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EMBARGO TO MIDNIGHT 28th March

Joy as lesbian and gay couples marry in England and Wales!

Starting just after midnight, on Saturday 29th April lesbian and gay couples will be able to marry in England and Wales. The Westminster parliament passed the legislation last July that comes into effect on Saturday 29th. The Scottish Parliament passed marriage legislation in February which will come into effect in autumn 2014. Northern Ireland does not yet have civil marriage legislation for lesbian and gay couples.

“This first day of marriage is a joyous and exciting time for lesbian and gay couples in England and Wales, and we offer our congratulations to all who will marry today” said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

“The advent of marriage 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, respect and equality is being sent to people everywhere” continued Rose.

“Ireland has made extraordinary progress towards full equality for lesbian and gay people, with joyous celebrations of civil partnership all across the country and very strong and growing public support for marriage and equal Constitutional protection for lesbian and gay couples” said Rose.

The Irish Government recently decided to accept the recommendation of the Constitutional Convention and will hold a referendum on access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples in 2015. All Political parties in Ireland support equal access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples.

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

Ends

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Editors Note:

Recent figures from the Registrar General's Office show that 1,303 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 December 2013. For data, maps and graphs on these Civil Partnerships see www.glen.ie or [here](#).