

BDC21
NO GOING BACK

REPORT of the
EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL

Belfast 26~27 October

STRONGER TOGETHER



CONGRESS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

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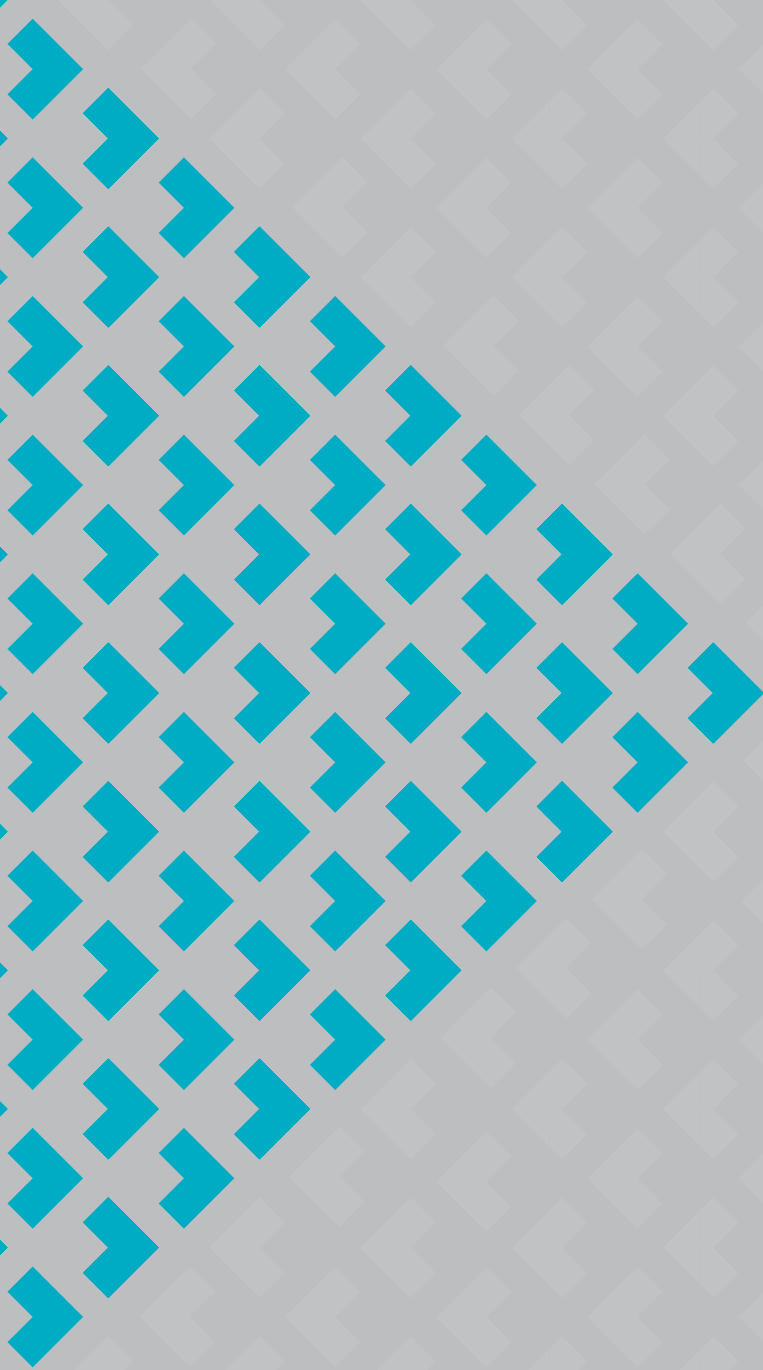
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SECTION 1
Introduction
& Overview

Introduction

by Gerry Murphy, President



This conference represents a new start in many ways. I don't simply mean this Congress which will have a new President almost four months later than planned. With a combination of good luck, hard science and social sacrifice, this conference will be among the first large-scale indoor events to take place on this island since March 2020. We all hope that you will be in the same hall as me when you read this, alongside hundreds of Trade Union activists possessed of the same will and determination that things cannot return to the *status quo ante*.

We may have missed the freedoms and certainties, even the dullness, of life before Covid-19. We may have hated the apprehension of mixing with colleagues and clients and students and the public. We may have gritted our teeth at the idea of another online meeting with novelty software over shaky broadband. We may have pined for travel, and companionship, and live arts and loud music.

But there are many things to which we shall not easily return. The old accountancy of cutting safety nets and not investing in services. The old roads of travel powered by oil and gas and fossil fuels that are choking our climate and imperilling the hope of the young. The old distractions of reactionary politicians – scare stories about crime, or foreigners, or the poor – as they reward cronies with contracts and corporate welfare. The old excuses will not hold, that we cannot afford justice or mercy, and that there is no room at the tables of power for those of us with a wider agenda.

No Going Back is our response. Justice and equality is our agenda, as much as a prosperous economy delivering the economic means for our social ends. High quality, universally accessible public services funded through progressive taxation at home, with strong rights for working people and all citizens across the European Union. A Bill of Rights for people in both jurisdictions, as envisioned

by the framers of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Collective Bargaining rights for all workers across the EU, and an end to the endless race to the bottom among states seeking crumbs from the corporate elites.

There will be elections next year to the NI Assembly. There could be elections any time to the Oireachtas. British politics is so chaotic right now, anything could happen, at any time. We need to get our arguments honed and our activists ready to make the case for a better and fairer way than after the last economic crisis when the least responsible for the-crash paid the most for the recovery.

In fact, that recovery never came for low-paid workers whose salaries are worth considerably less due to pay freezes and welfare cuts affecting the working poor.

But we have examples of what happens when motivated workers combine smart negotiations with public agitation. We saw that last year in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the year before with workers from across our NHS and the steadfast belief of the workers in Harland and Wolff in their right to control their own destinies.

What those workers did was not let the market decide, nor 'common sense' dictate. They declared independence from that 'common sense' and built their own. All of those successfully resolved disputes involved multiple trade unions, and the active support of Trades Councils and the resources of this entire movement. There is a word for all of that. 'Solidarity.'

That is a watchword for the months and years ahead, as we enter a new world after months of furloughs, and lockdowns, premature deaths, long-term health problems and urban landscapes of shops and offices eviscerated by the pandemic. But the social solidarity and human empathy exposed by Covid-19 cannot be erased so easily, and with persistence, can be directed more effectively in how we deal with each other as citizens and workers.

We know to what circumstances we are saying 'No Going Back'; this conference ought to help us find the alternative, a society which works well for all working people.

I look forward to chairing these discussions.

Foreword

by the General Secretary

We gather in Belfast this year to review key events since we last met at our Biennial Delegate Conference in Dublin in 2019.

Our theme this year is **'No Going Back- A new deal for a safe and secure future for all'**, and it speaks directly to the key issues facing us as a society, post pandemic, across our island.

At the outset, we must acknowledge the personal losses, suffering, grief and loss experienced by so many across our island and further afield since the start of last year. Many of us have been personally affected in some way or another, or knows someone who has.

The Covid-19 crisis has also been a major and transformative shock to the economy and to society. It is one that has had profound and long-lasting social, economic and political implications. It led to the rapid adoption of major and often quite radical policy measures, many of which would have been considered completely unthinkable, unacceptable and unfeasible before the pandemic.

We should salute the major contribution of our frontline and essential workers across the public and private sectors, who each day went out and risked their lives to safeguard our health and ensure our security and welfare. Covid-19 laid bare the consequences of the inequalities which for so long have failed these very often undervalued and under-paid workers.

Although the nature of our pandemic-induced crisis represents a very different set of challenges to those we confronted in 2008, it is remarkable that 10 years on we once again find ourselves faced with the difficult task of economic recovery, and this time from an even deeper economic shock.



Patricia King, General Secretary

At the very early stages of this crisis, Congress formed the view that we needed to develop a 'new social contract'. Together with NERI, we published "No Going Back – A new deal for a safe and secure future for all", in May 2020. This analysed and highlighted the implications of past policy choices and charted a course to fund and attain a new and better society for all.

A key lesson from the 2008 crisis is that cutting back public spending during a recession, i.e. 'austerity', not only does not lead to recovery but only prolongs the misery and leaves permanent scars, particularly on the long-term unemployed and on young people.

The pandemic has shown that threadbare public services are one of the greatest threats to the resilience of our economies. We can no longer shy away from the structural underfunding that we have all had to 'work around' for years. We must insist on adequate revenue measures that enable us to provide decent public services and resist any moves towards contractionary fiscal policies. We need to call out the revenue gaps that others try to ignore or hide, such as the fact that employers in the Republic of Ireland and in the UK pay less than half of the European average in social contributions.

Important policy choices will ultimately have to be made. In our view, these must be to deliver better public services, particularly in housing, health, education, early years, social protection as well as a Just Transition to decarbonisation, digitalisation and automation. In order to progress our interests, we must be in the right rooms, at the right time, to make the right arguments to shape those choices.

More and better jobs and rising wages are the keys to a fair recovery. Across this island hundreds of thousands of workers are low paid and have precarious jobs. Vast swathes of the labour 'market' operate on the basis of bogus self-employment and casualisation, often misrepresented as 'innovative' and offering 'maximum flexibility'. And all at a time when the Irish government continues to deny workers the right, in law, to collectively bargain with their employer through a union they choose.

Ensuring decent wages for all through collective agreements are the best wealth distribution mechanisms in the economy. They lower inequality, create jobs, ensure safer workplaces, and as we established in our 2019 paper on collective bargaining, drive productivity increases.

For these reasons Congress is campaigning alongside trade union confederations across Europe through the ETUC for the improvement and adoption of a draft directive on 'Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union', which promotes collective bargaining. We firmly reject all attempts to water down this legislation. We continue to engage through the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) with employers and government with a view to enabling the full and timely implementation of principles that underpin this directive.

Congress engaged with both the Irish government and the NI Executive at a very early stage in this pandemic to develop detailed workplace safety protocols with the primary purpose of advancing health and safety measures to ensure maximum protection of workers. In Northern Ireland we succeeded in establishing a social dialogue forum in dealing with the pandemic, the NI Labour Market Engagement Forum, to deal with these matters. Such processes included the appointment of a 'lead workplace representative' in every employment with a view to ensuring workers direct input to the implementation of these health and safety procedures.

The practice of contractor and employers misclassifying workers as 'self-employed' is

an ongoing scandal in Ireland. Over the past decade Congress has campaigned to have a legislative remedy enacted to secure workers' rights to the full range of social protection benefits together with access to employment rights and protections.

One of the most pressing issues facing both jurisdictions is decarbonisation and the achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, at the latest. Climate change policies must be based on a Just Transition as envisaged in the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Republic's track record on this is weak, as demonstrated by the case of the Bord na Móna workers and their local communities who have been required to make huge sacrifices for the common good. Notwithstanding the appointment of a Just Transition Commissioner, with whom Congress is working, the government has no integrated plan to ensure workers' upskilling as well as replacement employment. This must be addressed immediately.

Across the island we continue to experience a very substantial gender pay gap. The Congress Joint Women's committees recently engaged in extensive debate with other civil society groups, public representatives, academics and other stakeholders as to the various remedies that are needed to address this long-standing issue within our society. We support our Women in Leadership programme which has had very positive participant feed-back.

Since we last met, Northern Ireland has been taken out of the EU against its will. As an all island trade union federation we are determined to ensure that our members and all workers in Northern Ireland will not be left behind when it comes to employment rights.

Congress and the wider movement will continue to champion social, economic and industrial issues facing our members, and their families across the island.

And we continue to so with the primary aim, through solidarity, of building a better future for all.

Executive Council Members

2019-2021



*Gerry Murphy, President
(INTO)*



*Alison Millar, Vice-President
(NIPSA)*



*Kevin Callinan, Vice-President
(Fórsa)*



*Joe Cunningham, Treasurer
(SIPTU)*



*Eimear Allen
(Youth Committee Observer)*



*Brian Booth
(NIPSA)*



*John Boyle
(INTO)*



*Ethel Buckley
(SIPTU)*



*Kieran Christie
(ASTI)*



*John Clinton
(POA)*



*Annette Dolan
(INTO)*



*Seamus Dooley
(NUJ)*



*John Douglas
(Mandate)*



*Stevie Fitzpatrick
(CWU)*



*Bernard Harbor
(Fórsa)*



*Sean Heading
(Connect)*



*David Hughes
(INMO)*



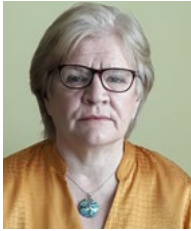
*Paddy Kavanagh
(Connect)*



*David Kennedy
(CWU UK)*



*John King
(SIPTU)*



Angela Kirk
(Fórsa)



Michaela Lafferty
(USDAW)



Gerry Light
(Mandate)



Gareth Murphy
(FSU)



Justin McCamphill
(NASUWT)



Gerry McCormack
(SIPTU)



Patricia McKeown
(Unison)



Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin
(CWU)



Phil Ní Sheaghda
(INMO)



Brendan Ogle
(Unite)



Deirdre O'Connor
(INTO)



Jackie Pollock
(Unite)



Ciaran Rohan
(AHCPS)



Eoin Ronayne
(Fórsa)



Anne Speed
(Unison)



Betty Tyrrell Collard
(Dublin Council Trade Unions
Local Reserved Panel)



Archie Thomson (Retired
Workers' Committee Ob-
server)



Jackie White
(UTU)

Notes:

J Douglas former General Secretary of MANDATE retired November 2020.
M Lafferty, USDAW resigned from the Executive Council in April 2020 to take up a position with UNI Global.
Mr G Light, Mandate was co-opted on to the Executive Council as a full member.

The Economy

Introduction

An economic and social crisis

We are now over one year into the worst global pandemic in a century. Millions of people lost their lives while tens of millions more have lost their livelihoods.

There has been unprecedented disruption to societies and economies alongside a sharp rise in extreme poverty within emerging economies as jobs have been lost and income levels have fallen. The global economy contracted by 3.5% in 2020, while the volume of world trade fell by close to 8.5%.

The vaccine rollouts are gathering pace in many countries and fiscal and monetary policy continue to buttress national and regional economies. Business sentiment and business expectations are now improving. The Chinese and US economies are already well on their way to recovery while the EU and the UK should return to their pre-crisis output levels in mid-2022.

It will take a number of years before unemployment and employment rates return to their pre-crisis levels. A number of advanced economies including Germany, the US and the UK were close to full employment just prior to the crisis. It is as yet unclear the extent to which there will be significant labour market scarring.

The Republic of Ireland's domestic economy contracted 5.4% in 2020 with personal consumption falling 9%. The unemployment rate averaged almost 19%, while employment levels fell by almost 400,000. Hours worked fell by 8.5%. Job losses were concentrated amongst lower skilled workers, young workers and part time workers. The youth unemployment rose above 60% in April of 2021. Even so, household incomes were largely protected by the government supports.

Outlook for the Republic of Ireland

The economy is set to bounce back strongly. The pace of the recovery depends on the degree of containment of the virus and associated lockdown measures.

The easing of lockdown marked the beginning of what will, in our view, be a prolonged economic expansion. The economy will be growing robustly on an annualised basis by the end of 2021 assuming (a) ongoing success in the vaccine rollout, (b) a full or almost full opening of society, and (c) a cautious approach to removing targeted supports for weakened but viable businesses.

The NERI projects GDP growth of close to 4% in 2021 and 5% in 2022. This growth will be fuelled by a robust increase in consumer spending (4.5% and 9% in 2021 and 2022 respectively).

The projected expansion is based on:

- The realisation of an unprecedented level of pent-up demand for activities constrained during the lockdown (primarily face-to-face services), along with increased public investment from fiscal policy, and increased private investment as economic uncertainty fades (SME saving rose significantly in 2020) and the lockdown on construction ends.
- The normalisation of the household savings rate from its current excessive and historically high level.
- An increased demand for exports as trading partners experience strong demand-based recoveries (e.g. Biden stimulus, EU recovery plan).

Crucially, we should not use previous recessions as a baseline for the pace of recovery. The Covid-19 recession is a policy induced freeze on supply. The

dynamics are therefore qualitatively different from previous demand-side balance sheet recessions. Household incomes have largely held up. Previous recessions were characterised by an overleveraged private sector carrying significant debt. On this occasion, the economy's productive capacity has broadly been protected and there may be minimal scarring effects. Policy makers have learned from previous crises.

Fiscal and monetary policy will mainly be expansionary until at least 2023 and the public finances will remain in deficit until 2025. Even so, interest rates are likely to remain low and there will be no external pressure to return to austerity policies. Strong employment growth and the removal of once-off Covid-19 supports will see the deficit fall significantly as of 2022, in both nominal as well as per cent of GDP terms. The key to fixing the public finances is to restore employment levels.

Overall, the extent of structural damage to the labour market remains unclear but scarring should not be as severe as during the great financial crash as there is no equivalent sectoral collapse akin to the structural collapse in construction post-2008. Labour market conditions should rapidly improve over the next two years with employment growth of close to 11% in 2022. Even so, unemployment levels will still be elevated, at around 8% of the labour force (circa 200,000), by the middle of 2022. We expect it will be end-2023 before the labour market is fully or almost fully recovered.

Wage and employment growth will vary from sector to sector but average headline wage growth in 2022 will be low and perhaps negative as many of the new or restored jobs will be in low paid sectors. Wage increases for existing jobs should be in the region of 2% in 2022. Price inflation will remain positive over the next two years. However, NERI's baseline view is that it will average well below 2%, despite the strong upward pressure from domestic demand over the next 18 months. We project inflation at between 0.5% to 1% in 2021 and 1.2% to 1.7% in 2022.

Risks

There are a number of risks to the outlook. Virus mutations could lead to further lockdowns and the global economy cannot recover until vaccinations are available in the global south.

The unwinding of the government's pandemic supports is another risk. The scale of business insolvency is difficult to predict and could be severe. A badly managed debt crystallisation process (e.g. back-taxes, rent arrears) could push firms over the edge. Also, savings have been concentrated in higher income households and it may be that the bounce-back in spending will be more muted than we expect.

In addition, there is residual uncertainty over the long-term disruption caused by Brexit. Finally, international changes in the taxation of multinationals will have consequences for Irish public finances and the ability to attract foreign direct investment. While welcome from a tax justice perspective, the international tax reforms will necessitate the development of a more rounded industrial strategy.

Outlook for Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland economy experienced a sharp and steep fall in economic activity in 2020. The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index fell by over 13% in the second quarter of 2020, before bouncing back to 15% growth in the third quarter. The second lockdown led to a further deterioration of 1.4% in the final quarter of the year. The Northern Ireland economy ended 2020 3% smaller than at the start of the year.

The recession experienced in 2020 was very different to the economic crisis that followed the great financial crash over a decade ago. That recession was much more gradual, but also more sustained and ultimately larger. Over the 5 years from the beginning of 2008 to the end of 2012, the economy shrank 6.3%, that is more than double the contraction of 2020. The crash of 2008 was also not followed by a swift rebound, and the

Northern Ireland economy never regained the ground that it lost during that recession.

Whilst the crash of 2008 was a very different economic event to the pandemic-induced slowdown of 2020, we can learn a lot about the difference in the policy response. The financial support provided by the state to workers and businesses stands in sharp contrast to the austerity which prevailed after 2008.

While government support may have maintained a recovery in output, the picture for jobs and employment remains very much uncertain. The recovery as it is will falter over the next few months and sustained government support will be key in determining the duration of this crisis. This is especially the case for employment.

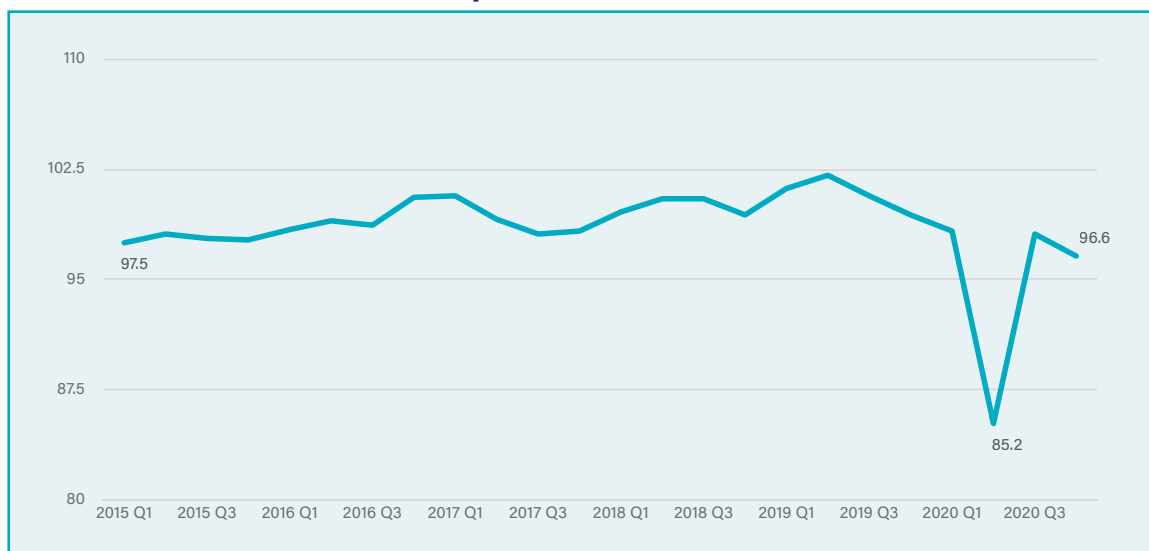
Northern Ireland's unemployment rate was quite low before the onset of the pandemic. We know that this is impacted by lower levels of participation in the labour force in Northern Ireland. However, the increase in the unemployment rate in 2020 was relatively modest given the economic circumstances that have prevailed. This is because the Covid-19 Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) kept people in their jobs, if not at work. As the chart below shows, uptake of the CJRS gives a more accurate picture of the health of the labour market during that period.

As the chart opposite shows, the number of people on the CJRS peaked at 240,000 in June 2020. In contrast, the number of people officially counted as unemployed over the same period was 32,000. The CJRS therefore prevented an explosion in unemployment, but as we move toward recovery, we will need just as much support for workers in industries which will struggle to return to business in the aftermath of the pandemic.

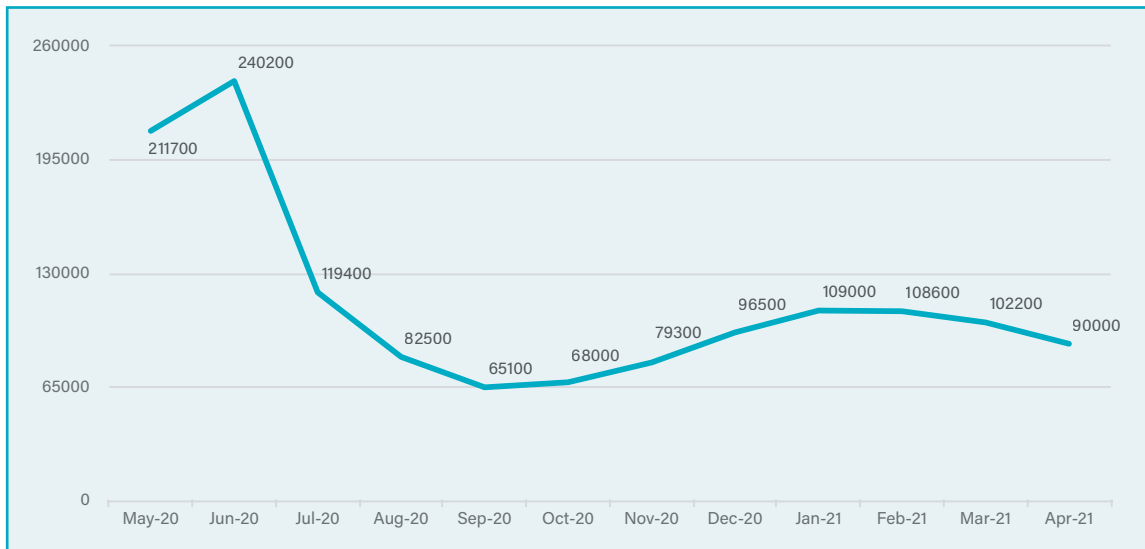
During the period of lockdown there was significant change in the composition of jobs in the economy. Whilst the redundancies in Retail and Hospitality might have been expected under the circumstances, other sectors such as Administration suffered significant reductions as well. Sectors such as the Arts will also require significant government support over the coming months as we navigate the remaining public health restrictions.

Moreover, the experience of this crisis has brought into sharp focus the inadequacy of the system of financial supports that were in place for people who become unemployed. We cannot simply return to pre-pandemic set of supports. Building a new system of social security North and South will be key area of research for the NERI over the coming months.

Chart 1: Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index 2015-2020



**Chart 2: Northern Ireland CJRS furloughed employments
May 2020- March 2021**



As a part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland has the lowest rates of income replacement for people who become unemployed in the OECD. Ireland also has one of the lowest replacement rates. People who earn the average wage can expect to receive payments of up to 60% of their previous earnings in Germany and 70% of previous earnings in the Netherlands. In Ireland the rate of earnings replacement is 28%, while for the UK it is only 12%.

The financial supports that have been put in place by both governments may seem extraordinary in the context of existing payments but, if anything, we are just moving toward the European average.

Beyond the Current Crisis

Universal Basic Services

In the NERI 3rd long-read, we discussed the potential expansion of Universal Basic Services (UBS) in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. We can think of UBS as synonymous with the provision of free or extremely low-cost public services – education, health, affordable housing, public transport, child and adult care – available to all and funded by taxation.

Universal right of access to basic services should be on the basis of need and not ability to pay. Expanding the provision of UBS is one of the most structurally important policy shifts that any government could take from an inequality and cost-of-living perspective. Such a policy programme would amount to a de-commodification of the affected range of services. As such, it would diminish the importance of market-based income.

There are other potential benefits. For example, expanding UBS to ensure accessible public transport for all helps countries reduce their carbon emissions in a manner consistent with Just Transition principles. Expansion of services such as affordable childcare would have a positive impact on potential economic growth by reducing barriers to labour force participation. We can think of UBS as critical investments in the social infrastructure needed for economies and communities to flourish.

An expansion of UBS is eminently affordable and a realistic goal, albeit with a significant caveat. In both jurisdictions the implied increase in public spending would require tax reform and an overhaul of social security. Ultimately, meeting the triple bottom line targets of growth, inequality and sustainability will require a re-imagining of the bounds of the welfare state.

Collective Bargaining

In the NERI 5th long-read, we discussed the impact of trade unions and collective bargaining on economic outcomes such as employment, productivity and inequality.

A good economic performance is a situation where unemployment is generally low, and where employment and real hourly wages are both high. There does not appear to be any empirical evidence of tension between trade unions and economic growth. Indeed, some of the best performing countries over the last four decades have been countries with powerful unions.

In terms of distribution, the labour share of GDP – the piece of the pie that goes to workers – should be higher where trade unions are stronger because unions increase the bargaining power of labour. Overall, collective bargaining is associated with lower levels of market inequality.

Collective bargaining facilitates a 'high-road' approach to competitiveness that is based on driving productivity, rather than the 'low-road' alternative of simply cutting labour and other costs. Where there is worker voice and a constructive relationship, better working conditions can be exchanged for higher productivity. In addition, multi-employer coordination of collective bargaining has a positive impact on long-run economic performance because such coordination impedes downward wage competition and forces firms to improve productivity in order to pay wages.

The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have 'voluntarist' collective bargaining systems. Voluntarist systems generally produce inferior economic performance compared to the organised decentralised systems in place in much of Central and Northern Europe. This suggests an obvious direction of travel if we wish to reform our collective bargaining systems.

A Trade Union Wage Premium

The role of trade unions in determining pay has diminished over the last three decades in most developed economies. However

collective bargaining still plays a crucial role in many sectors of the economy with many employers still negotiating pay through bargaining process. In our 66th working paper we sought to find out whether collective bargaining agreements still deliver for workers in Northern Ireland in terms of higher wages. What we found was that even after adjusting for many other factors such as age, gender, education and qualifications, workers who collectively bargained still received a higher wage.

Too often the trade union wage premium in Northern Ireland has been misinterpreted as a public sector premium. In our 70th working paper, we tackled this misconception head on. Our research showed that the gap between public and private sector pay is reduced by over 83% by accounting for observable differences in personal, job and workplace characteristics. Once again, the research showed that trade union membership and collective bargaining has much more explanatory power in determining pay than the public sector.

This has important implications for public policy and should end the obsession that many commentators and politicians have with the size of Northern Ireland's public sector. Previous studies have identified a causal link between collective bargaining and productivity both at the firm and sectoral level. Workers covered by a collective agreement may earn more but employers clearly also gain from these arrangements. Northern Ireland suffers from chronically weak productivity growth, and skills underutilisation is a key contributor to that. Collective bargaining therefore represents a significant policy lever open to the Northern Ireland Executive to encourage a more coordinated and integrated approach to industrial development in the region.

Reforming Taxation and Public Spending

In our 67th working paper we examined options for reforming tax and spending in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of

Ireland. We found that, prior to the pandemic; the UK and the Republic were both low revenue and low spending states in comparison to other Western European countries.

Public spending in the EU averaged 46.6% of GDP in 2018. In contrast, public spending in the UK was just 40.9% of GDP, while public spending in the Republic was just 40.6% of Gross National Income.

At the same time, the Republic had a revenue shortfall of over €2,200 per person compared to a group of developed European states, while the UK showed an even larger gap of €4,900.

On the revenue side the gap is explained by significant shortfalls under the heading of social contributions levied on employers. An important consequence is that both jurisdictions have weak social insurance systems.

In the paper, we argued that both states should (a) increase efficiency and promote equality by significantly curtailing the use and generosity of tax expenditures, (b) overhaul the social insurance system and pay for enhanced benefits through higher charges on employers and, (c) increase taxes on property and wealth as this would be highly progressive and these types of tax are relatively efficient from a growth perspective.

Finally, in order to increase long-run economic growth, we propose a set of necessary step changes in the level of public spending. In particular, we identify that both states should significantly increase their levels of public spending on education, on childcare services and on public R&D. These are all areas that are vital to long-run growth and where public spending is well below Western European norms.

Converging on Western European norms of tax and expenditure would enable both states to better secure sustainability and improve living standards.

Just Transition

Human generated climate change represents a huge challenge to societies around the world. This requires a significant effort across the island in collaboration with international partners. This coordinated programme can only be led by the state.

In addition, the transition will not be successful, or fair, if the costs of a society wide effort are shouldered by certain workers and their communities. The trade union generated concept of Just Transition demands that workers and their communities must be involved in meaningful and democratic social dialogue to build responses. This entails both plans to manage the transition away from our economy and produce decent work in the new economy.

To this end, the NERI has begun an explicit work stream to inform the beginning of Just Transition efforts. In the Republic of Ireland, we have identified a group of particularly at-risk workers in several sectors which contribute the vast majority of emissions but only a fraction of employment in areas like Agriculture and Electricity production. These jobs are unevenly distributed regionally. This is also borne out in work into Just Transition issues in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has an emissions profile more similar to that of the Republic of Ireland. Its agriculture emissions are just over 27% nearly three times that of the UK. There remain large challenges for emissions reduction in Northern Ireland. Due to its economic and land-use profile, the agricultural sector is not expected to reduce its emissions at similar rate/proportion to other sectors.

Given the scale of the challenge of a transition to a net zero economy, social dialogue which facilitates genuine input by stakeholders into decision making will be vital in this transition. A well-resourced permanent body similar to the Just Transition Commission in Scotland with an ongoing remit to provide practical expert advice and research can take a longer-term

view on economic development and industrial policy while at the same time advising on current issues such as the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland should look to creating a mechanism which facilitates ongoing social dialogue between social partners/stakeholders.

We also note a substantial mismatch in skills, with significant underused skills that could be useful in the green economy. We advocate an approach from government that recognises these skills gaps and provides the support necessary to ensure that workers can avail of these opportunities. As we point out elsewhere in our work, a reformed model of public finances could provide the resources to manage this shift, and a state engaged in dialogue with workers' representatives and communities could ensure effective and region-specific responses in line with the Just Transition.

International experience suggests that a strong state intervention to respond proactively to these risks can ensure a Just Transition for workers. A significant programme of state investment in sustainable infrastructure, enhance public services and research and development could lay the groundwork to realise this potential, whereas an approach that relies on market forces will not be up to the task.

Upcoming NERI work will examine some of the forces which have generated our high levels of emissions and the forces which have prevented us from addressing these issues. This work could suggest policy to break these unsustainable paths and forge a green and just economy.



Tom McDonnell and Paul MacFlynn NERI
Co-Directors

Gender Gaps in Pay

For some time now, both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have laws protecting against unequal pay for equal work, but despite narrowing in recent decades gender gaps in pay remain. Given the persistence of gender pay gaps, several countries have begun to look at the effectiveness of existing approaches and are considering supplementary measures. Indeed, there is increasing acceptance that without policy action, the gender pay gap is unlikely to narrow further.

One of the key mechanisms being used in this regard in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland is pay transparency legislation. In essence pay transparency legislation seeks to force employers to track, report, understand and ultimately explain their gender pay gap. The Northern Ireland Executive is also currently developing a gender equality strategy which is due to be published by the end of 2021.

In an effort to contribute to these policy debates the NERI became involved in work on the gender pay gap in 2020 and thought it worthwhile to go back to the very basic questions of 'What is the gender pay gap?' and 'How do we measure it?'. In this regard, if policy is going to be enacted to track the gender pay gap the NERI wanted to contribute to the debate on how this should be done, by whom and to what end.

The gender pay gap is often depicted as a discrete single, easy-to-understand concept. The reality however is much more complex and so for this reason alongside our more academic work in this area, we have put together an 'Understanding the

gender pay gap' toolkit which is available on our website and which we will be adding resources to over time.

Aside from this, we have also produced estimates of the unadjusted gender pay gap in both Northern Ireland and the



Republic of Ireland for the NERI Report series. This is particularly important work in the absence of national estimates of the gender pay gap in either part of the island. We will be updating these estimates on an annual basis, thus providing the trade union movement with the evidence base to track the gender pay gap using various different measures - such as for example, the gender pay gap in hourly, weekly and annual pay. In doing so, we get under the hood of the issue and are much better equipped in shining light on the different aspects of the gender pay gap.

Pre-Budget Submissions

Building a Shared Future

The Congress Pre-Budget recommendations for Budget 2020, Building a Shared Future (September 2019) proposed additional expenditure of €2.9 billion. This included €800 million for social housing, €600 million for health, €500 million for early years' services and education, €500 million for climate action including a Just Transition, €335 million for social welfare, and €160 million to support workers affected by Brexit.

No Going Back

The Congress Pre-Budget recommendations for Budget 2021 – No Going Back (September 2020) called for the continuation of the wage subsidy and household support measures to minimise the impact of the pandemic on workers and to preserve the economy's productive capacity.

It too recommended additional expenditure of €2.9 billion, including €800 million for social housing, €600 million for health, €500 million for climate action and a Just Transition, €500 million for early years' services and education, and €335 million for social welfare.

The additional expenditure in both years was to be funded by borrowing and new revenue raising measures, including a net wealth tax, bringing PRSI rates for employers and the self-employed closer to European norms, the reduction in tax breaks, and higher taxation of pollutants.

*No Going Back –
A New Deal For a Safe
and Secure Future for All*



Brexit

The UK regrettably left the EU on 31 December 2019 at 11pm. The transition period ended at 11pm on 31 December 2020. A trade and cooperation agreement (TCA) was reached between the EU and UK around Christmas 2020. This very modest free trade agreement provides for free trade and no more. However, the nature of the Brexit as pursued by the UK Tory government has been quite hard.

The trade union movement has been clear from day one. We campaigned against Brexit. We argued that any agreement reached between the parties would be less favourable than the status quo. We argued that anything other than 'as soft as possible' Brexit would be potentially destabilising for Northern Ireland. As far back as 2017 we stated that a harder border on the island of Ireland was unacceptable and that a border in the Irish sea would be equally unacceptable.

Tragically those in Northern Ireland who have demanded a hard Brexit and who had some political leverage at the time to facilitate a softer Brexit, are the very same voices decrying the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol which was agreed by the UK government and the EU some time ago.

In the last 12 months the NIC-ICTU has sought for an agreement between the UK and the EU, one that avoids a cliff edge and crash out. Such an agreement did emerge but it is a relatively poor and modest agreement. In many ways the TCA which has emerged will keep the EU and UK in perpetual negotiations regarding its relationship indefinitely.

We have sought to use whatever means at our disposal in raising the interests of workers across Northern Ireland in the context of Brexit and also seeking to highlight and prioritise the primacy of the Belfast/Good Friday agreement in every situation.

Through our work in Europe Jack O'Connor (former President of SIPTU) and Patricia McKeown (Unison Regional Secretary) who are members of the powerful and influential EESC group have helped to ensure the interests of the people of Northern Ireland and the island as a whole have been on the agenda in Europe. Owen Reidy our Assistant General Secretary is the Ireland member of the ETUC Executive and with other colleagues in Europe has engaged in a number of meetings with EU Commission officials on Brexit related matters.

Closer to home we have worked in particular with our colleagues in the WTUC and STUC in relation to the previous UK Internal Market Bill which would have completely undermined the prospect of an agreement and would have led to a Westminster power grab from the devolved administrations. Our participation in the Equality Coalition and the Human Rights Consortium has led to ongoing reaching out to the bipartisan Irish America lobby over 2020 and there has been regular engagement with Irish government officials.

Our General Secretary Patricia King represents the all island Congress on the Irish government's Brexit Stakeholder Forum, which is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. This has proven a very useful forum as Congress is uniquely an all island body and the General Secretary has been able to voice the interests and concerns of all workers across the island of Ireland directly with the Irish government.

We have also regularly liaised the Shadow Secretary of State for NI. Belatedly the UK government has seen the value in reaching out beyond the political parties and business interests in NI and we have with others in civic society sought to hold the UK government to account regarding the obligations in meetings with the Secretary of State and his new Permanent Secretary.

Earlier this year we found ourselves in the position that yet again we had to call people out for the potential of serious threats being made against port workers at Larne who are legally obliged to carry out customs checks. While there has been some discussion about the role the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council have played in all of this, any prospect or potential possibility of a threat to any worker going about their lawful work must always be called out and we will always support our affiliate unions in this.

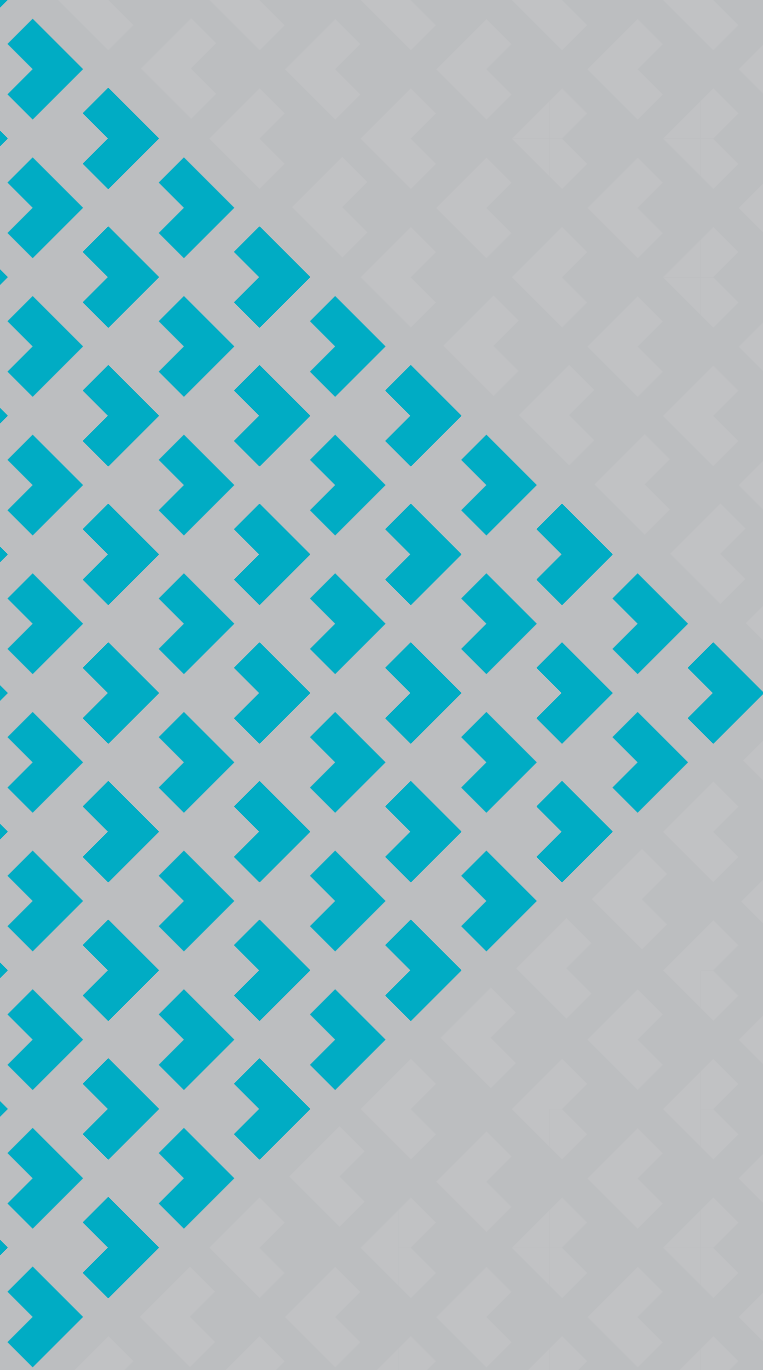
The protocol is imperfect, problematic and far from ideal. However, given the type of Brexit pursued and delivered by the UK government a protocol is necessary. Brexit has undermined the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and the protocol is the product of the very Brexit that the UK government has sought. We will continue to work with others across the community and seek to ensure that no-one's identity is threatened by a protocol and we have advocated the setting up of a wider grouping inclusive of unions and civic society at a 2021 meeting with European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and Minister Michael Gove that could meet with the Joint Committee and work through issues over time. We believe the talks at the Joint Committee must deliver an outcome on the implementation of a protocol that both protects the integrity of the EU Single Market, while regrettably acknowledging that Brexit has occurred. A space and a level of flexibility has to be created and developed to ensure that people across the communities in Northern Ireland see no threat in such a protocol. Politics has to work and local, national and international politicians have an obligation to be honest with their constituents and the public at large and crucially make agreements work.

We have met with four of the five main party leaders in the NI Executive arguing that a space needs to be created whereby the trade union movement in Northern Ireland and other social partners can play their role in seeking to bring people together, build a consensus and ensure that no community feels threatened by any such arrangements. The UK and the EU have an obligation to listen to the various representative voices in Northern Ireland and to make the protocol work for all of the people of Northern Ireland and indeed the island of Ireland. Brexit may have occurred but its legacy and ramifications will unfortunately be the subject of many BDC reports over the years to come.



ETUC DGS Esther Lynch at NIC-ICTU Brexit event





SECTION 2
The Work of
Congress

The Work of Congress

I. Industrial, Legislation & Organising

In February 2020 Congress developed a General Election Charter which laid out the key issues of concern for workers and which formed the basis for our engagements with all candidates during the election campaign period.

Over the past two years the work of Congress has been focused on issues arising for workers relating to the pandemic. In the early stages of the outbreak of Covid-19 Congress engaged with government and put forward proposals for the establishment of the 'Temporary Wage Subsidy' modelled on the Danish example. These were accepted in principle and implemented and have since morphed into the 'Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme'. Congress promoted this approach on the basis of maintaining the employment link between workers and their employer. A 'furlough' scheme was introduced in Northern Ireland.

Alongside the wage subsidy method Congress participated in discussions with government to secure increased payments for those workers temporarily laid off or becoming ill as a result of the virus. Subsequently the Pandemic Unemployment Payments commenced.

The matter of redundancy entitlements came to the fore during this period as Section 12 of the Redundancy Payments legislation was 'frozen' and subject to continuous exclusion throughout the pandemic period. Congress has consistently argued that the withdrawal of this legislative provision for workers is inequitable and in the current circumstances workers should not lose out on this time in the calculation of reckonable service for purposes of redundancy.

The problems that arise for workers in the Republic of Ireland when a company is declared insolvent were highlighted once

again by the closure of the Debenham stores and the shops owned by the Arcadia Group. Congress, on behalf of Mandate, successfully lobbied government to have the full Pandemic Unemployment Payments applied to all affected workers from the outset. Congress, together with Mandate and SIPTU have engaged with An Taoiseach and various government Ministers with a view to overhauling current legislation in order to address the major legislative shortcomings in relation to workers' rights also starkly highlighted in the case of the Clery's and Debenhams liquidations. The problems that arise for workers in the Republic of Ireland when a company is declared insolvent were highlighted once again by the closure of the Debenham stores and the shops owned by the Arcadia Group. The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) have all also issued a report on the matter to which Congress appended a dissenting view in a minority report penned by Michael Halpenny BL, the Congress nominee to the CLRG.



Mandate Debenhams Workers' Dispute

Congress engaged in substantial discussions with both administrations across the island to agree comprehensive measures for a safe return to work. This culminated in the development of the 'Return to Work Safely' Protocol which was a collaborative effort inclusive of the Health and Safety Authority, HSE, and the Department of Health and agreed through the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) process. It included a provision for the appointment by workers of a 'lead worker representative' to ensure that all Covid-19 safety measures are in place in each workplace and to enable workers to have confidence that they could influence the maintenance of a safe workplaces. In Northern Ireland these issues were dealt with through the establishment of a Labour Market Dialogue Forum. The operation of the Safety Protocol and the implementation of the measures in workplaces are the subject of regular review with the General Secretary and Gerry McCormack, Deputy General Secretary of SIPTU, representing Congress on the review committee. The General Secretary also participates in the NSOC committee established to monitor such matters specifically in Meat Processing locations and the Construction Industry generally.

The Labour, Employer, Economic Forum which meets quarterly is chaired by An Taoiseach and attended by senior government Ministers together with Congress and employer representatives. The General Secretary, Kevin Callinan (Vice-President), Joe Cunningham (Treasurer) and Dr. Tom McDonnell (NERI Co- Director) attend. The main issues considered include an overview of the general economic position together with such matters as Housing, Employment Rights, Childcare and Pensions. Following several engagements relating to the issue of Collective Bargaining and the ongoing work in Europe relating to the development of a Directive on the topic, it was agreed to establish a High Level LEEF Group to consider how Ireland, as a member state, can be prepared for the transposition of the measures contained therein.

Congress representatives from across the island participate in discussions on a 'Shared Island Initiative' sponsored by the Department of An Taoiseach.

As agreed by the Executive Council, the General Secretary also participates in the work of the Expert Review Group on Nursing, the Climate Action Advisory Council and the Apprenticeship Council.

Developments in the Private Sector

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the conduct of industrial relations and collective bargaining. The onset of the pandemic meant that for a substantial number of workers their home became their workplace and unions had to find new ways of representing members. In a number of instances negotiations on improvements to pay and other conditions of employment became discussions on how work would have to change to comply with the necessary public health restrictions. The designation of some workers as essential meant that affiliate unions had to ensure that workers health and safety was protected and that their workplaces complied with all of the necessary public health protocols.

The changed circumstances meant the work of the Congress Private Sector Committee would have to reflect those changes.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, the work of the Private Sector Committee was focussed on continuing to provide guidance to unions on pay bargaining at enterprise level. The committee had also begun work on developing measures to implement motions passed at the Congress BDC in 2019. This involved developing a campaign to achieve the objectives of the Congress policy on collective bargaining and looking to improve the capacity of unions to organise workers into unions.

While this work continued after March 2020, much of the work of the committee shifted to responding to the issues that arose for workers as the rate of infections of Covid-19 increased. This varied from seeking measures to protect workers from becoming infected in

settings such as meat factories, to ensuring appropriate income supports for workers who had little or no work, including those in the Aviation and Hospitality sectors. A number of members of the committee participated in task forces established by government to look at how pandemic related problems in specific sectors of the economy might be addressed. For example, the Arts and Entertainment Task Force made specific proposals to government about how issues affecting workers in that sector might be resolved.

In the period covered by this report the Private Sector Committee held ten meetings and the membership of the committee is listed in the appendices of this report.

Low Pay Commission

The Low Pay Commission invited Congress in 2019, 2020 and 2021 to make submissions as part of the annual review of the hourly minimum wage. The consistent themes across the three submissions was that the Low Pay Commission should recommend that the hourly rate of the Minimum Wage should be increased to ultimately become aligned with the hourly rate of the 'Living Wage'.



Ethel Buckley, Deputy General Secretary SIPTU

In 2019 the Low Pay Commission recommended an increase of thirty cent per hour bringing the hourly rate of the minimum wage to €10.10. This recommendation was accepted by government and took effect from 1 January 2020. In 2020 the Low Pay Commission recommended an increase of ten cent per hour bringing the hourly rate of the minimum wage to €10.20. This recommendation was accepted by government and took effect from 1 January 2021. The recommendation to increase the hourly rate of the minimum wage by only ten cents could not be supported by the two Congress representatives on the Low Pay Commission and as a result Patricia King and Gerry Light resigned.

At the request of the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment Congress nominated Michael Taft (SIPTU) and Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin (CWU) to represent Congress on the Low Pay Commission. In July 2021 The Low Pay Commission issued a report recommending that the hourly rate of the Minimum Wage be increased to €10.50. This represents an increase of 2.9%.

Developments in the Public Sector



Kevin Callinan, Congress Vice-President and Chair Public Sector Committee

For the period under review, union members in the Public Sector were covered by the provisions of the Public Service Stability Agreement. The provisions of this agreement provided for:

1 January 2018

1% increase in annualised salaries

1 October 2018

1% increase in annualised salaries

1 January 2019

1% increase in annualised salaries up to €30,000

1 September 2019

1.75% increase in annualised salaries

1 January 2020

0.5% increase in annualised salaries up to €32,000

1 October 2020

2% increase in all annualised salaries

In addition, all public sector members benefitted from changes in the Pension Related Deduction (PRD) which was modified to the Additional Superannuation

Charge (ASC), with the application of thresholds before the ASC is calculated, reflective of the different pension benefits accruing to public servants. During the period under review, public servants who were recruited since 2011 and who were on pay scales with additional two points, benefitted from two separate interventions in their pay scales commencing March 2019 as the means to address this issue.

In early 2019, the PSC Officers commenced discussions with DPER in relation to the effect of the Labour Court Recommendations issued in respect of the Nurses' Dispute with a view to ensuring a consistent approach to such matters across the public service. This commenced the conversation in relation to the creation of a Sectoral Fund which, despite concentrated efforts by the Officers of the PSC, did not materialise with the negotiation of the new Public Service Agreement 'Building Momentum'.

The need for such a mechanism became more relevant consequent on the government's decision to set aside the Public Service Pay Commission.

The onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic – Covid-19, had and continues to have significant and devastating consequences for public servants and their families, from loss of life to serious and critical illness, as well as significant turmoil to normal working and social life. For public servants in the front line, such as in health and in emergency services, the pressures and stresses to continue to work, to preserve life have been enormous. It has always been the case that citizens and societies only realise the true value of their public services in times of crisis. Never in our generation has this been more evident than during this crisis.

The Officers of the PSC continued to engage with DPER both in terms of matters concerning the public service agreements but also importantly in relation to the Covid-19 Return to Work Safety Protocols and also on the Covid-19 arrangements for public servants.

The Public Services Committee negotiated the terms of a new public service pay agreement, Building Momentum, across the latter part of 2020. The main provisions of the agreement provide for the following:

1 October 2021

1% of annualised pay or €500 a year, whichever is the greater

1 October 2022

1% of annualised pay or €500 a year, whichever is the greater

Establishment of a Sectoral Fund initially worth 1% of basic pensionable pay during the lifetime of the Agreement to deal with outstanding awards, recommendations, and adjudications with the option for groups to use the available allocation as general pay round payable from 1 February 2022.

The agreement also provided that issues outstanding from the 2013 Haddington Road Agreement could be addressed. These included:

- An independent body to be established by March 2021 to begin the process of returning to pre-HRA hours. €150m to be set aside to commence implementation in 2022 and remainder to be resolved in a successor agreement to be negotiated in 2022.
- Restoration of overtime, premium payments, tool allowance to pre-HRA 2013 levels.
- Resolution of new entrant teacher issue for cohort recruited after January 2011.

The process, in its entirety, was interrupted by the necessary Covid-19 restrictions, from the consultation piece amongst affiliates and members, to the negotiation itself, and to the manner in which affiliates engaged with and subsequently balloted their membership. However, the proposed agreement was accepted by a significant majority of affiliate members and all unions have conveyed their acceptance of the aggregate outcome.



Forsa More Power to You Campaign



INTO and Forsa Housing for All Lobby



INTO Belfast Pride 2019



SIPTU Early Years Rally

Industrial Sectors

Sectoral Wage Setting

Current legislation provides that legally binding minimum terms and conditions of employment in a sector can be set through the making of an Employment Regulation Order (ERO) or by the making of a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO).

The making of an ERO has its origins in negotiations that are conducted through a Joint Labour Committee (JLC). It is the role of the JLC to periodically negotiate revisions of the minimum terms and conditions of employment and any outcome is given effect through the Labour Court and subsequently by Ministerial Order. By way of example, in the period under review a new ERO for the Private Security Sector has been made which provides for, amongst other things, an increase in pay in 2021, 2022 and 2023. However a legal challenge by some employers in the sector has resulted in the granting of an injunction preventing the implementation of the terms of the ERO.

At the time of writing this report further developments were awaited. It is worth noting that two new JLCs have been established in the period covered by this report. These JLCs are in the English Language School Sector and the Early Year's Sector. Both of these JLCs were established following union led campaigns on behalf of workers in the sector. There are however fundamental operational flaws in the legislation governing JLCs which effectively provide a veto to employers. Congress as part of our campaign on collective bargaining rights is seeking a rebalancing of the legislation.

Developments in the Aviation Sector

The aviation sector has been damaged in the short term as a result of the pandemic. It will be one of the last sectors to fully recover and return to near normal levels of activity. Many workers in aviation have been laid off and those who are still at work are working shorter hours and relying on the wage

subsidy scheme and other social welfare supports. A sub-group of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) was established to recommend measure to ensure that employment in the sector is maintained and workers' incomes supported. A report with detailed recommendations was sent to government and at the time of writing this report we were awaiting a response.

Developments in the Construction Sector

The construction sector was closed for prolonged periods since March 2020. However, the short to medium term prospects for the sector are largely positive. Consequent on the operation of the construction SEO, workers in the sector received a 2.7% increase in pay on the both 2019 and 2020. An application for a review of the SEO was made by the Congress Construction Industry Committee in June 2021. There continues to be a high incidence of Bogus Self Employment in the construction sector and the unions continue to campaign for an end of this practice. Congress has proposed a number of measures to government to address this issue, however at the time of writing this report there does not appear to be an appetite for significant reform.

Public Water Services

The reform of the public water service continues to be the source of strong engagement. In 2021 a government White Paper, 'Irish Water – Towards a national, publicly-owned, regulated, water services utility' was published. The policy paper clarifies the government policy that the public water service will be delivered through a national utility and that this utility should have full control of the service. At the time of writing negotiations had commenced on the issues arising from the policy paper. These include keeping the utility in public ownership, creating a long-term sustainable system of local government, creating an appropriate governance structure for the national water utility and addressing the concerns of the local authority water services workforce.



SIPTU Forosa Community Employment Supervisors Pension Rally

Developments in the Community Sector

In the period under review, the Congress Community Sector Committee have sought to resolve long standing industrial relations disputes; namely the issue of pensions for Community Employment Supervisors and the issue of pay restoration for workers in Section 39 Organisations. In relation to the pay issue for workers in Section 39 Organisations, while there has been significant progress there are still some matters to be resolved. There remains however the long-term structural problem of how pay progression is to be determined. Proposals to settle the pension issue involving Community Employment Supervisors were under consideration at the time of writing this report.

Developments in the Film Production Sector

At the request of Congress, the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) conducted an audit of industrial relations and collective bargaining arrangements in the Film Production Sector. The WRC report made a number of recommendations to improve the conduct of collective bargaining in the sector and to further stabilise industrial relations.

Industrial Disputes - Republic of Ireland

The Table below provides a list of industrial disputes that occurred in the Republic of Ireland that were notified to the Executive in the period covered by the report.

The CSO collects data on the number of disputes that occurred in each year. In 2019 there were 9 industrial disputes, involving over 42,000 workers which resulted in the loss of over 35,000 days due to industrial action. In 2020 there were 6 industrial disputes, involving over 22,000 workers which resulted in the loss of over 21,000 day due to industrial action. Data on industrial disputes can be obtained from the CSO website.

Industrial Disputes

Year	Dispute	Union Involved	
2019	Health Sector	SIPTU/FÓRSA	
	Cork Mail Centre	CWU	
	Irish Pride	SIPTU	
	Go Safe Speed Vans	SIPTU	
	Allpro Services, Contract Services	SIPTU	
	Ryanair	FÓRSA	
	School Secretaries	FÓRSA	
	HSE Mayo University Hospital	CONNECT	
	SK Bioteck Ireland and Vests Ireland	CONNECT/SIPTU	
	GSK	CONNECT	
	Delfin English Language School	UNITE	
	RTÉ	Group of Unions	
	Bord Na Mona	Group of Unions	
	Pfizer	SIPTU	
	Dundalk Institute of Technology	TUI	
	Virgin Media	SIPTU/UNITE	
	Rentokil/Cannon Hygiene	SIPTU	
	MSD Ireland, Cork	SIPTU	
	UPS	CWU	
	2020	Section 39	Group of Unions
RTÉ		Group of Unions	
CE Supervisors		SIPTU / FÓRSA	
MDS Ireland		SIPTU	
Biotech Ireland		SIPTU	
Momentum		UNITE	
Paddy Power		MANDATE	
Mater Private		INMO	
Debenhams		MANDATE	
National Pen Service Dundalk		SIPTU	
National Rehab Dun Laoghaire		INMO	
Premier Periclase		SIPTU/UNITE	
Thermo King		UNITE	
Leo Pharma		SIPTU	
Shannon Airport		Group of Unions	
Sisters of Charity		SIPTU/INMO/FÓRSA	
Estee Lauder		MANDATE	
Dachser		UNITE	
SSE Airtricity Wexford		SIPTU/UNITE/CONNECT	
Banagher Concrete		SIPTU	
Public Health Doctors		IMO	
Ulster Bank		FSU	
2021		Rehab Enterprises	SIPTU
		QUB Creche Workers	NIPSA
		Rehabilitation Enterprise Workers Limerick	SIPTU
		BT	CWU UK
		ESB	SIPTU/UNITE
	Community Supervisors	SIPTU/FÓRSA	

The Workplace Relations Commission

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) continues to play a vital role in assisting unions to resolve disputes and ensuring that the workers can vindicate their employment rights. The WRC provides a range of services including conciliation, facilitation, mediation, adjudication, advisory, inspection and information. The table below shows the level of activity in each of these categories in 2019 and 2020. It should be borne in mind that the activity levels in 2020 were severely impacted by the public health restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a 2021 landmark judgement, the Supreme Court found that operation of the WRC Adjudication Service involved the Administration of Justice.

The judgement has implications for the procedures used in the hearing of complaints, and at the time of writing amending legislation was awaited. The WRC Board consists of two members appointed to represent the interests of workers - Liam Berney and Ethel Buckley. Ethel Buckley replaced Shay Cody in September 2019.

The Labour Court

The Labour Court is the court of last resort in industrial relations and employment rights disputes. The table below outlines the activity of the Court across the main areas of its jurisdiction in 2019 and 2020. It should be borne in mind that the activity levels in 2020 were severely impacted by the public health restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current worker members of the Labour Court are Linda Tanham, Paul Bell, Arthur Hall and Clare Tracey.

Activity	2019	2020
Conciliation		
Conferences	1202	735
Facilitation	255	242
Mediation		
Telephone	751	501
Face to Face	240	81
Adjudication		
Complaints	20939	18969
Hearings	5009	1899
Decisions Issued	3029	1629
Advisory		
New Projects	37	30
Inspection		
Concluded	4808	12,889
Wages Recovered	€3.9 million	€1.6 million
Prosecutions	125	81
Information		
Calls Answered	54,768	52866
Web Visits	2.7 million	2.6 million

Category	2019	2020
Industrial Relations Cases	479	316
Equality Cases	87	115
Unfair Dismissals Cases	223	174
Working Times Cases	78	61
Payment Wages Cases	88	64
Terms of Employment – Information Cases	60	55
Transfer of Undertakings	14	25
Redundancy Payments Cases	29	31
Minimum Notice Cases	42	36
Minimum Wage Cases	9	8
Part Time Working Cases	8	4
Fixed Term Working Cases	9	8

We would like to recognise the huge contribution made by Mr Kevin Duffy BL and Mr Michael Halpenny BL to support the work of the Congress Secretariat, and for their extensive support to the trade union movement over the past two years, all of which has been done on a 'pro bono' basis.

ROI Trades Councils

There are 15 affiliated trades councils operating throughout the country by committed and dedicated trade unionists whose aim is to promote trade unionism locally and provide supports to local affiliates and their members.

A Trades Council Network (TCN) was established in 2018 which has continued to run throughout this period, moving online to meet monthly during the pandemic. This has proved to be very beneficial for all Councils as it provides an opportunity to share, exchange information and learn from different experiences. During the period the Councils have dealt with and discussed a range of issues including an online survey, mapping their county, May Day events, housing, climate change, Just Transition and local government.

A three-week course was developed in partnership with SIPTU College specifically for personnel engaged in Trades Councils on the topics of Campaigning, Lobbying and Organising which also provided practical guidance in these areas to enable Councils develop their own local plans.



Not Remotely Connected flyer

ONE Manifesto for Change was compiled as a summary document to the Congress publication No Going Back detailing the union agenda in a post pandemic world. This gave rise to a webinar series #ONEFutureONEVision which began in October 2020 hosted by individual trades councils in conjunction with ONE Movement on the following topics;

- An Income to live on by Galway Council of Trade Unions
- Development with Decency by Wexford Council of Trade Unions
- Apprenticeships by ONE Cork & Cork Council of Trade Unions
- Not Remotely Connected by Kildare Council of Trade Unions
- GMIT Mayo by Castlebar Council of Trade Unions

A new ezine ONE News started in January 2020 which provides a platform for the Councils to communicate with the wider trade union movement and is issued on a quarterly basis.

Local Trade Union Centre (LTUC)

Work continued on the Local Trade Union Centre project, Chaired by Kevin Callinan, Congress Vice-President, throughout 2019 and into early 2020 to establish two LTUCs in the agreed locations of Sligo & Kildare.

The aims of this project are to promote collaborative working and sharing of resources by creating a vibrant centre which can be accessed and utilised by all affiliate unions, particularly those without a local presence, and provide essential facilities locally for officials and activists such as hot-desking, training and meeting rooms along with other essential services. The creation of such a centre also improves visibility and accessibility for local workers and it is hoped that these centres will become a local focal point for all union work and organising throughout each location.

It is also envisaged that each centre would offer, to local organisations such as student unions, the opportunity to use these facilities and services, thereby creating a space to develop new local working relations.

A commercial property agent was engaged in the Newbridge area to discuss properties to meet our needs and detailed

refurbishment plans were drawn up for such a main street retail unit. Unfortunately, Covid-19 restrictions has limited progress in this particular location but work will resume at the end of Summer 2021.

In September 2020 the Sligo Trade Union Centre was established in the Fórsa premises and will house officials from Connect, Fórsa and SIPTU along with the Sligo-Leitrim Trades Council, whenever offices return to full capacity.



Sligo Trade Union Centre

Similar developments have occurred in Limerick as both Connect and SIPTU work from the Fórsa offices there (pre-Covid-19) and the building will shortly be fitted out with new signage, rebranding it as the Limerick Trade Union Centre.

The LTUC group was reconvened over Summer 2021 to continue our aims to expand our presence, provide a shared collaborative space for unions and increase visibility across the country.

Northern Ireland Trades Councils

The Northern Ireland Trades Councils bring together union activists in Belfast, Craigavon, Derry, Omagh, North Down and Ards, Mid Ulster and Fermanagh, and Ballymena and Antrim.

The councils come together at the Trades Councils Consultative Committee (TCCC) to share information and initiatives, and to develop and coordinate joint campaigns. Examples of some of the activities of trades councils include:

Ballymena and Antrim Trades Council worked with the ICTU Migrant Workers Support unit to reduce racial tensions in the Ballymena area and in lobbying politicians around local cuts to services and job losses.

Campaigning and education have been among the priorities for the Belfast & District Trades Union Council. The B&DTUC actively supported the Alliance for Choice campaign and opposing Housing Executive stock transfers. They ran seminars on precarious employment, the New Decade New Approach agreement and Health & Safety legislation relating to Covid-19 with John Hendy QC as a guest speaker. As a result of the Covid-19 restrictions the B&DTUC organised online programmes to celebrate May Day 2020 and 2021.

Craigavon Trades Council has been working closely with the NIC ICTU Migrant Workers' Support Unit and the Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries project to support migrant workers in their area, to organise in trade unions and build community relations. The CTC organised a successful seminar on the Caledon Lockout - 100 years on.

Opposition to Welfare Reform has been an important aspect of the work of the Derry Trades Council along with organising of a Workers Rights and Social Justice Week. The

DTC also organised an online programme to celebrate May Day 2020, launched a Worker's Charter on May Day, and ran online events to mark May Day 2021.

Celebrations to mark the centenary of Fermanagh Trades Council included an exhibition in the Enniskillen Castle entitled, Struggling Workers: A History of Fermanagh Trade Unionism, and the launch of Labouring Near Lough Erne – a Study of the Fermanagh Labour Movement 1826 -1932.



Joe Cunningham, Congress Treasurer

ONE Movement

Work has continued in both Cork and Galway focussing on union collaboration in awareness raising, capacity building, lobbying and organising. Some of the highlights from the period include;

- ONE Galway had a very successful tipping campaign where the legislation passed both houses of the Oireachtas, which has unfortunately stagnated due to the money message attached by the government.
- ONE Cork Winter Activist Forum on the Miscellaneous Provisions Act.
- ONE Galway Autumn Activist Forum on Minding your Mental Health in the Workplace.
- Media training was organised through Congress for personnel of ONE and Trades Councils in the areas of developing skills for radio interviews, mobile phone filming and editing skills and creating a podcast.

- ONE Galway organised a Christmas Charity Quiz in aid of Pieta House supported by all the unions locally.
- A skills workshop was delivered by ONE Galway on negotiations to ISSU students during their Regional Officer training programme.
- ONE Galway organised a trade union information day in University Hospital Galway.
- Some very well attended General Election hustings were organised in early 2020 by;
 - ONE Cork in the Imperial Hotel Cork attended by a variety of election candidates in the Cork City constituency.
 - ONE Galway in partnership with NUIG Students' Union held on campus at NUIG to which 10 election candidates attended.
- ONE Cork co-hosted the Munster Skills Academy with the ISSU.
- A social media strategy training session was organised for ONE Cork activists to improve the online presence of the group.
- ONE Cork continues to pursue a housing pilot project for direct employment in the Maintenance Department of Cork City Council.

ONE Van

A vintage Citroen HY van was purchased by the group for collaborative organising in Cork City and county. It is envisaged that the van will be utilised by unions, either individually or collaboratively, to meet and chat with workers across a range of sites and sectors in the county such as business parks, shopping centres, school and college complexes. Although delayed, it will begin to be utilised from mid-Summer 2021.

A podcast ONE Conversation 'The Making of an Activist', was launched in June 2021 which goes behind the scenes of the trade union movement and introduces us to the people working to make a positive difference to the lives of thousands of workers. It creates a platform from which we can hear the stories of our activists, what motivates them to get involved and what keeps them going to fight the everyday challenges of the workplace. These are available wherever you get your podcasts from.

ONE Online Social media campaign

As 2020 was the year of moving online, ONE ran online social media campaigns during April-May to remind workers and members



ONE Van



of their rights, the importance of trade unions and to acknowledge workers' contributions to the frontline. It was also important to remain visible and accessible throughout the pandemic and assure members that we were working hard on their behalf, even if it was behind our screens.

Strategic Policy Committees

As the national trade union pillar for nominating to Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) in Local Authority areas, Congress has approximately 68 representatives across the country who sit on variously themed groups dealing with a range of important issues at local level such as economic development, local enterprise, housing, transport, community, climate change & environment, emergency services, planning and waste management.

In January 2020 a seminar was organised for all SPC representatives by way of an introduction to the role and held sessions on the role of local government, understanding the role of the SPC and how to influence the local agenda, understanding Congress policy across a range of key topics and developing a networking platform to support our representatives. Since then, a number of SPC networks have been established on those key themes with representatives meeting every 2-3 months to discuss the agenda, develop the Congress position and identify opportunities to submit motions to progress the trade union agenda.

The Work of Congress Sector Groups

See Appendix 5 for full membership of the Congress Sector Groups.

Retail Sector Group

The Retail Sector Group (RSG) is an all-island sector group comprising affiliate unions with members in the retail and distribution sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent public health response has had an enormous impact on the sector, north and south, with tens of thousands of retail staff becoming de facto essential service workers overnight and operating on the frontline of the public health emergency, alongside workers in health care and other key sectors.

Meanwhile, the pandemic also saw outlets close, a collapse in trade and a significant shift to online trading. It is too soon to determine if the trends seen during periods of lockdown will become embedded patterns across the retail sector to the longer-term detriment of 'bricks and mortar' trading.

But the changes seen have clear implications for staffing levels, for upskilling and retraining into the future.

As part of its work the RSG sought and secured trade union representation on the Retail Consultation Forum, an official consultative body established in 2014 under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, but which had included no trade union voice or nominee.

Following engagement with the Department, John Douglas, the then General Secretary of Mandate, was nominated to the Forum in September 2020. Following the retirement of John Douglas his position was filled by his successor as Mandate General Secretary, Gerry Light.

At the Forum, Congress has argued the case for the establishment of a dedicated Retail Stakeholder Group that would be

New Deal for Retail Workers



tasked with developing a blueprint for the overall sector, in terms of building a recovery post-pandemic and dealing with the impact of online trading.

As the pandemic unfolded, it was decided to highlight the crucial contribution being made by retail and distribution workers and their key role on the frontlines of the public health crisis.

A campaign briefing - A New Deal for Retail & Distribution Workers - was published and launched in December 2020.

The campaign briefing highlighted the need to tackle endemic low pay and insecure work across the sector, north and south and the need to prioritise decent work as part of any recovery.

The briefing received support from the main opposition parties and the Retail Group also met with the Minister of State for Business, Employment & Retail, Mr Damien English TD on the issues raised by the campaign.

The government has repeatedly pledged to tackle the key issues raised by the briefing, stating that better working conditions for all would form part of the post-pandemic recovery.

A campaign webinar was organised (6 May, 2021) to highlight the issues raised, at a national and a European level. Over 80 people registered for the successful event and speakers included: Martin Mahony (Retail Worker, Mandate NEC); Prof Christine Cross (University of Limerick); Dr Maeve O'Sullivan (UCC); Dr Damian Thomas (NESC) and Esther Lynch (ETUC).

The campaign was also referenced by the National, Economic & Social Council (NESC) as part of its Shared Island initiative and, at the time of writing, the Retail Group is looking at how it can be expanded on an all-island basis.

Health Sector Group

In the period under review, the Health Group worked to develop a comprehensive briefing that clearly set out the case for establishing a publicly-funded system of universal health care in the Republic.

The briefing paper was developed to final draft stage, before the Covid-19 pandemic forced a temporary suspension of this work. It is to be hoped that circumstances will allow this project to be revisited and updated in the near future, particularly as the public health emergency validated many of our key arguments in favour of creating a single-tier system of universal health care for all.

More recently, the focus of the Health Group was on the difficulties faced by staff in Nursing Home sector, one that is dominated by private operators and interests and which was very severely impacted by the pandemic.

This led directly to the establishment of an Expert Panel on Nursing Homes and this group was tasked with investigating the serious shortfalls across the sector that were exposed by the pandemic.

The Covid-19 Expert Panel Nursing Homes Report was published in August 2020 and set out a series of recommendations designed to improve both care and staffing conditions in the sector.

From a Congress perspective and in respect of staff, the report made a number of key recommendations and crucially recommended "a review of employment terms and conditions of nurse and healthcare assistant staffing grades in nursing homes" in order to meet future capacity and ensure a supply of qualified staff (Rec 5.7).

The review is to be carried out by the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, within 18 months of the report's publication date.

The Congress Health Group believes the most viable and sustainable means of delivering improved conditions for these essential, frontline staff lies in the creation of a new framework or standard for the sector, such as a Joint Labour Committee.

On that basis, Congress sought engagement with the Department of Health and the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, in terms of the planned review of staff terms and conditions. However, there was a distinct unwillingness to engage on this issue, at official level.

The Health Group has noted that similar obstacles faced the childcare and early learning sector and engaged with affiliates

involved in that successful campaign, in order to draw on their learning and experience.

Arising from this, the Health Sector Group devised and embarked on its own campaign to force a change in position, at departmental and political level, and thereby help deliver positive change for staff in the sector. This campaign was ongoing at the time of writing.

Education Sector Group

In late 2019, the Education Sector Group began work on a briefing paper outlining the necessity to address the funding crisis at third level, as part of the development of a publicly-funded and fully accessible model of tertiary education.

The funding crisis - severely exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic - was originally identified in the 2016 Cassells' report: Investing in National Ambition: A Strategy for Funding Higher Education.

The Congress briefing was published in February 2020 and found that funding levels in the sector had fallen by some 50%, between 2008 and 2019. The briefing coincided with the 2020 General Election and the slow formation of a new coalition government, which eventually took office in June 2020.

The briefing called for the incoming government to act on the deficit by committing to match and then maintain parity with average OECD funding for the sector, a level that Ireland has consistently failed to meet over recent years.

In addition, ahead of the new government taking office, the Education Sector Group called for the establishment of a new Sectoral Forum for further and higher education - comprised of trade union and key stakeholder representatives - to help develop and build "a longer-term vision for the sector and place it on a more sustainable footing for the future."

In September 2020, the newly-established Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science (DFHERIS) called for submissions from all parties on the proposal for a new forum and Congress once again made the case for a 'new form of engagement' across the sector.

The proposal was supported by all key stakeholders and following further engagement between Minister Harris and General Secretary Patricia King, the Department announced that it would establish the new Forum for Further & Higher Education.

However, the Forum has still not been established and Congress will be pressing for this commitment to be delivered on as a matter of urgency.

In the period under review, there has been a considerable level of engagement with the Department around managing the response to Covid-19 in the further and higher education sector, with Congress feeding into the development of sectoral guidelines and protocols on an ongoing basis.

In February 2021, three Congress representatives took up positions on the Covid-19 Steering Group, set up by the Department to coordinate the response across all stakeholders. The three representatives are: Annette Dolan (TUI); Karl Byrne (SIPTU) and Stella Griffin (Fórsa).

They were nominated by the Education Sector Group to represent all affiliates across the sector, with structures put in place to facilitate regular reporting back from the representatives and hear feedback from affiliate unions.

As the national vaccination programme got under way and the public health situation improved, work began on a plan for a wider reopening of the further and higher education sector, under the auspices of Covid-19 Steering Group.

The Congress representatives ensured that views and concerns of affiliates were taken on

board in this process, specifically that the plan (published in June 2021) was drawn up in accordance with public health guidelines and that it was based on ongoing consultation and dialogue, as the situation evolved.

However, Congress did make known its concern over the failure - in the period under review - to develop a national policy on remote working, as this would be a key concern for staff and students alike, on the commencement of the new academic term in September 2021.

During the period under review, the Congress Education Sector also provided input into the new department's statement of strategy and feedback on proposed reforms of the governance of higher education institutions.

In addition, the Group made a joint submission to the consultation process on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy, carried out under the auspices of Solas.

Energy Sector Group

As the issue of climate change has moved from the margins to the heart of political discourse and policymaking, the Congress Energy Sector Group has worked to ensure that the principles and practice of a Just Transition guide and underpin climate policy in Ireland.

The concept of Just Transition arose from within the global trade union movement and provides a comprehensive framework to manage the process of significant economic and industrial change that arises from the transition to a low/zero carbon economy.

It represents the single most effective means to protect jobs, create new employment, generate new opportunities and build sustainable communities, as part of the transition process.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) defines Just Transition as that which:

"...secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a zero-carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, government and communities. A plan for Just Transition provides and guarantees better and decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies."

To date, we have seen political parties and policymakers adopt the language of Just Transition - but very little of the substance.

Yet the Irish government has repeatedly pledged its support for the principles and practice of Just Transition, through the 2015 Paris Agreement, the 2018 Silesia Declaration, the 2019 UN's Climate Action for Jobs initiative.

Indeed, this agreed global framework is underpinned by guidelines for the implementation of a Just Transition from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which stress the centrality of social dialogue, decent work, social protection and skills development.

In addition, we also have a landmark March 2020 report from the National Economic & Social Council (NESC) that sets out a clear roadmap and blueprint for implementation of a Just Transition in Ireland.

President Michael D. Higgins characterised the NESC study as the single most important economic report published here, since TK Whitaker's renowned 1958 work.

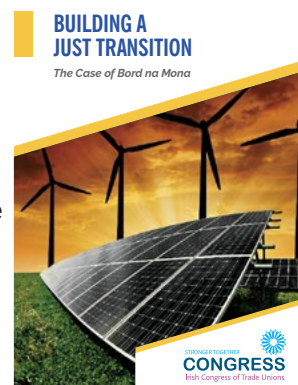
In the period under review, the Energy Sector Group engaged extensively with the Just Transition Commissioner, Kieran Mulvey, following his appointment in November 2019 and ahead of the publication of his first report on the transition process in the Midlands, in May 2020.

In addition, Congress secured seats for two representatives on the Midlands Regional Transition Team (MRTT): Padraig Mooney (Bord na Móna Group of Unions); Liam Cullinan (ESB Group of Unions).

However, the key problem remains that the transition process in Ireland is devoid of an overarching policy or framework within which social dialogue and strategic planning can take place.

The situation in Bord na Móna is indicative of this deeper flaw as, to date, more than 1000 jobs have been lost in the company and not a single, new replacement job has been created, while no significant or properly-scaled training/ upskilling programmes have been put in place and investment remains well short of what is required in the region. It has become a case study in how not to manage a Just Transition.

The Energy Group has utilised every available opportunity to reiterate these essential points, including at two appearances before the Dáil Committee on Climate Action (20 November and 26 November 2019) and in an engagement with the Climate Change Advisory Council (5 November 2020).



Building a Just Transition - The Case for Bord na Mona

A briefing document was prepared in the aftermath of the February 2020 General Election and delivered to all parties engaged in talks on a new Programme for Government (PfG). 'Stop Promising, Start Delivering: Ensuring a Just Transition for the Midlands' was also circulated to the relevant spokespeople in all parties and to TDs in the Midlands.

The Climate Action Bill was the first major piece of legislation from the coalition government, in respect of climate policy. Despite commitments made in opposition and explicit commitments contained in the Programme for Government, it failed to even mention the term 'Just Transition.'

Following engagement with government and the Dáil Committee on Climate Action this was somewhat rectified in later drafts, albeit in a limited manner.

The Energy Group has also engaged with local authorities in the Midlands and with relevant government departments on the planned National Retrofitting Programme, requesting that steps be taken to ensure that the programme would target workforces affected by the transition process in terms of employment and upskilling opportunities.

The Group has also sought engagement with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), as this body has been designated to oversee the retrofitting programme nationally, although no reply had been received at the time of writing.

In addition, there was also engagement with the working group established to explore the continued use of peat moss in the horticulture sector, a decision that could have an impact on a considerable number of jobs in Bord na Móna and beyond. Following representations and submissions from Congress, it was agreed to appoint a union representative to the working group, with Pdraig Mooney taking up that position in April 2021.

In addition, Congress engaged extensively with the consultants engaged by the Department of the Environment as part of process of drawing up a National Just Transition Plan.

The plan is to be drawn up by government and must then be approved by the European Commission in order to access the EU's Just Transition Fund (JTF).

Resources from the JTF are designed to support regions across Europe that are exiting coal or peat production and approximately €84 million has been designated to fund specific, targeted initiatives in the Midlands that will support employment growth and development.

The Congress Energy Group proposed the establishment of a new dedicated Centre of

Excellence for Green Energy Skills in the Midlands, which would target workers affected by the transition, help establish the Midlands as a 'hub' for green energy skills and contribute to growth and job creation at a regional and national level.

The National Just Transition Plan had not been finalised at the time of writing.

In May 2021 the government appointed Patricia King, General Secretary to the Climate Action Advisory Council.

The Work of the Committees

ROI Health & Safety Committee

The ROI Health and Safety Committee (HSC) is reconstituted after every Congress Biennial Conference and following its reconstitution in 2019 the following were elected as officers of the Committee; Pat Kenny, CWU (Chairperson), Rosena Jordan, INTO (Vice-Chairperson), Maeve Brehony, FSU (Secretary).

The Committee works through sub Committees and has formed the following sub committees; Strategy, Safety Reps, Mental Health, Bullying, Legislation, and Workers' Memorial Day.

In 2020 we found ourselves living through a pandemic which continues to have a profound effect on workers' health. If ever we needed reminding, this should serve to emphasise that we should be as concerned with health issues as much as with what is traditionally thought of as 'safety'. The often-ignored welfare aspects of facilities at work have also been highlighted by the arrival of Covid-19. We believe we must now rededicate ourselves to the principles and values that saw the trade union movement take a leading role in Occupational Health & Safety (OSH) in the past.

Apart from Covid-19, we continue to have significant and avoidable workplace fatalities every year. In addition, we have thousands of workers every year who suffer

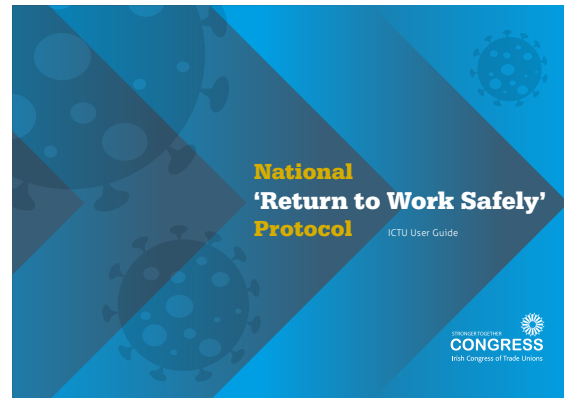
serious injury or illness from their occupations. In recent years, we have become far more conscious of the suffering and consequences of stress and mental illness in the workplace. Better medical research is alerting us to the threats posed by carcinogens and mutagens to workers.

Meanwhile inadequate OSH management in many workplaces continues to lead to serious Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) and far too many avoidable accidents.

We know that good OSH management policies and practices actually work in making workplaces safer and healthier. A critical part of that good management is having genuine consultative mechanisms and having workers involved in creating a safety culture in our enterprises and organisations.

The role of the Safety Representative (SR) is crucial to achieving this. Uniquely among workplace representatives in Ireland, SRs have a statutory basis with functions, entitlements, and protections defined in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Unlike other jurisdictions, including the UK, we do not in Ireland have a specific 'Trade Union Safety Representative.' However, all workers are entitled to select a SR and this has traditionally been done under the auspices of the union represented in the workplace.

Regrettably, we lost many SRs during the years of austerity and recession and there are now many sectors where having a Safety Representative is far from the norm. We are aware of confusion over the role in that many workers assume that they become responsible for safety and health within their workplaces if they take on the SR role, which is not the case. In many other companies, it is clear that there are management-appointed 'SRs' which is against both the spirit and the letter of the law. We think the time has come to reinforce this important role and for trade unions to again take a lead in selecting and supporting representatives to take it on, while also emphasising the importance of OSH as a trade union issue.



National Return to Work Safely Protocol ICTU User Guide

The adoption of the 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' and the subsequent 'Work Safely Protocols' were hugely significant events. The protocols go beyond the current provisions of the Safety Health and Welfare at work 2005 Act in insisting on a Covid-19 Worker representative being appointed in every workplace, rather than this being a discretionary decision only if workers request it. The Lead Worker Representative is an important role. There may, in this, be a unique opportunity to leverage wider acceptance and take-up of the Safety Representative function.

The trade union movement through Congress therefore committed itself to the following principles:

- At the end of a working day, workers have the right to return home free from physical or psychological injury or illness.
- All workers have the right to disconnect from work and to not receive or answer any work-related emails, calls, or messages outside of normal working hours.
- Trade unions, as the representatives of workers, see OSH as a trade union issue in the workplace and recognise that organised workplaces are safer workplaces. The trade union movement commits itself to engaging with the issue at company, sectoral and national level.
- Trade unions see OSH as an area where democracy at work should be manifest, and preventive measures must be

implemented by securing the active participation of workers.

- Trade unions believe workplace health and safety representatives and committees are key to effective implementation and these must be properly resourced and supported.
- Trade unions support accredited training for Safety Representatives as a prerequisite to their being able to undertake the role effectively.
- Trade unions support a strong and properly resourced Health & Safety Authority and see high levels of inspection, alongside other tools, as a critical part of compliance.
- Trade unions believe that companies and their workers must regard workplace health, safety and welfare as an on-going, proactive process and not just an exercise in paper-based compliance.

Sectoral Conferences

Despite plans for a series of sectoral conferences, the only conference to proceed was the Transport and Logistics Seminar which took place on the 27 February 2020. It is intended to proceed with the remaining sectors (Education, Construction, Health Care, Manufacturing, Call Centres/Financial, Retail/Hospitality) from Autumn 2021.

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic clearly dominated the period. The Strategy Group of the Health & Safety Committee had a number of meetings during the period and sought to support the work being done to develop the Return to Work Safely Protocols. Members of the Committee were kept updated with regular information in regard to Covid-19 and the development of the Return to Work Protocol.

Various pieces of work were done in relation to the way occupational safety was being impacted by the virus. The HSC was kept informed on developments and the Congress H&S website was maintained and updating, including preparing new pages for

relevant information and resources pertaining to the virus. In particular, following discussion at a Health & Safety Committee (HSC) meeting at the end of May, the committee decided to identify what resources might be useful to support the work of the Covid-19 Lead Worker Representative. A review was conducted of what resources or training initiatives might be in train amongst affiliates. The Strategy Group of the Committee then worked on the production of a number of documents which included:

- A Guide to the Role of the Lead Worker Representative
- A Complaints Procedure to be used in the event of non-compliance with the protocol
- A PowerPoint Presentation with associated guide to be used to explain the role of the LWR

A new Covid-19 Section was designed and published as part of the Congress Health & Safety site. All the key resources including the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the checklists and templates provided by the HSA, the Congress Guide to the protocol and associated video, together with all the new resources, were uploaded to this site. In addition, a list of reliable links to other sources of information and support was published.

We also liaised with the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and provided regular updates on various aspects of the response to the pandemic in Ireland as contributions to their Covid-19 member state briefings. We participated in and chaired a number of sessions of conferences and seminars arranged by ETUI in relation to Covid-19, and the status its designation as an occupational disease in Ireland.

We also participated in a network and online seminars organised by the World Health Organisation which provided updates on various aspects of the pandemic. We supported various online training and information events organised by affiliated unions and trades councils on Covid-19 and the role of the Lead Worker Representative.

HSC Submissions

The HSC made a number of submissions during the period. These included:

- Fitness Check of the EU legislation with regard to Endocrine Disruptors.
- Recommendations on Occupational Exposure Limits for various chemicals in regard to the updating of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive.
- Revision on the Biological Agents Directive (including the classification of SARS-COV-2).
- Submission to the Irish government to have Occupational Health & Safety adopted as a fundamental right in the ILO's framework, in support of a campaign by ITUC.
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Amendment) Bill 2020 (a bill to have Covid-19 designated as an occupational disease and thus directly reportable to the HSA). Committee members also gave evidence to a joint Oireachtas Committee meeting on this subject.
- The status of Covid-19 as an Occupational Disease (OD) in Ireland.
- Congress recommendations on the strategy for the HSA for 2022 to 2024.
- The Committee also contributed to a number of other submissions made by Congress that had an OSH dimension.

HSC Publications

In addition to the various documents developed in support of the Work Safety Programme, The HSC also published 'Trade union OSH Principles' referred to above, a substantive guide to the new Bullying & Harassment Code of Practice, and Guidelines on Mental Health.

Workers' Memorial Day 2020

It was decided to focus on Covid-19 and the contributions of front-line workers for Workers' Memorial Day 2020. This was consistent with a decision of the ETUC Health & Safety Committee. The commemoration took the form of an online ceremony which took place at the Starry Plough in the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin, with the participation of President Higgins.

Five workers were chosen to represent all frontline workers directly fighting Covid-19 or providing essential services to sustain those of us at home. The workers involved were nominated by CWU, Fórsa, INMO, Mandate and SIPTU and included a nurse, a cleaner, a postal worker, a retail worker and fire brigade/ambulance worker.

The ceremony was filmed in advance on 27 April 2020, as were contributions from the General Secretary Patricia King, and a musical piece. The resulting video was broadcast via Facebook and YouTube on the morning of IWMD at 11:00. A video of the event on YouTube has since had in excess of 1,500 views.



Workers' Memorial Day 2021

An online event was also arranged for IWMD 2021 due to Level 5 restrictions being in place. The commemoration took the form of a wreath-laying ceremony at the Garden of Remembrance, involving the participation of Minister Damien English, who has responsibility for health and safety, the recitation of a poem, specially written for IWMD, by two Health Care Workers from Connolly Hospital in Dublin, and a recording of a message from Dr Mike Ryan, Director of WHO's Emergency Programme who had agreed to support Congress in marking the day.

These three elements formed a video presentation, which was broadcast at noon on the day via the Congress website and YouTube. The video can be viewed on YouTube.



Wreath laying at Garden of Remembrance to mark Workers' Memorial Day 2021

Congress developed a social media campaign based on the adoption of twibbons (a twibbon is a brand overlay that sits over the top of your Facebook or Twitter profile picture) and frames for use with Twitter and Facebook profile pictures respectively. This campaign was widely supported by affiliated unions and also by IBEC, the HSA and NISO, among others.

NI Health & Safety Committee

The Health and Safety Committee met during this period and provided valuable feedback and insight into the many issues facing workers and trade unions.

Based on this feedback, Congress continued to press HSENI to provide guidance on various matters including the safety of pregnant women in relation to Covid-19.

Health and Safety Guidance and the Strategic Engagement Forum

As part of the work under the strategic engagement forum, Congress worked with other stakeholders to develop robust

Practical Guidance on Workplace Safety – 'Working Through this Together' (which can be accessed at www.ictuni.org).

Workers' Memorial Day in Northern Ireland

IWMD was marked in April 2020 and April 2021 by an online social media campaign calling for a minute's silence at 11am on 28 April. The minute silence was widely observed and gained considerable traction on social media.

Health and Safety during Covid-19 Reps Survey

In late 2020, the NIC ICTU Health and Safety Committee issued a survey to all affiliated unions to gather the experience of health and safety reps, this was the first comprehensive survey issued to health and safety representatives in Northern Ireland. It was a particularly important year to gather information relating to workplace health and safety, given that the period covered 10 months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Safety Reps were asked to identify their 5 main workplace safety concerns (excluding Covid-19). Not surprisingly, the top issue was stress with 84% of reps highlighting stress within their top 5 concerns. Overwork also featured highly, cited by just under half of reps with bullying/harassment, concerns about display screen equipment, harassment, violence or verbal abuse and working alone all being considered significant hazards.

The survey asked a number of questions about what action employers were taking to mitigate risks posed by Covid-19.

The majority of reps (92%) said their workplace was open for workers, in other words, either some or all of workers were working from their usual place of work.

Whilst the large majority of reps said that their employer had updated their risk assessment to take account of the additional hazards posed by Covid-19, 14% of respondents either didn't know or said that their employer had not updated their risk assessment, a not insignificant percentage given the repeated guidance issued by public health that specific Covid-19 risk assessments should be carried out. More worrying, over a third (36%) said that there had been no union involvement in the Covid-19 risk assessment.

Working from Home Guidance on Health & Safety

Congress produced guidance on working from home from an employment, health and safety and equality perspective.

The guidance also examined the issues connected with monitoring and privacy and surveillance noting that the trade union movement has become increasingly concerned to hear of the growing number of employers using software products to measure workers' keyboard and mouse usage, web browsing activity, and to monitor for keywords or topics in workplace chat channels. Practices that facilitate employers to watch over remote workers, such as requiring a laptop camera and microphone to be always on and at the ready for

supervisors spontaneously checking-in that they are actively working, are also disturbingly not uncommon.

The use of surveillance products and practices must comply with the transparency requirements of data protection law and not breach your right to privacy in the workplace. These practices should also be the subject of negotiation and agreement with you and your trade union. Covert workplace surveillance should only happen in extreme cases, such as if there are grounds to suspect criminal activity or serious malpractice, and only for a limited period of time.

ROI Retired Workers' Committee

The Committee drafted a pre-Budget submission to government setting out their priorities for 2020. The Secretary, Margaret Browne, represented retired members at the Department of Social Protection Pre-Budget Forum in Dublin Castle which was attended by the Minister and her senior officials. Margaret took the opportunity to highlight the Committee's budget priorities in the session.

When the general election was called in January, members engaged with and supported the Congress General Election Charter, the SIPTU-led Stop 67 campaign on the pension age, and Raise the Roof.



Congress Retired Workers' Seminar 2019

The Committee held its 2020 annual seminar over two days in February at the Communications Workers' Union (CWU), Dublin. The event was, as always, very well attended by retired members from across the island. The topics discussed covered financial abuse, housing, population ageing, the role of retired members in our unions, to name but a few.

Weeks later, Covid-19 arrived on our shores. When it became apparent that we would be living in lockdown for an extended period, the Committee seamlessly moved meetings online under the Chairmanship of Jimmy Whelan and with assistance from Natalie Fox.

A special meeting was held to discuss a Private Members' Bill making its way through the Oireachtas - The Industrial Relations (Provisions in Respect of Pension Entitlements of Retired Workers) Bill 2020.

The restrictions on travel necessitated the 2021 annual seminar becoming a webinar. It was divided over two extended lunchtime sessions in Spring and Summer. The first session was led by the Northern Ireland Committee and focused on the pandemic and its impact on older persons. The second was led by the Committee in the Republic and focused on positive aspect of ageing and celebrated the contribution older people make to their communities.

A submission for Budget 2022 was prepared and the Committee remain committed to, amongst other things, winning agreement from the government to establish a Commissioner for Older Persons.

NI Retired Workers' Committee

The Retired Workers' Committee (RWC) continued its campaigning in person and online under the Chair-ship of Margaret Galloway (PCS). The committee is actively represented on the National Pensioners Parliament at a regional and UK level. Meetings and lobbying continued via Zoom after the pandemic forced many age activists to shield at home. These restrictions ironically helped establish refreshed relations with colleagues in the

RoI RWC, and each committee took the lead in delivering two online Age Seminars in early 2021.

First held in Dublin in February 2016 the Age Seminar has become an annual fixture, alternating between Belfast and Dublin. The seminar has been addressed by trade union leaders, academics, guests from the UK NPC and the NI Older People's Commissioner.

A regular speaker who appeared at the 2020 seminar held in Dublin just before the lockdown, was Padraig Yeates, who delivered his near-annual history talk before dinner for all of the delegates. Other speakers came from Age Action, Alone, Safeguarding Ireland, QUB/ARK and the Nevin Economic Research Institute. There were speakers from trade union campaigns for pension justice, including Deborah Yapicioz of the UNISON Women's WASPI group & Ethel Buckley from SIPTU's Stop 67 campaign.

Other trade union speakers in 2020 and 2021 included Congress President Gerry Murphy, Vice-President Kevin Callinan (Fórsa), Phil Ní Sheaghda (INMO), John Douglas (Mandate), Brendan Ogle (Unite), Owen Reidy and Patricia King. As ever, the leadership of the trade union movement were subjected to rigorous but mannerly questioning from retired members, moderated by Margaret Galloway and Jimmy Whelan.

The two online seminars held in 2021 featured the NI Older People's Commissioner, the Chair of the NPC and academics from QUB/ARK, the TILDA study on ageing, Age Action, and Volunteers Ireland.

Student Engagement

Skills Academies for Future Leaders

In its third year of operation the Skills Academy for Future Leaders is a jointly partnered event between Congress and the ISSU which aims to reach second-level student activists by providing them with a platform to network with each other, engage



Skills Academy for Future Leaders

with the movement and build capacity through skills and learning workshops. It has been hosted every year for the three days by Congress, Fórsa and SIPTU for 50 residential students. The event was opened by Owen Reidy, and panel and political discussions took place on climate change, education reform, young people in politics and the working world, along with skills workshops on negotiations, surviving the workplace, campaigning, interviewing, media and taking solidarity actions.

An inaugural Munster Skills Academy took place over two days in Fórsa and SIPTU premises in Cork in February 2020, modelled on the national academy, panel discussions took place on local activism, LGBT+ school experiences and ISSU regional outreach and growth, with skills workshops in surviving the workplace, apprenticeships and vote@16 campaign.

Although Covid-19 restricted a physical academy, it went online in Summer 2020 for 70 student activists over two days, and covered standard topics including equality in activism, young people in politics and workshops in working rights, direct provision and sustainability and climate change.

Student Information Project

The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) and Congress agreed to collaborate on an information and awareness project aimed at second-level students, in particular senior cycle, to appraise them of their employment rights, outline the supportive role of trade unions and how they can exercise those rights. Informed by a student focus group, the project has developed posters, leaflets and pocket information cards to be disseminated through the ISSU school and student council network. The project and materials will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Education Resource

As part of the 1919 Commemorative Project a teaching resource was developed entitled Labour, Gender and Class in the struggle for Irish Independence 1917-1923 which is available online.

Student Engagement Northern Ireland

The Irish Second Level-Student's Union (ISSU) has been approached by second-level students in Northern Ireland to assist and guide them in setting up their own union. The ISSU are seeking the support and collaboration of Congress in Northern Ireland along with our Northern affiliates, to work with this new organisation in a similar manner as happens in the Republic, and our support for such an initiative has been communicated back to them.

Youth Committees ROI and NI

The Congress Youth Committees, in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland remain a vital part of the work and organisation of Congress and continue to play an active role in trade union and progressive campaigning. While the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the work of the two Committees, their role in ensuring a vibrant and sustainable trade union movement will be more important than ever following the pandemic.

The committee in Northern Ireland has been active in addressing a variety of social and economic issues facing young people. The committee Chair is Steven Harvey (NIPSA). Given the decline in young trade union membership of recent years, recruitment remains a priority in the youth committees work and a point which is enshrined within their strategic planning document published in 2017.

The committee in the Republic of Ireland had begun the process of identifying their key objectives in late 2019 and this work will recommence following the 2021 BDC. The Chair of the Committee is Lisa O'Donoghue (TUI).

Eimear Allen is the Youth Committee observer on the Congress Executive Council.

II. Northern Ireland

The Work of the NIC

This section deals with the work of the Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) over the past two years.

The NIC has been well served by the committed and efficient leadership of Gerry Murphy, whose two-year term as NIC Chair technically ended in 2020. However, the outbreak of Covid-19 in mid-March 2020 meant the planned NIC-ICTU BDC scheduled for 25/26 March was postponed. The NIC ICTU BDC was eventually hosted online on 23 March 2021.

The immediate consequence was that the mandate of the 2018-20 NIC membership would be extended until the postponed BDC could be safely arranged. At the April meeting of the NIC, the first to be hosted on Zoom, it was agreed that the four incoming members be invited to attend as observers until the formal election of the NIC after the postponed

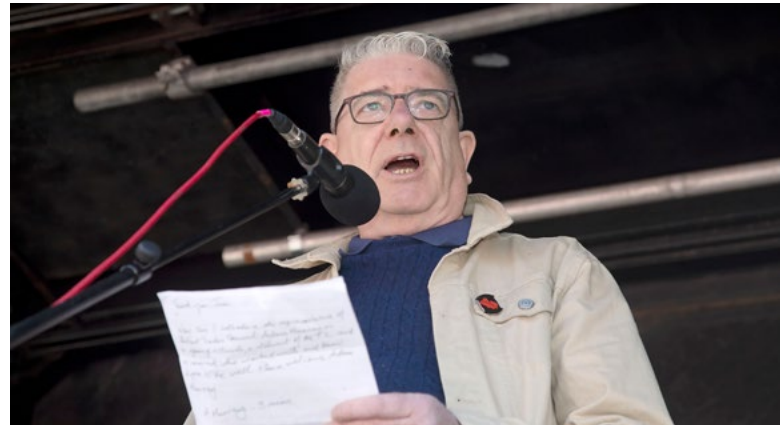


*Alison Millar,
Congress Vice-
President*

BDC. It was also agreed that the occupants of the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair continue until the BDC was held. The sole nominations for those incoming officer posts, Alison Millar and Paddy Mackel, agreed to this and Paddy joined the F&GPC to attend its meetings.

These four incoming 'observer' NIC members participated fully in the activities and discussions at that and all subsequent NIC meetings: John-Patrick Clayton (Unison); Angela Moffatt (Prospect); Helena McSherry (NIPSA); and Gayle Mathews (PCS).

Every regular monthly meeting of the NIC was held virtually as were a number of special briefings on Covid-19 regulated matters, such as the Engagement Forum.



NIC Chair (2018-20) Gerry Murphy

Campaigning

The Northern Ireland Labour Market Engagement Forum and Social Dialogue

It says something about the state of politics in Northern Ireland that it took a crisis such as the Covid-19 global pandemic for the NI Executive to agree to establish a social dialogue forum. In April 2020 the Executive agreed through the Minister of the Economy to establish the NI Labour Market Engagement forum. The forum's membership includes six senior trade union representatives, nominated by the NIC-ICTU. It also has senior employer representatives along with representatives from key state agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Public Health Agency and Solace (representing district councils). The forum is chaired by the Labour Relations Agency.

In many ways the establishment of the forum was a success of the NIC ICTU **Better Work Better Lives** campaign. This multi-layered campaign lasted

approximately 3 years and ultimately demanded that Northern Ireland needed a robust meaningful forum for social dialogue, similar to what pertains in Wales and Scotland, where the trade union movement could seek to influence key elements of public policy in the interests of workers.

Initially the forum met weekly. It was tasked with developing an agreed list of essential workers who could go to work during the pandemic. Working groups were established to facilitate these tasks and our recommendations were endorsed by the Executive. Later in the pandemic in the Summer of 2020 when things were getting better and re-opening was beginning, the forum developed a comprehensive safety guide for workers and employers on a safe and secure return to work. Again, the NI Executive fully endorsed the forum's recommendations.

The forum has been a useful vehicle whereby the trade union movement could bring issues directly up with the NI Executive given that the two Junior Ministers in the Executive Office were participating members of the forum. Members also received regular briefings on the Economy from the DfE Permanent Secretary who attends and reports on all Covid-19 related labour market matters.

By early 2021, It had become clear to the participants of the forum that the NI Executive in general (and the then Minister for the Economy in particular) believed there is little purpose in continuing with the forum. The participating organisations are looking at proposals to reshape and review the forum post Covid-19. It remains to be seen whether there is the appropriate and necessary political appetite for this across the NI Executive, or the incoming Economy Minister.

NIC ICTU continue to participate in a range of other forums and bilateral engagements, including the LRA sponsored Employment Roundtable and a number of other entities. The Employment Roundtable brings together employers and unions and allows us to explore issues that affect employment rights and engage with officials from the

Department of the Economy from time to time. Trade unions across all sectors are currently promoting the Joint Declaration of Protection and in discussions with employers on the current model of employment rights in Northern Ireland.

New Decade New Approach Agreement

The New Decade New Approach Agreement of early 2020 facilitated the much-needed return of local devolved government to Northern Ireland. Prior to the agreement, NIC-ICTU was part of a civic delegation that met leaders of all the political parties in Stormont imploring the parties to come together, to compromise and restore devolution to NI in the interests of all of the people.

The agreement which was negotiated by the two governments and five participating parties in the NI Executive had something in it for everyone, but not everything in it was acceptable to everyone. It was and is very much a document which requires compromise. The Agreement deals with a variety of issues and themes that dominated previous agreements, and elements that require the NI Executive to form part of a Programme for Government. These include transparency, accountability of a functioning Executive, the petition of concern, the sustainability of the institutions, a Programme for Government, rights language and identity and agreement review and monitoring.

There is a very important clause around the whole issue of workers' rights in the Agreement. Page 44, Clause X, of the Agreement is worth quoting in full. It is an excellent paragraph on Workers' Rights and what needs to be done. It says:

"There will be an enhanced focus within the Programme for Government on creating good jobs and protecting workers' rights. The parties agree that access to good jobs, where workers have a voice that provides a level of autonomy, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions, should

be integral to public policy given how this contributes to better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty."

The key focus of the NIC ICTU and the entire trade union movement must be to use whatever influence we have to make these words a reality. To that end we have engaged with a range of political parties in the last two years on this matter including the Alliance Party, the Ulster Unionist Party, Sinn Fein, the Social Democratic and Labour Party along with the UK Shadow Secretary of State for NI, Louise Haigh MP. Unfortunately, the then leader of the DUP and previous First Minister, Arlene Foster refused during this period to engage with the leadership of the trade union movement. This type of approach from an office holder is unacceptable in any democracy. Organised labour in Northern Ireland has a right to articulate the interests of its members and we will not be silenced nor side lined. We have a significant contribution to make towards both the society and economy in Northern Ireland and we will not be prevented from making it.

It has been clear to us that the current incumbent (at the time this report was written) has little intention in addressing this clause in this mandate. Therefore, we will be making this crucial clause a central issue in the forthcoming Assembly elections. It is vital that the ambitions in Page 44 Clause X of NDNA become a reality and are part of an agreed Programme for Government in the next mandate. While the Covid-19 crisis has derailed the implementation of much of the New Decade New Approach, it is critical that we hold the two governments and the five party NI Executive to account so that they implement all of the Agreement and prioritise the issue of workers' rights which would benefit over half a million workers in Northern Ireland.

NIC Campaigning Activity around the 'No Going Back' Paper

No Going Back, the theme of our conference, comes from the detailed paper which Congress developed in May 2020.

'No Going Back - towards a safe and secure future for all' charts the society and economy we want to campaign for, but crucially also highlights how that society and economy can be paid for. It is an all island policy paper, albeit recognising the two jurisdictions. The paper outlines the trade union movement manifesto as we emerge from the pandemic.



Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary

The NIC ICTU has been campaigning and promoting the themes and policies within No Going Back. The issue is a standing item on all NIC monthly meetings.

Since publication NIC ICTU has:

- Engaged with a range of Northern Ireland affiliates executive or regional committees where we have made detailed presentations to the lay leadership of those affiliates.
- Met with the leadership of a range of political parties promoting the policy. Parties included the Alliance party, the UUP, SF, the SDLP and the NI Greens.
- Met with the Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Louise Haigh MP. This outreach to Westminster is critical given that many of the funding policies are reserved matters.

- Met with a range of employer bodies promoting NGB including, CBI, IOD, Chambers NI, Manufacturing NI and the British Retail Consortium NI.
- Met with a range of civil society and other progressive organisations including the Equality Coalition, the Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group, Social Change Initiative, amongst many others.
- Presented our policy at the cross-party Stormont Finance committee and the Stormont Economy committee.
- Met with the Fiscal Commission of NI set up by the Minister for Finance on the funding issue.

Public Engagement & Organisation

As the largest civil society organisation in Northern Ireland, Congress has engaged with elected representatives at all levels, from local councils to the NI Assembly, the Executive, the Oireachtas and Westminster, in the many forums set up to address the economic and social policy issues, including lobbying political parties on protecting jobs and workers' rights, such as at Harland & Wolff when it faced closure and the retention of limited opening of large retailers on Sundays, as well as the Agricultural Wages Board, threatened with abolition by the Agriculture Minister.



Trade Union Support for Journalists Barry McCafferty and Trevor Bernie at Belfast High Court

Other reasons to lobby and engage with policy makers and Executive ministers included:

- Sector specific protections for workers during the pandemic
- Childcare
- The NI Bill of Rights
- Abortion legislation and access to services
- Equal Marriage
- Public Sector Pensions after the UK Supreme Court's 'McCloud' decision
- Opposition to wage freezes across the public sector
- Zero-Hour Contracts and low pay in the private sector
- Collective Bargaining rights
- Supporting journalists facing legal prosecution Trevor Bernie & Barry McCaffrey
- Threats to Journalists from paramilitaries.
- Attacks on PSNI officers and support staff

NI Employment Relations

The Roundtable comprises a representative of the four lead employer organisations (Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses and Institute of Directors) and four representatives from NIC ICTU; Patricia McKeown, Alison Millar, Jackie Pollock and Owen Reidy. It is hosted and facilitated by the LRA.

The Roundtable seeks to engage, advise and influence government on all matters relating to employment/industrial relations.

The Joint Declaration of Protection is a commitment by employers and trade unions to promoting and maintaining good and harmonious working environments. It is supported by a call for a fully resourced programme of action, comprising, among other things, an active communications strategy and training plans for making the declaration operational.



NHS strike 2019-20 Pickets at Royal Victoria Hospital



Health Service strikers December 2019

Industrial Disputes

The NIC supported and assisted affiliates in a range of industrial disputes, redundancy situations and disgraceful threats to workers. These included:

- NHS Pay strikes
- UU and Queen's Universities lecturers
- QUB crèche staff
- Harland & Wolff
- FE colleges
- Hovis Bakery
- Allied Bakeries
- Teacher and support staff
- Newry, Armagh & Down Council
- SONI
- NI Civil Service
- Bombardier
- Wrightbus
- Banking and Financial Services
- Port and customs staff at Larne and Belfast ports
- Journalists
- Retail workers, NHS staff and Transport workers

Education Trade Union Group

The ETUG is made up of teaching and support staff unions organising in the education sectors. It meets regularly to develop education policy matters for the NI

trade union movement, and was extremely busy during the pandemic as the schools became contentious sites over the public health discussion.

Speaking after its first meeting on Zoom, ETUG Chair Denise Walker welcomed on behalf of the unions, the assurance by the Education Minister Peter Weir that 'no decisions have been taken by the Executive on relaxation of the current lockdown, and when decisions are made, they will be based on expert scientific and public health advice,' and that his 'Department will consult and engage with all relevant parties, including school leaders and trade unions on behalf of staff as this work progresses.'

Trade unions representing principals, teachers and support staff had a lengthy and rewarding discussion on the staggering scale of disruption caused to our education system by this pandemic, while acknowledging that this crisis has exposed many underlying problems. The common determination among all unions was that their members and the children they are entrusted to educate cannot have their health endangered by re-opening the schools before key measurements are taken and precautions fulfilled.

It was agreed to commence drafting a document detailing concerns and proposing measures aimed at ensuring that when schools re-open, they function safely and

fairly for each child. This set the template for a series of engagements with the Education Minister and the NI Assembly Education committee, a series of letters and written submissions, and direct evidence with the committee in Stormont and online. This worked in parallel with union representatives on the existing bargaining structures with DENI and the Education Authority.

There was extensive media work running alongside this work, as schools became a fulcrum of debate on the whole direction of society's response to Covid-19, often in the face of bad faith arguments from individuals and interest groups with a new-found interest in the life-chances of deprived children.

In late Summer 2020 (and later in January 2021), the ETUG was embroiled in discussions with DENI on the safe re-opening of schools, and a range of logistical problems such as meal provision, cleaning and transport, not to mention the specific and serious problems facing SEN provision. However, as the pandemic ground on, the lines of communication between management in DENI and the EA improved, with weekly meetings with unions, and expert input from other state actors, such as the Public Health Agency.

A focus in the new year was the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine to education workers, with a priority made for SEN teachers and support staff. This was the subject of correspondence with the Health Minister, with the support of health trade unions.

In the course of 2020, and the postponement of the NIC BDC in March, the ETUG was reconstituted with Denise Walker (GMB) stepping aside as Chair, and Maxine Murphy-Higgins (NASUWT) taking the helm. Alan Law (NIPSA) became Vice-Chair. The ETUG continues to meet regularly and often at short notice in response to fast-moving developments, as well as fulfilling resolutions passed at the NIC ICTU BDC in March 2021.

NI Health Committee

The Health Committee continues to provide guidance and make recommendations to the NIC on matter of development in health policy and strategies within the Department of Health, the Health Trusts, HSCB and arms-length bodies. The composition of the committee is contained in Appendix 5 of this report.

In Autumn and Winter 2019/20, most health unions were balloting for industrial action on pay and workforce issues, culminating in an unprecedented wave of strikes which forced NI's political parties to agree to return to sharing power in Stormont in order to resolve the strikes. The agreement of the parties to prioritise a just and fair resolution was front and central to the NDNA deal and was the first action of the new Health Minister Robin Swann. And then, just as industrial peace began to settle in, the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

The Health Committee continued to meet regularly online through the pandemic, with interventions in the media, and with the NI Assembly Health Committee. The structures of partnership between trade unions and management established under the Delivering Together strategy endorsed by the NI Executive alongside long-standing bargaining structures, ensured that the trade union voice on workers' concerns and ideas were heard as the health crisis evolved over the year. The Health Committee Chair and Vice-Chair's interventions continued with the support of over 12 affiliated unions representing workers across the Health and Social Care sector.



Dooley Harte who represents Trades Councils on the NIC

Health unions were represented on both the Public Health Agency and the Department of Health's Transformation Advisory Board (TAB). In addition, the myriad Transformation Implementation Groups (TIGs) had union representation reflective of the specialisation of each TIG.

Before the outset of the Covid-19 health emergency and since detailed submissions were made to the Assembly Health Committee on the significance of workforce planning as an integral part of the transformation programme underway across the HSC. The transformation of health services will only be successful in delivering better health outcomes for the public where it has the support of the workforce. However, workforce planning and engagement had not been sufficiently mainstreamed into the transformation programme and the workstreams. The pandemic has once again highlighted both the incredible effort and dedication of HSC workers but also the need for investment in and reform of the entire system in a way that will genuinely benefit the public and the workforce.

A significant and longstanding concern for health unions pre Covid-19 was the impact of health inequality on our members, their families, their communities and the wider health and social care system. Significant and persistent inequalities exist between the most and least economically deprived areas, such as lower life expectancy, increased suicide rates and higher preventable death rates.

To address this situation, health unions believe we need a model of public health which requires not only radical reform of the health and social care system, but also a radical change in the way all government Ministers and Departments take their share of responsibility for the health and well-being of all the people. Health outcomes are not just the responsibility of the Department of Health, HSC Trusts or the various arms-length bodies. A significant, cross-governmental approach is required to tackle health inequality.

From the early stages of this pandemic, unions were concerned by the approach

that has been taken to Covid-19 Testing and Contact Tracing, as well as the situation with regards to the provision of PPE and guidance on its use across acute settings, community settings and within private sector social care. Engagement with trade unions on these issues by the Department of Health, the responsible health bodies and individual employers has not always been consistent and our views have not always been acted upon.

In anticipation of a surge of Covid-19 cases, numerous services were stood down across HSC Trusts. It is clear that the standing down of HSC services will have a significant negative effect on already unacceptably long waiting lists, as acknowledged by the Health Minister. Key principles for the restarting of services should include:

- Co-production and co-design approaches be used by HSC Trusts when considering how to restart services. Trade unions as representatives of the workforce should be involved from the earliest possible stage.
- Protocols for staff returning to workplaces and/or being redeployed should be developed and agreed with trade unions.

There were additional concerns expressed around the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities, with calls to put measures in place to support BAME workers who are potentially at greater risk from Covid-19, including within the private care home sector where there can be significant groupings of BAME workers.

Another issue which arose at the commencement of the pandemic was the availability of abortion services in all parts of NI. In conjunction with the NIC ICTU Women's Committee and allies in civil society, we sought assurances from the Health Minister that he would act quickly to provide this vital healthcare to women and girls living in Northern Ireland. We asked the Minister to commit to a timeframe for commissioning to get under way as a matter of urgency, and to commission the full abortion services

provided for in the regulations laid by Northern Ireland Office to ensure these are resourced and accessible to all who need them. Health unions have united with allies to lobby the minister and his department to ensure that this recent and long overdue service is implemented and then defended from those who would restrict access to this human and health right for NI's women.

May Day

In 2020, Belfast Trades Council worked with Northern Visions TV to create a full day of programming celebrating May Day and workers' struggles past and present. It included contributions from musicians and activists, and included programmes on:

- Belfast Cleaning Society - a workers' cooperative
- An interview with Francis Devine on the books he co-edited with Patrick Smylie, *Left Lives in Twentieth Century Ireland*
- Robert Ballagh - *Talent in Solidarity*
- A news programme with interviews of workers
- May Day music and archive films of previous May Day parades
- Derry Trades Council also organised an online programme to celebrate May Day 2020 and launched a Worker's Charter on May Day

May Day 2021 events in Belfast, organised by the Belfast Trades Council and supported by NIC ICTU, were mostly online with a week of talks, film and music events including:

- Film on protest movement on Chile - Santiago Rising
- Talks on the Indian Farmers and Workers Strike, and Covid-19 and the Magic Money Tree
- Discussion on Challenging Racism Here and Now

The events closed with a key note evening Celebrating Trade Union Victories and discussing how we won, which focused on the campaigns to Save the Shipyard, the Health Workers' Pay dispute, and the Newry, Mourne and Down Council dispute on pay equality.

In place of the traditional May Day Rally and March a cavalcade, bedecked in union flags, took place through Belfast City Centre on 1 May 2021.

Derry Trades Council ran a week-long programme of events on Workers' Rights and Social Justice along with Derry City and Strabane District Council. The themes for the DTC programme were history, education and increased access for communities.



NIC banner nears end of May Day Parade

Highlights included exhibitions, talks and live online events, and a local workers survey was launched.

All-Island and East-West Engagement

North/South Committee

While the North South Committee has not been as active during this period, (many of the agenda items of the N/S committee have been considered at the executive meetings), nevertheless the committee is a useful forum for the leadership of the movement to come together and focus in detail on some specific issues. Not surprisingly Brexit, the NI Protocols and the ramifications of both have been the key topics on our agenda.

The General Secretary led a delegation to a meeting the Irish government's Shared Island Unit. Given that Congress is such a significant and unique all island entity representing the interests of nearly 800,000 workers we believe we have a particular contribution to make in this area.

The membership of the committee includes, Gerry Murphy (President), Kevin Callinan (Vice-President), Alison Millar (Vice-President), Joe Cunningham (Treasurer), Steve Fitzpatrick (CWU), Phil Ní Sheaghda (INMO), Eoin Ronayne (Fórsa), John Boyle (INTO), Anne Speed (Unison), Patricia Mc Keown (Unison), Paddy Mackel (UCU), Denise Walker (GMB), Patricia King, General Secretary and Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary.

The Council of the Isles

The Council of the Isles trade union federations continue to meet annually virtually despite Covid-19. Notwithstanding the calamity of Brexit, the relationship between the trade union federations remains as strong as ever and the international labour links are more important than ever.



Owen Reidy and Frances O'Grady at the opening of the Connolly Centre in Belfast in 2019

The Council met for one single day session in May 2020 and May 2021 during the last two years. In addition to there have been bilateral meetings between federations on the fringes of ETUC meetings and we have addressed the Welsh TUC 2021 conference.

The Congress delegation for both years was Patricia King, Gerry Murphy and Owen Reidy. The themes and issues of both years were quite similar given the Covid-19 pandemic and they included:

- Covid-19 trade union responses
- Trade union plans and actions to rebuild a better society and economy
- Political elections in a number of jurisdictions and consequences
- The Just Transition challenge
- Equality issues

The Congress delegation used the opportunity to explain in detail our Congress policy paper 'No Going Back!'

In conjunction with the Council of the Isles initiative the NIC, the STUC and WTUC have met on several occasions focusing on activities in the three devolved states and this has been an excellent opportunity to share analysis, experience and learnings.

III. Equality, Social Policy and Labour Market

Labour Market

Labour Market Advisory Council

The government re-established the Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC) in early 2020. This had been set up in 2013 to advise on labour market issues but had ceased to be convened around 2017 when the government considered Ireland was approaching 'full employment'.

Six places were allocated to IBEC and employers, one to Congress, one to the INOU, and three to ex-ESRI, DSP and OECD officials, the last of whom chairs. Six ex-officio members represent the Departments of the Taoiseach, Social Protection, Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Public Expenditure and Reform. DSP provides the secretariat.

The LMAC met six times between May 2020 and June 2021. At the start, Congress had the terms of reference amended to acknowledge Ireland's commitments under SDG 8 to promote decent work (including labour rights).

In June 2020, the LMAC agreed by (majority) 'consensus' a paper Preparing for Economic Recovery. This included a dissenting paper from Congress as the majority paper did not adequately address Ireland's relatively average employment performance pre-pandemic, decent work and the role of collective bargaining in improving labour market outcomes.

LMAC has also similarly expressed views on a government-commissioned review of Ireland's public employment services, on Pathways to Work and on work placements.

In early 2021, two LMAC sub-groups were established, on the evaluation of programmes

(Congress is on this) and on 'employers' engagement' No employers have (yet) joined the evaluation group while the employers' engagement group was reserved mainly to other invited employers.

LMAC papers are not taken as necessarily reflecting the opinions of all members nor as having the endorsement of the organisations that the members are drawn from but there is considerable reluctance from some members and officials to even acknowledging the issues that Congress raises.



Gareth Murphy FSU and Dr Michelle O'Sullivan University Limerick at launch of 'Right to Disconnect'

Social Policy

Introduction of a genuine Short-Time Work Scheme

Congress initiated and engaged extensively with government in late 2019 on the introduction of a genuine short-time work scheme (STWS) to minimise the impact of Brexit on jobs.

While Ireland has had 'short-time work support' for a number of years, this is essentially a form of Jobseekers' Benefit for

workers - with sufficient contributions - whose employers put them on a shorter working week.

The Congress proposal was modelled on the most effective STWSs in place in Germany, Austria and the Nordics, which protect jobs in vulnerable but viable firms, maintain workers' net incomes at up to 100% in some cases (thereby also supporting demand in areas most at risk) and allow workers take part in training. Similar to these countries' programmes, it was to be implemented through collective agreements, thereby enabling it to meet the needs of both employers and workers so that all parties re-emerge better placed.

Despite some initial interest, government effectively disengaged on the proposal once the Brexit deal was agreed in late 2019. However, some elements of the proposal were evident in the government's wage subsidy schemes introduced when the pandemic hit. Congress has continued to press the government to transform these into a genuine STWS.

Sexual Harassment at Work

Ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November 2019, Congress surveyed 2,000 union members with experience of sexual harassment in the workplace. The purpose of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of workers' experience - the type of incident, the perpetrator and location, the barriers to reporting, and the impact sexual harassment has on the lives of those affected.

The findings were widely reported in the media. On the basis of our work, Congress was invited by the CSO to assist them to develop a national survey to measure the prevalence of sexual violence.

General Election/State Pension Age

The increase in the qualifying age for the State Pension became the most important deciding factor for voters, after health and housing, in the General Election in February 2020.



SIPTU Stop67 Campaign

Congress had vigorously resisted the loss of income for workers in their retirement and had long been raising public awareness of this injustice. We had raised it repeatedly in our discussions with Ministers since 2011, when the Pension Act which provides for the increases came into effect. We had also called for the planned changes to be scrapped in our pre-Budget submissions and raised the issue repeatedly in the media. Congress also fully supported the SIPTU STOP67 Campaign.

Following on from a commitment under the Programme for Government, the Act increasing the pension age was repealed, and a Pensions Commission was established. Congress is represented on this Commission by Ethel Buckley, SIPTU and member of the Congress Executive Council.

Congress made a comprehensive submission to the Commission on our recommendations for a fair, flexible and sustainable pension. We will continue to campaign until we reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Covid-19 Income Supports

The outbreak of the Covid-19 in March 2020 was an unprecedented economic shock as well as a public health emergency. Congress played a key role in developing and closing anomalies in the emergency income supports for workers affected by the crisis.

When the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed it was immediately evident to us that many workers would not be in a financial position to follow public health advice if infected or required to self-isolate, given the low coverage of paid sick leave.

Following our representations to the Taoiseach, government introduced an enhanced Illness Benefit at €350 per week and waived the six unpaid waiting days. 144,774 workers benefited from this payment between March 2020 and March 2021.

When a lockdown was imposed, 389,000 welfare applications were made in the first fortnight by workers temporarily laid off (the equivalent of a 19-months claim load). Congress assisted in designing a payment that could be administered quickly and was sufficient to absorb the income shock from the sudden loss of employment. The Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) was the result.

Prior to the outbreak, there were 2.5 million people in the workforce. Over half, a total of 1,320,837 workers, benefited from the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and the Wage Subsidy Scheme between March 2020 and March 2021.

Statutory Sick Pay

A Congress campaign for legislation to make paid sick leave mandatory won cross-party support and overwhelming public support - a national opinion poll found 9 in 10 (87%) people believe workers should have a legal right to sick pay from their employer.

Government has committed to legislating for statutory sick pay. Our priority is now to deliver a fit-for-purpose scheme - one which does not displace current collectively agreed sick pay schemes; which will improve working conditions and protect workers' health and incomes; replace the current voluntary approach to sick pay with a legal obligation on employers to provide a minimum period of paid sick leave; bring workers' basic entitlements into line with European norms.

SICKENING!
THE STATE OF SICK PAY IN IRELAND

Ensuring workers are well at work is a basic issue of safety and simply the right thing to do. When workers are unwell they need to rest to recover. When sick workers stay home they reduce the spread of infection and the risk of workplace accidents; they keep others safe.

Almost all European countries legally require employers to continue to pay a worker's wage (in full or in part) if sick and unable to work for a period. If the sickness lasts longer than the sick pay entitlement, Illness Benefit is payable to eligible workers through social insurance.

Workers in Ireland have no entitlement to sick pay. Sick pay is at the discretion of the employer. Workers without paid sick leave have to work unwell or claim Illness Benefit.

Voluntary sick pay isn't good enough. ICTU is calling on politicians in all political parties and none to guarantee workers a basic right other European workers have –

MAKE SICK PAY MANDATORY

CONGRESS
Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Mandatory Sick Pay by the Employer in High-Income European Countries

- Netherlands – 2 years @ 70% of a worker's wage
- UK – 28 weeks @ 20% of the national average wage
- France – 60-90 days @ 90% for first 30 days
- Austria – 10-16 weeks @ 100% for the first 6-12 weeks
- Germany – 6 weeks @ 100% of a worker's wage
- Belgium – 30 days @ 100% of a worker's wage
- Norway – 16 days @ 100% of a worker's wage
- Sweden – 2 weeks @ 80% of a worker's wage
- Finland – 9 days @ 100% of a worker's wage
- Ireland – 0

Budget 2021 reversed the austerity increase in unpaid waiting days for Illness Benefit from six to three, a longstanding Congress demand.

Introducing statutory sick pay will be a fitting legacy of the pandemic and bring Ireland into line with basic workers' rights in the rest of Europe.

Remote and Flexible Working

Before Covid-19, one in 20 workers worked mainly from home. Following the arrival of Covid-19, remote working went mainstream. Almost 40% of paid hours worked in the economy were performed from homes across the country during the first lockdown as the number of remote workers skyrocketed to more than one in four of those in employment.

For some workers the experience of working from home was fraught. Unsuitable accommodation, longer hours, and feeling isolated were among the top issues raised with union reps. But, for the vast majority it has been a positive experience and there is a huge appetite among members for a blend of remote and office-based working into the future.

Congress recognises that when done right, remote working can improve workers' work-life balance, make them happier and more productive. Remote working benefits business, society and the environment. Our priority is with ensuring workers' rights are preserved when working remotely and that protections keep pace with changes in ways of working.

Congress developed a remote worker's guide on employment rights and successfully campaigned for legislation giving workers a right to request remote working. We drafted a Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect in partnership with the WRC and business representatives. We had government commit to a review of the expense allowances for remote workers.

Not all jobs can be done remotely. Congress is calling on government to introduce a statutory right to request flexible work, not just remote work. For many workers, especially those with caring responsibilities or with a disability, access to flexible arrangements is vital to be able to enter employment and remain in employment. We have raised this in our discussions and submissions to government, and in evidence to the Citizens' Assembly. On our advice, the Assembly recommended government 'introduce a statutory right to reasonable access to flexible working'. If we are to tackle gender inequality in the workplace, have a more diverse workforce, and close the gender pay gap, normalising flexible working is key.

Right to Disconnect

While the push from unions around the world, including in Ireland for a 'right to disconnect' from work-related calls and email out of hours pre-dates the pandemic, the large swathes of workers suddenly thrust into remote working catapulted the issue up the political agenda. Much of the same technology that enables us to work from anywhere, makes us reachable at any time.

A WRC Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect was developed in consultation with Congress and business representatives (IBEC), and came into effect in April 2021.



Patricia King Supporting the FSU Right to Disconnect Campaign

There are three elements to the right enshrined in the Code. The right of an employee to not have routinely perform work outside their normal working hours. The right to not to be penalised for disconnecting. The duty to respect another person's right to disconnect.

Trade unions representatives are closely monitoring its operation and ensuring its full and proper implementation in workplaces as part of our pushback against the chipping away of workers' work-life balance.

Bogus Self-Employment

At the BDC is 2019 a number of delegates highlighted the continuing problem of workers being forced to classify themselves as self-employed. Delegates to that BDC spoke about how they could only gain employment if they were prepared to be self-employed, when in reality they were employees.

If a worker is forced to declare themselves as self-employed they lose out on many of the important benefits enjoyed by employees including all of the rights that are provided for in law such as holidays and minimum pay levels. For employers there are significant financial benefits from engaging in this practice.

Since the BDC in 2019 Congress has continued to campaign for stronger regulation to end the practice of Bogus Self Employment.

We have campaigned and lobbied Oireachtas members and have met with government Ministers and officials to persuade them that this practice is not only hurting workers, but allowing it to continue is costing the taxpayer many millions of euro every year.

In 2021 a meeting of the Labour, Employer, Economic Forum (LEEF) was held to discuss this issue. This meeting was chaired by An Tánaiste, and during this meeting it became very clear to Congress that government did not attach the same level of priority to this issue and seemed content to allow the practice to continue. This position was strongly supported by private sector employers including employers in the construction sector where the practice of misclassifying workers is a particular problem.

In July 2021 the Minister for Social Protection Heather Humphries TD published a revised Code of Practice on Determining Employment Status. It is the view of Congress that revised code is inadequate and we remain of the view that the best way of dealing with this issue is for the State to classify all workers as employees, in the first instance, until proven otherwise.

Equality

Congress continued to pursue the broad equality agenda North and South under the guidance of the Women's Committee and the Disability Committees. Both continued to work jointly on areas of common interest, as well as pursuing initiatives within the two jurisdictions on the island. Congress also participated in an 'Equality on a Shared Island' event hosted by Department of the Taoiseach in 2021.

Joint Women's Committee Work

The Women's Committee organised a National Women's Conference in March 2020 in Whites Hotel, Wexford, just before the island-wide lockdowns.

Entitled 'Realising our Rights: Women Organising for Change', the conference heard from the Congress General Secretary Patricia King, as well as a range of guest speakers. The large part of the agenda was taken up with debating motions covering topics including violence and harassment in the world of work, childcare, balancing caring responsibilities with work, parental leave frameworks and tackling insecure work.

Women and Leadership

Building on motions to the Congress Women's Conference, Congress held a Women and Leadership course in early 2020, just before the first lockdown.

Women from across the island gathered together in Congress House in Dublin to work with facilitator Isobel Butler to explore themes of leadership in the trade union movement and in society. Participants also heard from a range of trade union leaders about their experiences – speakers included Congress General Secretary Patricia King, former Congress President Sheila Nunan, Congress Vice-President Alison Millar, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary Ethel Buckley and Fórsa President Anne McGee.

The lockdown put plans for a second face-to-face course on hold, however working with Isobel Butler, an online version of the course was launched in Autumn 2020. Whilst it could not replicate the face-to-face experience, it nevertheless had excellent participation and good feedback.

Participants noted that the course was

"Well facilitated with lots of practical activities that got people talking in the room. Covered a lot of leadership theory but in a very meaningful way"

"I found the course extremely helpful, it drew attention to different types of leadership models, what makes a good/bad leader, also made the participants think, talk, respond and report."



Women's Conference, March 2020

International Women's Day 2021

The Women's Committee decided to build on the theme of leadership and organise a webinar to mark International Women's Day 2021.

The webinar focused on Leadership, Women and Change – in work and in society and Women and Leadership within the trade union movement – a reflection.

Speakers included Congress General Secretary Patricia King, Chairs of the Northern Ireland Assembly Women's Caucus and Green Party leader Clare Bailey, Chair of the Oireachtas Women's Caucus Fiona O'Loughlin, as well as contributions from a range of affiliates.

Members of the Women's Committee and affiliates also supported the events planned by Reclaim the Agenda for IWD across Northern Ireland. These included an online 'march' on Saturday 6 March as well as social media campaigns. Frontline workers were celebrated including NHS workers as well as those working in retail, transport, care homes and domiciliary care workers.

Women's Council of the Isles

The Women's Committee participated in the Women's Council of the Isles in October 2019 in London as well as a virtual Women's Council of the Isles event in February 2021. The 2019 Col brought together women from Congress, TUC, STUC and WTUC Women's Committees to share information and best practice.

In 2021, the STUC Women's Committee organised a virtual event featuring a panel discussion with the General Secretaries and Executive Council members from each of the countries as well as presentations from the Women's Committees and invited guests. Topics covered included Domestic Abuse Leave; Abortion provision in Northern Ireland and the rise of problem gambling for women.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Congress was instrumental in organising a Women's Council of the Isles Joint Statement to mark 25 November 2020, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against

Women. Signed by each of the General Secretaries from Congress, TUC, WTUC and STUC, the statement noted:

'Domestic abuse is always a workplace issue and trade unions know that work is often a place of safety for women experiencing domestic abuse.

Every year sees mounting evidence of the devastating impact of violence against women but 2020 has been particularly difficult. During the lockdowns, which extended to all parts of the UK and Ireland, many women were stuck at home with the perpetrator of violence, unable to escape to, what for many women, is the safety of their workplace.

That's why we are calling on our Governments to immediately ratify ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Article 18 of the accompanying recommendation specifies measures which should be taken to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence at work including leave for the victims of domestic violence, flexible work arrangements and the inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments.'

ROI Women's Committee

The Women's Committee Officers for the period were Margaret Coghlan (Fórsa) Chair; Alison Regan (SIPTU) Vice-Chair; and Melissa Brennan (Fórsa) Secretary.

The Committee continued to meet on a regular basis and to work closely with our colleagues in Northern Ireland. The Covid-19 crisis meant we had to quickly adapt to meeting online and all of us soon became experts in the various platforms, recognising the importance of continuing to meet and support each other. Our topics of course included the gendered impact of the crisis, including: flexible working and working from home; the issue of women returning from maternity leave being excluded from the WSS; threats to the EU gender equality strategy; increased risks for women in prostitution; leadership initiative, the menopause and violence against women. On

the latter Sarah Benson, Director of Women's Aid, spoke with us highlighting the increased incidence during Covid-19 and the need for sustained investment in the specialist domestic violence sector. We subsequently organised a webinar with Minister Roderic O'Gorman regarding the introduction of paid domestic violence leave and supported Congress in making a submission on the proposed legislation.

We were very proud of our affiliates who negotiating workplace agreements on paid domestic violence leave in their sectors and shared these with officials in DCEDIY who are working on the legislation.

The Committee has had a range of guest speakers, including women's groups and academics to inform our thinking on the issue of promoting women's leadership and are planning our work in this area.

We also issued a statement on the ownership of the national maternity hospital, stressing the need to avoid a situation where the ownership and control of the new maternity hospital will impede its complete clinical independence. Women's healthcare must remain the priority and the hospital must provide all healthcare services available under Irish law.

The Committee co-hosted a webinar on the ratification campaign for ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work, including participation by Marie Clarke Walker (CLC and Chair of the Workers Group during the negotiation of the instrument at the ILO) and the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. We continue to campaign for the ratification of the Convention.

We continue to be represented on the National Strategy for Women and Girls strategy group by our Chair, Margaret Coghlan and fed in a trade union statement in relation to the gendered impact of the crisis, including the under-funding of crucial public services; the gap between the value that frontline and service workers bring to society and the low wages—and lack of respect—many earn in return, and WSS

situation for women returning from maternity leave.

We continue to liaise with our sisters in the ETUC Women's Committee and fed into the trade union response to the EC Consultation on gender pay transparency. We also participated in work to ensure that the Commission did not drop commitments to a gender equality strategy which led to an overturning of plans to put women workers to the back of the queue for pay justice in the recovery. The Commission confirmed that the European Commission Work Programme contains commitments to binding pay transparency measures and a European Gender Equality Strategy.

The period also saw the work of the Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality completed and we kept a close eye on this historic initiative and fed into the Congress input to the Assembly. We were delighted that many of our concerns were reflected in the recommendations of the Assembly and will work tirelessly to see their implementation.

We also fed into the Congress Submission on sexual offences act sent to the Department of Justice and Equality as well as a range of other related Congress submissions.

NI Women's Committee

As mentioned above, the Women's Committee organised a National Women's Conference in March 2020 in Whites Hotel, Wexford, just before the island wide lockdowns. Entitled 'Realising our Rights: Women Organising for Change', the conference heard from the Congress General Secretary as well as a range of guest speakers. The large part of the agenda was taken up with debating motions covering topics including violence and harassment in the world of work, childcare, balancing caring responsibilities with work, parental leave frameworks and tackling insecure work.

The NIC ICTU Women's Committee held regular meetings during the period which

proved lively, motivating and a crucial exchange of information and solidarity. The Committee members has continued to provide support to many campaigns including abortion provision, tackling period poverty, addressing issues of domestic abuse in the workplace and supporting positive action around a range of workplace issues including menopause.

The Joint Women's Committee Officers have held regular meetings to coordinate work and plan for the events for International Women's Day 2021.

Equality and Human Rights in Northern Ireland

Despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19, NIC ICTU's equality committees have continued to meet and be active in a wide work programme both before the period of the pandemic as well as during the lockdown of large sections of Northern Ireland.

This period has highlighted the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 has on many vulnerable groups, including women, disabled people and workers in frontline roles, many of whom are in insecure and low paid work.

Key Equality and Human Rights allies

Congress continued to work with our key allies in this period including the Equality Coalition and the Human Rights consortium. This was particularly important as this joint working included a relaunch of a Bill of Rights campaign entitled Make our Future Fair as well as contributing to work on Brexit and Equality and Human Rights.

Abortion

Despite the introduction of long fought for legislation reforming archaic abortion law in Northern Ireland, many months on, the reality for women seeking abortions has changed little.

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulation 2020 came into force on the 31 March 2020.

For the first time the regulations provide a legal framework for abortion provision in Northern Ireland. However, despite this, there is still no commissioned nor properly resourced service available consistent across the Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT).

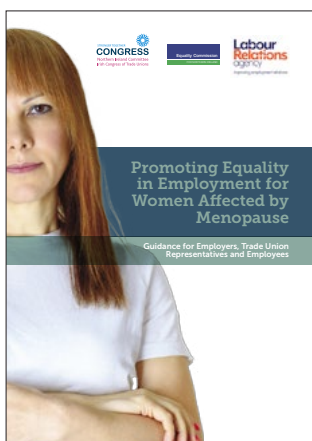
Congress continues to press for a comprehensive commissioned service to enable women to realise their full reproductive rights and has worked extensively through committees, including the NIC ICTU Women's Committee and Health Committee, to support Alliance for Choice in their work.

Domestic Abuse Leave

No one should lose their job or pay because of domestic abuse. As part of a response to Rachel Woods MLAs Private Members Bill to introduce paid domestic abuse leave, we called for victims of domestic abuse to be given additional employment rights. Very often people need to take time off to access legal or financial support and during the working day is the only safe time to do this. A day one right to paid time off from work to access this support, as in countries like Australia or New Zealand, would make a real difference to women's lives.

Menopause Guidance

Working with the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission, Congress produced Guidance for Employers and Employees on the Menopause. This was accompanied by webinars, the details of which are on the ICTU NI Website.



Feminist Recovery Plan

Congress is represented on key policy group the Women's Policy Group (WPG). A major focus of the WPG was the production of an in-depth analysis of the effects of the pandemic on women. The Feminist Recovery Plan was produced in the Summer of 2020 and ran to over a hundred pages long covering health, education, public life, violence against women among other topics. Congress took the lead in writing the chapters on women and work which noted:

Women in Northern Ireland continue to be more likely to be in insecure and part-time employment, and whilst the overall gender pay gap is the lowest in the UK, women still earn on average around 9.6% less than men. Having dependent children significantly amplifies this difference and women responsible for dependent children are more likely to be in insecure, part time work.

Policy failures around family leave frameworks fail all workers but impact disproportionately on women while the lack of affordable child-care, structured to facilitate women returning and staying in work, is still a very significant issue. Furthermore, women continue to experience significant sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and discrimination against mothers and pregnant women.

Recommendations to policy makers included

- *Develop a women's employment strategy which identifies the labour market issues facing women and an associated cross departmental action plan to tackle these.*
- *Introduce Gender Pay Gap legislation which is fit for purpose for Northern Ireland. Ensure that this is accompanied by an associated strategy, action plan and accountability measures which should be properly resourced.*
- *Introduce gender transparency measures to tackle inequality in men's and women's pay and pensions.*
- *Review flexible working legislation and make this available as a day one right for all workers.*

- *Make parental leave available as a day one right, introduce 10 days of paid parental leave.*
- *Reserve a period of paid parental leave for fathers – use it or lose it.*
- *Introduce a duty on employers to proactively tackle sexual harassment at work to include mandatory training for all employees including managers and HR personnel.*
- *The Northern Ireland Executive should recognise and promote the importance of collective bargaining and trade unions as a driver for better pay and terms and conditions as well as higher productivity.*

The Feminist Recovery Plan was updated and relaunched in July 2021 with more evidence on the negative impact of Covid-19 on women and gender equality.

Childcare and the Pandemic

As outlined in NIC ICTU's policy paper *Childcare in Northern Ireland: Care, Cost and Gender Equality*, Northern Ireland's system of childcare is woefully inadequate.

Expensive and not structured to facilitate participation in the labour market, the issue of childcare rose to even more prominence during the Covid-19 pandemic. NERI's Lisa Wilson highlighted the huge issues in a piece of research which found that scant consideration had been given to the issue of childcare when the economy was reopening during the summer months in 2020.

This was raised with the First and Deputy First Ministers in a letter which noted:

The Northern Ireland Executive has responded to the Covid-19 emergency with a programme of significant financial support for many sectors and this is welcome. However, without considering the issue of childcare, a return to work for many people will not be possible. We would therefore suggest that the Northern Ireland Executive urgently needs to consider significant public subsidy in childcare to facilitate parents to return to work whilst ensuring that their children are receiving quality care.

Northern Ireland Strategic Equality Strategies

The New Decade New Approach agreement promised the publication of long-awaited equality strategies. In late 2020, the Department for Communities invited NIC ICTU to nominate onto co-design groups for the Gender Equality, Disability and Anti-Poverty Strategies. Nominations were Clare Moore (Congress), Taryn Trainor, (UNITE) and John Patrick Clayton, (UNISON). Publication of the strategies is expected late 2021.

NI Disability Committee

The Disability Committee organised a well-attended seminar on mental health focusing on the HSENI's Stress Management Standards. The reasonable adjustment duty was also one of the topics in the Equality and Employment Law seminar series.

LGBTQ Matters

Congress organised an online event to mark Pride across the island. *Pride in Your Union* featured speakers from UNISON, SIPTU, NUJ, INTO and more as well as a tribute to the marriage equality campaign in Northern Ireland.

BME Migrant Workers

The *Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries* project, funded under the European Regional Development Fund of the EU and managed by the SEUPB, embraced many of the activities of the Migrant Workers

Support Unit and aimed to build positive relations with people from different communities and backgrounds.

The project worked with affiliates to organise BAME migrant workers in a number of workplaces and assisted affiliates in reaching out to migrant workers.

The project used novel approaches to gain the trust of vulnerable BAME migrant worker communities. Once trust was established the project deepened engagement with them by



Migrant Workers Project

providing ESOL courses, information sessions and linkages with local government and NGO's who can provide support to BAME migrant worker communities. The project also works to establish BME migrant community groups and encourage interaction between communities.

The project also produced a Charter to Protect Migrant Workers from Exploitation and to Build Inclusive Workplaces. This charter is a call from the migrant workers who participated in the project for change, so that all people here can work, live, learn

and socialise together, with dignity, respect, free from exploitation, prejudice, hate and intolerance.

NIC ICTU are represented on the steering committee of Belfast City of Sanctuary, whose work welcoming refugees and asylum seekers has been supported by many affiliates. Many asylum seekers and recently arrived international workers have benefitted from Congress courses explaining workers' rights.

Disability Committee ROI

The Congress Disability Committee in the Republic of Ireland continued to meet and to pursue its objective of decent work for all disabled people during the period. Michelle Quinn (SIPTU) was elected Chairperson and has led us in our efforts.

Pre-Pandemic, we were very focused on reasonable accommodation and supported the Equality Officer who spoke on a panel with IBEC at the IHREC Reasonable Accommodation conference in October 2019 and promoted the Reasonable Accommodation Passport Scheme. Subsequently, we were pleased to mark



Charter to Protect Migrant Workers from Exploitation and to Build Inclusive Workplaces

A project supported by the European Union's Peace IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



International Day for People with Disabilities 2019 with the joint launch with IBEC of the Reasonable Accommodation Passport Scheme. Originating in the GMB, the scheme is designed to enable disabled workers to carry out their work on an equal footing with others. Often there are fears around what reasonable accommodation in the workplace means – the Reasonable Accommodation Passport helps the conversations to happen.

The Committee also promoted and attended the Kevin Duffy briefing on the Nano Nagle case and consequences for implementation of reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities.

We also met with the Open Doors initiative to promote our reasonable accommodation passport scheme, which was subsequently covered in their newsletter.

We participated in a Focus Group on Reasonable Accommodations for People with Disabilities in the Employment Context hosted by the NDA as well as a meeting of affiliates with consultants on Part V of Disability Act (employment of people with disability in the public sector).



In May 2020 we held our first major discussions on the importance of Disability Inclusion in Covid-19 responses. The Committee heard from the Centre for Disability Policy and Law in NUIG and agreed to sign up to a joint statement with them and a range of disability organisations. We stressed the need to continue to combat prejudice and encourage inclusivity among Workers with Disabilities. The crisis lays bare the inequalities exacerbating Covid-19's impact on persons with disabilities and the Committee stressed that we must be vigilant in ensuring that the response to the current crisis does not leave persons with disabilities behind once again.

The Committee agreed to sign up to a joint statement by a number of civil society and human rights groups in Ireland, calling on all state actors to adhere to their obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which Ireland ratified in March 2018. While the current pandemic is impacting on all members of society the UN Rapporteur on Disability has identified persons with disabilities as vulnerable during this global health pandemic and outlines a number of issues to be addressed.

The Committee also highlighted that facilitating flexible work, including work from home could be an opportunity as it often ties in with the needs of people with disabilities. Such flexible working solutions can foster participation in the labour force. Such solutions are increasingly a priority from a range of perspectives, including increasing participation amongst people with disabilities. The inequalities faced by such groups in the labour market can be explained by the many barriers that exist to their full participation in the workplace – including an absence of the real flexibility in many organisations that would enable people to realise their professional potential.

The Committee welcomed the launch of the "Employers for Change" initiative to assist employers' interested in employing people with disabilities and welcomed their coordinator to one of our meetings. We

continue to support Congress participation in their advisory group and encouraged participation in research they are carrying out on the learning from the experience of remote working amongst people with disabilities during Covid-19 and implications for long term employment policy and practice.

We welcomed a briefing from Mental Health Reform Ireland on the newly published government mental health policy – Sharing the Vision. We held discussions with the Disability Federation of Ireland regarding the experience of high/very-high risk people in the context of the return to work.

The Committee supported Congress as part of an ETUC delegation at a social partner hearing on the new EU Disability Strategy. We also participated in a discussion with a researcher for an OECD project on engaging employers in activating persons with disabilities in Ireland.

Other work of the Committee included:

- Attending the DCEDIY hosted Comprehensive Employment Strategy meeting on 2 December and gave a joint presentation with IBEC on a reasonable accommodation passport scheme launched a year ago.
- Congress sent its support to both INTO and Fórsa regarding the efforts to get a return to special education in early 2021.
- Congress fed into a response to the first draft of Ireland's report to the UN on their responsibilities under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- We held discussions with a consultant on new Eurofound research on disabled people in the open labour market.
- We held a meeting with the TUC and their Disability Officer plus members of their Disability Committee to explore areas of common interest and possible joint work which we hope to be able to explore in person post the pandemic.
- We held very fruitful discussions with the OWL Programme - a Supported Employment Model in the Public Service and hope to be able to apply some of the learning from that in our future work.

Congress Equality Work ROI

Congress broad equality work involved regular consultation and liaison with officials in the Department of Justice and Equality and subsequently the Department of Children, Equality Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). Congress work on gender related issues was carried out in consultation with the Women's Committee and affiliate trade unions.

We continued our participation in National Strategy for Women and Girls meetings chaired by Minister O'Gorman. It has been agreed to extend the lifetime of the strategy to allow time to complete the actions delayed due to Covid-19 and to give adequate time to consider what should be included in its successor, to be in place by end 2021. Congress will continue to pursue implementation of outstanding issues.

Congress has engaged with Minister O'Gorman and officials in DCEDIY during the period in order to advance our broad equality agenda.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Through our participation in the Early Years LEEF, we continued to advocate for more public investment in ECEC as a means to tackle low pay, affordability and quality. The creation on the employer side of Childcare Services Ireland provided an opportunity for engagement with employers in the sector and Congress played a facilitative role in ensuring that SIPTU and IBEC began discussions on the creation of a JLC for the sector – a commitment in the Programme for Government. This work has progressed considerably since with a draft establishment order for the JLC published in April 2021.

Congress submitted views to DCEDIY consultation on a new funding model and the workforce development plan and participated actively in stakeholder consultation meetings on a new funding model for members of the Early Learning and Childcare Stakeholder Forum. Our input in all of these engagements has been based on Ireland, despite significant government

investment in recent years, where just 0.2% of GDP is spent on ECEC compared to a European Union average of 0.7% of GDP.

This insufficient level of funding has resulted in low pay, high staff turnover and the increasing cost of service delivery which are undermining the provision of accessible, affordable high-quality services. Furthermore, Ireland has the most expensive ECEC fees in the European Union while ECEC professionals are some of the lowest paid in the economy. Our call to government is therefore to introduce a new public model for Early Years with increased government investment, and the state assuming the responsibility for funding salaries and support the cost of service delivery. This would substantially reduce costs for both providers and parents.

We hope that this work on a new funding model will be completed in time for consideration and decisions in advance of Budget 2022.

Gender Pay Gap

Legislative measures to tackle the Gender Pay and Pensions Gap were published in 2019 but didn't complete the legislative

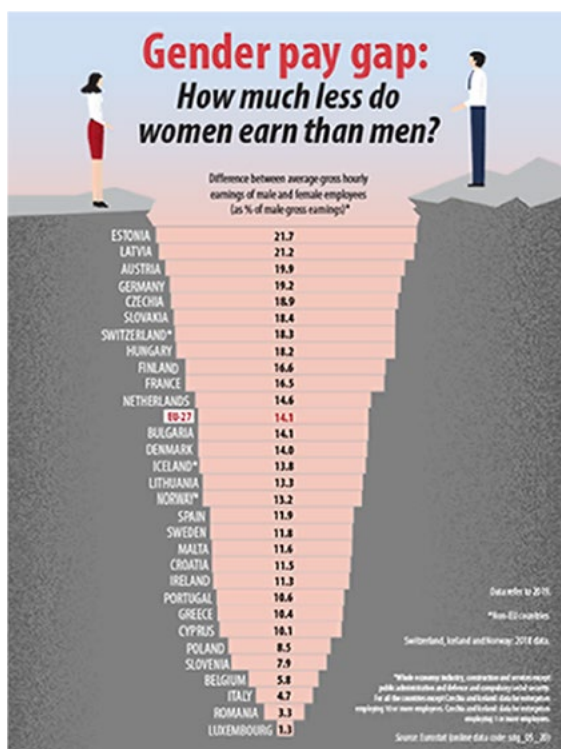
process before change of government. Congress successfully advocated for the Bill to be reintroduced and in May 2021 it passed Report and Fifth Stage in the Dáil and was awaiting further stages in the Seanad. The Act will amend the Employment Equality Act 1998 to require regulations to be made that will require certain employers (250 employees for first two years and thereafter will not apply to an employer having fewer than 50 employees) to publish information in relation to the gender pay gap in their organisations.

Congress also participated in ETUC discussion and actions on the EU Pay Transparency proposal published in March 2021. The Minister has indicated that provisions of the Directive will be reviewed in the context of the provisions of the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill 2019 and existing employment obligations and entitlements. The Commission proposals currently will only apply to companies with more than 250 employees and the Minister has confirmed to Congress that this will not impact the current plans to extend the requirements in the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill to companies with 50 or more employees.

Congress has convened a working group on the gender pay gap convened in light of the two processes towards legislation on pay transparency. A funding application was submitted to IHREC for a capacity building programme for unions on interrogating gender pay gap audits and developing a set of common proposals for the collective bargaining agenda.

Transposition of the Work Life Balance Directive

Congress has been advocating for the Irish government to transpose the Directive as rapidly and comprehensively as possible including an inclusive consultation process. The Directive includes commitments to introduce paternity leave and carer's leave – areas largely covered by Irish law, but also includes an individual right to 4 months of parental leave, from which 2 months are non-transferable between the parents and



are paid, and flexible working arrangements - the right for parents to request these arrangements has been extended to include working carers as well as working parents of children up to eight years old.

Congress has made a range of submissions on flexible working – resulting in a commitment by DETE to legislate for a right to request in line with many of our EU partner countries. We have also welcomed improvements in our provision of paid ‘parents leave’ to the current five weeks paid leave per parent, while pointing out that the EU WLB Directive, to be transposed by Summer 2022, requires this to rise to 9 weeks. We have also raised the fact that research widely shows that compensation is key for the uptake of family-related leaves, especially for lower income families and men and the low level of payment needs to be addressed.

Paid Domestic Violence Leave

Although not part of the Directive, the Minister announced in December 2020 that he had secured government agreement to establish a statutory entitlement to paid domestic violence leave, a longstanding demand of the trade union movement. Congress hosted a webinar with the Minister and national and international speakers to examine how this might be done and submitted detailed views during a consultation process.

Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Status

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to ‘examine the introduction of a new ground of discrimination based on socio-economic disadvantaged status to the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts’ a long-standing demand of Congress. The Minister has stated that his Department has commissioned a study on the ground, how it might be defined and that he is awaiting that report before proceeding. Congress will continue to pursue this objective through the subsequent consultation. (The broad idea is that someone could avail of equality legislation if they believed they were discriminated against on the grounds of family

background, where they’re from, educational background or their economic situation).

Disability issues

Congress continues to advocate for decent work for disabled people through our participation on the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities implementation group. Our agenda here includes the pursuit of the government commitment to double the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service to 6%.

On Employment Supports, we urged implementation of the promised awareness and support programme for employers to support the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities, and referenced commitments to developing initiatives that improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities living in rural areas, including through remote working options.

We also completed submission to DCEDIY on the Draft Initial State Report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Citizens’ Assembly on Gender Equality

Congress did a wide-ranging submission to the Citizens’ Assembly and participated in sessions related to workplace themes to further advocate for more gender equal workplaces. Our engagement was welcomed by the Assembly Chair, Catherine Day, and the recommendations of the Assembly echoed many of the calls from trade unions in our campaigns to remove barriers to pay parity and gender equality in the workplace. Significantly, this included adoption of our recommendation that workers be given a legal right to collective bargaining, and for acknowledging it as vital for improving wages and working conditions. Congress will work to ensure the implementation of this and other useful recommendations in relation to low pay, the living wage, the gender pay gap and family leaves.

IHREC

We continued our active participation in the IHREC Worker Employer Advisory Group meetings covering a wide range of equality and human rights workplace issues. Among the topics on our agenda was a consultation on an IHREC/ESRI exercise on the development of Decent Work National Indicators (subsequently published in 2021), a reasonable accommodation conference, and a Joint webinar with IHREC 'Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and Equality: The Potential of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty for Trade Unions' held with nearly 100 people in attendance.

Travellers

Congress participated in an advisory group for the St Stephen's Green Trust Traveller Employment & Enterprise group. We facilitated Traveller employment discussion with affiliates and the project officer from the programme, and promoted their new report: Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market: Situation, Experience & Identity and circulated to interested people in affiliates.

We continued to participate on the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy sub group on employment.

Congress submitted views to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community and subsequently participated in a hearing of the Committee.

Racism

Congress released a statement in support of Black Lives Matter in June 2020 following the death of George Floyd. We participated in a DCEDIY hosted consultation on employment issues on behalf of the National Independent Anti-Racism Committee and at time of writing were preparing a written submission in advance of the publication of the next national action plan on racism.

LGBTI+

Congress participated in meetings of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Committee hosted by DCEDIY, and spoke at a number of events including the UCC Student's Queer Conference on rights of LGBT people at work and an inaugural meeting of the INMO network.

IV. Education & Training

Industrial Relations Training

Over the last number of years Congress has sought to provide an education and training offering focused on equipping union officials and activists with the skills necessary to represent members at the WRC and Labour Court. Alongside the structured course we have held a number of half day Employment Law Briefings. This programme is delivered by Kevin Duffy BL and Michael Halpenny BL.

In the period under review two Employment Rights Disputes Essential courses were held in late 2019 and early 2020 and one course on Employment Rights Disputes – Strategy in Unfair Dismissals Cases was held in early 2020.

In December 2019 an Employment Law Briefing was held which examined the implications arising from a Supreme Court Judgement in what was known as the ‘Nano Nagle Case’.

The success of this training relies on participants working in teams to prepare approaches to case studies and involves mock hearings involving members of the Labour Court. The onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the associated public health restrictions disrupted the delivery of the programme during most of 2020 and 2021. It is planned to recommence the programme at the earliest opportunity.

In late 2020 Congress, at the request of the Teachers Union of Ireland, developed a bespoke series of seminars looking at Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations. A series of six seminars, which had a duration of ninety minutes each, were held over six morning in October and November 2020. The seminars included contributions from members of the Congress Secretariat and from representatives of the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court.

Apprenticeships

In July 2020 the government launched a public consultation on a new ‘Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021 - 2025’. The action plan signalled a root and branch reform of the apprenticeship system.

In a detailed response to the consultation Congress argued that:

- The governance of the apprenticeship system in Ireland had become very complex and that a single state agency should be given responsibility for apprenticeships.
- A new national registry of skills should be created to be accompanied by a skills passport.
- Specific measures should be put in place to make apprenticeship more attractive to women in particular.
- The state, as an employer and a procurer, should play a more significant role in making apprenticeships available.
- A number of problems that existed in the current system would need to be addressed to make the system more attractive to young people and adult learners.

As the process of developing the final action plan got underway Congress raised concerns with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science that what was likely to be proposed would significantly undermine the system of craft apprenticeship. We were also concerned about the failure to provide adequate worker representation in the proposed new consortium. In meetings with Minister Simon Harris and in subsequent correspondence, specific assurances were given to Congress on these issues.

Congress/SIPTU Certificate in Business Studies (Trade Union Studies)

This joint Congress/SIPTU course is offered in partnership with the National College of Ireland and is a modular programme leading to a Special Purpose Award at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications with a value of 60 credits over 2 academic years. Learners can join at any module and continue through the cycle for the major award. There are five core or compulsory modules which accumulate 45 credits:

- Return to Learn
- Trade Union and Collective Bargaining
- Law and the Worker
- Workers and the Economy
- Management of Labour

The remaining 15 credits can be attained by a combination of any 3 of the following:

- Diversity and Social Inequality
- Labour History
- Modern Labour Issues
- Organising Health & Safety at Work
- Representing Workers
- Work in Irish Society

The course is offered in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Sligo, however during the Covid-19 Pandemic the course was offered online via Webex.

The numbers attending modules were as follows:

Venue	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan-April 2021 (Jan-April)
Dublin	28	26	41
Waterford	9	5	4
Cork	15	12	9
Limerick	13	9	7
Galway	11	8	14
Sligo	12	8	6

Congress Centres' Network

The Congress Centres' Network (CCN) has continued to encounter difficulties during this reporting period.

Following difficulties in securing Department of Social Protection contracts to continue their Community Employment schemes, a number of centres have been forced to close their doors.

Arrangements were made to transfer CE participants to other schemes while the respective Boards dealt with trying to arrange an orderly closure of the companies running the effected centres. These centres were long-standing members of the network and all had a very strong trade union culture and tradition. Their boards and coordinators made a significant contribution to assisting the unemployed and the vulnerable in their areas and their closure represents a sad loss to the trade union movement.

Despite these difficulties, the network has continued to operate as an effective support for the vulnerable and marginalised in our communities, with quiet work helping the unemployed and others.

The Centres run Major Awards from QQI Level 3 to QQI Level 5. These Awards include eight minor awards covering modules such as; E-Business Studies, Web Authoring, Internet, Work Experience, Communications, Customer Service, Book-keeping - Manual & Computerised, Payroll - Manual and Computerised, Reception and Frontline Office Skills and a number of others.

Because of the nature of the work done by the Centres, all participants learn transferable skills, e.g.

- Communication - written, oral and reporting
- Telephone / reception skills
- Design, development and implementation of training programmes
- IT skills / tutoring
- Administrative skills
- Book-keeping and payroll - manual and computerised

- Organisational and management skills
- Job seeking skills / work experience
- Customer care skills
- Retailing skills
- Personal / interpersonal skill

Staff are trained on an ongoing basis to enhance their chances of gaining meaningful work. The training undertaken during 2019/20 by CE participants included:

- Train the Trainer QQI Level 6
- E-Business QQI Level 6
- Payroll/Book-keeping - Manual + Computerised QQI Level 5
- Receptionist & Frontline Office Skills Course QQI Level 5
- Advanced ECDL Excel & Word
- Communications QQI Award Level 5
- Work Experience QQI Award Level 5
- Web Authoring (ongoing) QQI Award Level 5
- Customer Services QQI Award Level 5
- CPC Training
- Advanced Certificate in Office Management QQI Award Level 6
- Healthcare Assistant – Elder Abuse & Potential Aggression, CPR, Patient Handling
- Progression of Learners

QQI Re-Engagement Programme

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 the independent State Agency QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) was established as the agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland.

In order to improve the quality of training in all establishments QQI undertook a process whereby the agency re-engaged with training providers to establish provider quality assurance procedures approved under the Act. This re-engagement was a significant undertaking for both providers and QQI and concentrated on improving quality processes with a regular analytical and reporting system.

In 2018 it was decided by the Congress Centres Network to collaborate and submit

an umbrella application covering all 11 training CE Centres. All centres have now submitted required documentation and CCN are examining same with a view to submission by end of Summer 2021.

People's College

Over the past two years the College continued to develop, grow and progress and we must recognise the many people and agencies that have assisted the College, but none more so than the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, affiliated unions and Solas, without whose help and assistance the College would not have developed as it has.

The College has endeavoured over the past two years to promote its courses amongst a wider audience, and in 2019 a large number of enrolments were new students. The College attracts young students from abroad to learn our language and other languages too. The Irish class is very popular and comprises a variety of international students including French, German and Polish.

Since the last Executive Council Report in 2019, the College has maintained its position as a key provider of opportunities for lifelong learning for its members – trade unionists, their families and the general public. It is inclusive in its appeal to all age groups and we have members as young as 60 years of age coming to learn and improve their digital and computing skills. It is well known that maintaining an active mind is essential to good general health and wellbeing, especially in the area of mental health.

The College closed its doors on 12 March 2020, like every other college and business. We were all on different ships, but in the same storm. We had six weeks left in our spring term to complete and we must commend the speed at which our tutors took to delivering their classes through online learning apps, as it was not something that our longstanding tutors would have been familiar with.

All of our classes were completed successfully through the newly learned online platforms, which, most people in business had to become familiar with very quickly. We continue to communicate with our students online and look forward to opening our new term as classroom-based courses in October.

A number of our tutors have gone above and beyond in keeping our students engaged by providing weekly podcasts, video lectures and debates during lockdown. This has created a social outlet, albeit virtually, but gave some of our students something to look forward to on a weekly basis. The isolation that our older generation of longstanding students have experienced through this pandemic has been a lot for some to bear.

Our students are looking to get out again, return to normality, resume their class and feel that they can learn in an environment where guidelines are being implemented and followed carefully.

We are constantly looking at new ways to promote the College and improve communications with affiliated trade unions and despite the challenges facing us today, and the rapidly increasing local competition, the College has continued to progress in recent years.

While addressing such challenges and others, the College remains wedded to the values of education for democracy, solidarity and comradeship which inspired our founders in 1948. Uniquely, our College is a learning community administered by the students, for the students, together with delegates nominated by affiliated trade unions.

The priority for the next two years will be to address the challenges of securing additional sources of funding, and growing the student base. This will allow the continued promotion of the principles and activities enshrined in the Constitution, aimed at providing students with the learning opportunities required in an increasingly difficult and changing world.

The College will be hosting a stand at the Congress Biennial Conference in Belfast this year, and aims to build new relationships to ensure the People's College continuing support of the training and education of union members in Ireland.

NI Education

The Trade Union Education Programme

The NIC ICTU Education Programme is a vital resource for all trade union officials, representatives and members. It provides a forum for trade unionists to come together to develop their knowledge and skills, and to learn from the experiences of others. Over one thousand learners participate in the training and seminars offered by NIC ICTU each year. The Covid-19 crisis adversely impacted learner numbers in 2020, with 300 attending accredited courses and 500 at seminars/webinars.

The programme contains pathways for union officials, representatives, health and safety representatives, equality representatives, union learning representatives and offers progression routes resulting in awards, certificates and diplomas accredited by the Open College Network (OCN). The courses are free and are run mainly on a day release basis over 3, 5, 10 or 32 days depending on the level of qualification attached to the course.

The programme is delivered in partnership with the South Eastern Regional College (SERC).

When the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020 the Education Programme was interrupted as all our courses were delivered in the classroom. The Education Department commenced work to switch to a full online delivery model, starting with webinars and progressing to online versions of our accredited courses. In response to the impact of Covid-19 on workers, new courses have been developed and introduced including;

- Working from Home
- Mental Health, Covid-19 and the Workplace
- Returning to Work Safely
- Redundancy and other Employment Issues in the Covid-19 crisis.

Following significant work with the tutors the Education Department have managed to produce a virtually full 2021 Education Programme all delivered online. While all learners have responded positively to online course provision the Education Department believes that a better learning experience is achieved through face-to-face delivery. When circumstances permit we will revert to classroom courses, but will retain an element of online delivery to ensure that the needs of affiliates can be flexibly met.

As mentioned, the NIC ICTU Education Programme continues to develop with a number of new courses added to the programme reflecting demand from affiliates and changes in the workplace and society. The Programme is flexible and includes bespoke courses tailored to the needs of individual affiliates.

The NIC ICTU TU Education Programme offers the following courses:

Core Skills

- Trade Union Reps Stage 1
- Trade Union Reps Stage 2
- Certificate in Employment Law
- Health and Safety Stage 1
- Health and Safety Stage 2
- Union Learning Reps Stage 1
- Union Learning Reps Stage 2
- Negotiation and Communication Skills
- Pay and Bargaining
- Handling Grievance and Disciplines
- Social Media for Trade Union Reps
- Dealing with Redundancies
- Public Sector Pensions

In addition to the core courses the programme also offers:

- Working from Home
- Mental Health, Covid-19 and the Workplace

- Returning to Work Safely
- Taking a case to Tribunals
- Discrimination and Equality Law
- Dealing with Stress, Bullying and Intimidating Behaviour in the Workplace
- Disability Champions
- Equality Reps in the Workplace
- Tackling Prejudice and Discrimination
- Trade Unions and Globalisation
- Confidence in the Workplace
- Diploma in Equalities (32 Week Course)
- Diploma in Employment Law (32 Week Course)
- Diploma in Health & Safety (32 Week Course)

NIC ICTU also runs a variety of unaccredited seminars with the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commissions as and when required on various employment related issues including:

- Key changes to family-related employment law
- Zero Hours Contracts
- Annual Review of Employment Law
- Unfair Dismissal the basics
- Workplace Bullying and Harassment and the Law
- Agency Workers
- Whistle blowing
- Equality Law - An Introduction to the Industrial Tribunal System
- An Introduction to the Industrial Tribunal System
- Equality Law - Reasonable Adjustments
- Equality Law - Introduction to the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006
- Equality Law - Promoting equality between men and women in employment
- Unconscious Bias
- Disability Discrimination Act and the reasonable adjustment duty in recruitment
- Flexible working

Further information regarding the above courses can be found on the NIC ICTU website .

Union Learning



Union Learning Conference 2020

NIC ICTU continues to have full responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the Union Learning Fund (ULF). In January 2020, applications were sought for a new three-year project plan. The following 11 project applications to the ULF were successful:

- NIPSA
- BFAWU
- UNITE (Construction)
- UNITE
- USDAW
- AEGIS
- INTO
- FSU
- GMB
- UNISON
- FBU

During the 2019 - 2021 reporting period, ULF projects engaged with over 10,000 workers and achieved the following outcomes:

- Over 1200 enrolled onto Essential Skills courses in Numeracy, Literacy or IT.
- Over 2300 completed accredited upskilling or vocational qualifications.
- Over 3200 completed CPD.
- Over 400 migrant workers completed OET, IELTS training or ESOL qualifications.
- Over 1000 completed Introduction to IT courses.

- Projects helped 700 members facing redundancy with CV writing and Interview skills.
- 30 new Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) were recruited and trained.

Lockdown Learning

In most cases, ULF projects rely on FE colleges to deliver Essential Skills and other upskilling or vocational qualifications to project participants. The Covid-19 pandemic affected educational systems throughout Northern Ireland, leading to the near-total closure of FE colleges and other learning providers during lockdown restrictions.

Working in partnership with the FE colleges and other distance learning providers, ULF projects reacted and adapted, to promote, support and deliver online learning opportunities to members. Given the challenges faced during 2020, the ULF project achieved all targets set in agreement with the Department for the Economy for the 2020/21 reporting period.

Union Learning Conference

In March 2020, the annual Union Learning Conference was held in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey. Over 70 ULRs attended and heard from key speakers addressing the theme of Skills for a Sustainable Economy. The Trade Union Learner of the Year award was presented to Sharon Brazier, USDAW.

In March 2021, due to the pandemic the conference was held online. Over 50 ULRs attended. Key speakers addressed the theme of Future Skills and Recovery.

V. Public Engagement, Campaigns & Communications

Campaigns & Public Engagement

Congress Housing Campaign

The Raise the Roof campaign network organised a public rally outside the Dáil on 2 October 2019, to mark the anniversary of the passing of an agreed opposition party motion on housing.

The original motion was passed by Dáil in October 2018 and was backed by the Raise the Roof coalition, which organised the largest housing demonstration seen in the capital in decades, to coincide with the debate on the agreed opposition motion.

The motion demanded a series of key measures be taken to tackle the housing crisis, including: Declare a Housing Emergency; Double investment in housing construction; End evictions into homelessness; Ensure affordable rents and Security of Tenure; and Create a legal Right to Housing.

Yet some 12 months after being passed by the Dáil, the then government had made no effort to implement any of the measures set out and chose instead to persist with its Rebuilding Ireland plan, an initiative that we now know not only failed to deal with the crisis, but which almost certainly worsened the situation.

By contrast, the key demands set out in the 2018 motion remain central to any resolution of the housing crisis, with the ESRI recently (May 2021) calling on government to double its investment in housing.

Ahead of the 2020 General Election, Raise the Roof produced a comprehensive briefing paper - Remaking Ireland - that set out the case for a dramatic and radical shift in housing policy, in order to tackle the escalating crisis. The briefing document was sent to all parties engaged in the election campaign and, later, to those engaged in negotiations on a new Programme for Government.

Ahead of the February 8 vote, the group also produced a series of three campaign videos, that echoed the themes set out in Remaking Ireland and which featured contributions from housing experts, representatives of Raise the Roof constituent groups and long-time housing and homeless campaigners.

The videos urged voters to support parties and candidates that backed greater investment in housing, better protections for tenants and the creation of a new Right to Housing. The videos were backed by a digital media advertising spend and had an audience in excess of 30,000.

Ahead of Budget 2021 (October 2020), the campaign wrote to Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien, urging him to revisit the key housing measures set out in the 2018 Dáil motion - which his party voted to support while in opposition - in terms of the allocation for housing investment in the coming budget.



Raise the Roof

On 27 November 2020, Raise the Roof organised a highly successful webinar, which saw some 300 people register and included keynote contributions on the experience of homelessness from Jessica Freed, from housing experts Orla Hegarty (UCD) and Mel Reynolds, Anthony Flynn (ICHH) and Rosemary Hennigan (Home for Good). The event also featured input from the housing spokespersons of all the major opposition parties, including: Cian O’Callaghan (Social Democrats); Rebecca Moynihan (Labour); Eoin O’Broin (Sinn Féin) and Richard Boyd-Barrett (People before Profit).

In the period under review, Congress also produced its own briefing papers on the key issues in housing, most notably on the delivery of affordable housing, on the need for a radical overhaul of the rental sector and on the key deficiencies in government proposals on affordable housing and the Land Development Agency.

In addition, Congress also responded to the official public consultation on Housing for All (May 2021), a process that is expected to feed into the development of a new government plan on housing to replace Rebuilding Ireland. The new plan had not been published at the time of writing.

Raise the Roof also produced a further campaign video (April 2021) that highlighted the fact that a change in government had not produced a significant change in housing policy despite commitments in the Programme for Government and stressed the necessity to ensure that public land was retained in public ownership and reserved for public housing.

At the time of writing, Raise the Roof was developing plans to escalate public and campaign activity, as public health restrictions were gradually eased, with a focus on events in the Autumn.

Communications Media

Media Matters

In the period under review Congress has been leading the debate on vital public issues and the numerous challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

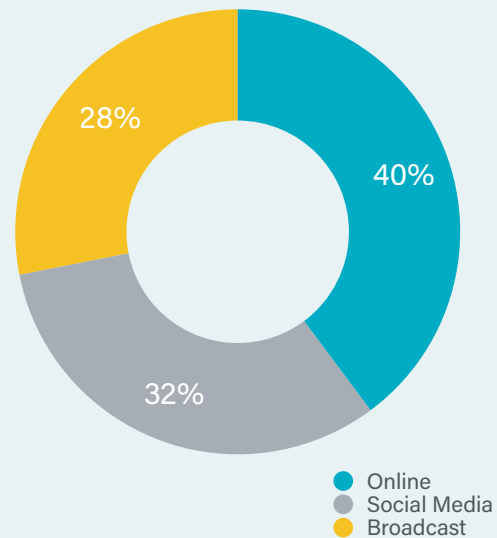
Congress responded in the media to the once in a century event, and clearly communicated how workers incomes should be protected to allow them gradually return to work once the crisis has abated.

The Congress Communications Office generated publicity relating to key issues including Pandemic Unemployment Supports, the Work Safety Protocol, Pensions, Remote Working, Sick Leave, the Housing Crisis, International Rights, Brexit and the ongoing battle for decent pay and collective bargaining.

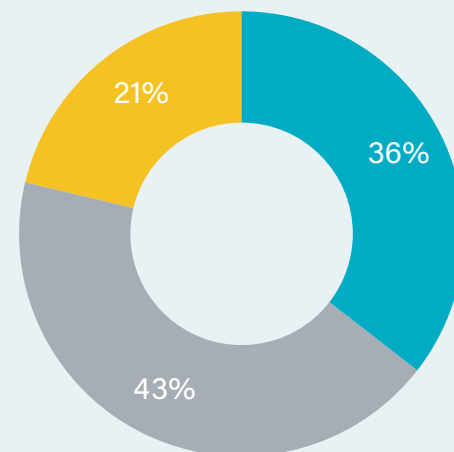
In the period under review there has been steady increase in social media engagement particularly on Twitter, though online media sources and Irish broadcast media are vital platforms. As demonstrated in the following chart, in 2020 Congress had 32% social media presence and in 2021 that social media presence had increased to 43.2%.

The Congress websites ROI and NI required redevelopment and this work has been undertaken by Congress staff in Dublin and Belfast, and is being designed and built by Simon Parry from Infobo web design company. The new-look website will reach out to affiliated trade unions, government and policy makers, social partners and the media. The objectives are to highlight the work of Congress, influence policy, attract people to unions and to support campaigns.

Share of Voice 1 Jan- 30 Dec 2020



Share of Voice 1 Jan- 30 June 2021



Congress Studio Training

The Covid-19 public health emergency had a significant impact on training provision in the Congress Studio which, in recent years, has been utilised to provide a range of training courses for affiliates on: developing media skills; radio interview preparation and practice; video recording and editing; podcast recording and editing.

Classes are held monthly and the numbers are kept deliberately low - approximately 4 to 5 per class - in order to enhance the learning experience of participants in a real studio setting, with the training provided by highly experienced media practitioners, Simon Devilly and Aileen O'Meara.

A total of six courses were held in 2019, with 17 participants.

The closure of the studio for much of 2020 severely restricted the planned training programme, but over time it proved possible to move some of the course provision online, primarily video and podcast recording.

In the latter half of 2020, three courses were delivered remotely, with a total of 13 participants. At the time of writing, a further five courses had been delivered in 2021, with 22 learners participating.

Congress Policy Papers

2019

- Because We're Worth It! The Truth about CEO Pay in Ireland (Winter 2019)

2020

- Remaking Ireland: A New Deal for Housing – Raise the Roof (May 2020)
- No Going Back – A New Deal towards a safe and secure future for all (May 2020)
- National Return to Work Safety Protocol ICTU User Guide (May 2020)
- When Your Home is Your Workplace – A Remote Workers' Guide to your Employment Rights (July 2020)
- Sickening! The State of Sick Pay in Ireland (Sept 2020)
- A New Deal for Retail & Distribution Workers (Dec 2020)

2021

- A Secure Tenancy Model for the Rental Sector (Jan 2021)
- Bullying and Harassment Guidelines – Prevention Guidelines for Trade Union Activists (ICTU H&S Committee Feb 2021)
- Ireland's Meat Processing Sector – From a low-road to a sustainable high-road strategy (Feb 2021)
- Sustainable State Pensions in the Future – Recommendations to the Pensions Commission (March 2021)
- Congress Housing Briefing – Delivering on Public Housing and Affordable Homes (April 2021)
- Congress Briefing: The Threat of Cuckoo Funds (May 2021)
- The Social Wage (September 2021)

Congress Submissions

2019

- Response to the Review of Registration Requirements Provided for in the Trade Union Acts 1871-1990 (Sept 2019)
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Business Enterprise & Innovation on Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill 2019 (Nov 2019)



2020

- Submission to the Low Pay Commission – 2020 Consultation on the National Minimum Hourly Rate of Pay (March 2020)
- Submission to Citizen’s Assembly on Gender Equality (March 2020)
- Submission to the Waste Advisory Group – Time to Modernise Ireland’s Domestic Waste Collection Service (April 2020)
- Response to Draft National Reform Programme 2020 (April 2020)
- Response to Department of Justice and Equality Consultation on Flexible Working (April 2020)
- Response to the Department of Justice and Equality Consultation on Flexible Working (April 2020)
- Submission to Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 – Reopening the Economy, The State’s Response and Support for Business (June 2020)
- Statement to the Special Committee on Covid-19 Response – Clusters in Meat Processing Plants (June 2020)
- Statement to the Special Committee on Covid-19 Response – The Impact on the Media, Arts and Entertainment Sector (June 2020)
- Submission to the Review of the Operation of Part 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 (Sept 2020)
- Proposals for the Protection of Employees in Insolvency (Oct 2020)
- Submission to Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science – Apprenticeship Action Plan 2021-2025 (Sept 2020)
- Submission on a new Forum for Further & Higher Education to the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science (Sept 2020)
- Congress Budget 2021 Recommendations – No Going Back (Sept 2020)
- Submission to DETE Statement of Strategy 2020-2023 (Oct 2020)
- Submission to Revenue Commissions on Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 (Oct 2020)
- Submission to Dept of Children and Youth Affairs Public Consultation on Future Funding of Early Learning and

Care and School-Age Childcare in Ireland (Oct 2020)

- Submission to Consultation on 2020 Code of Practice for the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013 and 2020 (Oct 2020)
- Submission on Proposals for the Protection of Employees in Insolvency (Oct 2020)
- Submission to Committee on Social Protection – Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) (Nov 2020)
- Submission to DETE Statutory Sick Pay Scheme Consultation (Dec 2020)
- Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade & Employment on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union (COM(2020) 682 final) (Dec 2020)
- Submission on DETE Statutory Sick Pay Scheme Consultation (Dec 2020)

2021

- Submission on Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect (Jan 2021)
- Submission to Joint Committee on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community (Jan 2021)
- Submission to Joint Committee on Disability Matters on Impact of Decisions to Delay in the Return to School of Children with Special Education Needs (Jan 2021)
- Response to DETE Request for Views on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union (COM(2020) 682 final) (Feb 2021)
- Response to the Department of Taoiseach regarding Public Consultation on Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Feb 2021)
- Submission to Public Consultation on Proposals for Summary Process for Small Companies – CLRG Special Report on Proposals for Rescue of Small Business (March 2021)
- Submission to Joint Committee on Social Protection Community and Rural Development and the Islands on Bogus Self-Employment (March 2021)

- Submission to the Low Pay Commission on the National Minimum Hourly Rate of Pay (March 2021)
- Submission on Paid Leave in Cases of Domestic Violence (March 2021)
- Submission to Department of Social Protection Consultation on Notification of Deaths (April 2021)
- Submission to the Central Bank of Ireland Public Consultation 'Enhancing Our Engagement with Stakeholders – Consultation Paper 136' (May 2021)
- Submission on Public Consultation on the Introduction of a Right to Request Remote Working (May 2021)
- Submission to Forum on a Friendly and Inclusive Parliament to Identify Supports and Measures Required for Elected Members, their Staff and the staff working in the Houses of Oireachtas Service (May 2021)
- Submission to Department of Justice Draft Scheme to Regularise Undocumented Migrants (May 2021)
- Submission to Pensions Council on Public Consultation on Gender Gaps within Supplementary Pensions (June 2021)
- Submission on Draft Agri-Food Strategy 2030 (June 2021)
- Submission on Public Consultation 2021 Towards a National Action Plan for Ireland (July 2021)

Congress Friday Briefings

Date	Briefing	Guest Speakers
Friday 15 November 2019	Four Day Week – Better for Everyone	Dr Laura Bambrick, Congress Joe O'Connor, Fórsa
Friday 24 January 2020	The Right to Disconnect	Paul Dillon, FSU Anne Marie Butler, FSU
Friday 13 March 2020	Poet in Residence	Catherine Ann Cullen
Friday 5 February 2021	Paid Leave in Cases of Domestic Violence	Minister Roderic O'Gorman Sarah Benson, CEO Women's Aid Jan Logie, MP, Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand Louise O'Reilly, Sinn Fein TD
Friday 28 May 2021	Collective Benefit – Harnessing the power of representation for economic and social progress	Alan Eustace, TCD Kevin Callinan, General Secretary, Fórsa & Congress Vice-President

Report on Biennial Delegate Conference 2019

The Irish Congress of Trade Union's 2019 Biennial Delegate Conference took place in the Business School, Trinity College, Dublin from 4-6 July, 2019. Sheila Nunan, Congress President presided over the proceedings.

The members of the **Standing Orders Committee** were: Kieran Jack McGinley (SIPTU and Chair), Annette Dolan (TUI), Joan Gaffney (MANDATE), Denis Keatings (UNISON) and Dennis Walshe, (Fórsa).

The following Tellers and Scrutineers were elected: **Tellers:** Roisin Graham (NISPA), David Duffy (TUI), Ola Ogidan (Fórsa), David Miskell (INMO), and Liam English (USDAW). **Scrutineers:** Paul McGlone (AHCPS), Eamonn Lawless (SIPTU), Joe Quinn (MANDATE), Billy Hannigan (Fórsa), and Aíne Brennan (UNISON).

488 delegates and 41 observers attended the Conference. 55 Motions and one Emergency Motion were submitted to BDC.

Motion 37 on Campaign of Industrial Action in relation to Housing Policy from Waterford Council of Trade Unions, and Motion 38 on an Alternative to Rebuilding Ireland Plan from Cork Council of Trade Unions were ruled out of order. All of the other motions were adopted. A report on the Actions on Motions to BDC 2019 is contained in Appendix 6 to this report.

The keynote and fraternal speakers at BDC were: An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Mary Robinson, Matt Frei Journalist, Esther Lynch ETUC, Tim Noonan ITUC, Grahame Smith STUC, Tom Brabazon Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Betty Tyrrell Collard President Dublin Council of Trade Unions, Clare Mahon Chair Congress Disability Committee, Joan McCrohan, Chair Global Solidarity Committee, Margaret Coughlan Chair Women's Committee, Margaret Browne Retired Workers' Committee, and Margaret Galloway Retired Workers' Committee.

The following Officers were elected: Gerry Murphy INTO (President), Kevin Callinan, Fórsa (Vice-President), Alison Millar, NIPSA (Vice-President), Joe Cunningham SIPTU (Treasurer), Annette Dolan TUI, Angela Kirk Fórsa, Anne Speed UNISON, Bernard Harbor Fórsa, Brendan Ogle Unite, Brian Booth NIPSA, Ciaran Rohan AHCPS, David Hughes INMO, David Kennedy CWU UK, Deirdre O'Connor INTO, Eoin Ronayne Fórsa, Ethel Buckley SIPTU, Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin CWU, Gareth Murphy FSU, Gerry McCormack SIPTU, Jackie Pollock Unite, Jacquie White UTU, John Boyle INTO, John Clinton POA, John Douglas Mandate, John King SIPTU, Justin McCamphill NASUWT, Kieran Christie ASTI, Michaela Lafferty USDAW, Paddy Kavanagh Connect, Patricia McKeown UNISON, Phil Ní Sheaghda INMO, Seamus Dooley NUJ, Sean Heading Connect, and Stevie Fitzpatrick CWU. Michaela Lafferty USDAW resigned to take up a new position and Gerry Light Mandate was co-opted onto the Executive Council. John Douglas retired in November 2020. Betty Tyrrell Collard was elected to the Reserved Seat for Trades Councils. Archie Thompson was nominated as Retired Workers' Observer, and Eimear Allen was nominated as Youth Committee Observer in July 2019.

Congress held the following Fringe Meetings at Conference: **Tuesday 2 July 2019:** Congress hosted 'Co-Operation within Communities in the 21st Century'; TUI hosted 'Campaigning in Solidarity with the Palestinian People – What About the Children?'; **Wednesday 3 July 2019:** Integrity at Work hosted 'Speaking Up Safely in the Workplace – Transparency International'; Connect hosted 'EU Militarisation, PESCO and Irish Neutrality'; The Global Solidarity Committee hosted 'A New Social Contract for the Future of Work'; and NERI hosted 'To a Fairer Future.'

Congress would like to acknowledge the support of our exhibitors at Biennial Delegate Conference 2019.



Left to Right:
 NUJ Delegation at BDC 2019
 Delegates pay tribute to Lyra McKee at BDC 2019
 Esther Lynch, DGS of ETUC addresses BDC Conference
 Kieran Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders
 INTO Delegation at BDC 2019
 Below: Congress Staff at BDC 2019



VI. European Union & International

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

The ETUC represents the interests of over 50 million workers across the continent of Europe through 90 national trade union federations. It is the lead single voice for workers' interests in Europe.

Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary represents Congress on the ETUC Executive. The Executive traditionally meets 4/5 times a year for two-day meetings in Brussels, but since April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic the meetings have been virtual, yet the important work certainly continues.

The Executive has developed and promoted many policies around workers' interest over the last two years. However, probably the most significant piece of work the Executive (and its Wages and Collective Bargaining committee of which Owen Reidy and Ger Gibbons, Social Policy Officer represent Congress) have been engaged in is work on the fairer wages and collective bargaining directive being pioneered by Commissioner Nicolas Schmit.

Ursula Von der Leyen, the President of the EU Commission made fairer wages and making work pay a priority at the start of her mandate in 2020. The ETUC secretariat and Executive saw this initiative as a potential opportunity to make work pay, to promote collective bargaining and collective bargaining coverage across the EU. The ETUC developed a strategy and policy which was endorsed by 85% of the membership to work to achieve an EU directive which would both;

- Promote to concept of higher minimum wages in states that currently had them or where the social partners sought that such an initiative would be progressive.
- Promote collective bargaining in a more coherent and sustainable manner across the EU to avoid social dumping and a race to the bottom.

Unfortunately, a number of the Nordic countries particularly Sweden and Denmark have been implacably opposed to any form of an EU directive around the issue of pay and collective bargaining as they are concerned that the European institutions will infect and damage their collective bargaining and industrial relations framework. The ETUC have been trying to develop an approach that ensures we achieve a credible directive that places an onus on states that do not promote or take collective bargaining seriously, while at the same time not interfering with good systems that already work very well.

In Ireland, the directive has the potential, should it be agreed and not watered down to be a game changer when it comes to collective bargaining and collective bargaining coverage. Collective bargaining coverage in Ireland (that is the percentage of workers covered by a collectively bargained agreement) is 33.5%. In EU the



ETUC Collective Bargaining for All and Fair Minimum Wages Campaign

average is 60%. It should be remembered that the public service which is nearly 100% covered by collective agreements represents about 15% of the workforce. Therefore, coverage in the private sector is considerably lower than 33.5%. Article 4 of the proposed directive will require states to engage with their social partners to develop a national action plan to promote collective bargaining and achieve 70% coverage in each member state.

The ETUC is working very hard to promote the trade union agenda on this matter in the European Parliament, with the Commission and the Council. We in Ireland have taken an active and participative role on this critical issue both at Executive, working group and collective bargaining and wages committee level within the ETUC. We have met with a range of Irish MEPs, the Permanent Representative team in Brussels and have engaged with the Tánaiste on this issue.

It is crucial that the Irish government does not find itself on the wrong side of history on this matter by objecting to elements of the directive (in particular article 4). While progress has been made during the Portuguese Presidency we do not expect progress during the Slovenian Presidency (July to December 21). But we are more optimistic about the French Presidency in the first part of 2022. We are determined as a Congress to work within the ETUC to achieve this directive which will allow more workers in the Republic of Ireland the tangible and real advantages of collective bargaining and potentially lead the way to greater trade union organisation. We are also of the view that should such a directive come to pass there is nothing stopping the NI Executive introducing mirroring legislation to implement something similar given that employment rights are a devolved matter. We want to ensure that no worker on the island of Ireland is left behind.

European Semester

Congress took part in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 'European Semester' process of policy coordination between EU member states. This seeks to achieve EU policy

objectives relating mainly to fiscal policy but also more recently to decarbonisation and digitalisation.

The process also seeks to involve civil society in the development of relevant national policies in order to achieve 'broad ownership' of policies.

Congress responded to public consultations on the European Commission's Country Report Ireland 2020 (February 2020) and on the government's draft National Reform Programme (April 2020) and its draft National Recovery and Resilience Plan (February 2021).

We emphasised that EU recommendations to Ireland and the government's planned responses seek to implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and attain UN SDGs, particularly those promoting decent work and collective bargaining and just green and digital transitions.

However, since 2019 government engagement with civil society under the process actually regressed from the already low level of engagement the Commission criticised as 'non-involvement' in its 2019 report on Ireland.

Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD

Since 2019, Congress has stepped up its engagement with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This has consultative status with the OECD, alongside BUAC, representing business.

In November 2019, Pierre Habbard, General Secretary of TUAC, briefed members of the Executive about TUAC and Dermot Nolan, Ireland's ambassador to the OECD, outlined the government's engagement with the OECD.

Congress has kept TUAC informed about developments in Ireland and has clarified where necessary commentary about Ireland in draft OECD reports circulated to TUAC.

TUAC has been central to the OECD's reappraisal over recent years of its previous, largely hostile stance on sectoral collective bargaining. The OECD's November 2019 report 'Negotiating our way up – Collective bargaining in a changing world of work', concluded that the coordinated, sectoral-level bargaining systems in place in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden produces the best labour market outcomes, and recommended the adoption of similar systems by all countries. However, this recommendation is not always advocated by all OECD departments nor acknowledged by governments.

European Economic and Social Committee

Established in 1958, the EESC is an advisory body of the EU. It works through three groups representing Employers, trade unions and a diverse range of other Civil Society actors. Its mandate envisages it operating by way of joint 'Opinions', arrived at by consensus, if possible.

These 'Opinions' are submitted to the main policy making institutions and, in an average year, the EESC will produce some 200 of them. It is mandatory for the EESC to be consulted on a range of issues stipulated in the EU Treaties and in all cases where the institutions deem it appropriate. The EESC may also be consulted on an exploratory basis by one or other of the EU institutions, and may issue 'Opinions', Information Reports, etc on its own initiative (around 15% of its Opinions are 'own-initiative').

Congress is represented on the EESC by Patricia McKeown and Jack O' Connor, with John Corey as substitute.

The delegates serve on the following sections:

Patricia McKeown: Section for External Relations - REX and Section for Economic and Monetary Union, Economic and Social Cohesion - ECO.

Jack O' Connor: Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship - SOC,

Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, - NAT and ECO, (above).

Global Solidarity

Congress international work continues to be informed by our Global Solidarity Committee and our affiliation to the ITUC. We are regular attendees at their General Council meetings and regularly advocate with our government in consultation with their work in international fora on our behalf. Of particular significance this period was the development of a trade union agenda for Ireland's term on the UN Security Council and the visit of ITUC Deputy General Secretary, Victor Baez to Ireland in March 2020 who met with officials in DETE and DFA on trade union and human rights in Latin America.



2019 Global Solidarity Summer School

ROI Global Solidarity Committee

The Global Solidarity Committee of Congress is chaired by Yvonne O'Callaghan (SIPTU) and Vice-Chair is John Bowen (Cork Council of Trade Unions). During this period, the activities of the committee were hampered by the global pandemic however they continue to meet on a regular basis seeking to coordinate trade union international solidarity work and to plan internationally themed campaigns and events.

Members have campaigned on Palestine, together with the Occupied Territories Bill

Campaign and other solidarity groups, which has led to progress in policy change, namely the Oireachtas motion on De facto Annexation.

The committee has prioritised work on the building a trade union response to challenge the far right and to strengthen trade union anti-racism work. It contributes to the work of the congress working group on the far right, including promoting the 'pro-mask is pro worker campaign' and in the development of education and training for trade union activists to challenge far right ideology in the workplace. It further contributed to the international response in the development of the ETUC roadmap-building the trade union response to the rise of the far-right.

Solidarity Action was taken to support trade unionists acting in their fight for democracy and workers' rights, particularly in Myanmar, Belarus, Colombia and Hong Kong.

Work continued in contributing to the global trade union movements work on Climate Change, including inter-generational dialogue and the Just Transition. The committee is involved in promoting the concept of climate proofing the workplace to encourage workplace activists to begin engaging their employers in conversation on climate change and what that means for their workplace.

The committee has played a pivotal role in campaigning for a new social contract in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its involvement in the national Coalition 2030 for Sustainable Development. This has included participation on delegations to the UN High Political Forum and Congress being chosen by government as a national SDG champion to promote the goals and raise awareness and engagement by Irish trade unions on using the sustainable development goals in their work.

The global pandemic did not lend itself to organising the annual summer schools, however the committee organised several

online global solidarity briefings on priority issues for trade union activists, including on child labour, ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, Development Co-operation with Irish Aid, the Kurdish Struggle and Ending Direct Provision.

Other areas of focus included:

- Developing with other civil society actors a 'Just Recovery' platform to promote a Post-Covid recovery that would include greater workplace democracy, measures to tackle equality and poverty.
- Engaged with organisations advocating for and representing refugees and asylum seekers on the white paper on ending direct provision.
- Engaging in the formation of the national coalition on Business and Human Rights.
- Provided joint training with the IOM on the protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to human trafficking.
- Attending the launch of Fairtrade Fortnight in February 2020 and 2021.

International Labour Organisation

Congress was part of the Workers' Group at the historic centenary conference of the ILO which adopted a new ILO Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. The first global standard on the topic, it includes recognition of the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment; recognition of the effects of domestic violence and the need to mitigate its impacts in the world of work; and commitments to an inclusive, integrated and gender responsive approach for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

Congress featured in an ITUC video regarding the ratification of ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. Congress has been urging the government to ratify the Convention which is still outstanding.

The Centenary Conference also agreed a Declaration on the Future of Work an historic commitment, agreed between unions, employers and governments, to a human centred future of work with a realisation of the Social Contract embodied in the mandate of the ILO 100 years ago. The Declaration is an agenda for rights and protection for all workers at a time when the world faces the enormous challenges of climate change and digital transformation, and for a labour protection floor for all workers.

We were a member of the planning group for the government's 17 September 2019 ILO Centenary Conference and attended regular meetings, assisted with provision of speakers and promotion of the event. We ensured a sizable trade union presence on the day and provided speakers for workshops and the plenary sessions. Patricia King, General Secretary also responded to the Phelan lecture that evening on the theme of Child Labour.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant the cancellation of the 2020 International Labour Conference but we did attend virtually the ILO Covid-19 Summit, including promotion on our website and social media of President Higgins address to same.

All of the regular supervisory processes of the ILO continued during lockdown and Congress provided comments to the ILO on a number of Irish government reports to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, including Article 19 Report (unratified conventions) 2020, and the Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977. We submitted a report on our response to the Covid-19 crisis to ACTRAV –Workers' Bureau of the ILO and continued to participate in regular ILO interdepartmental group meetings with departmental reps and IBEC, where OSH as a fundamental right; child labour, the 2021 international labour conference and ratification progress on ILO Convention 190, Convention 188 Work in Fishing all discussed. We completed an ILO questionnaire on apprenticeships to inform a standard setting discussion which is due in 2022.

The annual Global Solidarity Summer School 2019 was held in Wexford in August 2019 and themed around the ILO Centenary.

We also participated in Workers' Group meetings in advance of discussions at international labour conference 2021 on the draft outcome document 'A global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the Covid-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.'

Congress delivered the plenary speech at the 2019 and 2021 conferences.

Palestine

Congress attended the TUFFP Palestine Children's Conference in November 2019 and Patricia King, General Secretary delivered a keynote speech.

The work on the Occupied Territories Bill continued with other campaign organisations but, disappointingly and despite previous commitments by political parties, it did not appear in the new Programme for Government. We were part



Patricia King, General Secretary with Ms Fatin Al Tamimi, National Chairperson, Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign and film producer, Ms Rula Salameh (Pic from Women's Conference March 2020)



TUFU Secretary Eamon McMahon at BDC 2019

of a joint letter with a number of NGOs seeking a meeting with Minister Coveney to discuss how Ireland can continue to press for and promote the full respect of international law in occupied Palestinian Territories. The meeting took place in May 2021 and was attended by the President and General Secretary. Subsequently, the government supported a motion declaring that Israel's settlement activity in the West Bank represents the unlawful de facto annexation of Palestinian land. The motion attracted much international attention and Congress raised the issue with the ITUC, ETUC and at the ILO.

Following the violence in May 2021, Congress issued a statement reiterating our solidarity with the people of Palestine and declaring that Palestinians in Gaza and the Occupied Territories face persecution and denial of human rights by an occupying power in breach of international law. Palestinians in Israel face persecution and denial of human rights in what is now an apartheid state. We restated our commitment to BDS and encouraged our affiliates to take action where they can on investments, pension funds, procurement, and boycotting illegal goods from the Occupied Territories and those produced under an apartheid system. We have agreed to step up our efforts to translate this support into effective, strategic campaigns that can significantly contribute to the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. Congress also met with the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmaid on this topic.

Congress hosted a Trade Union Friends of Palestine webinar chaired by INMO General Secretary, Phil Ní Sheaghda and disseminated a subsequent solidarity request to affiliates which resulted in more than €30,000 raised in solidarity with Palestinian Civil Society.

Myanmar

Following the military coup in early 2021, Congress participated in an ITUC coordinated global initiative for drawing attention to the people's struggle in Myanmar and issued an appeal for support of the strike fund there and a statement following a terrible weekend of violence that left 100 people dead.



Trade Union Solidarity with the people of Myanmar

Colombia

Congress alongside Justice for Colombia attended the Oireachtas Committee hearing on the Colombian peace process in July 2019 and held a meeting with the Colombian Ambassador here as well as participating in a meeting with the Irish Ambassador in Bogota.

We delivered a letter to the Colombian Ambassador on the Colombia global day of action in November 2019 and continued to promote the latest JFC Peace Monitor reports on the peace deal.

We participated in a TUAC webinar - Colombia: One year after OECD accession and signed onto a joint trade union letter to embassies expressing our profound condemnation of the terrible state violence currently taking place in Colombia.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions was among 12 leaders chosen to drive forward the Sustainable Development Goals. Minister Richard Bruton made the announcement at the ploughing championships in September 2019. As a champion organisation Congress is requested to raise public awareness of the goals, and illustrate practical ways in which organisations and individuals can contribute to achieving the goals.

The four specific Sustainable Development Goals we are charged with promoting are:

Goal 1. End Poverty in all forms everywhere.

Goal 8. Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality in and among countries.

Goal 16. Promote just peaceful and inclusive societies.

We continued our involvement in Coalition 2030 activities with trade union participation in the high-level political forum in 2019 and in the Steering Group to coordinate activities. We continue to liaise with the ITUC, including participation in a webinar on new #timefor8 SDGs campaign and followed up with Irish testimonies to support the campaign in advance of the UN's July 2020 High Level Political Forum. We also participated in the ETUC Sustainable development group meetings.

Congress regularly promoted a trade union perspective on the goals in various fora and activities, including:

- the national CSR Forum with a focus on business and the SDGs in Deloitte 19 September.
- the national SDG Stakeholder Forum October 2019 in Dublin Castle.
- Congress video explaining the link between our work and the SDGs.
- Chambers Ireland Sustainable Business Breakfast.
- Speaking at DCU Business School webinar on SDGs for business.
- Speaking at HSA national conference in November 2019.

Business and Human Rights

Reflecting the welcome shift from ineffective Corporate Social Responsibility to more concrete action including human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how enterprises address impacts on human rights, Congress has played an active role in this agenda.

Congress was a founding member of the Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights and has played an active role in its set up activities, including advocacy documents for the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and on mandatory human rights due diligence in Ireland. We also facilitated the participation of the President of Cambodian Textile Union (and also Co-Chair of the sector at IndustriAll) to brief a consultation for Human Rights Defenders impacted by Irish companies.

We continued to participate in the DFA Business and Human Rights implementation group meetings and continue engagement with the DETE OECD National Contact Point on Responsible Business Conduct. We participate in TUAC Responsible Business Conduct group meetings.

In coordination with the ETUC, Congress promoted a joint European civil society initiative on the proposed EU legislative proposal on mandatory human rights due diligence and submitted a Congress response to the EC Consultation for an Initiative on Sustainable Corporate Governance.

We also submitted views to Business in the Community on their consultation about the responsible business behaviour mark.

Tackling the Far Right

The Executive Council formed a working group to advise on tackling the rise of the Far right. The work involved developing three strands of the campaign:

- Production of 'Pro Mask/Pro Worker' campaign masks for distribution.
- An accompanying social media campaign.
- Developing training for affiliates.



Worker wearing Pro Mask is Pro Worker Mask

The masks were delivered in early 2021 and were used in an extensive social media campaign in March to mark St Patrick's Day and the International Day against Racism.

On the training side, we held discussions with the TUC and others regarding their training materials and held a number of pilot sessions facilitated by the TUC and Unite, including affiliate participation in 'Difficult Conversations' a training workshop developed by the Communities Against Racism Network in partnership with Unite and based on Unites Unity Over Division campaign. We then formed a training sub group in order to develop materials for use here and have developed a framework of proposed training which will include a 'champions' course for senior trade union activists and relevant trade union staff, which could be rolled out centrally. We are developing modules and material that could form a suite of resources for Congress affiliates in their own trade union education and training courses.

Congress participated in international trade union discussions on tackling the far right, which included Congress President, Gerry Murphy taking part in an ETUC leaders discussion on cross border trade union response to the far right; a series of ETUC hosted conversations in order to develop a roadmap to tackling the far right; and promotion of the TUC report - The rise of the Far Right: Building a Trade Union response.

The General Secretary had an engagement with the Garda Commissioner's office regarding policing of anti-lockdown protests and we issued a statement following violent scenes at a far-right anti public health measures protest.

Congress participated in a consultation by the independent Anti-Racism Committee charged with developing a draft of the next national anti-racism strategy.

Other international Work

- Congress joined the global call for adults to join the September 2019 'Climate Strike', supported by over 50 organisations in Ireland including

- unions, grassroots groups, development organisations, environmental organisations and faith-based groups.
- Congress facilitated participation of Congress President, Gerry Murphy in 'ITUC Climate: Unions and Youth together - A Just Transition for climate ambition' webinar along with climate striker from Cork - Mira Henchi.
- Congress facilitated the participation of ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow in the EEAC 28th Annual Conference Delivering a Just Transition for All. Disseminated her speech on social media and that of President Higgins.
- Congress wrote to party leaders regarding their position on Irish membership of PESCO.
- Congress facilitated inclusion of Dunnes Stores Strike posters for exhibition of Irish Global Solidarity in 100 objects.
- We wrote to Minister for Finance regarding the trade union position on appropriate Covid-19 response from the international financial institutions in advance of their annual meetings.
- Congress participated in the DFA meeting on the OECD Development Assistance Committee Peer Review of Irish Aid.
- We spoke at TASC/Uplift launch of an analysis of the possible impact of the Mercosur trade agreement and also participated in Consultation on EU-Mercosur trade deal with Implement Consulting Group (carrying out sustainability impact analysis for DETE).
- Congress organised training for affiliates by the International Organisation for Migration Dublin office in the area of Trafficking in persons.
- We drafted a resource on 'climate and employment proofing your workplace' for agreement of Energy and Global Solidarity Committees.
- Congress made a submission on proposed regularisation scheme to Department of Justice.

NI Global Solidarity

The NI Global Solidarity Committee have been involved in raising public awareness around the movement, notably human trafficking, the human rights situation in

Columbia and the political and humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The following affiliates are represented: INTO, UTU, NASUWT, Unison, NIPSA, SIPTU, Prospect, Unite, Equity, Congress Youth committee and several trades councils. From 2018 until February 2021, the Chair has been Kevin Daly (INTO) with Paddy Mackel (Belfast & District Trades Council) as Vice-Chair. The committee was reconstituted in February 2021 and is now led by Dooley Harte (Craigavon Trades Council) as Chair and Paddy Mackel (B&D Trades Council) as Vice-Chair. The Committee is developing a work programme in co-operation with the all-island Congress Global Solidarity committee.



Attending Global Solidarity Summer School Wexford 2019

The disruption caused by the pandemic limited meetings of the committee, but the necessity of using new technology meant that both Global Solidarity committees in the two jurisdictions could work together and host a series of informative and often challenging talks and seminars from experts from around the world.

Beginning in June 2020, under the banner of Congress Global Solidarity, a series of briefings was organised in order to provide opportunities for trade unionists in both jurisdictions to hear about the impact and responses to Covid-19 from around the world and how trade unions are struggling to promote the interests of their members – many in the frontline.

Beginning with Latin America, we heard from two of the most affected countries, Brazil and Colombia, where health systems are under pressure and yet restrictions were being lifted.

To discuss the situation in Brazil, Congress Global Solidarity secured Alex Praça, the Human and Trade Unions Rights advisor for the Americas for the International Trade Union Confederation. The update on the situation in Colombia was delivered by Nick MacWilliam, Trade Unions and Programmes Officer at Justice for Colombia, who has spent several years working in Latin America as a freelance journalist and translator. During the 2021 May Day Celebrations, there was an online screening of Nick McWilliam's dramatic documentary on workers' protests in Chile, Santiago Rising. Online support for progressive causes in Latin America continues.

Congress President Gerry Murphy, hosted a webinar in July. Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights, Fatin Al Tamimi, Chairperson of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC), Eamon McMahon, Trade Union Friends of Palestine and Senator Frances Black were among the speakers at the webinar discussing Israel's plans to annex parts of the West Bank and Jordan Valley and what political measures must be taken to resist.

Global briefings held and discussion on Autumn programme, including two in September 'Using development cooperation to build back better' (DG Irish Aid and ITUC) and on the 'Global March against Child Labour' and the ITUC.

The Congress General Secretary delivered an input at the July online rally 'Freedom for Ocalan' expressing support for the Kurds in northern Syria facing attacks from the Turkish army, the Syrian regime, its Russian backers and the remnants of Da'esh/ ISIL. In early 2021, there was a special briefing from Yusra Talib Abdullah, a refugee doctor from Iraq on trade union protests against austerity and corruption in Baghdad, and their suppression by the theocratic paramilitaries of Muqtada Al-Sadr.

Solidarity was also expressed for CUT Brazil day of action in August 2020 as well as pro-democracy protests and strikes in Belarus. Solidarity was also expressed with people of Lebanon and the trade unionists in Hong Kong.

Congress supported calls for release of Palestinian Human Rights defender, Mahmoud Nawajaa, who was subsequently released in August.

More recently, Congress issued statements against the re-imposition of military rule in Myanmar/ Burma, and the forced relocation of Rohingya refugees by authorities in Bangladesh.

TUFP's September 2020 webinar included Jamal Juma' from the West Bank and Dina Nasser from East Jerusalem, Eamon McMahon, Northern Secretary, TUFP, and was chaired by Phil Ní Sheaghda, General Secretary, INMO.

Trade Union Friends of Palestine

The TUFP holds formal meetings on a bi-monthly basis in Belfast with the aim of promoting the implementation of Congress solidarity policy on Palestine. The TUFP committee in NI meets every two months and is supported by a Steering Group that meets on alternative months and as required. TUFP committee members from Unison and Fórsa sit on the Steering Group of the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine.

TUFP has continued its key role in informing the movement of the systemic human rights violations of Israeli settler colonialism and apartheid. Under these conditions Palestinians were particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. Israel refused to meet its obligations as occupier under international law. TUFP and Phil Ní Sheaghda from INMO took the lead in mobilising a Palestine Covid-19 Response Fund that raised €30,000 for Covid-19 support, €20,000 going to Gaza.

TUFP mobilised support for specific solidarity campaigns, including support for

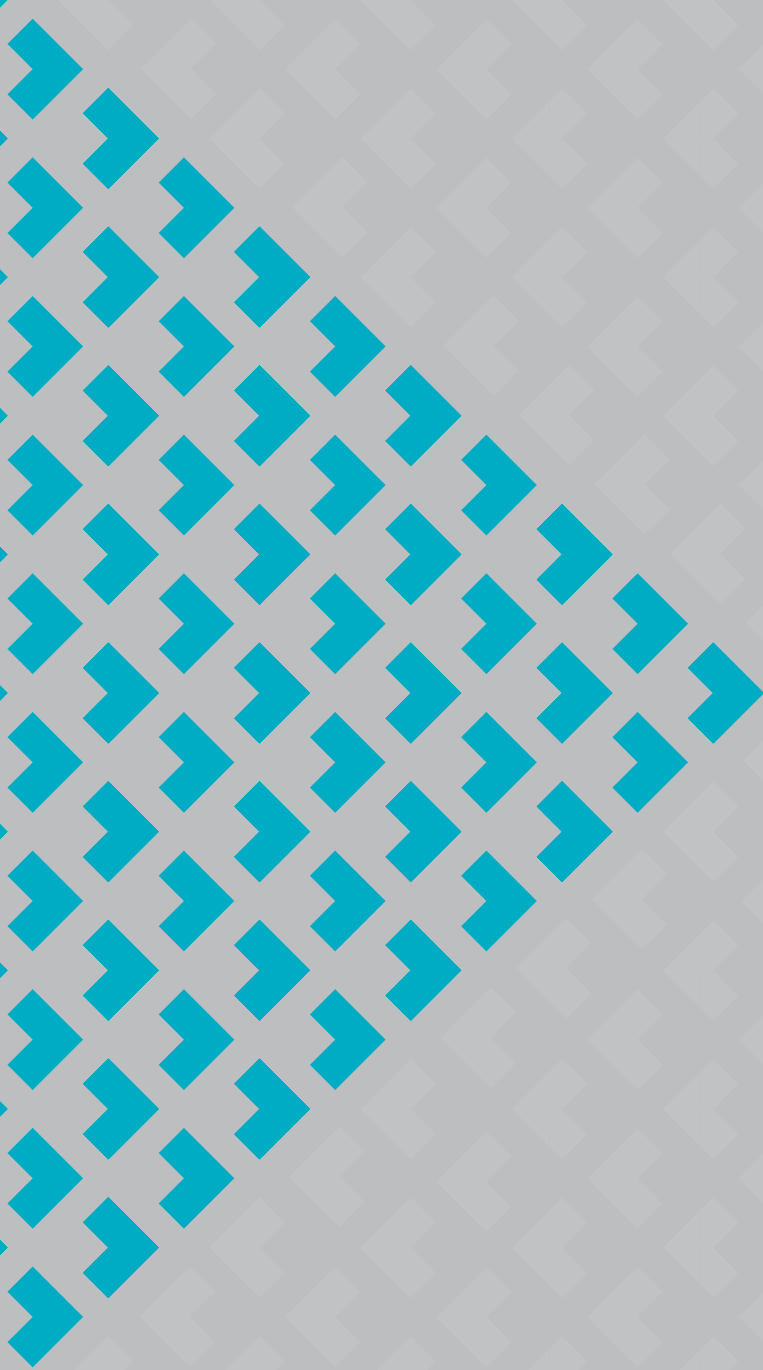
the striking workers of the New Unions at the Israeli owned Yamit chemical factory.

Following the well-attended Conference on Palestinian Children held in Dublin, and the TUIFP education-focused delegations to Palestine, a TUIFP Teaching Unions working group with senior representatives from INTO, UTU, ASTI, TUI and IFUT has been established to develop links with the Palestinian education sector.

TUIFP has helped mobilise a strong response to the call for international solidarity action, and statements of support, following the recent escalation of Israeli violations and brutal incursions in Sheikh Jarrah, at Al Aqsa Mosque and in response to the massacre of hundreds of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.



Trade Union Action for Palestine 22 May 2021



Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Accounts

Income and Expenditure Account

	2020 €	2019 €	2018 €
INCOME			
Affiliation Fees Income	2,268,935	2,299,911	2,339,825
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation	900,000	900,000	900,000
Grant and Project Income	32,379	72,435	70,558
Activities Income	225,433	286,373	235,521
Conference Income	16,403	55,646	25,534
Other Income	5,984	8,035	10,993
	<u>3,449,134</u>	<u>3,622,400</u>	<u>3,582,431</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Staff Costs	2,159,721	2,351,003	2,353,918
Ex-gratia Pensions	50,341	55,975	55,031
Affiliation Fees Costs	240,095	219,554	216,448
Education and Training Costs	166,799	154,549	205,959
Activities Costs	91,934	126,287	141,085
Research and Consulting	3,032	6,690	4,568
Conferences and Meetings	30,719	100,175	39,897
Publications, Printing and Stationery	8,798	23,846	22,106
Grants and Subscriptions	3,023	7,027	9,018
Repairs and Renewals	78,204	72,526	83,648
Leasing of Office Equipment	20,248	25,123	25,166
Motor, Travelling and Subsistence	17,045	45,364	70,375
Insurance	14,698	21,948	18,106
Rent, Rates and Service Charges	99,064	105,166	75,028
Postage and Telephone	28,003	38,855	34,126
Light and Heat	31,424	37,359	33,934
Cleaning and Sundry Items	28,233	58,801	54,150
Legal and Professional fees	71,303	44,292	36,345
Bank Interest and Charges	1,320	1,676	1,448
Loss/(Gain) on Foreign Exchange	20,857	(19,373)	18,258
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	-	5,655	-
Depreciation	55,106	54,092	52,903
Amortisation of Deferred Premises Funding	(33,255)	(33,255)	(33,255)
	<u>3,186,712</u>	<u>3,503,335</u>	<u>3,518,262</u>
Operating Surplus	262,422	119,065	64,169
Deposit Interest (net of DIRT tax)	-	-	185
Surplus for the year	<u><u>262,422</u></u>	<u><u>119,065</u></u>	<u><u>64,354</u></u>

	2020	2019	2018
	€	€	€
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	<u>1,862,693</u>	<u>1,907,705</u>	<u>1,936,747</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,818,978	1,599,287	1,531,037
Debtors and Prepayments	421,688	327,563	310,774
Stock of Stationery	5,034	5,034	5,034
	<u>2,245,700</u>	<u>1,931,884</u>	<u>1,846,845</u>
CREDITORS: (amounts falling due within one year)			
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	<u>(1,354,406)</u>	<u>(1,314,769)</u>	<u>(1,344,582)</u>
	<u>(1,354,406)</u>	<u>(1,314,769)</u>	<u>(1,344,582)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	891,294	617,115	502,263
CREDITORS: (amounts falling due after more than one year)			
Deferred Premises funding	(897,888)	(931,143)	(964,398)
NET ASSETS	<u>1,856,099</u>	<u>1,593,677</u>	<u>1,474,612</u>
RESERVES			
General Reserve	990,996	728,574	609,509
Campaign Fund	865,103	865,103	865,103
	<u>1,856,099</u>	<u>1,593,677</u>	<u>1,474,612</u>

APPENDIX 2

Executive Council, General Purposes Committee, Northern Ireland Committee and Obituaries

The Executive Council held 23 ordinary meetings between July 2019 and July 2021.

The attendances at these meetings were as follows:

Member	Number of Meetings attended
G Murphy (President) INTO	18
K Callinan (Vice-President) Fórsa	22
A Millar (Vice-President) NIPSA	18
J Cunningham (Treasurer) SIPTU	14
Brian Booth (NIPSA)	16
John Boyle (INTO)	21
Ethel Buckley (SIPTU)	16
Kieran Christie (ASTI)	21
John Clinton (POA)	16
Annette Dolan (TUI)	22
Seamus Dooley (NUJ)	21
John Douglas (MANDATE)	9
Stevie Fitzpatrick (CWU)	17
Bernard Harbor (Fórsa)	17
Sean Heading (CONNECT)	13
David Hughes (INMO)	20
Paddy Kavanagh (CONNECT)	20
David Kennedy (CWU UK)	13
John King (SIPTU)	22
Angela Kirk (Fórsa)	16
Michaela Laverty (USDAW)	8
Gerry Light (MANDATE)	16
Justin McCamphill (NASUWT)	18
Gerry McCormack (SIPTU)	18
Patricia McKeown (UNISON)	14
Gareth Murphy (FSU)	14
Phil Ní Sheaghda (INMO)	21
Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin (CWU)	16
Deirdre O'Connor (INTO)	19
Brendan Ogle (UNITE)	10
Jackie Pollock (UNITE)	2

Ciaran Rohan (AHCPS)	19
Eoin Ronayne (Fórsa)	21
Anne Speed (UNISON)	21
Jacque White (UTU)	10
Betty Tyrrell Collard (Dublin Council of Trade Unions)	22
Eimear Allen Observer YC (INTO)	16
Archie Thomson Observer RWC (UNISON)	11

General Purposes Committee

The General Purposes Committee held 21 Ordinary meetings between October 2019 and October 2021.

Name	Attended
Gerry Murphy (President) INTO	21
Kevin Callinan (Vice-President) Fórsa	19
Alison Millar (Vice-President) NIPSA	18
Joe Cunningham (Treasurer) SIPTU	18
John Boyle (INTO)	20
Gerry McCormack (SIPTU)	17
Phil Ní Sheaghda (INMO)	20
Brendan Ogle (Unite)	9
Eoin Ronayne (Fórsa)	19

J Douglas former General Secretary of Mandate retired in November 2020.

M Lafferty, USDAW resigned from the Executive Council in April 2020 to take up a new position with UNI Global.

As G Light, Mandate, had received the next highest number of votes in the Executive Council Election, he would be co-opted on to the Executive Council as a full member.

A Thompson (Retired Workers Committee Northern Ireland) and M Browne (Retired Workers' Committee Republic of Ireland) were elected as RWC Observers to the Executive Committee July 2019.

E Allen was elected Youth Committee Observer to the Executive Council in July 2019.

B Tyrrell- Collard was elected Local Reserved Panel to the Executive Council in July 2019.

Northern Ireland Committee

The Northern Ireland Committee's Biennial Delegate Conference took place virtually on 23 March, 2021 and the following were elected as members of the Committee 2021-2023:

Dooley Harte Craigavon TC, David Kennedy CWU UK, Jim Quinn FBU, Denise Walker GMB, Gerry Murphy INTO, Justin McCamphill NASUWT, Helena McSherry NIPSA, Angela Moffatt PROSPECT, Gayle Matthews PCS, Niall McNally SIPTU, Patricia McKeown UNISON, John Patrick Clayton UNISON, Jackie Pollock UNITE, Taryn Trainor UNITE, Kieran Smyth USDAW and Jacque White UTU.

Alison Millar (NIPSA) is the Chair of the Committee and Paddy Mackel (UCU) is the Vice-Chair.

Obituaries

We lost a number of colleagues, staff and activists of individual trade unions since BDC 2019, including:

Eileen Sweeney, Programme Manager General Secretary's office/Policy Researcher/ Executive Council Co-ordinator ICTU, who died June 2020.

Charlie Hammond lifelong trade unionist and former CPSU Official, past member of ICTU Retired Workers' Committee, who died May 2021.

Colm Quinlan, Regional Officer Dublin Office UNITE, who died June 2020.

Philip Oakes, Regional Officer Derry/Londonderry Office UNITE, who died June 2020.

Bernie Ruane, Assistant General Secretary TUI and former President and Vice-President, who died July 2020.

Dr Enda McDonagh, Maynooth University who died February 2021. Dr McDonagh served as President of IFUT from 1972 to 1974.

Sean Irwin, former President of OPATSI, who died in October 2019.

Denis Keatings, Joint Convenor of UNISON NI, member of the NIC/ICTU Conference Arrangements Committee/NIC -ICTU Heath Committee and ICTU Standing Orders Committee, who died May 2020.

Mel Corry, Committed Trade Unionist who served on Craigavon Trades Council, who died January 2021.

Dermot Doolan, Former Secretary of Irish Actors' Equity Association and the first Secretary of the ITGWU Cultural Division, who died August 2019.

Larry Doyle, Former General Secretary of AGEMOU Trade Union who died October 2019.

May O'Brien, Former SIPTU Equality Officer, ITGWU/SIPTU, who died January 2020.

Michael Gannon, Former National Group Secretary, ITGWU/SIPTU, who died April 2020.

Noel O'Neill, Former Irish Secretary of UCATT, a former member of the Congress Executive Council and a worker member of the Labour Court, who died July 2020.

Derek Casserly, Divisional Assistant Industrial Organiser SIPTU and member of Bray Council of Trade Unions, who died July 2021.

Barney Lawn, PCS official and member of NIC who died in August 2021.

On behalf of the Executive Council of Congress wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those deceased.

APPENDIX 3

Unions affiliated to Congress 2021

(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2020)

RO =	Regional Officer/Office	IS =	Irish Secretary
R =	Republic of Ireland	NS =	National Secretary
NI =	Northern Ireland	RS =	Regional Secretary
HO =	Head Office	NO =	National Official
GS =	General Secretary	CEO =	Chief Executive Officer
IR =	Irish Representative	SNO =	Senior Negotiating Officer
W =	Women	AS =	Area Secretary
NO =	National Organiser	NIO =	Northern Ireland Officer
PO =	Policy/Political Officer	SO =	Senior Organiser Ireland
NO =	National Organiser	P =	President
D =	Director		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants	R	3335	GS	Ciaran Rohan Flemings Hall, 12 Flemings Place, Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-6686077 Email: info@ahcps.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	3335		
	W R	1665		
Association of Irish Traditional Musicians	R	165	GS	Pádraig Ó Ceallaigh 32 Cearnóg Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin Telephone: 01-2800295 Email: eolas@comhaltas.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	165		
	W R	80		
	W NI	0		
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland	R	18452	GS	Kieran Christie ASTI, Thomas McDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01-6040160 Email: info@asti.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	18452		
	W R	12859		
Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union	R	0	GS	Sarah Woolley Stanborough House, Great North Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 7TA Telephone: 0044 17 0726 0150 Email: info@bfawu.org
	NI	487		
	Total	487		
	W R	0		
	W NI	104		
			NI	Laura Graham Auxiliary Organising Regional Secretary Suit 105, City East Business Centre 68-72 Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1GW Telephone: 0044 28 9094 1693 Email: laura.graham@bfawu.org

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Building and Allied Trades Union	R NI Total W R	2492 0 2492 2	GS	Brendan O'Sullivan Arus Hibernia, 13 Blessington Street, Dublin 7 Telephone: 01-8301911 Email: union@batu.ie
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	R NI Total WR WNI	0 1769 1769 0 1698	D	Claire Ronald 14 Bedford Row London WC1R 4ED Telephone: 0044 20 7306 6666 Email: sullivanc@csp.org.uk
Communications Workers' Union	R NI Total W R	15001 0 15001 3596	GS	Sean McDonagh William Norton House, 575 North Circular Road, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8663000 Email: info@cwu.ie
Communication Workers Union (UK)	R NI Total W NI	0 5097 5097 970	GS RS	Dave Ward CWU, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX Telephone: 0044 20 8971 7251 Email: dward@cwu.org Erin Massey CWU Regional Centre, 3rd Floor Unite Blds. 26 - 34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA Telephone: 0044 28 9032 1771 Email: northernirelandregion@cwu.org
Connect Trade Union	R NI Total W NI	37000 0 37000 276	GS	Paddy Kavanagh Head Office, 6 Gardiner Row, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8747047 Email: info@connectunion.ie
Energy Services Union (of Ireland)	R NI Total W R	1200 0 1200 792	GS	Fran O' Neill 43 East James's Place, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01-6767444 Email: fran@esu.ie
EQUITY	R NI Total W R W NI	0 467 467 0 236	GS	Paul W Fleming Guild House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EG Telephone: 0044 20 7379 6000 Email: info@equity.org.uk
Financial Services Union	R NI Total W R W NI	7912 2718 10630 5321 1828	GS	John O'Connell 1 Stephen Street Upper, Dublin 8, D08DR9P Telephone: 01-475 5908 Email: info@fsunion.org

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Fire Brigades' Union	R	0	GS	Matt Wrack Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE Telephone: 0044 20 8541 1765 Email: office@fbu.org.uk
	NI	1549	RO	Jim Quinn 14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 1XJ Telephone: 0044 28 9266 4622 Email: jim.quinn@fbu.org.uk
First Division Civil Servants (FDA)	Total	1549	GS	David Penman 93-95 Borough High Street, London SE1 7NL Telephone 0044 20 7401 5555 Email: dave@fda.org.uk
	W NI	108	NO	Allan Sampson 46 Moray Place, Edinburgh EH3 6BH Telephone: 0044 13 1226 4708 Email: allan@fda.org.uk
FÓRSA	R	89401	GS	Kevin Callinan Senior General Secretary Nerney's Court, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8171500 Email: kcallinan@FÓRSA.ie
GMB	NI	0	RS	Paul McCarthy North West and Irish Region Bill Smith House, Columbus Quay, Riverside Drive, Liverpool, L3 4GB Telephone: 0044 15 1727 0077
	Total	89401	SOI	Denise Walker Victoria House ,1 A Victoria Road Holywood BT18 9BA Telephone: 0044 28 9039 3347 Email: denise.walker@gmb.org.uk
W R	W R	61601		
	W NI	0		
Guinness Staff Union	R	340	GS	Mick Browne GSU, The Guinness Enterprise Centre Taylors Lane, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01-4100600 Email: mick.browne@guinnessstaffunion.com
	NI	0		
Irish Federation of University Teachers	Total	340	GS	Frank Jones 11 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, D02 P962 Telephone: 01-661 0910 Email: generalsecretary@ifut.ie
	W R	153		
W R	W R	1283		
	W NI	5211		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Irish Medical Organisation	R	5891	CEO	Susan Clyne Chief Executive Officer 10 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2, D02 Y322 Telephone: 01-676 7273 Email: sclyne@imo.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	5891		
	W R	3006		
	W NI	0		
Irish National Teachers' Organisation	R	42663	GS	John Boyle 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1 D01 ET35 Telephone: 01-8047700 Email: info@into.ie
	NI	7038		
	Total	49701	NS	Gerry Murphy 23-24 College Gardens, Belfast BT9 6BS Telephone: 0044 28 9038 1455 Email: infoni@into.ie
	W R	36316		
	W NI	5528		
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation	R	42349	GS	Phil Ní Sheaghdha The Whitworth Building, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Telephone: 01-6640600 Email: inmo@inmo.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	42349		
	W R	40050		
MANDATE	R	29250	GS	Gerry Light O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8746321 Email: mandate@mandate.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	29250		
	W R	19890		
Medical Laboratory Scientists Association	R	1795	GS	Terry Casey 4th Floor, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1, D01 E5Y3 Telephone: 01-8586472 Email: tcasey@siptu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	1795		
	W R	1449		
National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers	R	0	GS	Dr Patrick Roach Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham B45 8RS Telephone: 0044 12 1453 6150 Email: nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
	NI	12875		
	Total	12875	NO	Justin McCamphill Ben Madigan House, Edgewater Office Park, Edgewater Road, Belfast BT3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 28 9078 4480 Email: rc-nireland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
	W R	0		
	W NI	9394		
National Union of Journalists	R	2274	GS	Michelle Stanistreet Headland House, 72 Acton Street London WC1X 9NB Telephone: 0044 20 7843 3700 Email: info@nuj.org.uk
	NI	749		
	Total	3023	IS	Seamus Dooley 2nd Floor, Spencer House, Spencer Row, Off Store Street, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8170340 Email: info@nuj.ie
	W R	822		
	W NI	274		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT)	R	62	GS	Mick Cash
	NI	186	PO	James Croy
	Total	248		Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD
	W R	1		Telephone: 00442073874771
	W NI	21		Email: j.croy@rmt.org.uk
			RO	John Tilley
				North West & Eire Region
				2 Temple Square, Liverpool, L2 5BB
				Telephone: 0044151236391
				Email: j.tilley@rmt.org.uk
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance	R	0	GS	Carmel Gates
	NI	41595		Harkin House, 54-56 Wellington Park, Belfast Co. Antrim BT9 6DP
	Total	41595		Telephone: 004428906611831
	W NI	25323		Email: info@nipsa.org.uk
				30 Great James Street, Derry/ Londonderry, BT487DB
				Telephone: 00442871374977
				Email: regionaloffice@nipsa.org.uk
Operative Plasterers and Allied Trades Society of Ireland	R	928	GS	Billy Wall
	NI	0		18 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, D02 E126
	Total	928		Telephone: 01-9079200
	W R	1		Email: info@opatsi.ie
The Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA)	R	0	GS	John Murphy
	NI	701		Old Fire Station , 69 Albion Street
	Total	701		Birmingham, B1 3EA
	W NI	494		Telephone: 0044 12 1694 7000
				Email: paul.day@pda-union.org
Prison Officers' Association	R	3171	GS	John Clinton
	NI	0		18 Merrion Square Dublin 2, D02E126
	Total	3171		Telephone: 01-6625495
	W R	673		Email: admin@poa.ie
Prison Officers' Association UK	R	0	GS	Steve Gillan
	NI	954		Cronin House, 245 Church Street,
	Total	954		Edmonton, London N99HW
				Telephone: 0044 20 8803 0255
	W R	0		Email: general@poauk.org.uk
	W NI	294	AS	June Robinson
			Castell House, 116 Ballywalter Road	
			Millisle, Co Down, BT22 2HS	
			Telephone: 0044 28 9186 1928	
			Email: adminni@poauk.org.uk	

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Prospect	R	44	GS	Mike Clancy 8 Leake Street, New Prospect House, London SE1 8NN Telephone: 0044 28 9024 6331
	NI	1987		
	Total	2031	AS	Angela Moffatt Prospect Northern Ireland/ Republic of Ireland c/o ICTU NIC, 45-47 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FG Telephone: 048 28 9024 6331 Email: ni@prospect.org.uk
	W R	11		
	W NI	668		
Public and Commercial Services	R	0	GS	Mark Serwotka 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN Telephone: 0044 20 7801 2614 Email: mark@pcs.org.uk
	NI	1526		
	Total	1526		
	W R	0		
	W NI	770		
Royal College of Midwives	R	0	GS	Gill Walton 10-18 Union Street, London SE1 1SZ Telephone: 0044 20 7312 3535
	NI	1323		
	Total	1323	NI	Karen Murray 4 College House, Citylink Business Park, Belfast, BT12 4HQ Telephone: 0044 03 0030 30444 Email: karen.murray@rcm.org.uk Annemarie.oneill@rcm.org.uk
	W R	0		
	W NI	1320		
Services Industrial Professional Technical Union	R	173000	GS	Joe Cunningham Liberty Hall, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8586300 Email: gensec@siptu.ie
	NI	7000		
	Total	180000		
	W R	69200		
	W NI	2800		
Society of Radiographers	R	15	GS	Richard Evans 207 Providence Square, Mill Street London SE1 2EW Telephone: 0044 207 740 7200 Email: info@sor.org
	NI	1120		
	Total	1135		
	W R	13		
	W NI	982		
Teachers' Union of Ireland	R	19091	GS	Michael Gillespie 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, D06YP89 Telephone: 01-4922588 Email: tui@tui.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	19091		
	W R	12220		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association	R	510	GS	Manuel Cortes TSSA, 16-17 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4SQ Telephone: 0044 20 7387 2102 Email: supportservice@tssa.org.uk TSSA, Nerney's Court, Off Temple Street, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8745662 Email: enquiries@tssa.ie
	NI	309		
	Total	819		
	W R	201		
	W NI	114		
Ulster Teachers' Union	R	35	GS	Jacquie White 94 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP Telephone: 0044 28 9066 2216 Email: office@utu.edu
	NI	5884		
	Total	5919		
	W R	24		
	W NI	5008		
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	R	0	GS	Paddy Lillis Voyager Building, 2 Furness Quay Salford Quays, Manchester M503XZ Telephone: 0044 16 1224 2804 Email : paddy.lillis@usdaw.org.uk
	NI	16547		
	Total	16547		
	W NI	9226		
UNISON	R	34	GS	Christina McAnea Unison Centre, 130 Euston Road London NW1 2AY Telephone: 0044 20 7121 5151 Email: c.mcanea@unison.co.uk
	NI	39066		
	Total	39100		
	W R	28	IR	Patricia McKeown Galway House, 165 York Street Belfast, BT15 1AL Telephone: 00442890270190 Email: p.mckeown@unison.co.uk
	W NI	32425		
UNITE	R	20282	GS	Sharon Graham 128 Theobald's Road, Holborn, London, WC1X 8TN Telephone: 0044 20 7611 2500 Email: Sharon.graham@unitetheunion.org
	NI	33397		
	Total	53679		
	W R	6677	RS	Jackie Pollock Regional Secretary 26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA Telephone: 0044 28 9023 2381 Email: Jackie.pollock@unitetheunion.org
	W NI	8201		
			R	Brendan Ogle Senior Officer – Republic of Ireland UNITE House, 55/56 Middle Abbey Street Dublin 1 D01 X002 Telephone: 01 8734577 Email: brendan.ogle@unitetheunion.org

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
University & College Union	R	0	GS	Jo Grady Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH Telephone: 0044 207 756 2500 Email: jgrady@ucu.org.uk
	NI	3079		
	Total	3079		
	W NI	1726	NIO	
Veterinary Ireland	R	1099	GS	Finbarr Murphy 13, The Courtyard, Kilcarbery Park, Nangor Road, Dublin 22, D22 XH05 Telephone: 01-457 7976 Email: hq@vetireland.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	1099		
	W	280		
Veterinary Officers' Association	R	305	P	Justin Byrne Fleming's Hall, 12 Fleming's Place, Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-668 6077 Email: Justin.Byrne@agriculture.gov.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	305		
	W	113		

Unions with Associate Status affiliated to Congress 2021

(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2020)

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Aegis The Union	R	0	HO	Brian Linn General Secretary Aegis The Union, 1-3 Lochside Crescent Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9SE Telephone: 0044 13 1549 5665 Email: brian.linn@aegistheunion.co.uk
	NI	319		
	Total	319		
	W R	0		
	W NI	250		
British Dietetic Association	R	65	HO	Andy Burman 3rd Floor Interchange Place 151-165 Edmund Street, Birmingham, 133 2TA Telephone: 0044 12 1200 8080 Email: tusecretary@bda.uk.com
	NI	439		
	Total	504		
	W R	58		
	W NI	416		
Community	R	0	HO	Roy Rickhuss General Secretary Community, 465c Caledonian Road Lower Halloway, London, N7 9GX Telephone: 0044 20 74204000 Email: info@community-tu.org
	NI	150		
	Total	150		
	W R	0		
	W NI	60		
Hospital Consultants and Specialist Association	R	0	HO	Dr Paul Donaldson 1 Kingsclere Road, Overton, Basingstoke Hants, RG25 3JA Telephone: 0044 12 5677 1777 Email: conspec@hcsa.com
	NI	112		
	Total	112		
	W R	0		
	W NI	31		
National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)	R	0	HO	Paul Whiteman General Secretary NAHT, Carnmoney House, Edgewater office Park, Belfast BT3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 28 9077 6633 Email: nahtni@naht.org.uk
	NI	690		
	Total	690		
	W R	0		
	W NI	442		
The Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists	R	131	HO	Mr Steve Jamieson General Secretary 2nd Floor, Quartz House, 207 Providence Square, Mill Street, London SE1 2EW Telephone: 0044 20 7234 8631 Email: employmentsupport@cop.org.uk
	NI	480		
	Total	611		
	W R	101		
	W NI	365		

Affiliations to Congress

Currently there are 45 unions affiliated to Congress and 6 Associate Members.

Local Council of Trade Unions affiliated to Congress in 2021

Ballymena and Antrim District
Trades Union Council
Contact: Lawrence Huston

Belfast and District Trades Council
Contact: Kevin Doherty

Bray and District Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Kieron Connolly

Castlebar and District Trades Council
Contact: Donna Hyland

Clare Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Seamus Ryan

Clonmel Trades and Labour Council
Contact: Aileen Atcheston

Cork Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Joe Kelly

Craigavon Trades Council
Contact: Dooley Harte

Derry Trades Union Council
Contact: Goretti Horgan

Drogheda Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Martin Walsh

Dublin Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Sam Nolan

Fermanagh Trades Union Council
Contact: John Martin

Galway Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Tom Browne

Kildare Trades Council
Contact: Chris Harrison

Kilkenny Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Phil Funchion

Letterkenny & District Trades Union Council
Contact: Anne Wilkinson

Limerick Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Mike McNamara

Mid-Ulster Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Harry Hutchinson

North Down and Ards Trades Council
Contact: Janette McNulty

Omagh Trade Union Council
Contact: Anton McCabe

Sligo and Leitrim Trades Council
Contact: Denis Conway

Waterford Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Tom Creedon

Wexford Council of Trade Unions
Contact: Kate Miskella

Congress Centres Network

Dr Steven's Resource Centre
1st Floor Block a
Irishtown Central
Athlone
Co Westmeath
Ph: 090-6473001

Athy Resource Centre
The Manse
Woodstock Street
Athy
Co Kildare
Ph: 059-8638523

Ballina Centre for the Unemployed
Teeling Street
Ballina
Co Mayo
Ph: 096-70885

Belfast Resource Centre
45-47 Donegall Street
Belfast BT1 2FG
Ph: 048 9096 1111

Caherciveen Congress Information Centre
Celtic Apartments
Caherciveen
Co Kerry
Ph: 066-9472866

Castlebar Centre for the Unemployed
Tucker Street
Castlebar
Co Mayo
Ph: 094-9027684

Congress Information & Opportunity
Centre
Unit 7 A
Elevation Business Park
Clonroad, Ennis
Co Clare
Ph: 065-6841009

The Fingal Centre
5 Cardiffsbridge Road
Finglas
Dublin 11
Ph: 01-8845228

Noreside Resource Centre
3 St Canices Court
Dean Street
Kilkenny
Ph: 056-7762146

Congress Resource Centre Letterkenny
Celtic Apartments
Pearse Road
Letterkenny
Co Donegal
Ph: 074-9128010

Employment Development & Information
Centre, Longford
11a, 2 Mastertech Business Park
Athlone Road
Longford
Ph: 043-3347515

Mullingar Congress Information &
Development Centre
Unit B, Harbour Court
Friars Mill Road
Mullingar
Co Westmeath
Ph: 044-9345060

Newbridge Resource Centre
Lower Eyer Street
Droichead Nua
Co Kildare
Ph: 045-432763

Union Membership

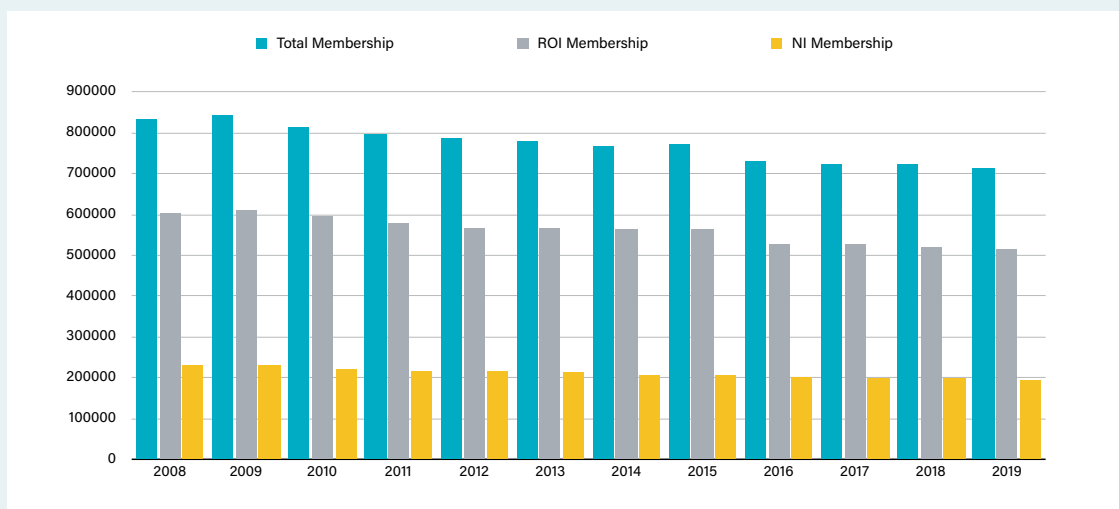
The number of union members affiliated to Congress as of the 31st December 2020 stood at 719,985 compared to 713,854 in 2019, a net increase of 6,131, representing an increase of .86% in the two year period since BDC2019. The number of unions affiliated to Congress for 2021 is 45.

The number of unions with Associate Status for 2021 is six.

Summary of Total Membership Changes 2019/2021:

Year	ROI	NI	TOTAL
2019	517,830	196,024	713,854
2021	521,004	198,981	719,985
Difference	3,174	2,957	6,131
% Difference	0.61%	1.51%	0.86%

12 Year Total Membership Overview



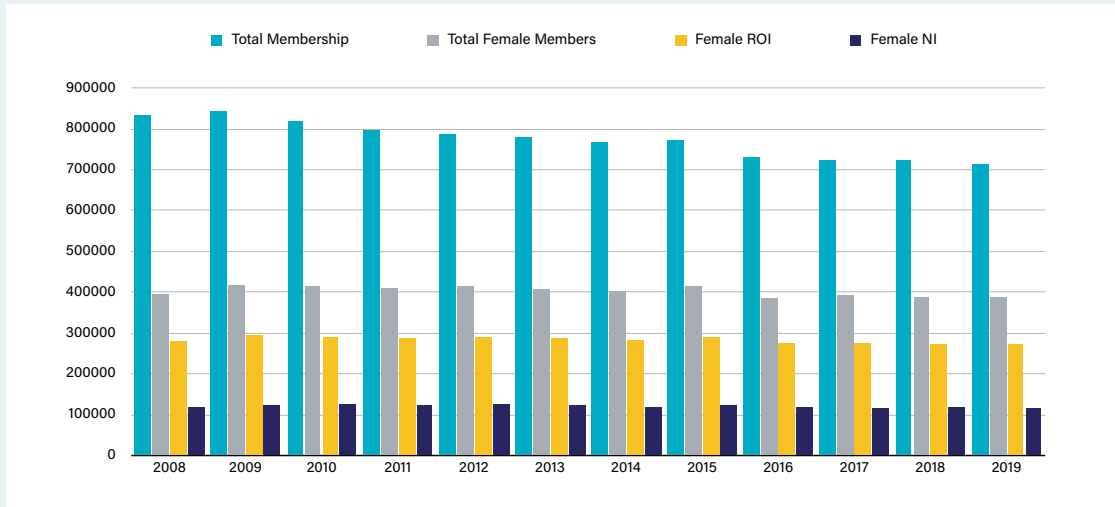
2020 Total 719,322 ROI 522,372 NI 196,950

Female Membership

The total number of female members at the 31st December, 2020 is 393,246

Year	TOTAL FEMALE	ROI	NI
2019	389,360	273,201	116,159
2021	393,246	278,545	114,701
Difference	3,886	5,344	-1458
% Difference	1.00%	1.96%	-1.26%

12 Year Female Membership Overview



Public/Private Membership 2021

Public / Private 2021	
Total Membership	719,985
Total Private Sector	45.35%
Total Public Sector	54.65%

Public / Private Female 2021	
Total ROI Female	278,545
ROI Private Sector Female	49.54%
ROI Public Sector Female	50.46%

Total ROI	521,004
ROI Private Sector	49.32%
ROI Public Sector	50.68%

Total NI Female	114,701
NI Private Sector Female	23.78%
NI Public Sector Female	78.97%

Total NI	198,981
NI Private Sector	34.94%
NI Public Sector	65.06%

Total Female	393,246
Total Female Private Sector	42.02%
Total Female Public Sector	58.78%
Total Female as % Total Membership	54.62%

Appendix 4

Staff at Congress 2021

(as of May 2021)

Head Office	Northern Ireland Office
31-32 Parnell Square	45-47 Donegall Street
Dublin 1 (D01 YR92)	Belfast BT1 2FG
T: +353 1 8897777	T: 048 9024 7940

Congress Head Office

General Secretary – Patricia King
Assistant General Secretary – Owen Reidy
Industrial Officer – Liam Berney
Equality Officer/Developmental Officer/Global Solidarity Officer – David Joyce
Campaigns Officer – Macdara Doyle
Programme Manager | Senior Administrator – Deirdre Mannion
Finance Officer – Pat Quinn
Social Policy Officer – Laura Bambrick
Social Policy Officer – Ger Gibbons
Communications Consultant – Conor Kavanagh
ONE Initiative/Trades Council Network – Fiona Dunne (secondment)

Administrative Staff

General Secretary's Office – Natalie Fox
Finance Office – Catherine McLoughlin
Administration – Pauline Corr
Reception – Vivien McDonnell
Reception – Trisha Ellis

Northern Ireland Office

Equality and Social Affairs Officer – Clare Moore
Union Services Officer, Communications & Policy – John O'Farrell
Union Services Officer, Trade Union Education – Kevin Doherty
NI Finance & Programme Officer – Gillian Allen
Administrative Union Learning and Development Officer – Julie Gorman
Administrative Officer – Tony Gallagher

Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)

Dublin Office

Co-Director – Tom McDonnell
Economist – Paul Goldrick-Kelly
Economist – Ciarán Nugent
Event Manager/Administrator – Louisa O'Brien

Belfast Office

Co-Director – Paul MacFlynn
Senior Economist – Lisa Wilson

Congress Secretariat Changes

Left Congress	Date
Frank Vaughan	September 2019
Eileen Gorman	October 2019
Peter Rigney	January 2020

Notes

On behalf of the Executive Council, Congress wishes to extend best wishes to those who have left or joined Congress since BDC 2019.

The Executive Council wish to offer its sincere condolences to the family and friends of Eileen Sweeney who passed away suddenly in June 2020.

A Tribute to Eileen Sweeney



The 8 June 2020 brought the very sad news that our beloved colleague Eileen Sweeney had passed away very suddenly. Her colleagues in Congress struggled to come to terms with her untimely loss. Tributes to Eileen were led by President Michael D. Higgins while messages of condolences poured in from the wider Trade Union movement; including the TUC and the International Trade Union Confederation; from Concern Worldwide; and from IBEC.

Eileen had unique qualities that appealed to many. She was a kind and compassionate person with a deep understanding of hard work and the hardships of life. She understood the difficulties people faced in life and she could empathise with them.

At a professional level her qualities were, first of all, integrity and loyalty. She lived by values which she did not wear on her sleeve but were deeply held and unshakeable, always demonstrated great judgement and discretion in the course of her work, and was reliably diplomatic and tactful.

Eileen was a lifelong member of the Communications Workers' Union, a committed trade unionist, and an immensely committed member of the Congress staff which she joined in 2001. Her work for the movement was the practical expression of her values and belief in social justice.

Together with her work as the senior administrator to the Executive Council and the Office of the General Secretary she was also the key enabler behind the organisation and overall administration of the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference - a task she took great pride in. Her presence at our Conference this year will be greatly missed by us all.

May her noble, generous and compassionate soul rest in peace.

Appendix 5

Membership of Congress Committee and External Bodies

Appeals Board

B Hannigan (FÓRSA), A Kenny (TUI), T O'Driscoll (SIPTU), M Staunton (FÓRSA), N Ward (INTO).

Communications Group

J Clinton (POA), P Cole (SIPTU), S Dooley (NUJ), B Harbour (FÓRSA), A Klemm (UNITE), F Connolly (SIPTU), D Geary (INTO), D Gibney (MANDATE), B McDowell (FSU), M Pidgeon (INMO), C Rohan (AHCPs), G Tuffy (ASTI), I Wall (CWU).

Community Sector Committee

J Boushell (SIPTU), B Byrne (UNITE), D Ginley (SIPTU), A Kane (SIPTU), C Keogh (FÓRSA), I McDonnell (FÓRSA), A Murphy (INMO), W Quigley (UNITE), K Smollen (SIPTU).

Construction Industry Committee

T Faulkner (CONNECT), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), R Kelly (UNITE), D Lane (SIPTU), A McGuinness (SIPTU), B Murphy (OPATSI), B Nolan (CONNECT), K O'Loughlin (SIPTU), B O'Sullivan (BATU), J Regan (SIPTU), A Smith (BATU), B Wall (SIPTU), C Whelan (BATU).

Disability Committee (Northern Ireland)

A Adams (GMB), P Brennan (SIPTU), L Chestnutt (UNISON), P Cobain (NIPSA), C Cumper (UTU), V Holding (CWU UK), S McKee (UTU), R Kennedy (UNISON), A Rea (NIPSA), A Smyth (UNITE).

Disability Committee (Republic of Ireland)

E Billane (SIPTU), M Branigan (UNITE), A Byrne (INMO), D Coates (FSU), M Coughlan (FÓRSA), D de Paor (ASTI), M Diskin (Bray & District TC), M Ennis (FSU), P Fanning (FÓRSA), M Gallagher (FSU), P Halligan (IFUT), J Hanna (SIPTU), B Halligan (FÓRSA), J Healion (ESU), P Heverin (SIPTU), G Looney (TUI), M Madden (FÓRSA), C Mahon (INMO), S McKee (UTU), G Monaghan (FÓRSA), M Murphy (INTO), D O'Connor (INTO), A O'Reilly (INMO), P Power (SIPTU), M Quinn (SIPTU), C Scheffer (CWU), J Thomas (Wexford Council of Trade Union).

Education Sector Group

B Byrne (UNITE), K Byrne (SIPTU), A Dolan (TUI), S Griffin (FÓRSA), F Jones (IFUT), A Kane (SIPTU), A Kenny (TUI), M Leydon (ASTI), A Mullen (INTO), D NicCraith (INTO), A Pike (FÓRSA), E Thompson (UNITE), J. Donegan (IFUT).

Education Trade Union Group

A Patterson (NASUWT), L Cooper (UTU), J Donley (GMB), K Ellison (UNITE), H Greer (NAHT), M Keenan (UNITE), A Law (NIPSA), G Gault (NAHT), C McCarthy (INTO), H McKinstry (UNISON), M McTaggart (INTO), P Mulholland (NIPSA), M Murphy Higgins (NASUWT), L Poutney (NAHT), A Speed (UNISON), A Steen (UTU), D Walker (GMB), A Wallace (NASUWT).

Energy & Natural Resources Sectoral Group

D Corkery (UNITE), L Cullinan (ESU), J Dullaghan (UNITE), D Erangey (CONNECT), S Heading (CONNECT), K Halpenny (ESU), P Mooney (UNITE), E Murphy (SIPTU/GNI GoU), J Nolan (ESB GoU), W Noone (SIPTU/ BnM GoU), J O'Dowd (UNITE), F O'Neill (ESU), E Thompson (UNITE).

Equality & Human Rights Committee

G Alexander (NIPSA), J Patrick Clayton (UNISON), P Mackel (UCU), P McKeown (UNISON), G Murphy (INTO), A Murray (NIPSA), T Taryn (UNITE).

Global Solidarity Committee (Republic of Ireland)

B Anderson (MANDATE), J Bowen (Cork Council of Trade Unions), F Brougham (INTO), C Campbell (Sligo/Leitrim Council of Trade Unions), F Connolly (SIPTU), N Cosgrave (Sligo/Leitrim Council of Trade Unions), H Cosuins (Galway Council of Trade Unions), R Coyle (UNITE), M Curtin (NUJ), K Daly (INTO), B Forbes (MANDATE), P Hennessy (ESU), M Jennings (IFUT), D Keane (FÓRSA), A Kenny (Kildare Council of Trade Unions), M Leydon (ASTI), B Lynch (ASTI), R McCord (UNITE), J McCrohan (FÓRSA), N McGuirk (FÓRSA), K Miskella (Wexford Council of Trade Unions), C Melinn (CWU), P Ní Sheaghda (INMO), A Noonan (INMO), Y O'Callaghan (SIPTU), J O'Brien (INTO), M O'Brien (SIPTU), T O'Connor (TUI), A Piggott (ASTI), H Pryor (Limerick Council of Trade Unions), J Roche (TUI), A Seely (SIPTU), P Torsney (CWU), M Wall (Wexford Council of Trade Unions), G Walsh (INMO).

Global Solidarity Committee (Northern Ireland)

G Alexander (NIPSA), L Collins (Mid-Ulster Trades Council), P Corrigan (Amnesty International NI), K Daly (INTO), R Gilpin (UTU), D Harte (Craigavon Trades Council), K Hillick (UNISON), P Mackel (Belfast Trades Council), C McCarthy (UNISON), A McKee (EQUITY), D McKendry (NASUWT), S McLaughlin (USDAW), E McMahan (TUFPP), C Mullaly (PROPECT), G O'Fachtna (SIPTU), J Scott (NIPSA).

Health and Safety Committee (Northern Ireland)

G Alexander (NIPSA), L Cooper (UTU), S Doherty (CWU UK), G Corry (GMB), B Cunningham (FBU), P Groogan (INTO), B Hewitt (CTU), E Jane Cullen (UNISON), A McDonnell (B&DTUC), M Loughran (NIPSA), L Love (UTU), D McPoland (FBU), R Rafferty (UNISON), K Sweeney (CWU UK).

Health and Safety Committee (Republic of Ireland)

F Barry (UNITE), M Brehony (FSU), L Coffey (FÓRSA), N Cooper (INTO), S Cronin (SIPTU), D Daly (FÓRSA), J Doran (CONNECT), D Hughes (INMO), J Irwin (TUI), R Jordan (INTO), P Kenny (CWU), D MacDonald (ASTI), M Martin (TUI), J McCamley (SIPTU), J McCarthy (SIPTU), C McDonald (ASTI), A McGuinness (SIPTU), M Meegan (MANDATE), B Mullan (UNITE), M Murphy (OPATSI), B O'Leary (MLSA), M Quinn (SIPTU), D Robinson (FÓRSA), J Sheridan (SIPTU), A Smith (BATU).

Health Sector Group

M Butler (SIPTU), K Figgis (SIPTU), D Hughes (INMO), P NíSheaghda (INMO), A Owens (IMO), T Fitzpatrick (INMO).

Health Services Committee (Northern Ireland)

L Archer (SOR), J Bremmer (HCSA), M Caddell (RCM), J Clayton (UNISON), J Donley (GMB), T Killen (NIPSA), K McAdam (UNITE), C McCarthy (UNISON), M McKenna (UNISON), M Morgan (NIPSA), D Moorehead (UNITE), K Murray (RCM), G O'Dwyer (COP), U O'Farrell (PDA), P Paxton (HSCA), C Pullar (MIP), C Ronald (CSP), A Speed (UNISON), T Sullivan (CSP), D Walker (GMB).

Industrial Relations Committee

J Boyle (INTO), E Buckley (SIPTU), K Callinan (FÓRSA), K Christie (ASTI), J Clinton (POA), J Cunningham (SIPTU), A Dolan (TUI), S Dooley (NUJ), S Fitzpatrick (CWU), B Harbor (FÓRSA), S Heading (CONNECT), D Hughes (INMO), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), J King (SIPTU), A Kirk (FÓRSA), G Light (MANDATE), G McCormack (SIPTU), G Murphy (FSU), P Ni Sheaghda (INMO), F Ní Bhrógáin (CWU), D O'Connor (INTO), B Ogle (UNITE), C Rohan (AHCPS), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), B Tyrrell Collard (Dublin Council of Trade Unions).

Legal Strategy Committee

R Browne (UNITE), E Buckley (SIPTU), A Dolan (TUI), F Lee (IFUT), M McHenry (INTO), R McNamara (MANDATE), L Monaghan (INMO), C Mullins (INMO), G Murphy (FSU), D O'Connor (INTO), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), R Ryan (SIPTU).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Committee (Northern Ireland)

F Carolan (UNISON), C Cumper (UTU), A Elson (UNITE), M Johnston (FSU), K McDowell (FBU), A Murray (NIPSA), A Rowan – Jenkins (UNITE), D Toner (NIPSA), J White (UTU).

Northern Ireland Committee

D Harte (Craigavon Trades Council), D Kennedy (CWU UK), P Mackel (UCU), G Matthews (PCS), J McCamphill (NASUWT), P McKeown (UNISON), N McNally (SIPTU), H McSherry (NIPSA), A Millar (NIPSA), A Moffatt (PROSPECT), G Murphy (INTO), J Patrick Clayton (UNISON), J Pollock (UNITE), J Quinn (FBU), K Smyth (USDAW), T Trainor (UNITE), D Walker (GMB), J White (UTU).

North South Committee

J Boyle (INTO), K Callinan (FÓRSA), J Cunningham (SIPTU), D Kennedy (CWU UK), A Millar (NIPSA), B Ogle (UNITE), P Mackel (UCU), G McCormack (SIPTU), P McKeown (UNISON), G Murphy (INTO), P Ní Sheaghda (INMO), J Pollock (UNITE), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), A Speed (UNISON), D Walker (GMB).

Private Sector Committee

B Barrett (FSU), M Browne (GSU), P Burns (UNITE), A Connolly (FÓRSA), S Dooley (NUJ), G Ennis (SIPTU), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), B Forbes (MANDATE), T Hannick (SIPTU), S Heading (CONNECT), J Hogan (MANDATE), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), G Light (MANDATE), I McArdle (CWU), G McCormack (SIPTU), K Morgan (FÓRSA), G Murphy (FSU), F Ní Bhrógáin (CWU), B Nolan (CONNECT Trade Union), K O'Loughlin (SIPTU).

Public Services Committee

J Boyle (INTO), R Browne (UNITE), J Boyle (INTO), K Callinan (FÓRSA), T Casey (MLSA), K Christie (ASTI), J Clinton (POA), S Clyne (IMO), M Gillespie (TUI), F Jones (IFUT), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), J King (SIPTU), F Murphy (VI), P Ní Sheaghda (INMO), B O'Sullivan (BATU), C Rohan (AHCPS), B Wall (OPATSI).

Retail & Distribution Sectoral Group

G Brash (UNITE), G Light (MANDATE), B Forbes (MANDATE), N McNally (SIPTU), M Quinn (SIPTU), N Scarborough (USDAW), D Walker (GMB).

Retired Workers Committee (Northern Ireland)

R Atkinson (UTU), A Boorman (UNISON), T Cluskey (NIPSA), S Dodds (NIPSA), M Galloway (PCS), F Hughes (PCS), J Hughes (FBU), D Lee (UNITE), J Ley (NUJ), E Luke (TSSA), P Magee (GMB), J Martin (CWU UK), M McAlinden (CWU), H Rafferty (UNITE), A Thompson (UNITE).

Retired Workers Committee (Republic of Ireland)

M Browne (FSU), B Burke (FÓRSA), M Casey (UNITE), M Corry (TUI), M Duffy (FÓRSA), J Dunne (Wexford Council of Trade Unions), F Farrell (UNITE), B Fitzpatrick (AHCPS), D Griffin (UNITE), J Guinan (CWU), J Higgins (CWU), D Keane (TUI), P Lamon (SIPTU), M MacGuinness (INMO), R Malone (IFUT), G McGovern (GSU), A McKim (Dublin Council of Trade Unions), J McLoughlin (SIPTU), H Murphy (SIPTU), J Nealon (Dublin Council of Trade Unions), D O'Boyle (ASTI), G O'Donoghue (ASTI), M O'Dwyer (MANDATE), M O'Halloran (MANDATE), P Quinn (FÓRSA), T Roche (Wexford Council of Trade Unions), D Ronan (INMO), B Sheenan (INTO), D Sheridan (FSU), A Walsh (FÓRSA), A Walsh (AHCPS), J Walsh (SIPTU), J Whelan (UNITE).

Standing Orders Committee

J Gaffney (MANDATE), M Gillespie (TUI), B Halligan (FÓRSA), P Mackel (UCU), J McGinley (SIPTU).

Women's Committee (Northern Ireland)

G Alexander (NIPSA), T Creaney (NIPSA), C Cumper (UTU), C Darcan (PCS), E Gorman V Holding (CWU UK), E Gorman (FSU), G Keown (GMB), G Matthews (PCS), R McCabe (SIPTU), C McCarthy (INTO), D McCusker (UNISON), D McGinley (INTO), M McKee (UNISON), M Murphy-Higgins (NASUWT), C Nelson (EQUITY), L O'Hagan (B&A DTC), G Partridge (UNITE), T Trainor (UNITE), A Wallace (NASUWT), D Walker (GMB), S Ward (FSU), J White (UNITE).

Women's Committee (Republic of Ireland)

A Atcheson (Clonmel Trades and Labour Council), M Branigan (UNITE), M Brennan (FÓRSA), M Browne (FSU), H Butler (INMO), M Coughlan (FÓRSA), T Caherty (NUJ), B Casey (SIPTU), C Corcoran

(ESU), D Curran (MANDATE), M Daly (ESU), A Dolan (TUI), C Farrar (NUJ), A Fitzgerald (INMO), J Gaffney (MANDATE), A Gilliland (INTO), N Grealy (INTO), M Harkin Kelly (INMO), M La Combre (FSU), F Lee (IFUT), M Leydon (ASTI), H Linehan (FÓRSA), B Lynch (ASTI), R McElaney (FÓRSA), T Moloney (Dublin Council of Trade Unions), B Neville (Wexford Council of Trade Unions), B O'Leary (MLSA), M Parsons (TUI), A Regan (SIPTU), A Ryan (SIPTU), C Scheffer (CWU), M Sherlock (SIPTU), B Tyrrell Collard (Dublin Council of Trade Unions), C Ward (Kildare Council of Trade Unions).

Youth Committee (Northern Ireland)

S Burns (UNITE), M Hamilton (NIPSA), S Harvey (NIPSA), A Homit (UNITE), M Johnston (FSU), K McCann (FSU), C McCullough (GMB), A Shields (UTU).

Youth Committee (Republic of Ireland)

R Omayayi Adiqun (ESU), E Allen (INTO), S Bailey (TUI), O Carroll (FÓRSA), S Corrigan (NUJ), C Davey (ASTI), A Dowling (TUI), H Duffy (M Coughlan (FÓRSA), C Galvin (SIPTU), A Homits (UNITE), G Langan (CWU), S Mealy (Cork Council of Trade Unions), E Mitchell (SIPTU), L O'Donoghue (TUI), A O'Maolagain (FÓRSA), D O'Toole (ASTI), S Ryan (SIPTU), G Williams (FÓRSA).

Bodies on which Congress is Represented

Republic of Ireland

Industrial Relations

Advisory Group- Better Balance for Better Business
 An Fóram Uisce
 Apprenticeship Council
 Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal
 Company Law Review Group
 Courts Services Board
 Expert Group on Future Skills
 Labour Court
 Low Pay Commission
 Personal Injuries Assessment Board
 Private Security Authority
 Workplace Relations Commission

Economic Affairs

County and City Development Boards
 Harbour Boards
 Local Government Strategic Policy Committees
 National Competitiveness Council
 National Economic & Social Council

Education and Training

Education & Training Boards (some)
 DFHERIS Advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (ACVT)
 Governing Bodies of Institutes of Technology
 Governing Body of NCI
 National Adult Literacy, Numeracy & Digital Literacy Strategy- SOLAS- Technical Advisory Committee
 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
 Skillnets
 Teaching Council

Safety, Health & Welfare

EU – OSHA (European Agency for Health & Safety at Work)
 Health and Safety Authority
 National Irish Safety Organisation
 Railway Safety Advisory Council

Social Affairs

Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities Implementation Group
 DBEI Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum
 DCEDIY National Women's Strategy Monitoring Group
 DFA Standing Committee on Human Rights
 DFA Business and Human Rights Implementation Group
 Early Learning & Childcare Stakeholder Forum (ELCSF)
 Employment sub group of National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy
 IHREC Worker Employer Advisory Committee
 Labour Market Advisory Council
 Migrant Integration Strategy Monitoring and Coordination Committee
 National Disability Authority
 National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Committee
 Social Welfare Tribunal
 Technical Advisory Group on Social Welfare

Other Bodies

Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Social Security Systems
 Advisory Committee on Freedom of Movement of Workers
 Advisory Group on a Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy
 Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce
 Board of IPA
 Brexit Stakeholder Forum
 Climate Change Advisory Committee
 Coalition 2030
 Commission on Taxation & Welfare
 Construction Workers Benevolent Fund & Construction Workers Health Trust
 Covid-19 Steering Group (Dept of Further & Higher Education)
 DAA
 Development of LGBT Youth Strategy
 ERIVA Board
 Expert Group of the Nursing Profession
 IHREC Worker Employer Advisory Committee

Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights
Law Society's Complaints and Client Relations Committee
Midlands Regional Transition Team
National Safeguarding Committee
Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC)
Pensions Commission
Retail Consultation Forum
Retirement Planning Council of Ireland
Shannon Group PLC

International Bodies

Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
Advisory Committee on Migrant Workers Social Welfare
CEDEFOP Government Board
European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
ETUC Executive
ETUC Standing Committees
EU Advisory Committee on Freedom of Movement of Workers
EUROFOUND
International Labour Organisation (ILO)
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
The European Social Fund (ESF)
Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)

Appendix 6

Action on Motions to Biennial Delegate Conference 2019

1 Northern Ireland (Executive Council)

Further to intensive campaigning we secured the establishment of the NI Engagement Forum which brings together unions, employers and government Ministers to seek to address the labour market issues around Covid-19. We have established a consensus that post pandemic, the Forum should be maintained but re-focussed. We continue to campaign with others for a Bill of Rights and have campaigned that Section X on page 44 of the NDNA agreement become part of a Programme for Government. We continue to campaign with others that workers must not pay the price of Brexit.

2 Return to Devolved Government in Northern Ireland within an Equality and Human Rights Framework (UNISON)

See Motion 1 above. Congress has campaigned with many other groups and organisations to advocate a return of devolutions. Through our participation in the Equality Coalition as well as the Human Rights Consortium, the movement has engaged with the Irish government on crucial equality and human rights related issues within the context of Brexit.

3 Fair Employment and Nepotism (NASUWT)

This matter has been pursued by the NIC-ICTU Education Group who have lobbied the Department of Education to monitor and indeed prevent nepotism.

4 Provision of Publicly Owned NHS Healthcare (Fermanagh Trades Councils)

This matter is a constant concern for the NIC-ICTU Health Committee, many of whose unions participated in a successful strike in late 2019 early 2020 for fairer pay and supporting a properly public funded universal health service, free at the point of use.

Through our campaigning promotion of the fiscal policies in our 'No Going Back' paper we have advocated fairer system of tax whereby NI employers should pay their fair share of national insurance contributions which would bring in an additional £3.5bn to the Executive.

5 Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland (Derry Trades Councils)

Congress has continued to advocate for a social security system which benefits all – most recently through No Going Back - and has joined Civil Society, including the Cliff Edge Coalition, to resist the egregious effects of welfare 'reform'.

6 Corporate Governance (UCU)

This matter remains unresolved, despite the concerns raised to the Department for the Economy and the FE colleges by affected affiliated unions, supported by the NI Committee.

7 Murder of Lyra McKee (NUJ)

We have worked with the NUJ to support journalists who have been threatened by paramilitaries making the point that every worker has the right to do their work free from intimidation and threats to their lives.

The values which were championed by Lyra McKee form a core part of the work of Congress. This includes the defence of all aspects of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and its full implementation including a Bill of Rights for NI and a Charter of Rights for the Island. Congress recognises the work that Lyra McKee in promoting LGBTQI equality and human rights and was to the fore in Love Equality, the campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland Congress is one of the constituent leadership groups which through a dynamic campaign 'Love Equality' secured the right of marriage equality for all in NI.

8 Collective Bargaining (Executive Council)

Through our membership of the ETUC Executive and our participation in the ETUC Collective Bargaining committee we are working closely with the ETUC secretariat on the EU draft directive on minimum wages which includes a provision to promote collective bargaining and collective bargaining coverage.

9 Trade Union Organisation (Fórsa)

The actions called for in this motion were pursued through a number of different initiatives including the creation of a number of new sectoral structures and through the Congress Policy on Collective Bargaining. Actions taken by Congress in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have resonated with the objectives of this motion.

10 Right to Statutory Collective Bargaining and Trade Union Access Rights (Mandate)

This motion has been pursued through the campaign for a Congress Collective Bargaining Policy at both national and European levels.

11 Precarious Work (SIPTU)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued by the Congress Strategic Organising Committee and the Congress Private Sector Committee. The Nevin Economic Research Institute assisted with certain aspects of this work.

12 Precarious Forms of Employment for Crafts Workers and Others (OPATSI)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the Congress Construction Industry. The issue of Bogus Self Employment in the Construction sector was highlighted in two Government commissioned reports as a result of Congress Submissions.

13 Public Contracts and Collective Bargaining (CWU)

Congress had commenced a campaign to secure stronger collective bargaining rights in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. As part of this campaign we are working with colleagues in the ETUC to secure an EU Directive on Minimum Wages and Collective Bargaining.

14 Publicly Funded Projects (Connect)

Congress pursued the actions in this motion directly with the Office of Government Procurement and in various engagements with the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

15 Securing Decent Work and Jobs in Financial Services (FSU)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued by the Congress Strategic Organising Committee and the Congress Private Sector Committee. The Nevin Economic Research Institute assisted with certain aspects of this work.

16 Industrial Relations in the Energy Sector (Prospect)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued by the Congress Energy Sector Group.

17 Industrial Relations Disputes do not Require Legal Approach (IFUT)

The actions in this motion were pursued through the Congress Education Sector Group.

18 Exploitation of Seafarers (NURMT)

This motion required no action on the part of Congress.

19 Recognition of Qualifications in the Construction Sector (OPATSI)

The actions identified in this submission were pursued through the work of the Congress Construction Industry Committee. Congress also raised the issue of a skills register in our submission on the Apprenticeship Action Plan and through the work of the Construction Sector Group.

20 Payment of Wages (Connect)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the Congress Private Sector Committee.

21 Supporting Trade Unionists deal with the Mental Health Crisis (Unite)

In Northern Ireland, Congress has worked with a range of statutory organisations, including the ECNI, the HSENI and the LRA to highlight the issue of workplace mental health. This has included webinars as well as guest speakers to Committee meetings. Congress is engaged with the ECNI on their Mental Health Charter initiative and this will be the subject of a webinar in 2021.

In the Republic, Congress representatives on the board of the Health & Safety Authority have strongly supported greater emphasis on health in general and mental health in particular. This has now been reflected in higher prioritisation in strategy documents of the HSA. Individual unions have also worked with the HSA to modify the Work Positive tool for sectoral use; the tool uses a risk-based approach to identify potential hazards affecting mental health in the workplace. The Health and Safety Committee also developed and published a Mental Health Charter in early 2021, designed to provide guidance to unions both within their own organisations and for wider application in workplaces.

22 Health of Workers (AST)

This actions in this motion were pursued in the work of the Congress Public Services Committee.

23 Gender Balance Membership (INMO/RCM)

This motion speaks about revising all committees to ensure positive gender balance / and that 'all agreements entered into by Congress are assessed for gender balance and gender proofed.' Unclear what is meant by 'agreements' in this context, but would suggest the addition of 'As committees are due to be reconstituted, Congress seeks to ensure that there is balanced representation of each gender on all appropriate committees.'

24 Engagement with Students (Kildare CTU)

Work is ongoing with USI and ISSU to encourage student participation in the Congress Trades Councils Network. The Skills Academy took place in 2019 and was held online in 2020. ONE Cork engages with youth workers across the city of Cork and students countrywide were encouraged to engage with the ONEFutureONEVision webinar series. A pre-recorded audio presentation was made available to schools in Kildare in September 2020 which was followed up with 5 live Q&A Sessions.

25 Climate Action & The Need for a Just Transition (Executive Council)

Action on this motion has been pursued through the work of the Congress Energy Sector Group and the Global Solidarity Committee, work which is ongoing given the evolving nature of government policy and planned new legislation in this area.

26 Duty to Defend the Environment (Omagh TUC)

Through our participation in the Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights, we have been calling for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence to be introduced. This would require companies to assess and mitigate risk of their activities and that remedy be provided.

27 Crisis in the Retail Sector (USDAW)

Action on this motion and on the objectives outlined have been pursued through the work of the all-island Retail Sector Group, through Congress membership of the Retail Consultation Forum and in particular through the development and launch of the New Deal for Retail & Distribution Workers campaign, on an all-island basis.

28 Future Potential of Rosslare Europort (Wexford CTU)

Congress continued to raise the importance of our ports in the context of our ongoing work on the implications of the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

29 Protecting the Right of Workers' North and South Post-Brexit (UNISON)

Congress has lobbied and engaged extensively with the trade union congresses on these islands and through the ETUC to seek to protect the interests of workers in the context of Brexit. We have engaged in all fora including the Irish governments Brexit stakeholder groups seeking to protect the interests of all workers on the island of Ireland. We have also joined with organisations across the island to express our concern about the development and implementation the UK government's permit scheme for frontier workers.

30 Protection of Workers' Rights (Equity)

See above. In addition, we have campaigned and argued that there is nothing preventing the Assembly mirroring any progressive EU directive on workers' rights in the future given that employment remains a devolved matter. We also have it on the public record that 4 of the 5 Executive parties have committed to such a principle.

31 Workers' Rights Post-Brexit (NIPSA)

See above. In addition, our campaign on our 'No Going Back' paper and our briefing paper to the Assembly on 'the need for worker friendly and trade union friendly legislation in NI' makes these crucial points about economic and tax justice and the need for legislation to support more collective bargaining and sectoral bargaining. Also, through the migrant workers project we have brought together migrant and local workers to campaign for improvements in workers' rights and produced a Charter to Protect BAME Migrant Workers from Exploitation and to Build Inclusion.

32 Increase in the Qualifying Age for State Pension (Executive Council)

It was in no small part because of the groundwork of Congress highlighting this injustice, the increase in the pension age became the most important deciding factor for voters in the General Election in February 2020, after housing and healthcare. Congress was pleased to see the new Government commit to pausing the planned increase to allow for a Commission on Pensions to report. As a member of the Commission, Congress will continue to vigorously resist any increase in the pension qualifying age.

33 Participation of Retired Workers (Fermanagh TC)

The input of retired workers into the overall work of Congress is valued. The work of the Congress Retired Workers Committees North and South and their seat on the Executive Councils allows Congress to reflect the views of retired workers as part of wider policy formation. Congress will continue to support these Committees so that the objectives of the motion can be actively pursued.

34 Housing (Executive Council)

Action on this motion and the objectives outlined have been pursued through the ongoing work of the trade union led Raise the Roof campaign, which has set as key priorities the provision of public housing, the need to establish security and certainty for tenants in the rental sector and the creation of a legal right to housing.

35 Housing Crisis (Dublin CTU)

Action on this motion and the objectives outlined have been pursued through the ongoing work of the trade-union led Raise the Roof campaign, which has set as key priorities the provision of public housing, the need to establish security and certainty for tenants in the rental sector and the creation of a legal right to housing.

36 Homelessness and the Working Poor (Unite)

Action on this motion and the objectives outlined have been pursued through the ongoing work of the trade-union led Raise the Roof campaign, which has set as key priorities the provision of public housing, the need to establish security and certainty for tenants in the rental sector and the creation of a legal right to housing.

37 Campaign of Industrial Action in relation to Housing Policy (Waterford CTU)

This motion was ruled out of order.

38 Alternative to Building Ireland Plan (Cork CTU)

This motion was ruled out of order.

39 Equality (Executive Council)

This is a wide-ranging motion and the Congress activity on this is covered fully in the equality section of the Executive Council Report to the BDC 2021.

40 Anti-Racism Campaign (Waterford CTU)

The Executive Council established a sub-group to develop a trade union response to the far right. This included a mask campaign with associated social media and a training programme. A full account of all activity can be found in the Executive Council Report to BDC 2021.

41 Reasonable Adjustments /Accommodation Passport (GMB)

Passport scheme launched with Ibec on international day for people with disabilities on 3 December 2019 and widely promoted through our networks. The Disability Passport initiative has been welcomed by the Disability Committee NI and will be the subject of an upcoming webinar in 2021.

42 Reproductive Rights (Belfast & District TUC)

In Northern Ireland, Congress was and is fully engaged with the Campaign to deliver full reproductive rights to women, as demanded by CEDAW. This includes supporting Alliance for Choice and working through the ICTU Women's Committee. Following legislation decriminalising abortion in NI, Congress has actively lobbied the Department of Health and other agencies to now deliver crucial healthcare.

43 Foster Leave (CWU)

Research uncovered fact that there are about 6000 children who are fostered in Ireland in about 3000 families. While they are recognised by the state in terms of foster allowances, payment of children's allowance etc. there is no associated leave however. Contact with TUSLA, and Foster Care Ireland indicated that they would support any moves that would further recognise the important role of foster families and/or make it more attractive for families to consider. Covid-19 halted progress so far.

44 Reverse the Waiting Time for Disability Benefit (Bray CTU)

In 2018 Bray CTU called for this government decision to be reversed on the basis that this measure was implemented during the financial crisis along with other cuts and it was now recognised by all that this financial crisis had ended. This was included in the Congress pre-budget submission. In October 2020 the government announced that the waiting time to qualify for the illness benefit was being restored to three days. The change will apply from March 2021.

45 Tyred - Old Tyres Kill (GMB)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the Health and Safety Committees of Congress in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. As part of the wider trade union effort the 'Tyred' campaign succeeded with its aims with the passing of a statutory instrument at Westminster in October 2020. The legal change came into effect in Britain in February 2021. The NIC has written to the NI Infrastructure Minister seeking that this law also be applied in Northern Ireland.

46 Building a Better Future through Educational Justice (TUI)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the work of the Congress Education Sector Committee, in particular through securing the agreement of government and other key stakeholders for the creation of a new Forum for Further & Higher Education.

47 Primary School Education (INTO)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the work of the Congress Education Sector Committee.

48 Health Services Funding Crisis (INMO/RCM)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the Congress Health Sector Committee.

49 Scoping Inquiry into the Cervical Check Screening Programme (Galway CTU)

The actions identified in this motion were pursued through the work of the Congress Health Sector Committee.

50 Abuse of Education Workers on Social Media (UTU)

In spring 2019, Congress' Education Trade Union Group conducted a major survey on violence and harassment of teachers and education support staff in NI schools, with over 1400 respondents answering questions on instances and procedures in primary and secondary schools across NI. Questions were included on online harassment as well as physical and verbal assaults in staff, and the survey received substantial press coverage.

Plans to follow through with employers on increasing protections for staff were delayed by widespread industrial action on pay and conditions, and then the pandemic, which presented education unions and employers with new challenges for the physical and mental health of education workers, mostly addressed in new structures which can be developed for future engagements on the health of the workforce.

51 Free Public Transport (PCSU)

Meetings with the relevant Government Ministers North and South have been sought in order to discuss the proposals contained in this motion.

52 The Rise of the Far Right and the Need for a Robust Trade Union Response (Executive Council)

Executive Council established a sub-group to develop a trade union response to the far right. This included a mask campaign with associated social media and a training programme. Full account in report to conference.

53 Rise of the Far Right (NIPSA)

The Executive Council established a sub-group to develop a trade union response to the far right. This included a mask campaign with associated social media and a training programme. Full account in report to conference.

54 Labour Rights: Strengthening the ILO (NUJ)

Congress continues to engage both nationally and internationally on ILO matters with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, Ibec and through the ITUC and ILO Workers Group. Covid-19 unfortunately led to the cancellation of the 2020 international labour conference.

55 Solidarity with Venezuela (Belfast & District TUC)

Venezuela has been a standing issue at our global solidarity committee and issues have been raised in correspondence and in person with DFA officials and the Minister

EM 1 Participation in PESCO (Connect/CWU/Mandate/SIPTU)

Congress has disseminated information on PESCO to affiliates and wrote to all political parties on the matter during election 2020.

Appendix 7

Disputes Committee

The following Disputes Committees Report were brought before the Executive Council for decision:

1. Spheres of Influence / Representational Rights at Second Level Schools in the Republic of Ireland.

This dispute concerned a claim by the ASTI that the TUI was recruiting members outside of long- established spheres of influence / representation rights at second level schools in the Republic of Ireland. A Disputes Committee investigated the ASTI complaint and in December 2020 Disputes Committee Report 01/20 was adopted by the Congress Executive Council. Disputes Committee Report 01/20 was conveyed by way of letter, from the Chair of the Disputes Committee to the General Secretary of Congress on the 27 November 2020. The report was appealed by the ASTI and the appeal was considered by a new Disputes Committee. The findings of the Disputes Committee in the case of the appeal are outlined in Disputes Committee report 01/21 which was adopted by the Executive Council in May 2021. Disputes Committee Report 01/20 and 01/21 are reproduced below.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions Disputes Committee Report 01/20

Parties: ASTI and TUI

Dispute: Spheres of Influence / Representational Rights in Second Level Schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Committee: Eoin Ronayne (Chair and Executive Council Member), John King (Executive Council Member and SIPTU) and Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin (Executive Council Member and CWU).

**Ms Patricia King
General Secretary
ICTU**

27th November 2020

RE: ICTU Disputes Committee: ASTI v TUI

Dear Patricia,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Disputes Committee established by the Executive Council to investigate a complaint by the ASTI that the TUI was acting in breach of established spheres of influence at second level schools in the Republic of Ireland.

When the Disputes Committee met with the ASTI and TUI in February 2020, we formed the view that the matters in dispute would be best resolved by the establishment of a Joint Working Party made up of the two unions and chaired by independent person. The Executive Council of Congress endorsed this view and appointed Mike Jennings to chair the Joint Working Group. At the Executive Council meeting held on the 18 November 2020 I reported that the Disputes Committee had received and considered the report from Mike Jennings. Furthermore, we informed the Executive Committee that these report recommendations now constitute the findings of the Disputes (No. 2) Committee. In this regard I note the decision of the Executive Council to accept these findings with provision, to allow a working week, to receive any further comments/observations from Executive members should they so wish. Following the meeting arrangements were made to provide the members of the Executive Council with the details of his recommendations

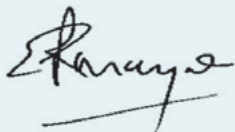
I confirm that I have not received any observations. For the purposes of clarity and for the record the follow constitutes the findings of the Disputes Committee:

1. Both the TUI and the ASTI will be permitted to recruit and represent members in Community and Comprehensive Schools, in Educational and Training Board Schools, in Voluntary Schools and in Educate Together Schools;
2. That in order to ensure the effective implementation of the new arrangements in point one and in order to avoid conflict in any school setting the following will apply;
3. No transfer from either union to the other, shall take place for a period of at least six months;
4. During this period both unions should engage with sincerity and genuine purpose in a process to design, and agree upon, a set of protocol(s) governing open recruitment of new members by both unions;
5. The negotiation of this protocol(s) will likely need the assistance of an outside intermediary and or facilitator and the TUI has agreed to bear the financial cost of procuring such assistance. The intermediary / facilitator, if one is engaged, must be chosen by agreement between the ASTI and the TUI;

6. The protocol(s) to emerge from such an engagement should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following;
 - a. Should any application for membership of either union be made by a current member of the other union, written permission shall be requested by the receiving union from the General Secretary of the other union for such a transfer. Should permission for the transfer not be forthcoming then, for at least the first year of this agreement the union applying shall not proceed with the transfer. This does not restrict the entitlement of the requesting union to seek an explanation of the refusal to accept the transfer of membership;
 - b. In schools where either union is of the view that the presence of two unions is likely to give rise to conflict between the unions both unions shall arrange appropriate training for local representatives in conflict avoidance / resolution. In so far as possible such training will be school based or, at least, locally based and, for the first full year of the implementation of this protocol(s), the cost of this training shall be borne by the TUI;
7. At national level both unions shall establish a Joint Working Group whose purpose shall be to oversee and manage the new. This Joint Working Group shall be tasked with maintaining the highest degree possible of harmony between the two unions, identifying the need for training at school/local level, and promoting and overseeing the implementation of this agreement. The Joint Working Group shall meet regularly and frequently, shall devise its own standing orders / modus operandi and be composed of an equal number of representatives and full-time officials (one of whom in each case shall be the General Secretary of his/ her nominated representative).

I would be obliged if you could arrange to have our findings conveyed to the ASTI and the TUI.

Yours Sincerely,



Eoin Ronayne
Chair ICTU Disputes Committee

Irish Congress of Trade Unions Disputes Committee Report 01/21

Parties: ASTI and TUI

Date of Hearing(s): 29 April 2021

Dispute: Appeal by the ASTI of a Disputes Committee Report adopted by the Executive Council concerning spheres of influence / representational rights in second level schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Committee: Paddy Kavanagh (Chair and Executive Council Member), Ashley Connolly (FÓRSA) and Kevin Figgis (SIPTU).

Introduction

1. We have been asked to hear the appeal from the ASTI of a Disputes Committee Report adopted by the Executive Council, concerning spheres of influence / representational rights in second level schools in the Republic of Ireland.
2. In December 2020 the Executive Council of Congress approved the report under appeal. The ASTI and TUI were then notified of the decision taken by the Executive Council and provided with a copy of the report. On the 22 December 2020 the ASTI wrote to Congress seeking to appeal the report and providing grounds for their appeal.
3. The Executive Council agreed to allow the appeal, leading to the formation of this Disputes Committee. As part our deliberations written submissions were sought from both the ASTI and the TUI. We met with both unions on the 29 April 2021. The Disputes Committee also sought and held a meeting with Mike Jennings, who had been appointed by the Executive Council to chair a Joint Working Group comprised of the two unions concerned. This meeting was held on the 8 April 2021.

Background

4. There is an extensive background to the matters under consideration in this report. We believe that a summary of the background provides an important context to this report and the conclusions that we have reached.
5. On the 29 June 2017 the ASTI wrote to Congress complaining that the TUI had been accepting into membership members and former members of the ASTI, contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. On foot of this complaint the process provided for in Constitution of Congress was initiated. A preliminary meeting between the parties took place on the 14 August 2017. As there was no resolution of the dispute at that meeting, a Disputes Committee was formed to investigate the claim made by the ASTI.
6. The Disputes Committee was appointed by the Executive Council and comprised Phil Ní Sheaghdha (Chair and Executive Council Member), Adrian Kane (SIPTU) and Ian McArdle (CWU). The report of their investigation and findings (Disputes Committee Report 01/2018) was approved by the Congress Executive Council at its meeting of the 18 April 2018.
7. On the 14 May 2018 the TUI notified Congress that it wished to appeal this report. The

Executive agreed to allow the appeal and appointed three members of the Executive Council to comprise the Disputes Committee. The Executive Council appointed Ciaran Rohan (AHCPS and Executive Council), Paddy Kavanagh (Connect and Executive Council) and Anne Speed (UNISON and Executive Council). Ciaran Rohan acted as Chair. The TUI appeal was heard on the 31 July 2018. The TUI appeal was not upheld and a Disputes Committee report 02/2018 was approved by the Executive Council at its meeting on the 19 September 2018.

8. The main findings in Disputes Committee Report 01/2018 have now been implemented. As part of this, the TUI was required to make a financial settlement with the ASTI. The amount of money to be paid by the TUI was agreed by the Executive Council on foot of a recommendation from the Congress General Secretary. The Executive Council decided that €279,798.75 was the appropriate amount. This money was remitted to Congress by the TUI in the first instance and paid to the ASTI in March 2021.
9. On the 11 June 2018 the ASTI wrote to Congress complaining that the established spheres of influence / representation rights in second level schools had been contravened by the TUI. The ASTI requested that the appropriate mechanism be put in place to investigate their complaint. It was subsequently agreed by both unions that no further action would be taken in respect of this complaint while the appeal of Disputes Committee Report 01/2018 was underway. On the 22 November 2019 the ASTI wrote to Congress requesting that the process to hear their complaint be commenced.
10. The Executive Council was advised of the request of the ASTI and again decided to appoint three members of Executive Council to comprise the Disputes Committee. The Executive Council appointed Eoin Ronayne (FÓRSA and Executive Council), John King (SIPTU and Executive Council) and Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin (CWU and Executive Council). Eoin Ronayne acted as Chair. The appointment of three members of the Executive Council reflected the seriousness that the Executive Council attached to the case.
11. A hearing of the ASTI complaint was arranged for the 10 February 2020. At that meeting it was suggested that the issues between the parties were such that they would be better resolved by way of a structured dialogue between the two unions. It was suggested by the Disputes Committee that a Joint Working Group be formed, comprising of representatives of the two unions and chaired by a person to be appointed by the Executive Council. Both unions agreed with the suggested approach.
12. The Executive Council in February 2020 agreed to appoint Mike Jennings as Chair of the Joint Working Group. Terms of reference for the group were agreed. Kieran Christie and Anne Piggott represented the ASTI and Michael Gillespie and Martin Marjoram represented the TUI. The terms of reference tasked the Joint Working Group 'with seeking to devise and scoping out the optimal organisational and representation structures to deliver the best outcomes for current and potential members in the sector, now and into the future.'
13. The work of the group commenced in February 2020. However, this work was stalled due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. Mike Jennings re-engaged with the two unions when public health restrictions eased in October 2020.
14. We met Mike Jennings on the 8 April 2021 and he confirmed that he held intensive discussions with the parties over the month of October 2020. Towards the end of

October 2020, he felt that based on discussions up to that point, it was not likely that agreement would be reached between the two unions. In these circumstances he sought the agreement of both unions to develop proposals for their consideration. Both unions consented. Mike Jennings sent his proposals to both unions on the 30 October 2020.

15. Both unions responded to Mike Jennings on the 12 November 2020. While the TUI sought specific clarifications, both the President and General Secretary indicated that they were disposed to recommend the Chair's proposals for acceptance to their Executive. The ASTI members of the Joint Working Group were not in a position to recommend the proposals for acceptance as they believed that the Chair's first recommendation had rendered consideration of the remaining recommendations 'moot.'
16. In light of this, Mike Jennings then wrote to the General Secretary of Congress on the 14 November 2020. He reported that his recommendations did not form that basis of agreement between the unions and in his view that it was appropriate to hand the matter back to Congress. The report compiled by Mike Jennings was provided to the Disputes Committee.
17. The Chair of the Disputes Committee, Eoin Ronayne, gave a verbal report to the Executive Council on the 18 November 2020. He reported that the Disputes Committee had considered Mike Jennings report and recommendations. He stated that the Disputes Committee was agreed that the recommendations relating to the representation and organisation of teachers at second level that were contained in the report compiled by Mike Jennings should be adopted as the outcome of the Disputes Committee process. A written report was sent to members of the Executive Council following the meeting. Members of the Executive Council were asked to revert to Eoin Ronayne within one week with any observations.
18. Eoin Ronayne wrote to the General Secretary of Congress on the 27 November 2020 confirming that he had received no observations. In this letter he set out for the record the findings of the Disputes Committee. This letter was copied to the ASTI and the TUI.
19. As mentioned earlier we met with the ASTI and the TUI on the 29 April 2021. At the commencement of the meeting, we asked the unions if they had any objection to the composition of the Disputes Committee. Both unions confirmed that they had no objection.

The ASTI Appeal

20. On the 22 December 2020, the ASTI informed Congress that it wished to appeal the report of the Disputes Committee established to investigate issues arising from spheres of influence / representational rights in second level schools in the Republic of Ireland. The arguments made by the ASTI in support of their appeal are detailed in the following paragraphs.
21. The ASTI claimed that the Disputes Committee failed to take account of certain facts. In support of this they cite the following:
 - The ASTI is composed exclusively of post-primary teachers. In contrast the membership of the TUI is mixed and made up of post primary teachers and lecturers and researchers in third level colleges and universities. The ASTI argue

that moving to a situation where there are shared recruitment rights between both unions across all parts of the second level sector is of greater value to the TUI and, as such, the ASTI is significantly disadvantaged. The proposal is 'lopsided'. In the course of the hearing held with the unions on the 29 April 2021 the ASTI claimed that it was deeply concerned that Congress was prepared to stand over a situation where one union could freely take into membership the members of another union;

- The ASTI claimed that it had made clear to the Chair of the Joint Working Group that his recommendations could not be recommended for acceptance as it was unlikely that an agreement between the two unions could be reached on a protocol for the future recruitment of members in the sector;
 - The ASTI further claimed that it came as a surprise to them that the recommendations proposed by the Chair of the Joint Working Group 'morphed into actual recommendations for settlement'. The ASTI claimed that this ignored the fact that proposals could not be accepted by the ASTI; and
 - The ASTI further claimed that the proposals of the Chair of the Joint Working Group cut across issues already examined and determined in the context of Disputes Committee Reports 01 /2018 and 02/2018.
22. The ASTI claimed that the Disputes Committee was not properly constituted. The ASTI argued that because the Disputes Committee was comprised of three members of the Executive Council it was not constituted in line with Paragraph 45 of the Congress Constitution and Standing Orders.
23. The ASTI further claimed that because the Disputes Committee was not properly constituted the members of the Disputes Committee 'could not possibly have acted in accordance with the Constitution of Congress as they lack eligibility to undertake the task assigned.'

The TUI Response

24. We provided the TUI with a copy of the ASTI submission and afforded them the opportunity to comment.
25. The TUI contested the view/ assertion that the proposal for 'open recruitment' across the sector would 'disproportionately favour the TUI'. In support of this they cite the following:
- The serving membership of the TUI is 19,091 of which 14,662 (77%) are in post primary / second level schools. The TUI has calculated that the serving membership of the ASTI is approximately 16,000 therefore the difference between the serving membership of two unions at second level is relatively small;
 - The TUI claimed that the post primary sector is growing and that because of agreed pupil teacher ratios the number of teachers in the sector will continue to grow over the coming years;
 - The TUI claimed that the bulk of the growth in teacher numbers will be in schools that are traditionally organised exclusively by the TUI. The proposal for open recruitment therefore provides the ASTI with an opportunity to recruit members in areas of the sector that were previously not open to them. The TUI claimed that the ASTI contention that open recruitment disproportionately favours the TUI is mistaken;
 - The claim that the TUI gains 'a competitive advantage' over the ASTI by open recruitment in the sector is not borne out by the facts.

26. In response to the contention by the ASTI that the Disputes Committee was not properly constituted the TUI point out that it is worth bearing in mind that a previous Disputes Committee has been constituted in a similar manner and no objections were lodged at that time.

Findings

27. We have given very careful consideration to the arguments set out by both the ASTI and the TUI. The focus of our deliberations however, has been to determine if the ASTI has pointed to matters that would support their contention that the findings of the previous Disputes Committee should be set aside.
28. The first part of the ASTI appeal is the contention that the Disputes Committee did not take account of certain facts in reaching its conclusion.
29. There are a number of points to consider here. It is clear to us that the Disputes Committee was keen to ensure that any report that it would make to the Congress Executive Council would take account of all the relevant issues between the two unions. The decision to recommend the appointment of a Joint Working Group comprised of the two unions is evidence of this. As part of our investigation, we met with Mike Jennings who was appointed by the Executive Council to Chair the Joint Working Group. He confirmed that he had met with both unions on a number of occasions and had sought and received a significant amount of written material.
30. The ASTI has argued that 'open recruitment' would give significant competitive advantage to the TUI and this was not taken account of by the Disputes Committee.
31. The TUI has confirmed that they have 14,662 serving members at second level. The ASTI has 16,572 members. It is not disputed that as a result of demographic change there is significant growth in the number of pupils entering second level education. This will continue in the short to medium term. As a result of agreements on teacher pupil ratios, the number of teachers at second level will increase. It is accepted that much of the growth will happen in areas which would have been exclusively organised by the TUI. It does not follow therefore that 'open recruitment' will confer any advantage on the TUI. We note that the Disputes Committee, while recommending 'open recruitment', did require the development of an agreed protocol between the TUI and the ASTI. This is further evidence that the Disputes Committee did not wish to see membership growth in one union at the expense of the other and that the protocols to be developed and agreed would set the 'rules of the game'
32. The ASTI has argued that the Disputes Committee did not take account of the fact that it had informed Mike Jennings that the ASTI did not accept his recommendations. The ASTI further argued that his recommendations cut across matters that had been already decided.
33. We are satisfied that the Disputes Committee received a full report from Mike Jennings which fully reflected the attitude of both unions to his recommendations. With regard to the matter of Mike Jennings 'cutting across' an issue already decided, we note that the Disputes Committee in its report makes no reference to the matters that were the subject of Disputes Committee Reports 01 /2018 and 02/2018. We understand that these reports have been accepted by both unions and fully implemented.

34. We are satisfied that the Disputes Committee has taken account of all of the pertinent facts in the case. This is evidenced by the approach taken by the Disputes Committee in coming to its conclusions and by the conditions that it has attached to them.
35. The second and third parts of the ASTI appeal are related. The ASTI contend that the Disputes Committee was not properly constituted. Specifically, that because the committee comprised three members of the Executive Council its composition was not consistent with the provisions of the Congress Constitution and Standing Orders. The ASTI further contends that because the Disputes Committee was not properly constituted, the members of the Committee could not possibly have acted in accordance with the Constitution of Congress as they lacked eligibility to undertake the task.
36. At the meeting held on the 29 April 2021 the ASTI conceded that they had participated in a previous Disputes Committee process where the committee was comprised of three members of the Executive Council and had raised no objections. The ASTI also confirmed it had raised no objections to the composition of the Disputes Committee at any stage during the process. The ASTI further confirmed that it had only come across this potential inconsistency at the during the preparation of the appeal.
37. It is our view that the motivation of the Executive Council in appointing the members of the Disputes Committee was to acknowledge the seriousness of the dispute and the importance of seeking, to the greatest extent possible, a satisfactory outcome.
38. It is important to recall that at no stage during the process did the ASTI object to the composition of the Committee. It is also a fact that the ASTI had willingly and actively participated in an earlier process in which the Disputes Committee was also comprised of three members of the Executive Council. We are minded to observe that if we were to accept the argument of the ASTI it could be argued that Disputes Committee Report 02/2018 should also be set aside.
39. In July 2021 legal representatives acting on behalf of ASTI have formally notified ICTU that their client reserves the right to take 'such action as is necessary to protect its position, including the issue of such proceedings as is necessary' if ICTU fails to respond positively within 21 days of their correspondence.

Decision

40. The Disputes Committee has given detailed consideration to the oral and written evidence presented. Having considered all of the evidence it upholds the findings of the Disputes Committee Report concerning spheres of influence / representational rights in second level schools in the Republic of Ireland.

BDC21 NO GOING BACK

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