



**MEDIA RELEASE: 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2013**

## **UK says ‘I Do’ to lesbian and gay couples – House of Lords passes Marriage Bill.**

This afternoon, 15<sup>th</sup> July, the House of Lords in the UK passed the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. The Bill provides for marriage for lesbian and gay couples in England and Wales. The Bill returns to the House of Commons for technical approval of Government amendments accepted in the House of Lords. The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent, and thus become law, as soon as this Wednesday. **It is expected that lesbian and gay couples in England and Wales will be able to marry from next spring.**

**“The vote of the UK Parliament is a further historic step in the journey to full equality for lesbian and gay people in England and Wales and contributes significantly to the growing International momentum for equality. A very strong message of inclusion, value and equality has been sent to lesbian and gay people everywhere”** said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

“Very soon, you will not be able to leave the shores of Ireland in any direction without reaching a country which has made marriage available to lesbian and gay couples” said Rose.

Marriage became available in France in April; a marriage Bill is expected before the Scottish Parliament shortly and the US Supreme Court recently ruled that federal bans on recognising State level marriages were unconstitutional.

**“The time is right in Ireland to complete the remarkable journey to full Constitutional protection for lesbian and gay people and families,** building on the extraordinary progress to date and the overwhelming vote for marriage at the Constitutional Convention,” said Rose.

The Irish Constitutional Convention recently voted overwhelmingly to support access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples, thus providing full Constitutional protection for lesbian and gay people and families. The Convention recently issued its report to the Government who must come back to the Dáil with their response by November. The Tánaiste recently said that he expects a referendum on marriage in 2014.

“The overwhelming vote at the Constitutional Convention, the widespread celebration of civil partnerships all across the country and the growing public and political support for marriage mean that Ireland is now ready to move to the next step of providing access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples” said Rose.

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

**Ends**

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**Ends**

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***Editors Note:***

Recent figures from the Registrar General’s Office show that 1,088 lesbian and gay couples have entered civil partnerships across every county in Ireland from April 2011, when they first became available, to the end of June 2013. For data, maps and graphs on these Civil Partnerships see [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie) or [here](#).