

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1395

(Meeting/s of 9 January 2002)

"Diversity in the Civil Service - A Policy on Equality of Opportunity"

Agreement on the introduction of "Diversity in the Civil Service - A Policy on Equality of Opportunity"

[1] Background

Equality of opportunity is an essential part of human resource management in the Civil Service. The legal framework on equality of opportunity, and the corresponding legal duties of employers have expanded significantly in recent years, with the enactment of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness commits the Civil Service to the development and implementation of improved measures to support equality of opportunity in recruitment, promotion and work practices. To ensure that all Government Departments and Offices are aware of their responsibilities under the Employment Equality Act, 1998, a new policy on equality of opportunity has been agreed between management and the staff panel. The policy reflects the provisions of the Employment Equality Act 1998, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, disability and membership of the Traveller community. A separate Gender Equality Policy for the Civil Service, which sets out a strategic approach to gender equality and specifically addresses the representation of women in the senior grades of the Civil Service, was agreed by General Council in May 2001 and launched by the Taoiseach and Minister for Finance in September 2001.

[2] The Policy on Equality of Opportunity

"Diversity in the Civil Service" seeks to ensure that all Civil Servants can be confident that their rights under the Employment Equality Act 1998 are guaranteed and that no one will receive less favourable treatment than some one else because of his or her gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community. The policy commits Departments and Offices to ensuring equality of opportunity in the key human resource areas. These are:-

I Recruitment

- II Promotion
- III Placement and mobility policies
- IV Training and development
- V Family friendly working arrangements and achieving work/life balance
- VI Realisation of a positive working environment, free of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying
- VII Elimination of discriminatory language
- VIII Retention of staff.

Responsibility for the implementation of equality of opportunity lies with each Head of Department or Office, or a person designated by the Head of Department.

[3] Ensuring Equality of Opportunity

Appendix A, "Ensuring Equality of Opportunity" sets out in detail the steps which Departments are to take to ensure equality of opportunity in each of the main human resource management areas. Departments are required to include a statement of their commitment to equality of opportunity in their Strategy Statements and to outline the general approach being adopted. Reports by Departments on the achievement of their strategic objectives should cover what steps have been taken in the main human resource management areas to achieve equality of opportunity in the period under review.

At an incorporeal meeting on 9 January 2002, the General Council agreed this report.

Recorded agreement

This report was adopted on 09 January 2002