vital to the delivery of our mandate in terms of employment equality and equal status, and both these areas are central to our Goal of "Making equality and human rights real", and in peoples everyday lives, "especially those of the least advantaged" (Goal 4). They are also key to achieving Goal 5 "Intercultural understanding and diversity", and they have a good track record in this area. Both bodies are increasingly involved in the business and human rights area (see links below).

We have discussed the setting up of a worker – employer advisory committee at a number of Plenary meetings but we have postponed making a final decision for various reasons. I have sensed though general support for such an Advisory Committee. Now that we have established a Research Advisory Committee under

Section 18 it is vital and timely that we take up the offer of ICTU and now establish a Section Advisory Committee.

I would like this to be an Agenda item for decision at our next Plenary.

Kieran

16/06/2016

"The legislation should allow IHREC to establish subcommittees of the Commission to enable representatives of a wide range of interests to contribute in an advisory capacity. "

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/20120419-WorkingGroupRpt-HumanRightsEqualityCommission.pdf/Files/20120419-WorkingGroupRpt-HumanRightsEqualityCommission.pdf>

<http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2016/05/11/irelands-second-examination-by-the-un-human-rights/>

https://www.ibec.ie/IBEC/DFB.nsf/vPages/Social_affairs~social-affairs?OpenDocument#.V2FIhdQrLGg

