

Press Release: 2nd July 2013, Dublin

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS: CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION LODGES REPORT ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES

Joint News Release

Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), Marriage Equality

In a joint statement today (2nd July 2013), human rights groups Marriage Equality, the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) welcomed the delivery of the formal report to the Oireachtas of the Constitutional Convention proceedings on marriage for lesbian and gay couples.

In April, in a historic decision, the Convention voted to recommend that the people be asked in a referendum to change the Constitution to provide for full civil marriage for same sex couples. They also overwhelmingly voted that our laws should be changed to provide legal recognition and protection for lesbian and gay headed families.

Mark Kelly, Director of the ICCL said "Today's report to Government by the Convention on the Constitution is the natural next step on the road to marriage equality for same sex couples in Ireland. The report's message is clear and unequivocal: an overwhelming majority of the delegates to the Convention were convinced that the time is ripe to change the Constitution in order to end the exclusion of same sex couples from full civil marriage. The clock is ticking now for this last bastion of lawful discrimination and the ICCL fully expects that, within no more than four months, the Government will announce that a referendum will be held to bring our Constitution into line with modern equality norms".

Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair said "The Constitutional Convention's support for marriage is echoed in the very strong public and political support for full Constitutional equality for lesbian and gay couples and families, building the great public welcome for civil partnerships throughout the country. It is now time to take the next step and put the issue before the people of Ireland in a referendum."

The Government must respond to the Oireachtas within four months, and if accepting the recommendations of the Convention, indicate the timeframe for a referendum.

Moninne Griffith of Marriage Equality said "The Government now has four months to debate this recommendation and make a decision whether to put this issue to the people of Ireland in a referendum. With an overwhelming majority of Irish people in favour of marriage equality for same sex couples we know that now is the time. Today we call on the Government to implement this positive recommendation as soon as possible. And with recent comments from our Tánaiste saying a referendum on this issue could take place in 2014, the countdown to equality in Ireland for same sex couples, their families and their children begins today,

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITOR

- The Convention on the Constitution met on the weekend of Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 April with a view to reporting recommendations to the Houses of the Oireachtas on the constitutional provision for marriage for same-sex couples. For more information on the Convention on the Constitution see www.constitution.ie. The Convention voted 79/100 to change the Constitution to provide for civil marriage for same-sex couples and 81/100 for the State “to enact laws incorporating necessary changed arrangements in regard to the parentage, guardianship and upbringing of children” in lesbian and gay headed families.
- The ICCL, GLEN and Marriage Equality jointly made the case for opening up civil marriage in Ireland to same-sex couples. The ICCL's, GLEN's and Marriage Equality's submissions to the Constitutional Convention are available on the Hear Our Voices website at <http://www.hearourvoices.ie/submissions>. Hear Our Voices is an initiative of The Irish Council for Civil Liberties, working to ensure that the voices of civil society organisations will be heard in an effective way during the constitutional convention process.