



PRESS RELEASE: 24th September 2014

New poll shows farmers support marriage for lesbian and gay couples.

GLEN receive very warm reception at the National Ploughing Championships

A new poll published today in the Irish Examiner found that farmers would vote in favour if a referendum on marriage for lesbian and gay couples were held today.

“These poll results are another welcome demonstration of the **transformation in attitudes to lesbian and gay people in rural Ireland** and the **willingness to extend equal status and dignity in our Constitution to lesbian and gay couples**” said Brian Sheehan, Director of GLEN.

“It builds on the success of Civil Partnership where over 1,500 couples, across every county and community in Ireland have celebrated their love and commitment to each other, warmly supported by their families, friends and neighbours” continued Sheehan.

“That **positive support has been reflected in the very warm reception which GLEN have received at our stand at this year’s National Ploughing Championships**” said Sheehan.

The poll, conducted by Behaviour and Attitudes, showed that if the referendum were held today 46% of farmers would vote in favour with 41% not in favour. Support was highest among farmers under 35 years of age, at 64%, and amongst women (60%). The majority of farmers aged from 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 also support marriage (48% and 53% respectively).

Farmers over 65 years of age were least likely to vote for marriage if a referendum were held today, with 73% saying that that would vote against. 13% said that they didn’t know which way they would vote.

“Irish people take Constitutional change seriously and we expect that people will have questions about this change. **The poll finding for older farmers shows that we have work to do to persuade people of our case**” said Sheehan

“**Irish people’s thoughts on this issue are constantly evolving.** We look forward to talking with many people over the coming months to understand, and hopefully answer, their concerns and to explain **why marriage matters to lesbian and gay couples**” concluded Sheehan.

The examiner poll results build on the findings of a Macra na Feirme poll last week which found that 52% of young farmers supported marriage. Macra and GLEN have jointly produced a guide on supporting LGBT people in rural Ireland.

Ends.

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