











Report on the visit to Ireland

from 22 to 25 November 2016

Human rights of Travellers and Roma

-  » Official recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group
-  » Adoption of a new National Traveller/Roma Inclusion Strategy underway
-  » Improvement of data collection in education through an ethnic identifier
-  » Very significant reduction in State's support following economic crisis
-  » Acute discrimination in access to education, employment and housing, including an insufficient provision of Traveller-specific accommodations and defective safeguards against forced evictions
-  » Persistent stereotypes and cases of racist acts, including refusal of services, verbal abuse and racist statements by local representatives and in the media
-  » Shortcomings in legal remedies in cases of discrimination
-  » Lack of disaggregated data to monitor discrimination

Women's rights and gender equality

-  » Adoption of the Public Sector Duty to mainstream equality in public bodies
-  » Adoption of a Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (2016-2021) and introduction of a Domestic Violence Bill in Parliament to improve the protection available to victims of domestic violence
-  » Adoption of a National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020 and a National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026
-  » Quota system to ensure that a minimum percentage of parliamentary candidates are women
-  » Insufficient resources to implement gender equality policies
-  » Disproportionate impact of austerity measures on women, in particular rural women, older women, Traveller women, single mothers and women with disabilities
-  » Persistent gender stereotypes in the Constitution, the media and the education system
-  » Administrative barriers and serious shortage of housing solutions, including emergency shelter places, for women victims of violence
-  » Shortcomings in official response to domestic violence, including low rates of sanctions
-  » One of the most restrictive legal frameworks on abortion in Europe criminalising abortion in all cases except where there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the pregnant woman
-  » Abortion-related smear campaigns and stigmatisation of women, doctors and women's rights defenders

Human rights of children

- » Introduction of a provision on children's rights in the Constitution
- » Removal of the common law defense of corporal punishment
- » Initiatives to increase diversity in national schools

- » Limited offer of inclusive education for all pupils irrespective of religion or belief
- » An exemption clause allows discriminatory admissions policies by state-funded schools on the basis of a child's religion
- » Lack of adequate alternatives to religious classes in case of opt-out
- » De facto ethnic segregation in some schools
- » Increased child poverty and homelessness
- » Absence of legal avenue for undocumented children negatively impacting their human rights
- » Inadequate living conditions for children staying for long period in Direct Provision accommodation for asylum seekers

Past human rights abuses against women and children in institutions

- » A number of measures taken to address past abuses including official apologies by the government and/or redress mechanisms in some cases
- » Recent creation of an inquiry body for abuses in Mother and Baby Homes
- » A number of general measures to improve child protection against sexual abuse in schools

- » Shortcomings in the inquiries and existing redress measures for the victims (including lack of human rights based approach and narrow scope of investigations or categories of victims compensated)
- » Standards of truth, justice and reparation not met in all uncovered cases of past human rights abuses, including lack of full acknowledgement of accountability of state authorities and/or religious institutions in some cases