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## **Two Years On: More than Two Thousand People enter Civil Partnerships as we progress towards Marriage**

In just over two years since Civil Partnerships first took place in Ireland (in April 2011) 1,088 lesbian and gay couples have entered civil partnerships across every county in Ireland, up to the end of June 2013. A further 250 couples have given notice that they will enter civil partnerships later this year.

**“Civil Partnerships are a resounding success. Lesbian and gay couples in every county in Ireland have celebrated their love and commitment to each other in front of family, friends and neighbours. In doing so, these couples have contributed enormously to the remarkable progress towards marriage and full constitutional equality for lesbian and gay couples and families”** said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

Many hundreds more lesbian and gay couples have celebrated their commitment by entering civil partnerships or getting married abroad. These couples’ foreign legal relationships are recognised in Ireland as civil partnerships.

The Civil Partnership Act passed through the Oireachtas in July 2010 and the first public civil partnership was celebrated in April 2011. Civil Partnership provides almost all the legal rights and obligations that apply to civil marriage.

**“The huge welcome for civil partnerships throughout the country shows that Ireland is ready to take the next step to provide for civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples.** It is now time to put the issue before the people of Ireland in a referendum.” said Rose.

The Constitutional Convention overwhelmingly voted for marriage in April and the Government have until November to decide to accept that proposal and give a timetable for a referendum, which the Tánaiste recently stated could be in 2014.

The Longford Leader in an editorial stated “for many people, the term ‘civil partnership’ has become interchangeable with the term marriage. As far as they are concerned, they are attending the ‘wedding’ of their gay or lesbian friends. The reality is that the tide of public opinion has just shifted towards an acceptance of gay marriage.”

**“We firmly believe that the people of Ireland will continue their warm welcome of lesbian and gay couples and families and that a yes vote will be carried in a referendum that would provide access to civil marriage”** concluded Rose.

**Ends**

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**Editors Note:**

1. The figures are compiled from data supplied by the General Registrars Office and reflect civil partnerships that have taken place up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.
2. Details of the breakdown of the 1,088 couples by age, gender, nationality, place of ceremony and places where the couples live are available at the GLEN website [here](#).
3. Graphs and maps of the Civil Partnerships statistics are available at the GLEN website [here](#) including:
  - county by county distribution of civil partnership,
  - the Dublin postal district distribution
  - Age and Nationality distribution.